

Master's Thesis

Deconstructing Terrorism:

Exploring Alternative Responses to Counter Violent Extremism in Kenya



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To the Victims, Survivors and Perpetrators of Terrorism...

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Abstract

The main focus of this study is Terrorism and Violent Extremism with a specific focus on Kenya. The current approaches applied to respond and counter the rise of extremism and terroristic attacks have replicated dominant narratives that are proving to be counterproductive and creating a cycle of violence. This research is important as it delves into the hegemonic dogmas that largely shape Kenya's practices, with the aim of introducing alternative approaches that can contribute positively to the solutions of this problem. Consequently, it has adopted a discursive analysis that has focused on dominant discourses, case study analysis and hermeneutic analysis, which have aided in the comprehension of the Kenyan example. The main conclusion of the thesis is that Terrorism needs to be analyzed from a holistic approach that gives room for multileveled ways of dealing with it. The thesis recommends for a collective bottom-up approach to be used while countering violent extremism. Bringing in a communal responsibility that seeks to undermine terroristic activities and foster social cohesion and resilience.

Keywords: Discourse, Terrorism, Extremism, Responses, Alternatives

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*Source of Picture: www.cartoonmovement.com

Introduction

It does not matter whether the war is actually happening and since no decisive victory is possible, it does not matter whether the war is going well or badly. All that is needed is that a state of war should exist

-George Orwell (1984)

1. Presentation of the Thesis

Taking a glance at the concept of war in the current 21st century, the nature and methods of warfare have drastically changed compared to the previous centuries. It is important to note that state to state warfare has largely diminished and gone are the days of territorial conquest sought by many nation states. Apart from a few nations still seeking for self-determination and international recognition, I can conclude that war and conflict has relatively remained within the borders of most countries. In this sense, intra-state conflict has been still active in most parts of the world with different kinds of conflict arising due to different circumstances. Amongst these conflicts, the role of non-state actors has been increasingly noted, being a central part in revolutionary regime changes amongst other causes.

In today's conflicts, Terrorism and violent extremism have been featuring both in within state and cross border conflicts making it both a national and international strategy applied by different non-state and state groups to achieve a certain goal or make a statement. The scourge of terrorism has been felt within many societies, making it one of the fundamental problems of our times. On the other side, the manner in which most states have handled the aftermath of terrorist attacks has been mainly a militaristic, top-down and control approach that has focused on responding harshly towards suspected perpetrators, groups, ethnicities or religions. This approach has led to a cycle of violence in many places that face violent extremist attacks. I think

that terrorism and extremism has been treated as a military problem in most cases, whereas treating it as a cultural psychological problem would bring better understanding of the issue.

The topic of this Thesis thus merges my understanding, personal opinions and different studies and perceptions brought into the field by different scholars. It will combine different ideas and thoughts and further outlay different cases and examples that will help demonstrate how terrorism can be comprehended through different lenses and hopefully contribute alternative thinking and ideas that may help formulate positive responses towards terrorism. The Thesis will be submitted for the Master's Degree in International in Peace, Conflicts and Development Studies; it will be consistent with the research line within the framework of the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace.

To be more specific, this Thesis aims to construct a framework in order to better understand the concept of Terrorism as a phenomenon in contemporary conflicts where it is used as a strategy of warfare through state or non-state entities. It is first an attempt to deconstruct the dominant narratives regarding Terrorism using the frameworks offered by the Philosophy for Peace. It will also pay attention to radicalization, indoctrination and recruitment at the front end and to develop a coherent strategy for dealing with perpetrators at the back end. Additionally, it aims to make relevant the necessity to use an interdisciplinary approach and finally, to offer some insights on the significance of a societal perspective on the phenomenon.

Hence, this introduction will present the following section: my personal motivations in undertaking this investigation, the relevance and justification of the project, the hypothesis, the objectives, the methodology and guiding questions and the limitations of the research Thesis.

2. Personal motivations

My interest in researching Terrorism has been motivated by my country of origin Kenya. Enrolling into this master, I envisioned having a positive impact within my society which has experienced different conflicts in the past and now is being faced with terrorism. My interest was furthered due to the rapid turn of events that my country has experienced, since October 2011 a rise in cases of violent extremist attacks has been witnessed creating a major insecurity problem in some parts of the country. As I was joining the Master program back in 2013 a week after my arrival in Spain, a major attack was experienced in the heart of the nation's capital Nairobi, leading to numerous deaths, destruction of property and a hostage siege that lasted for three days. This event made me start thinking of what role I can play as a student in peace studies towards the problem facing my country.

On the other hand, I would like to contribute towards alternative responses that can be applied in the handling of the rise of violent extremism in the country. I feel like the current approaches have relied heavily on a militaristic approach that is proving to be counterproductive. This approach has focused more on degrading the operational capabilities of the militant group by focusing on eliminating top leaders and destroying their camps and hideouts. I think that a more appropriate response should be applied, one that focuses on impeding recruitment, inducing defections or getting defectors to renounce their prior activities and affiliations. This I believe would be a better strategy that can address the whole sociological dynamics of such groups, focusing more on the front door instead of back door. This would help understand motivations of such groups that are mainly bonded by collectivist orientation and search for a sense of belonging which may be neglected or missing within the social fabric. The goal is to bring in fresh understandings within Terrorism studies that can bring in better ways of handling it.

Then, my last, and possibly my most important motivation has to do with my interest of career for two main reasons. First, I wish to contribute to both the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace with regards to Terrorism and violence by building a bridge between the various forms of knowledge that have left impressions on myself and my academic path. In other words, I hope this Thesis will fulfil my desire of engaging in a deeper academic commitment regarding violence and peace. Second, I also hope that this Thesis will provide a pathway for me into field work, where I hope I can further my investigations by working within groups that are facing high risk of radicalization and recruitment. Therefore, this Thesis is helpful for me in the sense that it lays the groundwork for a wider understanding of Terrorism as a concept and the challenges that come when trying to respond to it which, I hope, will help me profoundly in the future.

3. Project relevance and justification

This project is relevant because it questions our dominant notions and/or perceptions regarding Terrorism as a strategy used during warfare. It goes beyond the mainstream ideas of the subject as a weapon of the weak only but also branches into the role of the state and other actors in the politics of terrorism and violent extremism. By having this multileveled characteristic, it not only sees terrorism from one perspective but from many angles, therefore questioning aspects like state terrorism and international terrorism that are hardly scrutinized within dominant narratives. This brings in a critical approach and understanding to the subject by analyzing the interplaying factors and causes of non-state terrorism in Kenya.

Moreover, the phenomenon of Terrorism has clearly been studied under comparative analysis, motivations analysis or directly under the banner of “security threat”. That is to say that this project is relevant because it centralizes the question of terrorism on the core

problem which is the use of motivated violence upon a targeted group or population in order to attain a certain objective or influence decision making and change behaviour. Such a conceptualization counterbalances the flow of information we receive daily regarding terrorism due to the fact that it is an important media target. The re-conceptualization of terrorism from a critical and philosophical perspective is evidently relevant since the problem is “hypervisibilized” and consequently gaining much more importance for terrorist organizations, which perpetuates the cycle of violence. In this regard, it is necessary to critically analyze this phenomenon (within Peace Studies) in order to transform this vicious cycle of violence into a better representation maybe ultimately, through this comprehension, foster nonviolent responses.

4. Hypothesis and guiding questions

Current hegemonic narratives on Terrorism rely on militaristic approaches to respond to the menace, in order to better understand the phenomenon, analyzing the concept from an interdisciplinary approach needs to be brought at the forefront of the analysis.

Accompanying this hypothesis, there are three questions that are guiding this investigation and they are intrinsically related to the chapters of this Thesis:

(1) How has terrorism been discussed and portrayed in relation to its responses and how can we rethink those links within the Philosophy for Peace?

(2) What are the underlying hegemonic narratives regarding terrorism in the scientific literature?

(3) What risk factors can lead an individual to be more vulnerable to recruitment in a violent extremist group? Do the societal perceptions help to explain the emergence of radical extremist groups?

5. Objectives

The general objective of the Thesis is to analyze the dominant discourses of terrorism, from a critical perspective, the phenomenon of violence in the context of extremism in by creating a philosophical framework that will allow better understanding of extremist groups implicated in violent acts. This Thesis will have three specific objectives:

(1) To situate, rethink and enhance the debate on terrorism and extremism within the Kenyan society and the broader area of Peace Studies, in order to lay the theoretical foundations for this Thesis.

(2) To contribute to the knowledge on terrorism by deconstructing the hegemonic narratives and our own perceptions of the subject with the aim of promoting a “critical and pluralistic thinking” within the Philosophy for Peace.

(3) To investigate, alternative responses towards terrorism in Kenya, ones that focus on human-centred solutions and foster social cohesion through strengthening positive interactions of different social groups, with the aim of placing emphasis on non-violent responses.

6. Methodology and theoretical framework

The methodology that will be applied for this Thesis is qualitative since it projects to be using content analysis of descriptions and narratives as well as literature review. The Thesis proposed will follow a deductive and hermeneutic approach as it will try to draw conclusions regarding the phenomenon of Terrorism from a theoretical framework offered by Philosophy for

Peace and Terrorism Studies, this will also be accompanied by discourse analysis. The overall methodology will be characterized by a review of the existing literature on the topic together with a critical discussion and confrontation of the authors with the aim of constructing a philosophical framework to analyze the violence caused through terrorism. These approaches will aid me in analyzing the case study which will focus mainly on Terrorism in Kenya.

The theoretical framework of this Thesis will be constructed around critical discourse analysis of terrorism. It will be organized around three important areas of studies regarding the topic, terrorism discourse, extremism and alternative responses. The first chapter will adopt a literature review insisting on the centrality of using an interdisciplinary approach to terrorism. It will confront bibliography from Media Studies, Gender and Terrorism Studies in order to conceptualize the importance of taking into account these fields in the apprehension of violence while critically analyzing the current debates on terrorism. To this end, the principal authors that will be used are the following: Chomsky, (1979; 1991), Laqueur (1987), Schmid and Jongman (1998), Hoffman (2006), Jackson, Breen Smyth, Jarvis & Gunning (2011), Tilly (2004; 2005), Jackson (2008; 2009), Butler (1988; 2007; 2009), Confortini (2006) and Sjoberg & Gentry (2007; 2008), among others.

The second chapter will look more into the case study Kenya, focusing on the vulnerabilities and causes of violent extremism that leads to terroristic acts. This will take a historical and contemporary approach where emphasis will be put on rise of extremist acts especially after militaristic approaches steered by the government. This will help in understanding the height of radicalization and extremism in the country.

The last chapter of this Thesis will rely on discussions from alternative schools of thought, which bring in different perspectives, discussing how we can change the framework within which we understand and respond to terrorism and extremism in Kenya. The emphasis will be put on non-violent innovative approaches, by highlighting on different channels that can be used to formulate more productive solutions.

7. Limitations of the research and conceptual precisions

This section is dedicated to the limitations of this research as well as to the conceptual precisions I wish to make before approaching the topic of terrorism and extremism. There are, obviously, multiple reasons that render this Thesis difficult to conduct at my current level of investigation. The principal obstacle is that doing the research in Spain, there was a challenge of not being able to do interviews so as to get firsthand information. This made me rely mainly on secondary sources especially while interrogating account of victims, survivors and perpetrators. This I feel could have strengthened my arguments if I had the chance to interact with these individuals at a personal level. Although being a sensitive venture, I would love to do this in my future investigation.

Another challenge that I had while interacting with the topic was that of religion and more specifically Islam. I say this because, as it will be outlined in my thesis the Islamic faith especially since 9/11, there are lots of cultural assumptions made towards Muslims all around the world, with few nuances regarding their religion as they are categorized as violent “terrorists”. I do consider that Islam does not determine political violence because the religion in itself does not endorse any violent practices. Furthermore, there is “no religiously motivated violence in Islam” (Gonzalez-Perez, 2011: 55) as “killing non-Muslim” or “avenging a wrong done” for

religious motives is strictly prohibited by Islam, even more when the element of killing is added as it is forbidden in Islam (Tahir Ul-Qadri, 2010: 9-11 & 35). Religion is sometimes portrayed as the principal reason for extremist violence, but I will not go in that direction as I agree with Salzkai (2012) when she considers that the phenomenon must be analyzed under the lenses of tradition more than religion as it is the interpretation of religious texts that lead to the legitimization of political violence in the name of religion.

Finally, I experienced the problematic use of the term “jihad,” because of the widespread use of the word without any critical observance of the etymology of the word that has nothing to do with “holy war” as it is always translated to in English. It is a fact that “in recent years, militant Islamists have raised jihad to the level of an individual religious duty (*fard al-‘ayn*)” but without the agreement and consent of Muslim jurists (Asad, 2007: 12). In fact, the Arabic roots of the word (j.h.d) refer to effort and discipline in the everyday life of Muslims (Al-Gharbi, 2006: 63), even though there is a difference between minor and major jihad. The idea of martyrdom through jihad is a modern idea, as the Quran “does not make explicit use of the word *shahid* to signify someone who dies in God’s cause” (Asad, 2007: 52). Consequently, I will consider terrorism as a strategy as it will be explained, avoiding the utilization of the word “jihad” considering that it directly relates “Islamic inspired” militant groups violence with religion. By not being a Muslim I faced the challenge of interpreting many Islamic concepts that have been used within terrorism studies.

Chapter 1: Conceptualization of Terrorism

1. Linking the Past to the Present

The world today faces many challenges that are proving to hamper peaceful co-existence and understanding between different countries, groups, races and ideologies. Amongst these problems violent extremism is one of them and has taken much of the mainstream media, governmental policies and international politics. This phenomenon has become a puzzle for many policy makers as it has become a worrying conundrum resulting to threat and fear within many societies. As this fear wages on, ways of curbing this rising threat has become even a bigger challenge as there have been little positive and fruitful results. This begs the question as to what violent extremism really entails. As this debate and violence continues, it is essential for positive solutions to be formulated. Perhaps a change of strategy is needed, a paradigm shift or exploring new dimensions that are rarely considered to deal with the puzzling world of violent extremism.

To kick off this jigsaw puzzle, it is relevant to cross examine Terrorism; this is because violent extremism is often engulfed in the word terrorism. Since 11th September 2001 attacks in New York USA, the term was disseminated by the US government and become an elementary part of its foreign policy. The threat was evident; the world hegemony had fallen into the hands of ‘terrorists’ raising a need to protect herself from future harms and threats. Moreover, it seems that the 9/11 events started an academic period known as the “golden age” of Terrorism Studies because of the “explosion of academic and other literature addressing terrorism” in various parts of the world (Mangus, 2009: 17). This ‘new age’ influenced the understanding of terrorism in many spheres with some interrogating it critically while others especially governments playing

fiddle to the hegemony's discourse. As a result, the era of the 'global war on terror' came to birth making the USA threat a global threat.

Terrorism seems like a new concept on the world stage especially post 9/11 events; it has been a driving force of foreign policies around the world making it a common agenda amongst policy thinkers. Nevertheless, it is a strategy that has been applied by different factions to attain their goals. On the contrary, terrorism is a concept that has multiple definitions, thus troubling many minds that have attempted to define it, consequently, creating a challenge in handling the problems that arise from it. The oxymoron that is terrorism makes me ponder how a "controversial", "definition full" word occupies mainstream space and policies without having a consensus meaning. To attempt to answer these concerns, it is paramount to cross-examine the classical roots of terrorism.

To begin with, it is appropriate to analyze its historical background; this may guide me towards an understanding of the terrorism jungle. The roots of terrorism come from terror which comes from the Latin word *terrere* which means "frighten" or "tremble." When coupled with the French suffix *isme* (referencing "to practice"), it becomes akin to "practicing the trembling" or "causing the frightening," trembling and frightening here are synonyms for fear, panic, and anxiety what we would naturally call terror (Hoffman, 1999: 23). It can be traced in many ancient histories and it's used to describe a state of fear and panic that needed an emergency response. From an etymological¹ stand point, language is organic, changeable, fluctuating depending on the needs of the thinker and speakers over time and place. Hence the evolution of

¹ Etymology; the study of the origin and evolution of words

the word is vital in this study as it will shed light upon the present day perceptions and views, thus broadening or giving a better understanding to the word.

Terrorism itself first appears in the Western vocabulary where it was coined during the French Revolution's reign of terror (1793–1794) against domestic enemies (Tilly, 2004: 8). In the Reign of Terror (*Le Gouvernement de la Terreur*), a group of rebels, the Jacobins, used the term when self-reflexively portraying their own actions and explanations of the French Revolution. The Reign of Terror was a campaign of large scale violence by the French state; between 16,000 and 40,000 people were killed in a span of a year (Burke, 1969). The reign of terror was a product of the French government that sought to clamp down on the revolutionaries that wanted regime change.

In today's understanding terrorism is mostly denoted as the killing or harming of humans by non-governmental political actors usually for various reasons, mainly as a political statement. Many governments averse from defining the term for the fear on an official definition would expose the legitimacy of self proclaimed combatants of national liberation (Harmon, 2000). In some countries, the word has been associated with political opponents and groups seeking self-determination and political freedoms. For instance Tibetan Buddhists are considered vicious 'terrorists' by the Chinese government, while opposition parties in Zimbabwe are considered in the similar fashion by Robert Mugabe's regime. Therefore Terrorism is considered as a pejorative² term, as those who employ it characterize their opponents' actions as something evil and lacking human compassion. The complexity of terrorism emerges from the double-edged

² Term that is fraught with negative and derogatory meaning

characteristic it bears, as Ronald Reagan³ once said; “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter”. This ambivalence creates more difficulty in formulating a coherent comprehension of terrorism, calling for a double-edged analysis of the term and what it bears.

So far terrorism is often linked to non-state actors that are violently acting towards their regimes to gain politically, as this may be the commonly used discourse to explain terrorism, I feel that it lacks clarity and is relatively exclusive of many other groups, institutions and governments that cause terror to gain legitimacy. By solely focusing on non-state groups it negates to look at the power dynamics that define terrorism, in this case, the one that plays the piper calls the tune. Since governments have legitimacy acknowledged by the masses, it easily calls who is a terrorist and who is not; in the end we only get to hear the tune and hardly question the player.

This has always been a key problem while defining or addressing acts of terror, orthodox terrorism studies has the tendency of treating terrorism as an objective phenomenon which is defined by the actor rather than the act (Jackson, Jarvis, Gunning,&Smyth, 2011: 18). Therefore, adopting a critical approach theory to the study of terrorism is necessary, meaning that uncovering of ideological, conceptual and institutional underpinnings in terrorism studies (Toros & Gunning, 2009: 90). By taking this approach, I can unravel the discrepancies that accompany ‘old’and ‘new’terrorism. This would provide space for a better debate on the subject that recognizes that; “terrorism is continually changing and evolves according to many factors including states’ actions and responses to it and the local and global socio-political environments” (Campana, 2009: 107).

³ 40th President of the United States.

By broadening the scope used to scrutinize terrorism, violences occurring in the name of countering-terrorism and other policies that have come to being due to the terrorism “threat” can be put to question. This also gives a chance to look into historical and political contexts, particularly whether the state’s repressive apparatus might have a role in creating an environment of terrorism that may seem desirable or even legitimate to some actors.

Since the reign of terror in France, that crushed the Jacobins revolting against the government, a non critical approach has largely been employed to understand terrorism. To break from this traditional approach, I must break loose from the conventional approach of knowledge which has historically dominated most social sciences. Challenges to traditional approaches have emerged based on the recognition that knowledge and power are intimately connected. ‘Theory is always for someone and for some purpose’ (Held, 1980), most efforts to explain the social world are tied up in the interest and perspectives of the creator . Hereby, a “Foucauldian lens” is relevant so as to relate the notion of power and knowledge when thinking about terrorism studies. There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations (Foucault, 1975). Finding the relationship of power and knowledge in terrorism studies is important as it deconstructs the dominant perception of the term. This needs to be done by trying to stand apart from the existing order, questioning what passes as commonsense and accepted knowledge. This involves asking deeper questions about how existing order came to exist and how it’s sustained, thus the need to acknowledge one’s own location and biases.

Localizing oneself is necessary in order to understand which vantage point one has and how this view has been shaped. Coming from Kenya, a country considered to be a ‘hotbed of

terror⁴, and a former British Colony. I am aware of my biases and views when it comes to analyzing the discourse of terrorism, which has lately taken centre stage in the country. Terrorism in Kenya has been one of the main problems grappling the government's security policies and foreign policies. The threat is perceived as contemporary and one that is hindering the country's peace thus having an impact on the international perception of the country as a safe place to visit or invest.

1.1 Colonial Era of Terror

Terrorism being a grave concern in Kenya today, it is essential to look at it from a critical lens so as to make lucid proposals that can curb the rising trend. From my position, terrorism should not be considered as a new concept but rather one that extends long before the 'global war on terror'. I consider terrorism to have been present pre-9/11, by having this sentiment I look back to the colonial era that led to the formation of the Kenyan Nation state. Before Kenya was a sovereign independent state, it was a land that experienced terror from the strong British Empire. I say this because all the harm that the empire conducted in its colonized territories constitutes terrorism in every possible manner. The use of different forms of violence enabled the empire to enrich herself and their collaborators at the cost of the locals; consequently, it established herself as a powerful country, claimed racial superiority, and imposed her cultures and Christian religion and ruling ideas on the people (Jalata, 2013: 47).

In many colonialism debates, the venture is rarely linked to terrorism and is associated with other discourses. Although many scholars have explored the impacts of racial slavery, exploration, Christianity, colonization on the entire continent, and geo-cultural knowledge, they

⁴ US News channel CNN referred to Kenya as a 'hot bed of terror' Mr Obama was "not just heading to his father's homeland, but to a region that's a hotbed of terror" <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-33642158>

have ignored to study the essence and role of European terrorism in the destruction and dehumanization of African societies and in the establishment and maintenance of the European dominated capitalist world system (Freund, 1984: 35). Despite the fact that these European powers and their agents used the discourses of commerce, Christianity, modernity, and civilization to cultivate their African collaborators for dividing and conquering Africa, systematic terrorism and other forms of violence enabled them to dominate African societies and exploit their economic and labour resources beginning in the late fifteenth century and reaching its climax during the last decades of the nineteenth century (Jalata, 2013: 49). The slave system and colonial orders were mainly maintained through acts of terrorism towards the populations. European colonial terrorism caused deaths and suffering by racial slavery, mass murder and genocide, severed hands and heads, shattered families and many other crimes were committed so as to extract wealth and capital. Much of these acts are never acknowledged let alone recognised as terrorism.

In critical terrorism studies, it is imperative for such revelations to be highlighted so as to find the missing links in the study. It is also paramount to analyze such events in order to portray the power relations that accompany the field, which contributes to what is regarded as an act of terrorism today. During the colonial era of Africa and other parts of the world, power and domination through force and other means were the principle forms of terror instilled upon self-governing peoples. This form of terror was done through ‘othering⁵’ the inhabitants of the invaded lands due to their different cultures, races, beliefs and modes of governing. The

⁵ A concept of the identity of difference, which is discussed within some works of Continental philosophy and in the social sciences, such as across the taxonomies of anthropology. The state or characteristic of "the other/Other" is "being different [from] or [alien to]" the identity of self or social identities (Miller, 2008)

colonization mission was initiated through this principle that considered some as people and other lesser people. George Orwell had a term for it: “unpeople.” The world is divided into people like us, and “unpeople” everyone else who do not matter (Chomsky & Vltchek, 2013: 21). The insignificant other was regarded as not important and only relevant when it came to labour exploitation and other forms of humiliation. The perception of other human beings as non/sub-human contributed to the acts of terrorism that have rarely been acknowledge and often denied as being acts of terror.

The idea of the ‘other’ could not have prevailed without knowledge being diffused that convinced the world that indeed some cultures and peoples were more superior to others. Edward Said explains this in his book *Orientalism*, which outlines the principal dogmas of the term and reconstruction of histories. Primary is the historical portrayal of the “west” as rational, developed, humane and “superior”, caricature the “orient” as “aberrant, underdeveloped and inferior” (Said, 1978). In this regard, the “orient” needs to look up to the developed West for guidance and catch up with its ways of modernization. The “orient” is considered as mythical, spiritual and ruled by a set of decrees inscribed in sacred texts and not responding to the changing demands of life. In addition, the “orient” is eternal, uniform and incapable of defining itself; therefore it is assumed that a highly generalized and systematic vocabulary for describing the “orient” from western standpoint is inevitable and scientifically “objective” (Said, 1978: 47). These perceptions leave the “orient” at the bottom of the human race, hence being feared by the “west” or in need of being controlled.

The creation of the “orient” or “other” by western standards can be seen all through its colonization mission. Many scholars have neglected to identify the periods of colonization as

eras of terrorism. While many have focused on the emergence, development, and expansion of the racialized capitalist world system has primarily focused on trade, the international division of labour, exploitation, capital accumulation, political structures, development and underdevelopment, and social inequality, the role of terror in creating this system is hardly mentioned. Finding the missing link would be to provide an adequate explanation for the role of state-centred or state-sponsored terrorism in destroying or enslaving the indigenous peoples of the world and in creating, developing, and maintaining the capitalist world system. It is with such debates that one can begin to understand the complexities that make up modern day terrorism.

1.2 From “Orient” to “Terrorist”

Modern day terrorism has a face of the “orient” or “other” that is posing a “threat” to the free and liberal western world. In most cases, it takes the face of Arabic and Muslim individuals that seem to be against the “prosperous” western ideals that have come to corrode their cultural ways and life. Many “extremist groups” have camouflaged under the guise of radical Islamist groups often referred to as “jihadist” groups. In my opinion, the relation of Islam and terrorism is often misinterpreted by those facing the threat and those instigating it. The co-relation is a fallacy that has been propelled through the present discourse of terrorism and maintained by extremist groups that use this platform to advance their ill intended ideologies. Bridging the gap between Islam and terrorism is vital in the understanding and countering of violent extremism.

In light of Said’s Orientalism, the world is classified and divided into two distinctive halves; modern and pre-modern. Here, the modern make culture and are its masters while the pre-modern are said to be its conduits (Mamdani, 2004: 18). The categorization of the world in this manner depends on ones; race, religion, culture and political ideology. Especially, after the

cold war where “western liberal democracy” defeated “eastern communism” the world seemed to have reached an end point of socio-cultural evolution and final form of human government.

Fukuyama noted that;

"What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the “universalization” of Western liberal democracy” (Fukuyama, 1992).

However, what transpired in parts of the oriental world would shape modern day perception of terrorism and violent extremism. Islam and the Middle East displaced Africa as the hard pre-modern core in a rapidly globalizing world. In this case, Africa was seen as incapable of modernity while hardcore Islam was seen as not only incapable but also resistant to modernity (Mamdani, 2004: 19). This created the notion that pre-modern is not creative, while anti-modern had the profound ability to be destructive hence the need to be cautious of this “destructive threat” that was accumulating in the Middle East.

Modern day terrorism and extremism was largely shaped by different events during the cold war and post-cold war. The era of the cold war was marked by two developments. Firstly was the distinctive initiative of the Reagan administration’s foreign policies. During this period, a shift in foreign policy occurred as focus was put on responses to the revolutionary overthrow of pro-USA dictatorships. Notably, the 1979 Sandinista revolution⁶ in Nicaragua and the Islamist revolution in Iran were perceived as setting a trend of reversal after the Vietnam War (Mamdani, 2004: 12). The Reagan administration used the ideological war discourse of the cold war to legitimize its advancements against different states around the world. After waiting fruitlessly for

⁶ Nicaraguan revolution; encompassed the rising opposition coming together against the Somoza dictatorship. It was led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) that violently ousted the dictatorship in 1978-1979.

engagements to begin between soviet troops massing up in Europe, the administration realized that it was waiting to fight the wrong war. The focus was shifted to yesterday's guerrillas who had come to power as today's nationalists, from Southern Africa to Central Africa. This was executed through labelling the nationalists as 'soviet proxies'.

Another shift in strategy was from "containment"⁷ to "roll back"⁸, this called for the subordination by all means to a single end of the 'evil empire' (Soviet Union). For this to flourish, courting language was needed so as to legitimize the amoral venture that was to take place, thus coating the actions as "constructive engagements"⁹. The latter led the US administration to hold hands and lie in bed with illegitimate regimes such as the apartheid regime of South Africa and others that were waging terror upon its citizens (Mamdani, 2004: 18). The courtship further moved to harness political terror as the most effective way to undermine nationalist government in newly independent colonies across the globe. The battlegrounds of the cold war kept shifting from Africa to Central America and Central Asia. Sadly, US attitude toward political terror turned into a brazen embrace of militia groups. Case in point: The Contras¹⁰ of Nicaragua and later Al Qaeda then Taliban in Afghanistan who were both allies with the US governments during the cold war. By supporting these groups, the US was determined to win the cold war by any means necessary even if it meant through unjust means.

⁷ A military strategy to stop the expansion of an enemy. It is best known as the Cold War policy of the United States and its allies to prevent the spread of communism abroad.

⁸ A strategy of forcing change in the major policies of a state usually by replacing its ruling regime.

⁹ The name given to the policy of the Reagan Administration towards the apartheid regime in South Africa in the early 1980s. It was promoted as an alternative to the economic sanctions and divestment from South Africa demanded by the UN General Assembly and the international anti-apartheid movement.

¹⁰ A label given to the various rebel groups that were active from 1979 through to the early 1990s in opposition to the Sandinista Junta of National Reconstruction government in Nicaragua.

Fast forward to today, the biggest threat in the “global war on terror” discourse are the two latter groups amongst many others that have cropped up over the years. Posing the question whether the result of an alliance gone sour is what propelled the 9/11 attacks and the current “global war on terror”.

The aftermaths of the cold war left an indelible mark in the structures of many political systems around the world. The outcomes would either play in favour of the world hegemony or to its disfavour, subsequently still posing a threat to the ideals of the world superpower. On a different scale, the Islamic world was strongly shaken by the tremors of the cold war. Most Islamic states encountered a modern dilemma in their religious visions. This dilemma revived the sentiments of Jamal ad-Din Al Afghani¹¹ who acknowledged that Muslims needed modern science which they would have to learn from Europe. On the other hand, this very necessity was proof of inferiority and decadence, for we civilize ourselves by imitating Europeans. He asked; if being modern meant above all, free rein for human creativity and originality, how could a colonial society modernize by imitating? (Keddie, 1968: 38-40). Afghani located the centre of his historical dilemma in a society that has been subjected to colonization, oppression and imperial ideals that he did not find attractive to modernize the Muslim world. Feelings similar to Afghani’s cultivated a mood for change within Islam; as a result, political movements that speak the language of religion became profound, thus leading to the rise of political Islam.

1.3 The Islamic link (Political Islam)

It would be simplistic to conclude that political Islam came about as a result of the Cold war; rather it’s logical to say that it’s a domestic product championed by local thinkers but not

¹¹ (1838/1839 – March 9, 1897), was a political activist and Islamic ideologist in the Muslim world during the late 19th century, particularly in the Middle East, South Asia and Europe.

bred in isolation. Its encounter with Western principals and powers produced radical thinking that led to chaotic understanding of the concept. Although being present during the colonial period, political Islam did not give rise to extremists and terrorist movements until the Cold War. Within the development of political Islam it is important to note that; non-cleric political intellectuals such as Muhammad Iqbal¹² and Mohammed Ali Jinnah¹³ were instrumental in the advancement of the ideology (Keddie, 1968), only glaring exception being Ayatollah Khomeini¹⁴ of Iran. Pioneers of political Islam were not the religious scholars but political intellectuals with an exclusively worldly concern.

To understand political Islam, it is necessary to highlight particular circumstances that transformed it from an ideological tendency into a political force that is today associated with terrorism. With this in mind, it is essential to distinguish between “moderate” and “radical” political Islam. Considering “moderate” political Islam, its affiliates propagated for social reforms within the present political and religious auspices; whereas “radicals” believed that no meaningful social reforms would be possible without taking over the state (Khalid, 2009: 45).

Despite their being many disagreements in the use of these typologies within Islam, I find it crucial to interact with them for the sake of understanding the evolution of political Islam. The two concepts have been refuted and acknowledge by different scholars who have studied Islam. What is important to recognize is that; just as it is historically inadequate to equate political

¹² (9 November 1877 – 21 April 1938), widely known as Allama Iqbal , was an academic, poet, barrister, philosopher, and politician

¹³ (25 December 1876 – 11 September 1948) was a lawyer, politician, and the founder of Pakistan

¹⁴ (24 September 1902 – 3 June 1989) was an Iranian Ayatollah, revolutionary, politician, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the leader of the 1979 Iranian Revolution which saw the overthrow of the Pahlavi monarchy and Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran who was supported by the United States.

Islam with “religious fundamentalism”, it also makes no sense to equate every shade of political Islam with terrorism (Choueiri, 1990: 29). Fundamentalism¹⁵ should not be misconstrued as a throwback to a “pre-modern” culture but rather as a response to an imposed secular modernity, thus there would be no fundamentalism without modernity. In reference to political Islam, it can be referred to forms of Shi’a Islam that developed a religious hierarchy which later advanced into political movements that speak the language of religion (Armstrong, 2007: 88). Therefore, while describing political Islam it’s unfair to generalize all movements as being part of “religious fundamentalism” as this tends to equate movements forged in different historical and political contexts, obscuring their doctrinal differences including the place of violence in religious doctrines. Hence, it’s significant to note that “religious fundamentalism” is akin to counterculture and not a political movement.

From the above standpoint, one can begin understanding how different Islamic movement shaped the usage of political Islam upon believers and states. Take the implementation of the “Sharia law¹⁶” within Islamic societies, it pertains different interpretations depending on the motivation of the movement delivering it. Concepts such as *Itjihad*; the institutionalized practice of interpreting Sharia taking into account changing historical circumstances and therefore having a range of view points (Hashim, 1991: 377-379). Its application in today’s societies differs creating diverse opinions and clashes within Islamic cultures. An attitude towards it is the single most important issue that divides society-centred from state-centred and progressive from reactionary-extremist Islam (Mutahhari, 2013: 17). By deciphering such hypotheses, an open

¹⁵ The demand for a strict adherence to certain theological doctrines, in reaction against Modernist theology

¹⁶ The Islamic legal system derived from the religious precepts of Islam, particularly the Quran and the Hadith.

avenue can be explored within political Islam, eventually grasping the classical roots of political Islam. From my comprehension, theoretical origins of “radical” Islamist political terror would lie in the state-centred and not in the society-centred movements of Islam.

On another front, transformations within political Islam emerged due to the resistance and opposition of western principles. Particularly during the Iranian revolution, distinctive faces of political Islam came about which seem to have remained relevant up to present day. From the revolution, Elitist and Revolutionary forms of Islam became dominant. On one hand the revolutionary side saw the organization of Islamic social movements and mass participation as a critical way of ushering an independent Islamic state. In contrast, elitists distrusted popular participation; its notion of an Islamist state was one that would contain popular participation not encouraging it (Kurzman, 2004: 14). These two dimensions of Islam created a rift within the faith that has surged on up to today. It also created an opportunity for Western powers to strengthen their discourse and constitution of what classifies as terrorism or terrorist states.

Consequently, rivals of western ideologies qualified to be categorized as terrorist states or entities. Subsequently, a state such as Iran was surely a terrorist state and was proclaimed intensively by Western governments and media. Its exposure as a terrorist state was amplified during the Iran-Contra inquiries¹⁷. Specifically, Iran's perhaps inadvertent involvement in the US proxy war against Nicaragua. This fact is unacceptable, therefore unnoticed, though the Iranian connection in US-directed international terrorism was exposed at a time of impassioned denunciation of Iranian terrorism (Chomsky, 1991: 44). Iran's role in terrorism also revealed the

¹⁷ Was a political scandal in the United States that occurred during the second term of the Reagan Administration. Senior administration officials secretly facilitated the sale of arms to Iran, which was the subject of an arms embargo.

US role in international terrorism through its support of individual groups and criminals to instigate violence across its borders.

The US went further, not only constructing a semi-private international terrorist network but also an array of client and mercenary states --Taiwan, South Korea, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and others -- to finance and implement its terrorist operations (George, 1991: 68). Playing such a role raised resentment towards the US especially in the Arab world, where sentiments of losing a cultural war to western ways of life were still fresh in the air. The negativity towards Westernization further bolstered the spirit of state-centred reactionary-extremist Islamist. The cultural infiltration and western domination being experienced directly or indirectly encouraged the rise of opposition groups that opted to counter these invasions by means of the sword.

Connecting the influence of cold war politics, and the role it played in the discourse of terrorism is a fundamental ingredient in the analysis of present day perceptions. Making these links creates the need for precaution when studying the matter as its depiction has solely been that of one dangerous 'enemy'. In effect, it needs to be understood that terrorism does not appear by itself; it is part of a wider political process (Tilly, 2004: 21). Hence, it is important to understand that, the perpetrators of terrorist violence might also have been victims of a conflict or other terrorist acts; the "individuals both shape and are shaped by larger communities, social processes, and group dynamics, economic and political structures, and ideologies" (Toros & Gunning, 2009: 97). Therefore, terrorism should be seen as a "social fact" that also evolves within a given society along with a historical materiality and that is "constructed through various acts".

2. Critical Approach to Terrorism

Bringing in a critical understanding of terrorism bears the challenge of breaking through the selective discourse it carries. Especially post 9/11, it is essential to toss the terrorism coin into the air and scrutinize the different sides it has, with the hope of deconstructing both the head and tail and optimistically putting a face to the “old” and “new” terrorism. To begin this process, it is central to note that a critical approach to terrorism starts with acknowledging that wholly objective or neutral knowledge –any kind of absolute or real ‘truth’- about terrorism is impossible and there is always an ideological, ethical and political dimension to the research process (Toros & Gunning, 2009). This requires one to recognise the personal subjectivity that may appear in the research mainly shaped by personal identity, values, perceptions, and culture and worldviews. As I attempt to bring forth an objective investigation, I stay wary of my subjectivity. This is important for me as I wage my research so as to avoid reflexivity that may diminish some knowledge or uplift others.

The reference of 9/11 as a major turning point or as would some prefer “new age” of terrorism has been reiterated constantly forming an epochal significance in the discourse. Accepting or denying the relevance of the events in the making or understanding of terrorism depends on ones focal interest in its study. As a critical researcher of the field, I do not tarnish this allusion but rather question its manifestation. Having highlighted previously different forms of terrorism that took place in history but hardly face such referral or significance. It is this discrepancy that makes me query the role of 9/11 in the study of terrorism. Relying on how the narrative has changed since then, it seems to be manoeuvred by the Western school of thought, depicting itself under threat and attack from the orient “terrorist”.

A critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices that we accept rest (Foucault, 1988: 155). From this wavelength, questions within terrorism can begin to find explanations and possibly answers. In the current “global war on terror” discourse dire explanations are needed so as to demystify the narrative. What formulates this discourse is an array of rhetoric statements, policies and practises that have made justifiable actions that have accompanied it. For these rhetoric to flourish, a set of devices have been implemented so as to sustain it, done through metaphors, narratives and meanings and an exclusive language of “counter-terrorism” that has formed knowledge on the discursive project (Richard, 2004: 20). It is therefore imperative to study these forms of rhetoric that have made it possible for US “war on terror” to become a “global war on terror”. By doing this, I will be able to analyze the role language, power and identity and the threat of terrorism have been discursively constructed within societies, becoming part of the political and social realities that we have to confront every day.

2.1 The Power of Language in Terrorism

Language intrinsically formulates reality; through it we can convey knowledge, communicate and influence the status of reality. One distinctive feature of language is that it is never neutral. As linguistics and anthropologists have discovered, all language has a basic binary structure, such that almost every noun, adjective and verb has its direct opposite (Silberstein, 2002). Having this duality, it serves as a crucial conveyer of terrorism rhetoric. Post 9/11, political language served in the favour of those who wanted to respond militarily to the attack America faced. The language used by senior US government officials was to convince its allies

and the world that the threat of terror was a global responsibility that demanded co-operation by all. President George .W. Bush openly declared that;

“Over time it's going to be important for nations to know they will be held accountable for inactivity, you are either with us or against us in the fight against terror” (CNN, 2001)

According to Bush, there was no neutrality in this “war” as the threat posed by terrorism needed a collective response. The narrative steered by the Bush administration brought together a coalition of states that shared similar opinions and objectives. This coalition, mainly comprised of Western states, read from the same script that shared the same assumptions, beliefs, values and language, which contributed to the social construction of the “global war on terror”.

When analyzing the discourse of terrorism, the Bush administration’s role is important due to the implications the administration’s policies and approaches has on present day perceptions. Through a vast corpus of texts (speeches, memos, laws, policy documents, reports, and websites among others) the language of terrorism was shaped to fit a western outfit. For example, Bush’s rhetoric ‘shapes the world that provides a backdrop of values and beliefs, heroes and villains, triumphs and tragedies against which and through which deliberative judgements are made in a ceaseless swirl of discourse` (Llorente, 2002: 73). For this to prosper, it needed to rely on a powerful mix on analogies tailor made to elaborate an ‘Us vs. Them’ narrative. ‘Al Qaeda is to terrorism what mafia is to crime’ (Guardian, 2001) amplifications like, ‘Al Qaeda wants to kill all Americans’ were employed to reinforce the ‘Good vs. Evil’ mentality within terrorism.

Although the threat of Al Qaeda was relatively felt during the events of 9/11, I believe that it posed as a major threat far away from the US borders. Despite being a well-known fact,

the justifications made for the Invasion of Afghanistan after 9/11 was that of democracy and liberation of the Afghani people that lacked the many ‘freedoms’ those western societies suppose to uphold. Exporting this ‘democracy’ came at a cost for both entities as the US entered an unjustified ‘war’ while the invaded countries have yet to harvest the fruits of it up to date. Concurrently, the language of the ‘war on terrorism’ seeks to normalize and institutionalize counter-terrorism policies, which often violate the principles of democracy, thus regularizing the ‘war on terror’ while simultaneously reifying state power (Richard, 2005: 18). The pretext of counter-terrorism has also administered a construction of terrorist identity and threat, which has been founded on the duality of ‘good and evil’, ‘civilized and barbaric’ and ‘us and them’.

2.2 “The Making of a Terrorist Identity”

To denote how the construct of identity cropped into terrorism, I draw back to the work of Samuel Huntington¹⁸, and his controversial 1993 article (‘The Clash of Civilizations’). His writings were deeply embedded in the idea of the ‘west and the rest’, with the former being a superior civilization that could be threatened by the latter’s nonconformity or unwillingness to join the bandwagon and accept Western values. The generalization that accompanies most of Huntington’s ideas is what formidably accompanies the discourse of terrorism. Analyzing its influence in the field will offer a different interpretation and counter-discourses that may be unbiased.

Huntington’s proposal could not go unchallenged thus arising counter-arguments that refuted his claims as being simplistic and inadequate labels that generalize cultural assertions. Notably is Edward Said’s 2001 article (‘The Clash of Ignorance’) that underscored the dangers

¹⁸ (April 18, 1927 – December 24, 2008) was an influential American conservative political scientist, adviser and academic.

of one-dimensional narratives such as Huntington's. From the premise Said underlines how having labels such as "Islam" and "West" serve only to confuse us about our disorderly reality (Said, 2001). He further argues that, Huntington presents the concepts of civilizations and identities as closed, shut-down, and sealed off entities that are unchanging and homogeneous in the global community (Said, 2001). Said believes that these concepts have in fact been open to exchange, cross-fertilization and sharing. Huntington's ideas after the events of 9/11 bolstered the vocabulary employed by American and European policymakers served to intensify passionate associations with "the West" and further established the notion of 'Us vs. Them,' or the 'West versus Islam'.

Unfortunately, what constitutes terrorism today carries interpretations such as those outlined by Huntington. This has led to a 'Villain vs. Hero' attitude, which has influenced the responses and policies that make up today's counter-terrorism strategies. Regrettably, these strategies have constructed a massive counter-violence approach that has stretched all through the post-9/11 terrorism threat. To alter this approach it is important to have in mind Said's closing remarks in the Clash of Ignorance;

These are tense times, but it is better to think in terms of powerful and powerless communities, the secular politics of reason and ignorance, and universal principles of justice and injustice, than to wander off in search of vast abstractions that may give momentary satisfaction but little self-knowledge or informed analysis. "The Clash of Civilizations" thesis is a gimmick like "The War of the Worlds," better for reinforcing defensive self-pride than for critical understanding of the bewildering interdependence of our time (Said, 2001).

Resonating to Said's closing remarks; debates within the field of terrorism have to be based on productive arguments that produce constructive ideas to tackle the suffering and injustices that terrorism has brought about. Relying on "old-fashioned" discriminative arguments does no good

to the lives of innocent civilians that are prone to experience the violence and misery of terroristic activities. Shifting the debate towards an enriching understanding of terrorism can help in alleviating the ills that accompany the discourse.

3. The Media Effect; How it Shapes Discourse of Terrorism

The media is the most powerful entity on earth. It has the power to make the innocent guilty and the guilty innocent. It controls the minds of the masses.

-Malcom X, 1963 (Griffith, Alexander & Jones, 2013)

Language, politics and identity are principle mediums that have shaped the discourse and study of terrorism, and as seen previously, have convincingly influenced how we perceive the field. However, these mediums do not manage to persuade on their own and have been dependant on the mass media to propagate the desired agenda. Terrorism and the media exist in a relationship that can be described as symbiotic; that is a mutually beneficial coexistence from which each profits (Biernatzki, 2002: 4). In this case, media coverage of terrorism provides political actors' access to particular audiences with whom they wish to communicate with, as the reporting of a violent event helps to extend its impact beyond those directly affected.

From newspaper articles and stories that recount terror incidences, television has become the leading news medium, making the newspaper supplementary to TV's instant, live, and emotional coverage (Ramonet, 2002). Furthermore, the emergence of social media has shifted the dynamics of this symbiotic relationship making the understanding of terrorism through the media more sophisticated than before. The extent of the media's influence on terrorism has created moral ethical dilemmas for governments and media houses; they often grapple with

making the choice of what stories should get coverage bearing in mind the repercussions that may arise from airing certain stories to the public.

The biggest hurdle is to distinguish whether the sensational coverage of attacks encourages further incidents from those, on the one hand, who would use violence to pursue political programmes and those, on the other hand, who approach the media as victims rather than perpetrators of terrorism (Picard, 1986: 388). The media's challenge to represent terrorism without promoting the acts and taking into account the trauma of victims of these acts is one that puzzles media practitioners and governments. Peter C. Kratcoski commented that, "if one of the elements of terrorism is the wish to obtain publicity for a cause and create propaganda, the media has obviously overreacted in responding to this desire" (2001: 468). I echo his sentiments as I believe that the media's role has had a twofold impact both towards the discourse of terrorism through the different narratives it portrays. On one side, it contributes in dispersing the mainstream interpretations of terrorism that governments rely on so as to justify needed responses to it. On the other side, it serves advantageous to the perpetrators of acts of terror who use this coverage as a benchmark to validate their cause and see this as 'victories' within it.

It is hard to determine whether media coverage directly causes terrorist violence, however it is certain to say that it helps constitute terrorism and its social construction. The manifestation of certain news frames to represent terrorism through the media is a major contributing factor. Hence, this helps one to understand that media representations are choices and not neutral or objective representations of the external events. By choosing to broadcast certain information, the media can encourage certain understandings of events through highlighting or broadening certain perceptions familiar to the audience. For instance, in covering

terrorism; terrorists are monsters, villains and evildoers; terrorist attacks are national traumas; terrorism is seen as evidence of broader cultural clashes; the need for resilience in the face of adversity; and the heroism of post-attack responses (Kellner, 2002: 149). This is done through magnifying or shrinking elements of a certain event to make them appear more or less relevant than other.

The post-9/11 terrorism discourse has relied on the demonization of those regarded as terrorists and has put more emphasis on Islamic extremist groups as the major threat within terrorism, thus leading to the victimization of and discrimination against Muslims and Arabs ('other') by authorities and society as a whole. The outcomes of this kind of all encompassing and smothering discourse is the destabilization of the community and replaces non-violent political interactions with suspicion, fear, hatred, chauvinism and impulse to violently defend against the 'imagined community' (Richard, 2004: 12). This biased discourse leaves the impression that acts of terrorism are solely orchestrated by some individuals, while others only suffer the impacts of these acts. This approach negates to focus on acts of state-centred terrorism, western terrorism and non-Arab/non-Muslim acts of terrorism.

Dominant discourses on terrorism have become embedded in our cultural and political landscapes with the help of the media. The practises that come with this discourse have become 'normalized' making us frequently oblivious of their significance or even their presence. While acts committed by those believed to be terrorist are considered as gruesome, horrendous and insanely barbaric. Offensive operations carried out against these 'alleged' groups such as the humiliation of terror "suspects" in Guantanamo Bay, tortured Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib, droned civilian villages in Afghanistan and many more are rarely questioned until long after

when the events have been absorbed by the society, they are considered as harsh treatment of suspects or the ‘collateral damage’ from bombing campaigns to be justified and morally acceptable (Weber, 2007: 452). This creates direct consequences of a discourse that constructs the enemy ‘other’ as ‘evil’ and the respondent as humane and rationalized to act in this way. Because of this, dominant discourses and narratives on terrorism and their effects often go unnoticed and unchallenged resulting to serious consequences that impact responses to it.

3.1 Normalization of Terrorism (‘Entertain Me Please’)

The media’s role in promoting one type of dominant discourse is not only transmitted through news coverage that is consumed by the general public. It has also been promoted through popular culture precisely in the entertainment industry, which has an important role in its social construction. An upsurge of films and TV series themed on terrorism has been experienced since 9/11. The depictions of terrorism and counter-terrorism we encounter on cinema and television screens have different social effects depending on how the work is interpreted by its audience (Morgan, 2009: 3). These mediums are hence capable of presenting different types of knowledge claims about terrorism. Films such as (*Die Hard*) and (*Rules of Engagement*), for example, encourage viewers to inhabit particular identities or subject positions in relation to terrorism, by soliciting empathy or sympathy for particular characters and what they stand for (Erickson, 2007: 201). Such films make allegorical references to contemporary events which further reinforce particular perspectives on what it means to be a ‘terrorist’ (enemy) or not terrorist.

In most of these depictions terrorism is simplified, often representing it as the outcome of flawed and psychological individuals (Riegler, 2010: 38). The historical and political reason for

violence is rarely afforded much attention, and because of this a crudely moralistic interpretation of terrorism is fed to the public, portraying it as a product of ‘evil fanatics’. One such production is the 1998 film (The Siege), where scant attention is afforded to the backdrop of the Muslim Arab attacks on New York City, which dominates most of its storyline. As analysed by Wilkins and Downing, they note that the film contains very little reference to the political economy of oil supplies, long running US, British and France military interventions in the Middle East, of Israeli settlements and continued annexation of Palestine and other potentially relevant factors (Downing & Wilkins, 2002: 428). As elaborated before, the perception of Islam and Arabs in particular within Western narratives has been associated with violence and specifically terrorism, by having such productions, they complicity helps to reproduce crude stereotypes of social and cultural differences within societies.

3.1.1 Let’s Play Terror

Apart from Terrorism filling much of the TV and film industry, it has also featured widely in popular video games. As a result of this younger audiences have been exposed to the discourse of terrorism through graphic and seemingly realistic scenarios that enact possible terrorism situations. What makes this experience different from the TV and film industry is the sense of direct involvement that gaming offers. Games like (Pandora Tomorrow) and (Terrorist Takedown Mogadishu), the gamer is taken into the ‘terrorist world’ that is dependent on the gamer to create peace. Pandora tomorrow; allows a gamer to go into a futuristic world of conflict with Indonesian cyber-terrorists and the character Sam Fisher, a deadly stealth operative wages a one-man war against them (Sisler, 2008: 208). From the game (Terrorists Takedown Mogadishu), the manufactures description says; ‘player is transported back to 1993 Somalia to revisit past confrontations with terrorists, as a member of an elite special operations force Army

Rangers from which you will engage the fanatical followers of terrorist warlords in a furious battle to control the city' (Richard, 2011: 59).

Based on the above descriptions, the consumers are granted an opportunity to engage in a fictitious world of terrorism, from this, particular comprehensions of terrorism and counter-terrorism emphasized leaving the player with a skewed understanding of the subject. Often, the 'hero' or 'saviour' is the 'white westerner' soldier or special agent, who is fighting to protect the 'innocent' and world peace from the (typically non-western) 'terrorist (Sisler, 2008: 210). This categorization solicits hostility and suspicion towards particular others, who are already heavily discriminated and profiled as main culprits of terror in the actual world. To top on it these games have a tendency of being themed in an imaginary Middle Eastern context. This subconsciously reaffirms a widespread understanding of terrorism being something geographical or culturally specific. The frequent use of stereotypical icons associated with the Middle East, such as camels, the sheik or belly dancers, draws long established orientalist tropes that eroticise a diverse region, thus presenting the Middle East as a singular world of danger and excitement (Said, 1978).

Most video games produced in the genre of terrorism have proved to emulate the dominant discourse of terrorism that exceptionally focuses on relaying constant threat, fear and 'Us vs. Them' mindset. It is also necessary to highlight that just as Hollywood and media outlets have become increasingly linked to military and political elites, so too have the video games (Power, 2007: 276). Case in point is the game (*America's Army*), which is officially funded and developed by Western state militaries and promises to provide players 'with the most authentic military experience available' (Sample, 2008: 31). Such investments really show what magnitude

of influence video games have within terrorism discourse. Being promoted by the military and governments leaves the impression of a well-intended agenda that is meant for the general public to consume and absorb them as 'truths'.

3.1.2 Let's Mock and Laugh the "Other"

My analysis of the media and its role in mainstream terrorism discourse has made me realize the strength it has within this field. Despite largely focusing on the TV, Film and Gaming industries, its influence goes beyond these mentioned industries. Other cultural sites in which social construction of terrorism occurs like; novels, comic books, music, plays, websites, blogs, cartoons caricature and many other areas of contemporary culture are also key to scrutinize. Such cultural objects and processes may seem inconsequential but collectively they contribute to a shared understanding of terrorism, the threat it poses and how we should respond to this threat as consumers and viewers (Der Derian, 2009). Incidents such as the Danish cartoon controversy of 2005 that published caricatures of prophet Muhammad, an action seen by many as forbidden under Islamic Law, which further depicted the deity with a bomb turban and other provoking images linking the prophet to terrorism, therefore Islam to terrorism (Modood, Hansen, Bleich, O'Leary & Carens: 2006). The publications lead to discussions about the right to and freedoms of expressions within European societies, the construction of Islam as a social and cultural threat, also leading to violent protests and organization of consumer boycotts of Danish products. Early this year in January, similar depictions of the prophet were published by satirical French Magazine Charlie Hebdo. These images inspired two gunmen to attack the magazine's editorial offices killing 12 people and injuring many others, this lead to a police hunt which ended with the execution of the suspects.

My study so far has made me realize that the discourse of terrorism is formed through different platforms that contribute to its social construction becoming a reality. Factors such as language, politics, power, knowledge and the media make it possible for terrorism to feature in our daily lives. These inter-relational aspects need to be scrutinized effectively so as to understand what terrorism constitutes and how to formulate ways of dealing with it. Important to note is the exclusiveness that the discourse has by paying more attention to some issues while others are overlooked or simply ignored. For one to have a proper understanding of the concept, it is paramount to take an inclusive approach that oversees all angles and what role they play. Aspects like gender are hardly mentioned within terrorism, hence my next analysis will focus on the role it plays in terrorism, this I believe is important to incorporate in my research.

4. Missing Narratives and Understandings in Terrorism Studies

4.1 Gendering Terrorism

While studying terrorism, a gender perspective is rarely included in the discourse. Often, when gender is mentioned within the studies of Political Science and International Relations, it is assumed that is relevant to women who 'have gender' whilst 'genderless' men are 'the norm' (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007). However, it is vital to remember that gender is as much about men and masculinity as it is about women and femininity. Distinguishing this will enable one to explore how terrorism is formed and shaped by gender dynamics. Sjoberg and Gentry argue:

...gender relations are not power relations that just happen between men and women...gender relations happen among members of terrorist organizations, between terrorist organizations and their target audiences, between terrorist organizations and states, and between states (2011: 7).

Sticking to this line of thought, it evokes the relevance of having a gender perspective while interrogating terrorism. This would bring the necessity of delving into the internal

dynamics as well as the external representations of the terrorists' organizations, networks or individuals (Hunt&Riygiel, 2006). As such, instead of conceptualizing gender as a subfield of Terrorism Studies, it should be considered as the backbone of a critical and more complete analysis of terror as a political act. This will aide in demystifying perceptions of the roles played by women and men in violence and how they are represented, thus helping to maintain gender formations and hierarchies. Therefore, since we live in a 'gendered world' the primary step would be to understand what gender means.

Until relatively recently in most social sciences, gender was primarily understood as the socially constructed identities associated with biological 'sex' (Connell, 2009). This being 'Masculinity' in the case of men and 'Femininity' in the case of women, these categories were often accompanied by different stereotypes that classified them. Whereby, men and masculinity were associated with strength, power, action and toughness while women and femininity were associated with weakness, powerlessness, passivity, gentleness, emotionality and softness (Sjoberg, Cooke & Neal, 2011: 18). Linking this to terrorism, the gender categories play out in the sense that men are predominant in combatant roles, whether in non-state armed groups of state institutions countering terrorism, while women are seen to be victims of this violence. In the case that women take up arms, they are often depicted either as deviant or victims to be rescued (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 6). Consequently, it proves the 'rule' that women are inherently peaceful and less prone to violence by their very nature than men.

In recent approaches to gender especially those examining the relations between gender and violence such as terrorism the lenses are shifting towards deeper understandings of gender. Judith Butler sees gender as 'performative' - as something we do in relation to others, rather than

something we are (Butler, 2006). In this sense, gender emerges as part of an ongoing social performance, thus, being something that is open to change and is therefore never fully fixed. Butler understands gender identities are largely produced through discourses and repetitions of acts. Throughout time, some behaviour comes to be repeatedly associated to men or women, and then, they are further related to gender: the “body becomes its gender through a series of acts which are renewed, revised and consolidated through time” (Butler, 1988: 523). In this regard gender roles have been normalized or institutionalized and those who do not fit into these hegemonic roles attract social sanctions, regarded as deviant and lesser beings. Therefore we are ‘gendered’ and expected to observe heteronormative¹⁹ standards of gender that often come with power and resources for those who abide by it.

The understanding of gender so far, draws out important issues that are frequently absent in orthodox terrorism studies. It is important to address the issues so as to emancipate and increase awareness of the role gender plays in terrorism so as to point out effective alternatives that can aide in ending or mitigating the damages of terrorism. Therefore, gender is central to the study of terrorism violence as the latter is normally pictured as masculine; a female figure does not fit within our comprehension of gender roles, which “portray women as naturally nurturing” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 7). Still, it seems that Terrorism Studies still struggles to include gender, and women, in their global analysis on terrorism.

Within global politics, peace studies and conflict transformation, the voice of women in these fields have been increasing over recent years, giving the impression that gender equality is

¹⁹ Term was first defined by Michael Warner in 1991. Refers to norms and values that support the division of society into two distinct genders (male and female), associate ‘natural’ roles with each gender and normalize heterosexual relationships.

being achieved. In this same spirit, I believe that it is time for terrorism studies to adopt a gender-blind agenda. For this vision to be realized a gender perspective is needed for two principle reasons. Firstly, most of the time, “the study of terrorism provides an example of the risks of conflating ‘gender’ with ‘women’” (Hamilton, 2010: 104) leaving aside the militarized masculinities and their gender dimensions. Second, without a gender-sensitive approach, women are “nearly absent from investigations of terrorist participation and wherever visible are marginalized from agency” (Sylvester & Parashar, 2009: 179). These two problematic considerations lead me to affirm that gender lenses are truly necessary to this study.

4.1.1 Relevance of Gender in Terrorism Studies

Currently, and even if Critical Studies on Terrorism give us the tool to explore gender and terrorism, the voices of women are fairly absent from the field (Sylvester & Parashar, 2009: 181). Moreover, the picture made of the female combatants or terrorists is marked by a tendency to refer to the biological sex in the accounts of their violence. As the male gender represents the normativity, it seems that the label “woman” needs to be added to “terrorist” in order to really comprehend that we are talking about a violent woman.

Few researchers actually depict violent women as rational actors” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 14) and usually portray the integration of women in terrorist organizations as outside of their own agency. Toles Patkin, quoting Talbot, shows that most of the time we perceive and conceive the motivations of women to integrate a terrorist organization as bounded by irrationality, extreme feminist ideas, passivity or because they have been forced into it by a man (2004: 82). These categorizations of women have a lot of consequences, the first one being the perpetuation of gender subordination and the reproduction of stereotypes that lead to the creation

of even more violence (Confortini, 2006:333 & 355; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007: 21). Evidently, for these very reasons, there is a need to consider gender and terrorism and, more importantly, a necessity to deeper analyze those field interactions within Peace Studies.

Therefore it is important for one to be “gender-conscious” (Confortini, 2006: 355) as this challenges the dominant narratives of analyzing terrorism. It suggests that we could go beyond the traditional “rational model,” largely publicized by Pape (2003) that perpetuates the former conceptualization of war as objective and masculine. In fact, Sjoberg & Gentry argue that adopting a gender-blind approach to terrorism in general, “privileges characteristics traditionally associated with masculinity,” such as objectivity or rationality (2008: 181). Taking that into consideration, the rational model leaves aside the important category of analysis represented by emotions and social interactions to reduce every action to a calculation. Thus, a gender-sensitive approach to terrorism will thus reveal the multiple levels of power domination, taking into account the state discourses that perpetuate images of violent women and men and finally better apprehend the context in which these individuals evolve.

4.2 Definitional Problem

As seen from the analysis above, the absence of a gender perspective within terrorism limits the proper understanding of the discourse. Another limitation that I mentioned before was the lack of a consensus definition within the study. This word terrorism, like many other important words that are used to describe our social world is surrounded by controversy over their meanings. Concepts such as, ‘democracy’, ‘freedom’, ‘equality’ and even ‘politics’ itself, do not have universally accepted definitions (Gaille, 1955-56: 168). Gaille suggests that the main reasons for this difficulty is not the complexity of that to which they refer, but because different

people equal different understandings, often equally plausible understandings of the criteria by which they are to be identified and assessed (1955-56: 170). These different comprehensions have made it difficult for a successful resolution to the definition problem remains elusive. While numerous attempts have been made, the nature and value of them vary depending on the motivations behind them.

Many a times the definitions produced by political elites tend towards over-generalization, even ambiguity, so as to offer the authorities and courts flexibility when it comes to applying the term to different actors and situations. This as explained previously is moulded by the discourse agents that determine what constitutes terrorism or not. Scholars who have attempted to find an all encompassing definition like (Schmid and Jongman) have been criticised for over-complexity in their definition making it almost unusable for many (Laqueur, 1987). These contradictions make it harder for researchers and scholars to identify or come up with a definite meaning to the concept. Amidst all the definitional problems, the question that comes to mind is what specifically makes escaping this quagmire so difficult? To answer this question it is necessary to look at the challenges of a universal definition.

Terrorism the word itself is regarded as a pejorative word that is linked to barbarism and evil. This association according to me is the genesis of the definitional challenge. However, looking back at the origin of the word as outlined in the first section, it was used as a revolutionary term by the Jacobins against the *Le Gouvernement de la Terreur*. During the Russian revolution in 1880 Nikolai Morozov called for the revolutionaries to take up arms against the Russian Tsarist regime:

Terroristic struggle, which strikes at the weakest spot of the existing system, will obviously be universally accepted in life. The time will come when the present, unsystematic attempts will merge into one wide stream and then no despotism or brutal force will be able to stand up against them (Cited in Lauquer & Alexander 1987: 77).

Words like those of Morozov have been used by many revolutionary groups and organizations that are demanding for political change through an armed struggle in what may be deemed as an unjust political system. Distinguishing the ‘legitimacy’ or ‘illegitimacy’ of this call is always the biggest hurdle as each side understands it according to the position they have. Which can be interpreted as; liberator, oppressor, freedom fighter or any other wording that may suite the circumstance.

Just like the classical use of the term for political change and liberation from an oppressive regime, it is this similar sentiment that has dominated many calls by resistant groups today. However, from political groups to radical/extremist groups, the use of the language of terrorism to describe them has not been shaken off. This always plays in the favour of political actors as very few are willing to apply this label to their own actions. The apartheid regime was never tagged as engaging in acts of terror upon black South Africans who suffered oppression, massacres and discrimination in their own land. The African National Council (ANC) was quickly dubbed a terrorist organization for revolting against the oppression through an armed struggle. The irony is that Nelson Mandela would be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize years later for liberating South Africa from white supremacy, the ANC leader who was once labelled a “terrorist” is now a Peace Icon. This ambivalent nature of terrorism makes it difficult for a universally accepted definition to be reached, especially due to the range of political, historical and philosophical factors surrounding the term.

4.2.1 Attempting a Definition

Despite the myriad of definitional problems associated to terrorism, it is still vital to pursue a definition. This is fundamental when trying to come up with initiatives that seek to avert the damages caused by terrorism. For many scholars, the ability to understand, explain and perhaps even predict possible acts of terrorism is impeded by the lack of a single, accepted conception of the term (Toros, 2008: 298). Based on this logic many have argued that; if we cannot agree on the basic character of what we are studying our ability to formulate the models, theories or typologies of terrorism which could form the building blocks of a rigorous scholarly discipline is severely diminished (English, 2009). This line of thought questions the effectiveness of formulated counter-terrorism policies, which are built on a controversial concept thus questioning the authority or impact such policies, may have.

Before giving up on the quest for a definition, it is important to note that perspectives on terrorism should not be approached as universal or objective truths (Chomsky, 1991: 33), rather it needs to be thought of as particular knowledge claims or the social products of specific political contexts, power struggles and competing interests (Chomsky&Vltchek, 2013: 53). In other words, a continuous process of reviewing our understanding of terrorism has the potential of preventing manipulative understandings of the subject such as propaganda condemning some acts while others obscure their own acts of violence. From this viewpoint, I believe that achieving a consensus meaning of the term is not an important end to itself, perhaps solely for linguistics. However, it is important to differentiate various conditions of violence and to distinguish between diverse modes of conflict, whatever we name them, if we want to obtain a better understanding of their origins, the factors affecting them and how to cope with them (Merari, 1993: 214).

For the sake of my investigation, I shall not try to develop a definition of terrorism; however I shall draw from different existing definitions and my own understanding of the concept so far to come up with a definition that is suitable for my research. By employing this approach, I hope to avoid being one sided based on my own biases but rather seek to come up with an all-encompassing description of terrorism. Hence based of definitions by scholars like; Laqueur (1987), Schmid and Jongman (1998), Hoffman (2006), Jackson, Breen Smyth, Jarvis & Gunning (2011) and Sjoberg & Gentry (2008) amongst others, *terrorism* can be understood as:

A method or strategy that employs a particular type of premeditated violence which is inspired by political, ideological or religious motivations, executed by an individual, group (both state & non-state sponsored), state actors (police, army..e.t.c), government (local & foreign) that targets a selected or random population who serve as message generators. The act is meant to have far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target, by evoking fear, intimidation and tension upon the targets.

From my attempted definition, I have identified certain characteristics that expound on the term:

- (1) It can be perpetrated by men, women, children, irregular groups, well-organized groups or states;
- (2) It is more or less organized and structured;
- (3) It aims at achieving intimidation and creates fear, sometimes using propaganda;
- (4) It principally targets civilians, but not solely; however, the target is not always the victims of a terrorist act and;
- (5) Its targets are chosen for symbolic reasons, which give a particular dimension to emotions.

In this sense, terrorism can be seen as an intended act of violence that can be either indiscriminate or discriminate. It is a strategy that makes it clear “that the target is vulnerable, that the perpetrators exist, that the perpetrators have the capacity to strike again” (Tilly, 2005: 22).

With this definition and characterization, I believe that terrorism as a concept can be viewed through different lenses that shy away from the dominant discriminative discourse. Through such lenses, violence that is never categorized as terrorism can begin to be acknowledge as terrorism making the concept equally applied upon deeds that fall under this description. By considering this approach, incidences of violence committed by entities such as the government and other groups, which are rarely classified as terrorism can be put into scrutiny. In the end, terrorism should be viewed from the acts committed and not from the identities of actors committing the deeds as this would make the concept applicable to all entities.

4.3 Many Faces of Terrorism

Remembering how discriminative the discourse of terrorism has been by solely focusing on some acts, groups, faiths, ideologies and identities as the ones perpetuating terrorism, it is necessary to rethink such biases, it is vital for all acts that fit the criteria of terrorism to be recognized for what they are. As denoted earlier, Islamism is always the first victim to be tagged or associated with terrorism, with many authorities and security agents suspecting or labelling attacks to be committed by ‘Islamic extremists’. I do not deny that there are extremist groups that have worn the coat of Islam and used it to perpetuate violence in the name of the religion. However, by supposing that most

extremist attacks are executed by one identity it ignores actions committed by other entities.

To expound on these discrepancies, I will look at different entities that commit terrorist acts, but are hardly featured on the mainstream discourse of terrorism. In the United States, September 11 marked as the ‘new age’ of terrorism, and this influenced the whole world as well. Nevertheless, going back to its history, terrorism had been present within the American society. The Klu Klux Klan for example, has been wreaking havoc since 1865 with the end of the United States Civil War. Founded by Confederate veterans, the group sought to restore white supremacy by assaulting freed slaves and those that aided them. They assassinated prominent African Americans, including politicians, religious figures, and community leaders (Fitzgerald, 2013: 21). Up to today the Klu Klux Klan still exists, focusing its resentments towards illegal immigrants, homosexuals, urban criminals, and African Americans.

The Klan laid forth the groundwork for nearly every white supremacist group that exists today in the USA, and as such should be held accountable for their actions as well (Fitzgerald, 2013: 23). This includes the murder and assault of thousands of individuals throughout its history, and frequent property crimes against minority households. As we see today, the debate around abolishing the confederate flag²⁰ in the United States has exposed the magnitude of support towards maintaining the flag, which has a racist, white supremacist connotation to it and is one of the banners of the Klu Klux Klan.

²⁰ The Confederate flag is one of the most controversial, inflammatory icons of American culture, and even has a significant presence abroad.

Individual acts of violence have also been left out of the terrorism tag over the years. Case in point, In February 2010, a man named Joseph Stack deliberately flew his small airplane into the side of a building that housed a regional IRS office in Austin, Texas, just as 200 agency employees were starting their workday, along with himself, Stack killed an IRS manager and injured 13 others (Greenwald, 2015: 26). Despite the act having all the elements of iconic terrorism, a model for how its most commonly understood: replicating the 9/11 attacks, Stack was white and non-Muslim, as a result the term terrorism was not applied. On the contrary, officials ruled out any connection to terrorist groups or causes and federal officials emphasized the same message, describing the case as a criminal inquiry (Brick, 2010). Mr. Stack was described as generally easygoing, a talented amateur musician with marital troubles and a maddening grudge against the tax authorities.

Fast forward to October 2014 across the US border in Canada, a shooting occurred in Ottawa at the Canadian Parliament building committed by a single individual, Michael Zehaf-Bibeau (Greenwald, 2015: 27). As soon as it was known that the shooter was a convert to Islam, the incident was instantly and universally declared to be “terrorism.” Prime Minister Stephen Harper declared it a terror attack and even demanded new “counter-terrorism” policies (Watters, 2015). To bolster the label, the government claimed Zehaf-Bibeau was on his way to Syria to fight with “jihadists”. In the days that followed, investigations would unfold and it became clear that Zehaf-Bibeau suffered from serious mental illness and “seemed to have become mentally unstable.” He had a history of arrests for petty offenses and had received psychiatric treatment (Freeze, 2014). His close acquaintances recall him expressing no real political

views but instead claiming he was possessed by the devil. The contradictions in story of Zehaf-Bibeau led to the Canadian police to admit that they had made a mistake by saying he was planning to travel to Syria and join (Islamic State of Iraq al-Sham) ISIS, dismissing it as a ‘mistake’.

Going back to the US, on June 17th this year a mass shooting took place at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in downtown Charleston, South Carolina, United States during a prayer service; nine people were killed by a gunman (Bever & Costa: 2015). The Charleston attack from the start had the indication of what is commonly understood to be “terrorism.” Specifically, the suspected shooter was clearly a vehement racist who told witnesses at the church that he was acting out of racial hatred and a desire to force African-Americans “to go.” However, news reports indicated there was “no sign of terrorism” what this meant indirectly was that the shooter is non-Muslim and non-Arab, simply making it a “hate crime”.

Out of these scenarios, it becomes clearer that it is very hard to escape the conclusion that the term “terrorism,” at least as it’s predominantly used in the post-9/11 West, is about the identity of those committing the violence and the identity of the targets. It obviously has nothing to do with some neutral, objective assessment of the acts being labelled, making it a term that can be used to justify everything and yet it means nothing.

4.4 State-Terrorism

It is a very serious analytic error to say that terrorism is the weapon of the weak, like other means of violence; it's primarily a weapon of the strong, overwhelmingly, in fact. It is held to be a weapon of the weak because the strong also control the doctrinal system and their terror does not count as terror

-Chomsky (2001).

The use and non-use of the term terrorism is not only seen when trying to distinguish violent attacks done by different identities, however, it also applies when trying to distinguish between state and non-state terrorism. My investigation so far has largely focused on non-state terrorism and the way its discourse and understanding is portrayed within societies. For this section I would like to dedicate time to interrogate the concept of state terrorism. In terms of human and material destruction, state terrorism has typically been a far more serious problem than the commonly known non-state terrorism (Jackson et al..., 2011: 175). This being the situation, state terrorism is rarely classified under terrorism and has been studied under different kinds of state violence such as repression, human rights abuses, genocide, and state crime (Silke, 2004: 206). These acts, which arguably contain terroristic aspects, have for long been studied in fields such as law, history, political science, criminology amongst others. Research conducted to analyze these acts under the auspices of concepts and theories of terrorism are still lacking.

Despite the absence of research in the study of state terrorism, historical evidence shows its application by states up to today. Recalling the French Revolution, when the term 'terror' was first coined to describe counter-revolutionary of the new regime against

its opponents (Throup, 2010: 99). The use of state terror has been frequent and extensive since then, making it a relevant area of study within terrorism studies. Referring back to the notion of “colonial terrorism” that I had mentioned earlier, this venture could not have been realized without the application of state terrorism. In North and South America, Africa, Asia, Australia and beyond, imperial powers used overwhelming forms of violence to subdue and control invaded populations, clear land for settlers and incorporate the populations into extractive economies as slaves and labourers (Baker, 2002: 61). These heinous atrocities were committed so as to send a message to the local population not to oppose the rule and ways of the invaders. Atrocities such as hand amputations of African workers by King Leopold’s officials in the Congo were used as a method of maintaining productivity and preventing resistance in the rubber plantations (Baker, 2002). British Colonial Officials bombed rebellious villages with poisonous gas in what is present day Iraq, while in the Americas, European settlers used violence to conquer native peoples, including the deliberate spread of diseases (Campbell, 1998).

4.4.1 Twentieth Century Waves of State Terrorism

Another wave of state terrorism was experienced in the early part of the 20th century when the rise of fascism in Japan, Germany, Spain and Italy led to a number of notorious ‘terror states’ (O’Kane, 1996). These regimes used coercive power to terrorize their own people and other populations with expansionary wars in Asia, Africa and Europe. These regimes used torture, extra-judicial killing, mass murder, mass rape, concentration camps and many other forms of violence to terrify populations into submission. At the same time the use of terrorism as a method of state rule and consolidation was adopted by many post-colonial states. Among numerous examples,

depots in Uganda, Central African Republic, Haiti, Indonesia, Turkey, Chile, South Africa as well as Rhodesia's apartheid regimes, all employed state terror in an effort to destroy opposition and maintain power (Barker, 2002: 72). In this quest for power and dominance, many of these regimes were partly influenced or supported by the USA or the Soviet Union as part of their broader rivalry in the still ongoing cold war. This ideological war shaped the policies and strategies of the regimes, at times being unfavourable towards the population that is supposed to be protected by the state.

The cold war era could be assumed to be a period of 'no violence' as the major world power were not engaging in active combat directly but through proxy wars in Vietnam, Korea, Afghanistan and beyond. As highlighted in previous sections, the remnants of World War II's active battles were fought on foreign soil under the disguise of 'democracy' and 'liberation movements'. These engagements were not free of terroristic tendencies, which were employed upon opposing groups or the population. During the height of the cold war, western states engaged directly in, and sponsored, many acts of terrorism in pro-insurgency and counter-insurgency campaigns in Latin America, Asia and Africa (Chomsky, 1979). Many of these atrocities were seen as government responses to insurgencies and not Western state sponsored terrorism.

In the contemporary times, state terrorism has been hard to identify despite it being still used as a strategy. In many ways, state terrorism has been manifested through the widespread use of the so-called 'extraordinary renditions', torture, targeted killings, death squads, support of warlords and militias and human rights abuses in the 'global war

on terrorism' (Blakeley, 2009). The post-9/11 discourse of terrorism have legitimized and shielded acts of state terrorism, which are bundled up as 'counter-terrorism' strategies.

Many marginalized and vulnerable groups have been targeted by such policies, which discriminate, profile and target them as the first suspects of terrorism activities. By acknowledging state terrorism one can begin to find ways of protecting or emancipating these targeted groups. Identifying these acts can have the effect of delegitimizing any and all forms of violence that seek to instrumentalize human suffering for the purpose of sending a message to an audience (Wolfendale, 2007: 85). Today many states are oppressing and causing human suffering in the name of 'counter-terrorism' demonstrating that states can be terrorists too.

A controversial case of state terrorism has been that of the Israeli state and its occupation of Palestine and conflict with surrounding Arab states. Even before the 9/11 terrorism discourse, the quest for a nation-state by the Israeli government since 1948 to date has been accompanied by claims of it using terrorism to realize its cause. Since it's founding in 1948, the state has constantly used attacks on civilians, collective punishments, torture, targeted killings, kidnappings, and use of human shields during combat, attacks on infrastructure, private militia and other forms of suppressive violence (Amnesty International, 2002). While these tactics have caused vast suffering for Palestinians who live in deplorable conditions within their own territory the actions of Israel have never been acknowledged as state terrorism internationally. In fact, these actions are defended by Israel and its supporters as necessary and proportional to

‘Palestinian terrorism’ (Pappe, 2009), therefore being acts of ‘counter-terrorism’ and not state terrorism.

By examining state terrorism, it has become apparent that it forms an integral part of Terrorism as a discourse and should not be swallowed up into other forms of violence as proposed by some scholars. I say this because, by naming acts of state terrorism, I believe that this could have a powerful normative effect of constraining state excessive power and promote genuine human security. While some may contest the application of the concept as, it cannot change any logical or deontological facts of the matter (Primoratz, 2004: 26). I would echo Robert Goodin’s remarks that say; ‘If what states do is otherwise indistinguishable from what is done by non-state actors that we would determine terroristic, then the acts of the state doing the same thing would be morally wrong for just the same reasons’ (Goodin, 2006: 56). This reaffirms the need to point out state terrorism, as not doing so would be an unfair analysis of the discourse of terrorism.

4.4.1.1 Inheriting a System of Terror: The Case of Kenya

Reflecting on my prior assertions on the importance of underlining state terrorism, I believe that both state and non-state terrorism co-exist together within terrorism, meaning that one may lead to the other or vice versa. Drawing from many scenarios of both state and non-state terrorism, in most cases one is always the result of the other, despite this being a debatable claim. For the next section of my research, I seek to outlay the connections between the two forms of terrorism. To accomplish this I will focus on Kenya and its battle against Terrorism, which has been on the spot light for the past few years. Just like many other African countries, post-9/11 ‘terrorism syndrome’ has

infected the Kenyan society and politics, making it one of the gravest problems facing the country and has largely shaped its security and foreign policies. However, the focus on counter-terrorism that has been on the forefront since the globalization of US ‘war on terror’ is only a tip of the whole terrorism iceberg in Kenya.

Flashbacking to post-independent Kenya of 1963, the country emerged from a period of ‘colonial terror’ by fighting the British colonialist to the point of attaining self governance. With this achievement, Kenya was now ‘in charge’ of her own affairs and had mandate over its sovereign territory. No sooner had the triumphs and jubilations of gaining independence faded away than; the infant state was put to its first territorial integrity test. From the North Eastern frontiers of the country, voices of dissidence were being heard from the inhabitants of this region. Mainly populated by people of Somali ethnicity, the residents did not feel comfortable being regarded as part of the Kenyan nation state. Instead, they wanted to be recognized as part of neighbouring Somalia where they felt more connected ethnically and culturally. This discontent led to the formation of a secessionist movement that called for a departure of the region from Kenya.

4.4.1.2 Colonial Demarcations Steered Dissident Movements

This turn of events did not appear out of nowhere, however it was due to past decision made by the colonial oppressors who randomly demarcated the East Africa regions. This inherited problem was now causing a revolt against the government of the day. Even before independence the region had always felt apart from the colonial system of government. The British authorities from the start of their administration of the East African protectorate recognized Somalis as a distinct group unlike other ethnicities in the

region (Ringquist, 2011: 102). The British classified them as a homogenous people, Muslim by religion and with a warrior culture of proven ability and a history of martial prowess (Ringquist, 2011). The colonial government tried to administer the Somali but faced many hurdles, their opposition to other forms of governance, religion and culture was one of the biggest challenges. They pledged loyalty to their clan system and abided to it, rejecting the colonizers rule, also being nomadic, their migratory movements were hard to monitor, posing another challenge for the invaders.

Economic exploitation being the main interest of the colonizers, they needed to find a way to oversee this region without losing their interest. Thus, the British attempts to administer the Northern Front District (NFD) began in 1902 with the District Ordinance of 1902 which established frontier posts ostensibly to stop increasing raids from the Abyssinian²¹ soldiers from the north and westward expansion of Somali pastoralists (Mburu, 1999). The British intended the NFD to serve as a buffer between Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland, as well as protect their economic aspirations in the Central Kenya region “white highlands” and the East African Railway.

Therefore, the main concern was to ensure that there was no intrusion into other parts of the Kenyan territory that could jeopardize the colonial project. To establish some sort of governance in the region, the British administered the district through the military from 1921-1925, to facilitate ending of clan warfare and enforcing tax collection (Lewis, 2002). During this period, there was no attempt to build a Kenyan identity or conduct major economic ventures in the NFD. Both the British and Somali accepted that the

²¹ These were soldiers from the Ethiopian empire in the North that were attacking the British invaders in the region

region was different from the rest of Kenya with each having multileveled perceptions. The Somali attitude was based on religion, tradition, ethnic background, and lifestyle, whereas the British regarded the Somali as a security problem that required continual attempts of integration into the colony (Saadia, 1966: 118). These perceptions influenced how Somalis were viewed by the colonial government and other regions of Kenya, through such attitudes the ‘othering’ of the Somali people was beginning to take place.

The effects of being excluded from procedures that other parts of the colony experienced can be seen through the issuing of national identity cards (*kipande*). These cards were mandatory for the colonized population, as it showed ones ethnicity, region and name. For the NFD, it was almost impossible to hand out these cards due to much resistance and clan wrangles that made it a difficult task. Efforts made were met with passive resistance such as massive movements of some clans to Italian Somaliland, while others accepted. In one attempt to register two different clans, the *Gurre* resisted attempts to fingerprint the clan by crossing the border, while their fellow Somalis, the *Booran* accepted the measure (Turton, 1974: 123). With different attitudes and acceptance of the colonial system and other integration exercises, it became difficult for any form of general policy to be applied towards the Somalis in the NFD; this complexity would haunt the Somali people until post-independent Kenya.

4.4.1.3 Post-Independence Borders Created Division

In 1962 one year before independence, the British canvassed the NFD in an informal referendum. In this plebiscite the government wanted to determine the wishes of the Somalis and their allies in the NFD, whether they preferred being in Kenya or not.

The outcome established that 87% of the inhabitants wished for the union of the region with the Somali republic (Mburu, 2005: 171). Despite the majority being in favour of secession, the British put Somali interests second to Kenya's independence and post-independence relations.

The British government saw this as a complex issue that would be difficult to resolve before independence, thus, it preferred to seek its future interest first. In one of the government minutes, Colonial secretary Duncan Sandys cited that; "The NFD's inclusion in Kenya was intended as an interim measure, however the Kenyan government should realize that retaining the region against the will of the Somali inhabitants would incur heavy policing and administrative costs, and prove amenable to Somali secession"(Mburu, 2005: 173). From his comments, it was clear that what was going to unfold was a stream of resistance and dissent towards the independence government. The Somalis felt betrayed by the colonial government and pledging no allegiance to the Kenyan government was the only way, this was seen with the boycott of elections in 1963 by the Kenyan-Somali community (Ringquist, 2011: 106). This led to the Kenyan government to offer development incentives to the community as a show of support and solidarity, nonetheless this was not enough and armed resistance commenced in May 1963.

4.4.1.4 "A Liberation War or A Shifta²² War"

The start of hostilities turned into full-scale warfare with it being termed as a *shifta* war by the Kenyan government, the revolutionary Somalis were dubbed bandits

²² Term used in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia for rebel, outlaw, or bandit.

and therefore outlaws who should be stopped. The attacks were aimed at police stations and polling stations, in one case over 1000 Somalis raided a polling station in Isiolo necessitating for a call for resistance that brought a platoon of the King's African Rifles to patrol the town (Times, 1963). These fighters comprised a consolidation of Somalis and Kenyan-Somalis who united under one banner to fight against the Kenyan government in the Pan-Somali spirit that sought for the unification of all Somali inhabited areas in the region. The Somali people of the NFD united behind a group called the Northern Province Progressive People's Party (NPPPP) (Mburu, 2005). The NPPPP received military and financial assistance from the Somali government, who were in turned, trained and funded by the Soviet Union. Winning the war thus became paramount for Kenya as a capitalist state and a former British Colony.

In response to the attacks and raids, the Kenyan government imposed a state of emergency in December 1963 (Howell, 1968: 38), and instituted a state of dawn to dusk curfew, which restricted entry into the NFD by non-residents. In addition, the police were armed and empowered to shoot *shifita* on sight, furthermore the military was authorized to confiscate cattle found within five miles of the Kenya-Somali border (Turton, 1974: 136). Astonishingly, the government took measures that were reminiscent of the British Colonial counter-insurgency tactics against the Mau Mau²³, by making the NFD a controlled zone the government mounted concentration camps, performed kidnappings, assassinations, torture and other forms of violence to crush the Somali insurgency. These

²³ Name given to Kenya Land and Freedom Army (KLFA) soldiers (Freedom Fighters) by the British.

measures created more support for the *shifita* insurgency and less loyalty to the government. It's sad to say that the previously oppressed had now become the oppressor.

The *shifita* war was the genesis of state terrorism in Kenya as the government used all its resources and powers to fight the nationalistic ambitions of the Somali people. In this quest for territorial integrity, the government excluded, marginalized and discriminated the Somalis making them the distant 'other'. By branding them *shifitas*, the construction of a new Somali identity was taking shape; one tattered with negativity and exclusion reinforcing the Somali as an outsider. As founding President Jomo Kenyatta once stated;

“To the people that live in the Northeast region, I have this to say, we know many of you are herdsmen by day and *shifita* by night. Others conceal them and refuse to give information about their movement. Kenya will not allow any part of its territory to be dismembered and will defend her territorial integrity by any means”
(Cited in Mburu, 2005: 135)

Indeed the words of President Kenyatta came to effect as the Somali were branded *shifita* leading to their stigmatization within Kenyan societies. With the end of the war, the mentality of Somalis as outsiders stuck within communities, Kenyans of Somali origin never felt patriotic or enthusiastic about being part of Kenya. The lack of feeling Kenyan was not only created by the loss of the war but also the government and citizen attitude towards them was not that encouraging. Continued profiling, harassment and marginalization continued, streaming into successive governments. Massacres and killings did not stop as well. In February of 1984 the Wagalla massacre took place, in a region primarily inhabited by ethnic Somalis. Kenyan troops had descended on the area to reportedly help diffuse clan-related conflict. However, according to eye-witness

testimony, about 5,000 Somali men were then taken to an airstrip and prevented from accessing water and food for five days before being executed by Kenyan soldiers (Maliti, 2003). This among many other atrocities haunted the people of North Eastern region and Somalis to be precise.

4.4.1.5 Yesterday's History still a Part of Today's Reality

As Kenya celebrated 50 years of independence on the 12th of December 2013, President Uhuru Kenyatta emphasised that; the Jubilee Government believes in one Kenya; a Kenya where every citizen, whoever they are and wherever they live will have the opportunity to succeed and prosper, free of discrimination (Kenyatta, 2013). These visionary words, envisage an idealistic Kenyan society that would be inclusive and favoured by many. However, looking at Kenyatta's rule now almost two years since he uttered these words a non-discriminative and all inclusive Kenya is far from being realized.

Considering the plight of the Somali people, Uhuru has been a chip of the old block in the manner which his government has treated them. Coincidentally, just like his father's first months in power was put to test by the *shifita* war, Uhuru faced a similar test this time coming in the form of non-state terrorism from the infamous militant group Al-Shabab²⁴. Five months into his presidency, the nation faced a heinous attack from the group who stormed into an upscale city mall in the capital Nairobi. This attack drew national and international attention because of its severity and magnitude. On the

²⁴ Somali based militant extremist group

government's side this meant a call for action, thus, the need to respond to the attack.

Being one of the biggest attacks in the country's history, the nation was left in fear.

Chapter 2: Extremism & Radicalization: Interrogating Vulnerabilities and Causing Factors

“Extremism in the defence of liberty is no vice; Moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue”

-Marcus Tullius Ciero

In many ways what Kenya is facing today is a combination of historical and present day factors that have found a face through the Militant group Al Shabab, which has been linked to Somalis who are causing havoc and solely seek revenge towards the state for invading their country. As this may be the main narrative sold to the masses by the government’s security agencies and media. It may not be as black and white as it appears, not refuting that there are indeed extremists of Somali origin that have dedicated their lives towards violent acts. It is not as crystal clear as perceived and placing an entire community into one bandwagon is rather simplistic and fails to interpret the gravity of the matter and does not go into the core underlying issues. To clear up the blurred picture one needs to dive into the deep hole of violent extremism in the country and hopefully find the roots that can be cut down or perhaps matured to blossom into rosier ideologies. To do this, a holistic approach needs to be taken; hereby interrogating the intimately interconnected factors that lead to violent extremism and its ills.

The murky roots of extremism do not materialize from nowhere; rather they are implanted by various influences that eventually lead to this route. Within the Kenyan experience, many factors have been recognized as main contributors towards this being an alternative road towards a ‘better’ life. As grim as it may sound, the thought of extremism as a substitute path in pursuit of a worthy life is proving to be more attractive or welcoming for a number of

individuals. The gravest concern should be why do people shun away from the expected societal direction that may lead to one leading a 'decent' life? With this in question, I believe that it is paramount to dig into extremism and what it entails, with the aim of bridging the gaps that may be present and possibly build new ones where there are none. In this process, it is important to also consider the end result of extremism, which is always hostilities, casualties, grief and sorrow. For this to be altered, we must consider the mannerisms of responding or countering violent extremism that is rapidly creeping into the society.

Since extremist led violent attacks are not novel in the country, there have been different approaches taken towards the vice. The tendency of reacting towards the violent acts has predominantly been by use of military or police force. As Max Webber once stated; the state is the source of legitimacy for any use of violence (Warner, 1991: 9). Relying on this statement, the right to use violence by the state takes precedence whenever the need to use it is available. As 'right' or politically correct Max Webber sounds, the demise of violent extremism never seems to cease with the response of use of force. On the other hand the augmentation of the latter seems to be the case.

Often assumed, is that the notion behind demonstration of military might through use of force or harsh law enforcement by security agents will act as deterrence towards the likely instigators of such acts of violence. However, as history proves in many scenarios the brutal response upon violent extremists seems to act as a catalyst to their cause, with some finding reason and justification to continue perpetrating violence. I think that when dealing with violent extremism in Kenya one cannot employ the approach of slaying the 'serpent's head' - meaning cutting off the head and the entire serpent is destroyed. This is because there are many loyal

followers under command from different local and international networks ready to fulfil their quest without reward. For this reason a more diplomatic and cautious approach is needed so as to weed out the numerous 'lone wolves' that may be operating out there.

1. From Political Islam to Extremist Islam

To be able to understand violent extremism in Kenya, a range of factors need to be evaluated and intrinsically scrutinized. In principle, the first stride should be the analysis of different vulnerabilities that result to violent extremisms or behaviour. From the genesis, extremism is linked to different ideologies that tag along with it. It is hardly possible for one to be affiliated to extremism without a set of dogmas that commits one to this type of life. With the case of extremism in Kenya the ideology associated to this is Islam and its followers who are mainly Kenyan-Somalis. As I acknowledged earlier that extremism does not represent Islam and Muslims, an essential question is: where does the extremist interpretation of Islam originate?

Referring to the previous discussion of Islam and extremism, the Iranian revolution marked as a significant turning point within political Islam. In 1979, when the Shah of Iran was overthrown and the Islamic republic of Iran was established, certain political, diplomatic and ideological altercations were facilitated by the revolution leaders. These changes created a rift between the western powers especially United States that supported the Shah. In response, the Western powers sought to contain the Iranian influence which was sending shockwaves and inspiring Islamic theocracy across the Muslim world (Mamdani, 2004). To add salt to the injury the Iranian revolution was based on Shia ideology which bothered the Sunni Muslims.

1.2 Battle for Supremacy Influenced Interpretations of Different Schools of Islam

Consequently, western powers were in search of a new partner to court in the Middle East, in order to retract Iran's influence in the region. Saudi Arabia was wooed and promised to be empowered and projected as the custodian of the Islamic faith globally. In spite of this, the marriage was to come with some repercussions in the advancement of political Islam. Since Islam has different schools and thinkers within itself such as: Hanafi, Maliki, Hanbali and Shafi'i and so on (Mamdani, 2004:23). The recognition of Saudi Arabia which is predominantly Sunni, with a majority of whom subscribe to the Hanbali School of Islamic thought, the result of the strategy to use Saudi Arabia as a counterweight to Iran was to bring Sunni and Shia Islam into even more intense conflict, resulting in a hardening of attitudes on both sides (Mamdani, 2004:25). This 'competition' between Sunni Islam, represented by Saudi Arabia, and Shia Islam, signified by Iran, did not remain in the Middle East, but extended beyond this region to Africa, including the Horn of Africa. This led to extreme positions and initiatives on both sides to spread their influence.

The tussle over Islamic correctness and supremacy created a need to amass followers that resonate with the ideologies being spread. To propel these ideologies, scholarship of Muslim leaders became relevant as they were the stewards of the religion. At least in the East African region and Kenya to be precise it became common for young Muslims to voyage out to Saudi Arabia and other Middle East countries to gain mentorship on advanced Islamic Studies. The aim was to return to the country and take up the mantle of conveying the teachings of Islam to upcoming generations (Smith, 2010). Concurrently, some Muslim scholars immigrated to Kenya and East Africa and introduced new forms of Islam that were contrary to the traditional Shafi'i practices which was the dominant school of thought in the region. As this unfolded the entry of

extremism cropped in due to the influence of another school of thought, with Hanbali the closest associated with Wahhabi Islam stepping foot in the region.

By having different contact and influence from different parts of the world, Islam in Kenya is multifaceted thus involving different schools and interpretation. Being of a multidimensional nature, it has gained followers from a wide spectrum of the Kenyan society. Since the country is multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural, the presence of Islam has been welcomed with the Muslim Community roughly taking up 10 per cent of the population (Mohamed, 2012). Nonetheless, it is evident that a large chunk of the Muslim Community is of Somali origin, amidst this figure a large magnitude comprises of Borana and coastal communities while the remainder constitutes Muslim minorities living in Christian dominated regions.

Although Muslims are situated all around the country, it is important to note that the majority reside in North-eastern Kenya along the Kenya-Somali border and in the Coastal Region. The latter has been regarded as the ‘gateway’ between the Islamic faith in Kenya and the entire East and Central African region because of the regions rich Islamic heritage that spans centuries (Smith, 2010). This historical connection has made the region a vital player in the spread and scholarship of the religion. Numerous Muslim scholars have hailed from this region and have participated actively in reaching out to the entire country and other parts of the East African hinterland. It is also significant to note that many of their teachings have been of the Shafi’i school of Sunni Islam, but not forgetting as mentioned previously that the other scholars that infiltrated the region with a different interpretation of the religion are giving teachings simultaneously.

2. Western Targets Local Initiators

This myriad of interactions within Islam in Kenya and the global context gave rise to a kind of revivalism in the Muslim world. Especially for Sunnis they began testing the waters of the different practices of Islam before settling for which practice to quench their spiritual faith. The revivalism was characterized by adoption of extremist forms of Islam, where violence was one form of adaptation. In spite of this, things in Kenya seemed to be relatively ordinary with many sticking to the classical practices of the religion. Although being distant from the changing trend in the practice of Islam that took on violent forms of resurgence, the growing discontent from being locked out of participating in the mainstream political processes led some to take up violent extremism as a platform of achieving political and religious aims.

2.1 Kenya's "9/11" 1997 Bombings

To portray how violent extremism has become a common ideology and tactic in Kenya, it is significant to trace back some of its roots by digging into specific historical events. The 7th of August 1998 is a date that many Kenyans or at least the world will always have in mind. The date is marked as the first manifestation of extremist attacks spearheaded by a militant group. As this may raise some questions depending on the perspective or discursive angle an individual interprets extremist acts. It is a major point of reference while analyzing the beginning of Kenya's 'war on terrorism' discourse and to some extent violent extremism. On this day the country experienced suicide attacks that targeted the US embassy; the attackers detonated a truck bomb in the capital Nairobi. Reactions after the assault were that of surprise and dismay as many concluded that the country was just an innocent victim of US targeted interest.

As this may appear as the case, an alternative viewpoint may steer one into understanding the attack from a different scale. The involvement of Kenyan nationals in the carnage implies

that there are certain elements that had motivated the aggressors towards killing and harming themselves and fellow citizens. The US intelligence on November 6th 1998 brought forth the indictment of Osama Bin Laden as the main culprit that orchestrated the attack (USIS, 2007). It is notable that, included on the indictment were Kenyan citizens that were implicated in aiding and facilitating the bombings together with Bin Laden. The individuals were; Fazul Abdaullah Mohammed identified as the East African Al Qaeda leader. Accompanying him was Faid Mohammed Ally Msalaam, accused of being involved in the Tanzanian bombing that occurred simultaneously. He, along with Sheikh Ahmed Salim Swedan another Kenyan were tagged responsible for purchasing the trucks used to initiate the bombings in both countries (Botha, 2013: 4). Establishing the Kenyan connection in the 1998 US embassy bombings provides a new point of analysis with regards to violent extremism and its foundations. It presents an opportunity of reimagining the fundamental causes of these acts and gives room to rethinking the matter. Not only was Kenya a victim of US targeted attacks on its own soil but it was also a perpetrator of the violence through Kenyan foot soldiers that were willing to shed the blood of their own citizens.

2.2 Mombasa: 2002 Bombings

Since the 1998 bombings, violent extremist acts motivated by miscellaneous agendas had diminished for some period. This, however, was to change, on 28 November 2002 attacks of similar nature occurred, this time far away from the capital in the coastal town of Mombasa. The target this time was the Israeli owned Paradise Hotel, popular for foreign tourists' largely Israeli nationals. Much similarity can be pin pointed in the execution of the attack, as one can easily see the principle aim was to harm Israelis who are foreigners and openly known allies of the US.

The resemblance to the prior attacks is also striking, just as the 1998 bombings the front men were suicide bombers armed with assault rifles and pistols. Coincidentally or intentionally the use of vehicles loaded with explosive devices were also used by being driven into the hotel wall and exploding instantly. To top it all up, the presence of Kenyan nationals in the planning and carrying out the attack displays how violent extremism is largely present in the country. With the exception of only one Sudanese national Abu Talha al-Sudani, the other two Fumo Mohammed Fuma and Haruni Bamusa were Kenyans (Lacey & Weeiser, 2002). These bombings illustrate how extremist ideas had infiltrated into the country long before many imagined. It also depicts how the alien concepts of martyrdom and suicide operations had become embedded within the Kenyan society. In a relatively short span of four years Kenyan nationals were now willing to act as suicide bombers; in addition it became evident that local nationals played a key role in the planning phases of the attacks.

3. Camouflaging into Locals to Evade Scrutiny

Embedding extremist ideas into a society is not an easy thing to do especially in a multicultural setting that is dominantly Christian. In the case of Kenya, these aspects do not seem to be barriers that hinder the recruitment of persons into extremist groups. As seen before, the role played by Kenyan citizens in mapping and launching of attacks has enable terror networks and militia groups to accomplish their deeds triumphantly. This being the sad reality, it is necessary to uncover the sheets that enable these groups to lie in their beds of terror with comfort while their lieutenants wet the streets with blood and anguish.

Having influenced some locals into lying in bed with them, examining the susceptibilities that drag them into bed is needed. The planners of these attacks use the available local and

regional vulnerabilities to their own advantage. Take the Nairobi attack, before it transpired a long string on networks had been already put in place by affiliated groups in the region and were aided by these vulnerabilities. To establish a link, one needs to look at the prior activities of these groups, which gradually extended its reach within the Horn of Africa before the early 1990's. In this case, the major affiliate of extremism in the region has been Al Qaeda, during this period it was widely believed that Osama Bin Laden had set base in Sudan between 1991 and 1996 (Lacey&Weiser, 2002). By harbouring in the region, he took benefit of the instability in the region to create a wing of his group. Known as the East African Cell of Al Qaeda, it was able to come up mainly because of the opportunities foreseen in Somalia. With Said Bare ousted and total turmoil being experienced, recruitment of followers was not so hard. While this took place, neighbouring Kenya was also a prime mark for setting up camp. From at least 1993 to 1994, Al Qaeda was able to set up substantial bases within Mombasa and Nairobi.

3.1 Disguise through Enterprise

For proper entrenching to flourish the organization needed to undertake a couple of important activities for this to suffice. Since Kenya has always been a friendly neighbour that accommodates foreign refugees fleeing conflict, it served as a potential 'safe zone' to create safe houses that could host members and sympathizers traversing through the region. In addition, it also acted as a facilitator of illegal cross-border movement; this also gave way for Kenya to serve as a gateway for terror actors to the Gulf, Middle East and South East Asia (Haynes, 2005). This open corridor gave room for extremists to gain a foothold in Kenya; subsequently, enlisting new members along the way also went on, with the aim of not being identified easily and also spreading the ideology to as many as possible.

Another form of disguise was to integrate within the local population as this would not raise any suspicion of their undertakings. Given that, Nairobi and Mombasa are the two largest and busiest cities in the country, incorporating themselves into the hustle and bustle of these cities was the best form of discretion. Business ventures and relief organization would serve as good avenues to subsidise and conceal its activities. Let's take Khalid al- Fawwaz one of Bin Laden's faithful accomplices who later became his spokesperson in Britain (Davis, 2010). He started a business named Asama Limited that would later be transferred to Abu Ubaidah al-Banshiri one of Al Qaeda's military commanders (Davis, 2010:160). To successfully scheme up and exchange ownership of this business under the nose of the authorities and locals without suspicion brings the impression that either the owners were good in concealing themselves or someone turned a blind eye of their presence. As a result, this made the two take up their intended actions without scrutiny or worry of being nabbed.

Helping people is always seen as noble act within many societies especially those experiencing some societal challenges like Kenya. In this same spirit, the network camouflaged in the form of relief organization that appeared to be "fighting for a good cause". To contextualize this, the example of Wadih El- Hage can further elaborate how coming up with an organization named Help African People would be a good form of obscuring the public eye from any suspicion, to top things up he also owned a business called Tanzanite King (Haynes, 2005). The two would act as good cover-ups for any operations he had planned.

3.2 Assimilation through Marriage

Away from business, the operatives also ensured that they were fully assimilated in the societies they lived in. This meant that marrying locals was a good form of assimilation since it's

likely for one to be more accepted in the community once he or she attains the married status. Furthermore, the conceiving of children that accompanies marriage meant that the organization's links would be extended to many generations to come through the offspring's since their likelihood of being extremists is very high. Therefore, becoming an integral part of the Kenyan society granted the terror associates to freely operate as Kenyans as their status in the country would hardly be questioned. This also made it easier for them to identify and use local people to strengthen their cover.

So once settled in the society, the operatives could continue with their agendas and trainings both in Kenya and throughout the region. Some operatives would even move in and out of the country without detection as they would seek some training and skills from neighbouring Somalia which is an 'open field' for extremism due to the lack of stability in the country. The ability of the Al Qaeda members to settle into Kenya and evade being captured made it easier to launch terror attacks. As it will be seen later, it was only the start of numerous streams of attacks.

4. Flood of Extremism Drowning Juveniles

The country's exposure to extremism was definitely a cause for alarm and drastic measures to reverse the coming tide was needed earnestly. Unfortunately, the laxity to reverse the surge would prove to be costly for the country as the wave of extremism was rapidly streaming in and would soon flood the country. As extremism flooded into parts of the country, the youth were the first to drown in this flood. Intentionally targeted by recruiters and voluntarily or involuntarily joining their side, it is apparent that young people are easily deluded into extremism.

In large part the youths in the coastal towns, parts of Nairobi and North-Eastern Kenya were mainly influenced. Apart from their regional susceptibilities, the historical representation and appreciation of these youths made them good targets. Haunted by a history of marginalization, discrimination and exclusions among many other historical and societal injustices the allure towards extremism found many of these youths in a difficult place. As if this was not already a hard bone to chew, the treatment many of them receive from the security personnel, state agencies and authorities diminished them further towards the ground staring closely at the riverbed of extremism.

4.1 Most Marginalized becoming Most Vulnerable

To place the vulnerable youths, many who come from the named regions are of Somali origin be it Kenya-Somalis or Somalis who now reside in Kenya and many practice Islam. Looking at the opportunities they have in the society, much more needs to be done towards their plight. Locked out from fundamental rightful privileges that other Kenyans enjoy, their position within many settings is seen as ‘outsider’ or a distant ‘other’ that is still trying to become Kenyan. Whilst these are some of the misfortunes endured by the youth, the chances of them being indoctrinated or lured into extremism augments. Acknowledging that these are not the only reasons for opting for an extremist life, it is important to highlight these as major channels to it.

Tying the links between discriminatory attitudes and responses to extremism and fuelling sentiments of marginalization is crucial so as to comprehend how the youths end up like this. After the Paradise hotel bombings these practices were out rightly employed towards many young people living in the coastal region. Many arrests appeared to be discriminatory and arbitrary, with many Muslims particularly ethnic Somalis and Arabs being targeted. As echoed in

the voices of many local leaders the fear of new reprisals would bolster radicalism even more. Former Mombasa mayor Najib Balala emphasized that ‘harassments and intimidations by the government has always been there for us (Maclean, 2002), now we are further lowered to second-class citizens because of our identities and religion.

Similarly, according to then director of Muslims for Human Rights, Khelef Khalifa ‘police harassed Muslim residents in Mombasa in responses to the attacks and arrested key suspects’ relatives while they failed to arrest those directly involved in the attacks (Kaivuli, 2005). While this was happening growing anti-Western and anti-Christian sentiments manifested themselves in more attacks that targeted businesses owned by foreigners and churches. In December 2002 two petrol bombs were hurled into Tembo discotheque in northern Mombasa, the premises was jointly operated by a Kenya and a European investor (Xinhua, 2002).

The incidences unfolding at the same time intensified the justifications of actions from the government towards supposed perpetrators and also inspired the perpetrators to continue causing harm. It is only a few government officials that recognized that the country had numerous internal problems that needed to be addressed so as to calm extremism and radicalization. Chris Murungaru, then minister for national security stated one 29 June 2003 that; “Kenya’s ‘war on terrorism’ will only be won by admitting the existing problems in the society that stretch far back to post-colonial Kenya, once this is addressed we can start winning in this fight” (Cowell, 2003).

The minister’s statements undeniably bore truth, as the long-standing problems particularly towards Muslims and ethnic-Somalis have barely been dealt with appropriately. Neglecting this approach would result to the spread of radicalisation and extremist behaviour.

Excluding the youth meant that they would seek alternative avenues to identify with and feel accommodated, as things would unfold the choice of extremism opened up as an avenue to walk on. The growth of extremism did not materialize without those behind it finding a leeway through existing vulnerabilities, as previously noted the landscape had been cleared out long before and all that was required was to plant the seed and wait for it to blossom.

5. The Calm before the Storm

Spared for a period from rampant attacks since the 1998 bombings and 2002 Mombasa attacks, things seemed to have calmed down in the country for a while. Even with the rise of militant extremist group Al Shabab, an offspring of the Islamic Court Union (ICU) which splintered into several factions after its defeat in 2006 by Transitional Federal Government (TFG) forces and Ethiopian allies in Somalia (Abdisaid, 2008). The state was not directly targeted by the group. Despite this being the case it is believed that Al Shabab affiliates have been present and active in Kenya since 2009 (Abdisaid, 2008). During this period, it's perceived that the cessation of attacks was because the country was a hub and gateway for foreign fighters, home to sympathizers and financiers, a home for medical care injured combatants and also a major source of new recruits (Botha, 2013: 7). Although this was the case, it is important to note some attacks that were initiated during this period of 'perceived cessation of attacks', so as to understand the height of radicalization within the country, unveiling the active role of extremism within the country is paramount.

5.1 Rampant Stream of Attacks

Between 2006 when Al Shabab became active in Somalia and 2009 when it is believed to have started operating in Kenya, several attacks carried out that replicate their methods of warfare have been witnessed. A short overview of the attacks is as follows: (Koross, 2012)

- 11th July 2007 two people, including one suspected of carrying explosives, died outside City Gate Restaurant, next to Hotel Ambassador as the device was suspected to have detonated prematurely.
- In late September 2009, guests at Simmers restaurant on Kenyatta Avenue found Russian-made grenades under their seats.
- On 13 June 2010 three grenades exploded at a political rally in Uhuru Park, Nairobi, killing six people and injuring 30.
- On 20 December 2010, three police officers were killed in separate grenade attacks in Nairobi.
- On 20th December 2010 one person was killed and 26 injured in a grenade attack at the Kampala coach bus terminus in river road.

Based on the above chronology of order of events, it is clear that home-grown attacks were still manifesting even with the perception of a decline. This brings to question the role radicalization plays in gaining local support and eventually being capable of attacks. It also shows that there was a huge negligence of proper investigations as to why such attacks were still present and what was really causing them. Even as resounding evidence of local extremism and

radicalization kept cropping up, there was inadequate follow up into the matter. Instead the profiling and harassment of Muslims and people of Somali origin increased.

In October 2011 Kenya sent her troops into Somalia in response to the kidnapping of two Spanish aid workers along Kenya's north-eastern coast (Aljazeera. 2011). This response was hailed by many as a necessary initiative that was long overdue; it was seen as an act of aggression that would discourage future kidnappings and secure Kenya. The intervention was meant to create a buffer zone over the spillage of insecurity and hamper the expansion of Al Shabab's campaigners in the homeland (Aljazeera, 2011). In spite of this being the intention, the terror network made use of this opportunity to increase recruitment to its ranks within Kenya. Furthermore, observers have highlighted that the group was not directly responsible for the spate of cross-border kidnappings that gave justifications to the intervention; rather it discouraged groups from carrying kinetic activities in Kenya (UN, 2011). In fact, prior to the invasion, Kenyan security forces managing the border had established a kind of *Modus Vivendi*²⁵ although through local peace networks with Al Shabab (UN, 2011).

The invasion of Somalia was supposed to safeguard the country from further attacks and other kind of activities. This was at least the presumption of the general public. As the soldier broadcasted their advancements and incursion conquering towns and villages in southern Somalia all seemed to be going on as planned. The cheerful faces of jubilant soldiers interacting with locals may have brought calm and reassurance to the masses. In contrast, the gains made by the armed forces would soon mean nothing in the hearts and mind of many because of what was to follow. The intervention can be analogized as that of a clumsy, overgrown, weak-muscled

²⁵ Latin phrase signifying an agreement between those whose opinions differ, such that they agree to disagree.

teenager boy stumbling into a rainy, muddy, battlefield for the first time. Eager to use his Kalashnikov, but fiddles about to get his aim right, unaware of his opponents potential who's more agile and bloodthirsty waiting with his weapon corked and ready to fire and die within and without his territory. If only the clumsy teenager could turn back and go home to protect his backyard.

5.2 Territorial Integrity leads to Integral Insecurity

No sooner had the mission to protect 'territorial integrity' began by crossing over into Somalia than integral security within Kenya started diminishing further with rampant attacks taking place frequently. On 17 October 2011 one person was killed and 15 injured when a grenade was thrown into *Mawaura's* pub in Nairobi (Thome, 2011). Only being one day after troops crossed into Somalia it was eminent that this was an indiscriminate attack targeting civilians. To make matters worse it was just the beginning of another string of attacks that would follow, just to underscore a few: (Koross, 2012)

- On 24th October 2011 one person was killed and eight injured by a grenade hurled at people standing at a bus stop.
- 27th October 2011 four people were killed when a grenade hit a vehicle in Mandera.
- On 16th November 2011 attackers targeting East African Pentecostal worshipers killed two people in a grenade attack in Garissa.
- On 24th November 2011 three people were killed in twin grenade attacks on the Holiday Inn in Garissa.

- On 4th of April four people were killed and 30 injured in grenade attacks on a church service in Mtwapa, Mombasa.
- On 28th April one person was killed and 16 others injured at the God's House of Miracles International church in Ngara, Nairobi.
- On 16th May 2012 a security guard was killed after two grenades were thrown into Bella Vista bar in Mombasa.
- 28th May 2012 one person was killed and 30 others were injured after an explosion device detonated at Assanands building in Moi Avenue.
- On 1st July 2012, 17 people were killed and 45 wounded in grenade attacks at the Garissa Catholic Church and African Inland Church. Among dead were two police officers whose guns were stolen by attackers.
- On 19th July 2012, grenades thrown into a hotel and barber's shop wounded four, in Kenya's Wajir border region.
- On 30th September 2012 a child was killed and three seriously injured in a grenade attack on St Polycarp's church on Juja road.

5.2.1 Operation *Linda Nchi*²⁶ and Beyond

Depending on the above data, in a span of one year after the launch of Operation '*Linda Nchi*' (Safeguard the Country), the actions of the Al Shabaaab worsened the security threat. By

²⁶ ("Protect the country" *Linda Nchi*) is the codename for a co-ordinated military operation between the Kenyan military and the Somalia military that began on 16 October 2011, when troops from Kenya crossed the border into the conflict zones of southern Somalia

tossing the ball into Kenya's court, the dynamics of the game changed as Kenyan soldiers found themselves playing outside their own court, substituted by their spectators who hardly knew how to kick the ball, resulting to them being constantly hit. The round of strikes fired into Kenya's own territory targeted non-Muslim and non-Somali targets, hence the frequent attacks on churches, bars, restaurants, business premises and other areas where non-Muslims gathered. It also took a strange turn as commonly shared zones such as; bus stops and services like buses and *matatus*²⁷ both in Muslim and non-Muslim populated areas like Eastleigh in Nairobi and Thika-Nairobi highway experiencing grisly grenade and Improvised Explosive Devices (IED's) blasts.

The pernicious, but relatively contained menace was soon overshadowed by the carnage that took place at Westgate shopping mall from 21-24 September 2013. On this instance, the attackers took over the mall situated in an 'upscale' business and residential area. The siege that lasted for three days resulted to the death of close to 70 people, many others injured and massive destruction of property. The world's eyes turned to Kenya as the events unfolded, making the incident receive immense media coverage. One may wonder why the deeds of this group would gain so much attention with one event while they had been responsible for numerous other events before.

To understand this, some factors need to be scrutinized. To start with, the location this time had shifted, not being in some local bar, restaurant, barbershop or church somewhere in North-eastern, Mombasa or Nairobi. However, it had occurred in an 'upmarket' area with famous restaurants and stores, frequently visited by foreigners living and working in Kenya and

²⁷ In Kenya and neighbouring nations, they are privately owned minibuses and vans that are used for transportation (Shared Taxis)

other mainly middle class Kenyans. Being of this nature the stakes were higher and the intended target had changed, the scenes of Europeans, Indians, other foreigners and minority groups scrambling for their lives meant that the threat of Al Shabab was not only a problem for the low class citizens living in marginalized areas such as Eastleigh, North Eastern and Coastal Kenya but rather a predicament to the general public that barely knows where the next havoc may be. Reactions from both the local and international community was of awe, disgrace, conciliatory and calls for more vigilance. The usual rants of dealing with the ‘enemy’ precisely from the government leaders were not news to many and as things would unfurl they did not mince their words. Foreign governments pledged more support, intelligence and equipment to counter the attacks, not forgetting the issuance of travel advisories to warn their citizens that Kenya is not safe to visit, and if one does visit stay away from certain areas.

From the events that transpired during the Westgate siege it becomes apparent that Kenya’s strategy in the supposed ‘war on terror’ it is fighting against Al Shabab was not going as planned. The drastic loss of lives, injuries and destruction of property creates an image that the government is in a losing battle. Based on the analysis so far, the height of extremism in the country had not been looked into as a probable cause of all these attacks. The ability of the perpetrators to permeate within the society without detection and successfully launch assaults emphasizes the encroachment of extremist ideologies within Kenya. It equally draws attention to the possibility of locals, despite not being part of Al Shabab colluding with them in the execution of their bad intended actions. The previously mentioned aspects seem to have been rooted in the country and unfortunately not being effectively addressed in the government’s strategy to safeguard the nation. The impacts of overseeing these issues would prove to be costly as deadlier attacks were to be experienced in different parts of the country.

6. Local Networks Aiding in the Growth of Extremism

Linking radicalization and extremism to the widespread attacks is crucial, especially when looking for nonviolent ways of countering violent extremism. The role of these two concepts largely influences what approach to be taken against this kind of behaviour. Within the Kenyan context, traces of radicalization and extremism have been prominently present but rarely addressed appropriately. To paint a picture of this presence, analyzing the role of different groups and individuals within Kenya is vital. For a start, let's consider the Muslim Youth Centre (MYC), formed in 2008 as a 'rights forum' claiming to articulate the social, economical and religious grievances of impoverished and disaffected young Muslims. It emerged into one of the largest support networks for Al Shabab in Kenya (Plaut, 2013). As documented in the UN Monitoring group report on Somalia, the group plays an active role in funding, recruiting and launching onslaughts within Kenya and other parts of East Africa; furthermore it seeks to expand Al Shabab membership to non-Somali Kenyan nationals (UN, 2012).

The urge to expand Kenyan membership was executed by endorsing various Muslim clerics, imams and leaders from Kenya that were willing to convey their hateful ideology, with top rank leadership positions in Al Shabab. Case in point, the group appointed Sheikh Ahmad Iman Ali as its "Supreme Emir" (leader) on 10 January 2012 (Roggio, 2012) this was acknowledged by the MYC on their blog as a great stride. The group further, followed up on their twitter account: "Ali's elevation to become supreme emir of Kenya for Al Shabaab is a recognition from our Somali brothers who have fought tirelessly against the unbelievers on the importance of the Kenyan *Mujahedeen* in Somalia" (Bosire, 2012). The MYC's support for Al Shabaab was not hidden, and their agenda to gain more Kenyan support was being implemented using all available avenues.

Ali's elevation into top rank leadership in Al Shabaab was also hailed by the group itself. In a video released by Al-Kataib, Al Shabab's official media company. He was presented as a calm and charismatic individual who contained a solid understanding of the basic Islamic concepts associated with the Salafi-Jihad doctrine such as; *al-wala' wal-bara'* (loyal to Islam and Muslims and disavowal of non-Muslims). He also referred to Kenya as *dar al-harb* (house of war) in contrast to *dar al-Islam* (house of peace) where the laws of war apply whose people are categorized as belligerents and therefore legitimate targets (Botha, 2013). The message conveyed by Ali could be seen as an open declaration of war, that was intended to reach Kenyan nationals as the video was in proper Swahili and had english subtitles. He was seen to follow in the footsteps of Fazul Mohammed, former Al Qaeda East Africa leader, who was killed by Somali troops at a checkpoint in South Mogadishu in June 2011, Ali would fill the vacuum left (UN, 2012).

The rhetoric that followed after Ali's promotion to Emir leader of Al Shabbab was rather worrying and should have been considered as major assertions by entire Kenyan society. In particular, MYC's open declaration of support and praise of Al Shabaab should not have fallen on deaf ears but rather served as an awakening voice of terror to the slumbering nation on the nightmare of extremism. For example, through its twitter account (@MYC_Press) and blog (themovingcaravan.wordpress.com), which are now both defunct. The group hailed the merger of Al Shabaab and Al Qaeda in 2012 as a 'long overdue' merger of 'jihad brothers' terming it a great union and hoped that allah would grant the *mujahideen* in Kenya the strength to 'set jihad alight' in the country (Mahir, 2012). They further noted that, now the *kuffar* (infidel) could never doubt that Al Shabaab was defeated or weak declaring: 'we are multiplying from East to West,

North to South'. From this message, the impression of rapid radicalization within Kenya had already become visible, and were yearning for more followers to corrode with extremist ideas.

The objectives of MYC can be tagged as that of a group that advocates for an extreme interpretation of Islam and offering support for those who seek to travel to Somalia to engage or train for onslaughts. The group has openly pledged support to Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab and willingly disseminated extremist propaganda for them even claiming candidly that 'jihad is our religion'. In one of their publications on the monthly newsletter *Al-Misbah* dated 9 October to 26 November 2009 the group clouds the necessity of 'jihad' by publishing an article by Anwar Awlaki²⁸ entitled '44 ways of supporting jihad' (Mahir, 2012). In this article the justifications of 'jihad' as 'holy war' against *kuffars* is heavily amplified. By aligning with extremist views such as those preached by Anwar Awlaki, it elaborates the position of the group on how they interpret Islam. The kind of 'jihad' that they preach has no link to the classical ways of Islam and solely purports to radical thinking and extremism, with the basic agenda of a military struggle in practice.

In their effort to recruit more followers one good example can be seen through a posting made on their twitter page 'Basic questions of jihad answered'. The group openly radicalizes its followers using this platform. Answering to the question, 'What can I expect when I join jihad?' MYC replied: 'For the privileged brothers and sisters who join jihad they are given training on everything from the true meaning of Islam to operating RPGs, AK-47s and other weapons. In yet another question, 'Will I be fighting other muslims?' MYC responded: 'Any muslim who

²⁸ April 21, 1971 – September 30, 2011) was an American and Yemeni imam and Islamic lecturer. U.S. government officials allege that he was a senior recruiter and motivator who was involved in planning terrorist operations for the militant group Al-Qaeda.

supports the kuffar against his Muslim brothers cannot call himself or herself a Muslim' (Gisesa, 2012). These two examples illustrate the motives that the group has in radicalizing vulnerable individuals into believing in their deluding ideologies. On the other hand it demonstrates how MYC its affiliate factions and other extremist groups do not convey the principles and values of Islam. On the contrary, they divert the ideals of the religion to fit their own malicious interests through misleading interpretations. They not only mislead individuals but also conspire on the Muslim communities to turn against each other as seen in the second twitter message.

7. Face of Extremism across all Identities

Already saddening that extremism was reaching the grassroots level at an alarming rate, with some people already showing interest by asking questions about jihad. The impacts of radicalization could be seen throughout the country. As new developments emerged, some of the violent attacks on civilians were instigated by other Kenyan nationals and not Kenyan-Somalis or Somali nationals as assumed. Arrests of individuals such as Elgiva Bwire Oliacha also known as (Mohammed Seif), in connection to the 24th October 2011 grenade attacks (Odula, 2011), caught with 13 grenades, six guns and hundreds of rounds of ammunition in his house. The ever smiling Oliacha pleaded guilty to nine charges and sentenced to life imprisonment (Whispers, 2011). He also confessed to be part of Al Shabaab. What astonished many about this unremorseful character was that he comes from Busia town in Western Kenya, he was born and bred in a catholic family and attended schools in Nairobi (Guardian, 2011). More developments emerged on the OTC bus stop grenade detonations that caused serious bodily harm to several people. The culprits involved, Omar Muchiri Athuman, alias Hussein, and Stephen Macharia, alias Mchangoo were linked to the attacks and charged with engaging in criminal

activities and being in possession of firearms, hand grenades and 717 rounds of ammunition at a house in Kayole estate (Property, 2011). These two examples show the height of extremism in the country and how it is gaining a grip within the Kenyan society traversing across all ethnicities and religions, thus attracting multiple followers within and without the assumed circles that extremists often target.

Despite the visible warning signs, sheer negligence in the approach taken against extremism was largely overlooked. By not addressing the localization of extremism, the worrying sequence of locals being dragged into the extremist world and constant attacks did not cease. Another concern, especially within the Muslim community was the tainting image their religion was receiving. Since many youths that were implicated in most attacks had converted to Islam, it raised the attention of the community as to how recently converted youths are caught up in the trap of extremism. It also reminded the broader Kenyan community of how the dominant approach of ethnic and religious profiling of individuals is not an effective counter-measure when dealing with violent extremism or in identifying possible Al-Shabab members or supporters. It should have rather acted as caution for the authorities against perceiving that the spread of any particular religion or conversion to it as a threat to national security. Instead, I believe that the government should have focused on the different socioeconomic factors such as impoverishment, which lead these youths to be easily lured into such groups. It holds no water to focus on ethnic-Somalis as the people responsible while the whole population is littered with extremism.

8. Mpeketoni: The Unheard Cries of Terror

Lack of a proper counteractive strategy to handle the growth of extremism and regular attacks left the country highly at risk of more onslaughts of the same nature. No sooner had the nation nursed its wounds from the Westgate scourge than another plague of death, misery and destruction swept across the coastal town of Mpeketoni. Located in the county of Lamu and a few kilometres from the Kenya-Somalia border, the reign of terror that befell this little town was grotesque in nature. The gruesome attack was orchestrated in the night of 15th June 2014 between 9pm lasting up to around 2am. This attack was facilitated by a large group of around 40-50 men who crossed into Kenya from Somalia to wage ‘Jihad’ in the land of the ‘*Kuffars*’ (Al-Kataib, 2015). During the assault the assailants targeted civilians, government offices, hotels and restaurants, schools, churches and other valuable properties they could find on their way. The attack caused the loss of many lives, destructions of millions worth property and the remaining residents were left in fear with many fleeing their homes.

This time attacks occurring away from the capital Nairobi and in some small coastal town, the reactions and responses to the horrific incident exposes a wide gap in Kenya’s attitude towards acts of violent extremism. The terrific and destructive occurrence was deemed as a politically instigated violence and not carried out by extremist networks. In the words of the commander-in-chief himself, President Uhuru Kenyatta; “the Lamu attack was well planned, orchestrated, and politically motivated ethnic violence against a Kenyan community, with the intention of profiling and evicting them for political reasons” (State House, 2014).

The president statements seems to only bear some truth as it was indeed well planned and as investigations would later reveal the role of locals in aiding the attack was unfortunately present. The counter narrative expressed by Al Shabaab much later was that of claiming the

attack as a success. In one statement, the group glorified the attack and stressed that they were in retribution for “the Kenyan Government’s brutal oppression of Muslims through coercion, intimidation, and extrajudicial killings of Muslim scholars, particularly in Mombasa and the violation of Muslim honour and sanctity” (Al Jazeera, 2014). The confirmation of their responsibility in the attack was further substantiated on March 15th 2015 with the release of a 34 minute video; Mpeketoni: ‘Reclaiming back Muslim lands under Kenyan occupation’ (Al Kataib, 2015). From this well documented video, it demonstrates how the group crossed into Kenya through the Boni forest, reaching Mpeketoni and other targeted areas and blatantly shows how they executed and ravaged the places.

Not treated the same as the Westgate attack, the President would soon swallow his own words as contradictory statements from him and a parliamentary report would prove that indeed the attack was prompted by Al Shabab and the local groups that have close links to them. Accounts from witnesses and survivors proved the existence of locals within the group, Omar Ali accounts; “*Kulikuwa na mchanganyiko ya wasomali na waswahili*²⁹” (Jicho Pevu, 2014). Others said; “The gunmen spoke several languages including Somali and Swahili and carried Al Shabab flags (AFP, 2014). Such utterances revealed that indeed the role of the group in this attack was central.

It also exposed the weaknesses in the security and intelligence outlaid and conveyed by the agencies in charge. The government was stripped off its security garments and left naked by the vicious attacks that tattered apart its garments. It was noted that a day before the attack the security personnel were scarce in the town and once the attack happened there were hardly any

²⁹ There was a mixture of Somalis and Swahilis (Own Translation)

present to salvage the residents. This raises eyebrows as to whether some intelligence of the attack was availed before and not acted upon. Drawing comparisons to the manner in which the Westgate attack was handled, a lot more seriousness and effective responses are direly needed. It also depicts the different attitudes taken in Kenya's 'war on terror' depending on where attacks occur with some being considered as graver than others. An overhaul attitude needs to be applied, which is non discriminative and acknowledges that all lives matter when dealing with violent extremism.

From my analysis so far the presence of violent extremism has become a common feature within the Kenyan setting. Particularly, with regards to the rise of haphazard attacks that strike without mercy or favour. This being the current trend, one can assume that there are some warning signs that may be visible ahead of an attack and this may be used as a starting point for vigilance or precautions to be taken so as to avert the situation. The transformation of violent extremism attacks and ideologies needs a multifaceted approach which, seeks to not only focus on how to respond to the situation once it occurs, but rather it should be one that looks into preventing such situations from occurring by addressing the early warning signs or conditions that lead to such actions. Unfortunately, the latter approach has not taken precedence in Kenya, and has only been focusing on aftermath responses. Thanks to this approach, the decrease of violent extremism and its acts has not been realized; instead, an augmentation of the vice has been the scenario.

9. Mandera: Passengers and Laborers Fall into the Hands of Extremists

Mpeketoni demonstrated how sloppy intelligence on extremism is obtained and used by the security agents. It also showed how vulnerable the country has been to such attacks and the need to engage the circumstances from another perspective. While thinking of the changes needed in countering violent extremism, the extremists on the other side were deliberating on where to strike again. The aftermath of Mpeketoni led to more profiling, arrests, arbitrations, torture and executions of mostly Somali and Muslim citizens among them important religious leaders and voices in the coastal towns. These actions would be retaliated in yet another string of brutal attacks.

As security forces roughed up mosques, homes and Muslim individuals in the Coastal parts of the country. This move was a recipe for disaster as the extremist cooks formulated their next point of damage. This time they shifted their target up north in the town of Mandera, located at the furthest corner within the Kenyan territory; it shares a border with Somalia. On 22nd November 2015 in the early hours of dawn, the militants ambushed a bus that was transporting passengers from the town of Mandera to Nairobi. During the incident, the assailants singled out and killed 28 passengers who could not recite Islamic creed and therefore were assumed to be non-Muslim (Guardian, 2014). Ochwodho, a survivor recounts that; “those who could not recite the *Shahada*³⁰, were shot at close range immediately”. He was lucky to be alive as he lay in the middle of the line of passengers facing the ground as one gunman shot from the right, the other from the left, when reaching to him; each gunman thought the other had shot him (Guardian, 2014). This was a close shave with death for him and the events from that day must be dreading the lucky survivor.

³⁰ Is an Islamic creed declaring belief in the oneness of God and the acceptance of Muhammad as God's prophet.

Ten days later, within a 10-mile radius in the outskirts of Mandera another audacious attack was to be witnessed. The gunmen stormed into some labourers' camp in a quarry mine in the early morning hours of 2nd December 2014, once again singling out non-Muslims and shooting them at point blank range and beheaded some (Star, 2014). Many similarities can be drawn from the previous attack, considering the means of execution, separation of religions and the locations these events took place. It underscores further the inadequacies present in the detection, prevention and confrontation of acts of violent extremism and the spread of the ideology.

The shortcomings identified so far in my analysis reinforce the importance of my study and the need to toss the coin of extremism with the hope of it landing on a different side. This flip should somehow lead us to a different understanding of the subject, by bringing in ideas and innovations that will curb the mounting harms being caused by extremism. As seen all along, the tectonic plates of violent extremist tactics are quickly shifting under the feet of Kenya. The openly launched attacks into cities, towns, businesses and other local enterprises prove how these shifts are taking place. The harsh realities of extremism are being felt and witnessed day by day, thus making it very paramount for us to reverse the violent shifts into peaceful shifts.

My optimistic turn of events and narratives remain important to me and many others that wish for an end to these acts of violent extremism. However, it is discouraging at times to see the converse taking place and our optimistic dream being shattered into the ground. I say this because; new developments that emerge as a result of violent extremism acts are worrying. The intensification of these acts, maltreatment of alleged perpetrators and the divisions cropping up

between religions and ethnicities makes it even more difficult for a peaceful coexistence to be realized.

10. Garissa: ‘Mowing Grass in a Desert Land’

On this worrying note, it is vital to look into the new developments that make it more difficult to cope with the rising threat caused by extremism. The main underlying issue seen all through the analysis, is a contest of casualties and causing melancholy between the extremists and the security forces that respond to these acts. The eye for an eye attitude taken so far is proving to create less understanding and harmony that can provide room for initiatives that can transform the conflict being experienced. Therefore, the innocent, clueless civilian is the one that is largely affected by these hostilities. As we say in Swahili; “*Ndume mbili zikipigana nyasi ndio huumia*”³¹.

When a bullfighting match is about to take place, the opposing parties duly prepare their beasts for the fight. They care and nature for their animal and ensure that it has the stamina to sustain any kind of force or strike it may experience. It is fed the best meal and given enough food so as to be strong and ready to endure the hard battle ahead. This kind of preparation may take years, months or days as each faction wants to emerge victorious in the upcoming combat. Some spitting analogies can be witnessed in Kenya’s fight against violent extremism. The conflicting sides share the same battle field which is the Kenyan territory. Just as the bull owners prepare their animals, the extremists and Kenyan government prepare themselves as they wait to wage war on each other.

³¹ When two bulls fight the grass is the one that gets injured (Own Translation)

Looking more at how extremists prepare, their mission is camouflaged in the name of waging ‘Jihad’ against the *kuffars*. They seek pilgrimage into neighbouring Somalia, where just as the bulls they are fattened with the misleading ideology of killing the disbelievers. They harshly train for combat by learning different skills on handling sophisticated weapons. Just like the bulls, the extremists are natured, however into hatred mercilessness, bewilderment, and a belief of their soon intended actions. This pilgrimage becomes their way of life and when the call for ‘jihad’ is waged, it is time to pursue the path that has been falsely bestowed upon them.

While comparing the acts of extremism and its responses to a bull fight, it is vital to note some disparities that can be seen through the strategies taken by the two conflicting sides. From the Kenyan government perspective, they invaded their opponents training ground in the name of safeguarding their own territory. However, they forgot that some bulls had already strayed away into their land and had been natured within their territory. They thought that by starving and punishing the strayed bulls, it would be easier to conquer their opponent as they would be weaker. Contrary, the strayed bulls reaped from this fertile opportunity and started mowing the grass.

In the early morning hours of 2nd April 2015, the desert town of Garissa had been identified as fertile mowing field by violent extremists. The University of Garissa was the exact field that would fall into the hands of merciless extremists who would strive to cut off every clump of grass sprouting above the soil. On this fateful morning, the gunmen stormed into the university and started shooting the students indiscriminately. After the four militants had pitched ground in the university premises they shifted their tactic and nature of execution. They began separating Muslims from non-Muslims shooting the latter after testing their faith by asking them

to recite scriptures from the Quran and also making them call their loved ones to bid them farewell.

The technique of separating Muslims from non-Muslims in deadly attacks has often been employed by Al-Shabaab in its recent self-confessed attacks in the country. Security analysts call this “antagonisms formula” between Muslims and Christian faithful in the country (Osman, 2015). With this tactic the attackers attempt to justify their deluded interpretation of Islam and the call for Jihad. They also seek to gain favour from their fellow Muslims as they spare their own, making it seem like only a war on non-Muslims. However, one fundamental question to ask is; Why does Al-Shabab claim to spare the lives of Muslims in Kenya; while their biggest victims in Somalia are Muslims? This contradiction clearly displays the deluded dogma that these ideological misfits seek to propagate in the name of Islam. Such a simple example further reiterates the fact that the Islamic religion in no way advocates for the killing of other faiths or followers of its faith. Rather, it pin points on how the manipulation of religion can be used as a medium of transpiring radical extremist ideas that lead to violence. This sort of manipulation is important to study especially when analyzing how religious extremism is executed; therefore, bringing in the need to interrogate different channels that aide in the realization of extremist discourses.

11. Manifestation of Radicalization in Kenya

For violent extremist ideologies to be rooted into a society or community, a set of specific drivers towards this route must be in place so as to motivate the targeted audience into subscribing to this set of ideas. The different mechanisms used vary depending on the situation and circumstances of the individuals being convinced to join the “bandwagon” of extremist

theory. For this to be achieved, the recruiter must look for different factors and avenues that may be used as a launching pad to purport these distorted ideas to the masses. Once this has been identified the recruiter establishes a cordial relationship with the desired targets so as to fully motivate and convince them into being part of their flock. In brief, the recruiter needs to ensure that the recruits get convinced of the path they seek is one that will grant them fulfilment and their hearts desires. For this tainted illusion to be realized the recruiters' vital tool is radicalization and its stealth execution, thus making it the most lethal weapon they bear.

In Kenya, the notion that radicalization exists has for a lengthy period been downplayed as non-existing. Due to this assumption, the presence of the vice has always been watered down as not very grave. With this open gap, the rise of radicalization has streamed into the Kenyan society and is becoming strongly rooted into the country. Especially with the rise of violet extremist attacks, the impacts of radicalization have now been seen and felt, making it finally acknowledged as a major contributor towards these attacks.

11.1 'Open Air radicalization'

To highlight further the presence of radicalization in the country, I will start by underpinning recent events that took place after the Garissa attacks of 2nd April 2015. In the village of Yumbis, located about 70km from Garissa the Somali based Al Shabab launched a one of a kind invasion into the Kenyan frontiers. This raid was an unusual one as it did not resemble the usual style of attacks witnessed before by the group, rather I believe that it was one meant to make a statement to the government and the Kenyan population. The May 22nd invasion was one meant to instil fear and division upon the members of the village. In this rare exercise, the group of masked militants entered Yumbis with a non killing mission but a radicalizing one. As

accounted by Abdulaziz Abu Mus'ab, Al Shabab's spokesman for military operations from an unknown location; "The *Mujahideen* carried out an operation in Yumbis, this was part of our ongoing operations to free the Christian-occupied Muslim lands of Northern Frontier Districts (NFD), the coward enemy ran away before our *Mujahideen* arrived, we spoke to the Muslim residents and left more than eight hours later, we will not rest or stop until NFD is free" (Mohammed, 2015). From the militant's statement, the aim was not to kill or destroy property but to convince the residents that they are in need of a certain kind of liberation, which can only be delivered by the group.

The actions of Al-Shabab on this day can be categorised as radicalization, to me I feel that this new venture can be termed as 'open air radicalization'. The occurrence of the eight hour occupation was aimed at preaching to the villagers and demonstrate the might that the militant group has even beyond the Somali borders. Witnesses that experienced this indoctrination shared different thoughts of how the events rolled out, making it clear that the actions were intended to show the foothold Al-Shabab was gaining in the region. One man recounts the events by saying; "We were all rounded up in the village center and clustered into groups and forced to sit and listen to the invaders preaching to us about 'Islam' even non-Muslims, children and people of all walks of life were present at the sitting" (Heavens, 2015). The village came to a total stand still as the inhabitants overlooked and listened to the militants that forcefully engaged them in their distorting dogma. This form of radicalization has not been openly used by the group, thus raising eyebrows on why the sudden change of tactic and also the confidence gained so as to launch such an assault. For me this could only mean that the unfelt radicalization is now out in the open.

11.2 Socialization into Radicalization

Moving away from this outright form of radicalization it is important to underpin the drivers and motivators that lead to one being radicalized and later choosing an extremist life. To analyze this, it is vital to acknowledge that these factors differ from person to person, although one may come across broad trends. While a number of factors play a role in the radicalization process, socialization provides an important insight into the process through which one becomes increasingly involved in extremist activity. As noted by Hogan and Taylor: ‘What we know of terrorist suggests that there is rarely a conscious decision made to become a terrorist, most involvement in terrorism results from gradual exposure and socialization towards extreme behaviour (Horgan & Taylor, 2001). Therefore implying that the road towards extremism is slow and comprises different occurrences, experiences, perceptions and role players. It simulates other social learnings that take up a similar gradual and incremental procedure. Learnings of sexuality, race, ethnicity and political affiliation just to name a few are shaped by the society one is nurtured in and the factors that revolve around it. There is no defining identity that comes pre-set in the mind of an individual; rather they become defined and shaped through interactions and experiences.

While socialization may be one of the major influencers of radicalization, there are other factors that provide an environment for radicalization. Therefore, identifying these factors would aid in comprehending the different dimensions that may lead or nurture radicalization in a society. Firstly, the domestic circumstances of a country or community, including ethnic, national and religious discrimination and socioeconomic marginalization (Botha, 2013). This influences the individual’s development in political participation, social participation and

economic contribution to the society. Considering the psychological impacts this may have, it is paramount for one to recognize that changes of these factors can create room for extremism.

11.3 State Attitude and Treatment Motivating Radicalization

On the state level, different interactions between the state and other actors plays an important role in the making or breaking of extremist behaviour. Notably, the form of government and the relationship between those in power and the populace, including the impact of violence on the political socialisation of children; the relationship between the state and organisations in providing a theoretical perspective on the ‘conflict’ between organisations and the state for political control; the use of state structures, namely the police and the military, in counter-terrorism; the legitimacy of the state as an essential element; the lack of the rule of law and good governance; violations of human rights; and political exclusion and repression (Dawson&Prewitt, 1977). The interplaying relationship between all these players may contribute heavily towards warming up or cooling down of extremist thought. Many of the mentioned interactions take place gradually and may at times not be foreseen as major contributors to radicalization.

However, certain events may have a psychological influence on the lifelong growth of an individual, leading to past scars becoming fresh radicalized wounds. Especially in Kenya, psychological trauma in particular the mistreatment and even death of individuals and loved ones in the hands of security forces leaves many disgruntled by this forms of treatment. Such actions have been ongoing for decades upon people of Somali heritage living in Kenya as they are primarily linked to extremism and attacks. Following the Yumbis attack, images surfaced on social media showing young men lying on their bellies and being whipped, they were allegedly

taken and posted by a senior police officer based in Garissa (Ombati, 2015). The reactions that followed this posting was that of bashing off such behaviour by security forces from the general public whom engaged in debates against such actions leading to hashtags such as #stoppolicebrutalityinNep. The reactions proved that the need to rethink the strategies of countering violent extremism in Kenya is now more than ever.

Unfortunately, this brutal approach has dominated Kenya's response towards extremism, specifically those linked to the Al-Shabab and sadly the Somalis have been victims of this kind of treatment. Thus, resulting to a prolonged state of unresolved grievances and conflicts or its impacts on the socialization process in terms of which domestic conflicts and wars in Somalia have provided a space for central organizations such as Al-Shabab where individuals can associate with. Although a group like this may not reflect each individual's overarching sentiments, individuals can turn to it when placed under pressure (Botha, 2013). These factors play a major role in the radicalization process that is fast spreading around the country. Specifically, factors such as; socioeconomic, political, religious, national identity, counter-terrorism and inter personal factors, can be identified as major drivers of youth into radical groups. This has not only been limited to groups such as Al-Shabab but also youths joining gangs and other separatist organization such as the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC).

11.4 Socioeconomic Challenges to Radicalization

Socioeconomic factors entail a range of aspects that cultivate a fertile environment for radicalization or extremism. Issues such as marginalization and exclusion from national resources, frustrated expectations and relative deprivation play a major role. Despite the immediate link made between poverty and radicalization, the issue of economic conditions

extend well beyond poverty. A common perception is that poverty is a cause of extremism, however when studying perpetrators of extremist attacks, it has been noted that not only poor people are drawn to extremism. This is often associated with level of education and socioeconomic status within a society.

On the contrary, not all extremists in Kenya fall into this assumption. Evidently, from previous attacks and the 2nd April Garissa attacks the perceived link of poverty to extremism has been challenged. One of the four Al Shabab militants who stormed Garissa University College killing 148 plus students was identified as Abdirahim Mohamed Abdullahi the son of a Kenya Government administrative Chief in Mandera. Abdirahim is a University of Nairobi Law graduate and is described by a person who knows him well as a “brilliant upcoming lawyer”. Before his admission to the University of Nairobi where he studied Law LLB he was a student at *Wamy* High School and scored an A grade in his final exam according to one of his teachers (Juma, 2015). As the militant’s credentials were revealed, it came as a surprise to many as he did not fit the ‘general profile’ of a person prone to extremism. Many questions arose while analyzing this case. What really motivated him into choosing an extremist lifestyle as opposed to a career in law? Within the Kenyan setting, Abdirahim could be described as an advantaged young man. Being of Somali origin, he was fortunate enough to have privileges such as education that most Somalis do not receive. Despite these privileges he still decided to join Al-Shabab, thus questioning the socioeconomic link to extremism.

However, it is important to note that, poor economic conditions increases pressure for economic change that in turn impacts on governments reactions. Therefore, situations where increased economic disparities occur within or are limited to identifiable ethnic and religious

groups definitely affect the political climate, rising cases of discrimination and marginalization (Horgan & Braddock, 2010). In this sense, the people exposed to this are susceptible to join radical groups as they find no source of income or a valuable source of livelihood. With this option lingering around their environment, it takes little convincing for these vulnerable youths to engage in any form of vice so as to make a living, making uneven development a major factor.

11.5 Uneven Development Creating Extremist Development

Lack of socioeconomic prosperity among youths may be a main factor that leads to extremism, however what leads to its absence is uneven development. Particularly, when focusing on most radicalized areas, it becomes apparent that lack of development in these areas makes them more vulnerable. The overall access to basic needs and services become limited with the lack of even development, thus making access to these facilities unequally distributed within a country. For example, people often expect that there should be less access to basic services in rural than in urban areas. It is also to be expected that richer communities will have better access to services than poorer communities. According to the Failed State Index of the Fund for Peace, uneven development in Kenya in 2012 is scored at 8.2 (on a scale where fully uneven development = 10 and fully even development = 1) (Fundforpeace, 2012). Lamentably, the stretch of this inequality is largely experienced in North Eastern Province (NEP). Due to its arid nature and harsh terrain, present and past government have consistently neglected the region making it face dire problems and service shortage. To make matters worse, the rise in extremism and violent attacks has further hampered these inequalities.

Considering the education sector, since the rise of extremist attacks; students in both primary and secondary have not received sufficient quality education since late last year because

of the scarcity of teaching instructors. The burden on teachers who opted to stay has increased substantially, a teacher who taught less than 10 lessons per week would now be forced to teach 30 lessons in a week to make up for the short-fall (Osman, 2015). Normally, the teachers-student ratio was 1:60 which was bad by even then, but when the teachers called it a day in Mandera, the ratio doubled up to 1:120, a total of 91,000 students have been affected by the changes in the education sector (Osman, 2015). Without a doubt, these gaps in the education sector give more room for radicalization, resulting the youth to fall in the hands of extremists who warmly welcome them.

11.6 Historical Wounds Fuelling Today's Aggression

Uneven development and marginalization of Somali and the Muslim community is not a novel discrimination. Regrettably, it stretches back to early pre/post-independence Kenya as explained earlier and has persisted up to present day. Following independence, Kenya adopted the British model of governance, thus having a centralized form of government with the political power concentrated in Nairobi. The capital being predominantly Christian and following the colonialists' mannerism, Islamic areas were second-placed in the national agenda. This early discrimination caused the Muslims to feel left out and not part of the country. Equally, it caused the government and non-Muslims to question the patriotism of the Muslims. This perception was strengthened by the fact that Kenyans of Somali origin agitated for a separate homeland with the option of joining their brethren in Somalia.

This feeling of not being part of Kenya was largely felt in the formation of government, where Muslims were not allocated any position. Even before this, pre-independence negotiations

such as the Lancaster House conferences³², many ethnicities were represented except for Kenyan-Somalis. Consequently when Kenya attained independence in 1963, the Somali community felt left out from the outset (Mburu, 1999:99). This ultimately led to the *Shifita* separatist war (1963–67), as highlighted before; this call for separation had been felt in other parts of the region immediately after Somalia's independence in 1960, with most Somali speaking communities in the Horn of Africa wanting to unite. This caused alarm in the region as no government was ready to grant the separatists what they wanted.

In response to the guerrilla war, the government enforced a brutal response that did not give room for dialogue or negotiations. The entire north-eastern part of Kenya and all regions bordering the Somali-populated regions were declared security operation zones. Recounts from Athman Ali, a resident of Kiunga in the coastal area of Lamu on the Kenyan border with Somalia to the Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) portrayed the atrocities committed by the government upon the Bajuni community. He narrated that; they were happier under the British colonialists than during the rule of Jomo Kenyatta. He accused the former president of sending security officers to uproot local people from 12 villages on the pretext that the Bajunis (a predominantly Muslim community) had sided with the Somali *shifita* militia (Ndurya, 2012). Such are the grievances that Muslims have harboured against successive governments in Kenya, resulting to historical injustices against Muslims. Because of the *shifita* war, Kenyan-Somalis who are the faces of Islam in Kenya have grown up with 'rage' against these successive governments, thus making it easy for young Somali Muslims to join extremist groups in the name of 'defending' their faith and avenging atrocities.

³² The Lancaster House conferences were three meetings (1960, 1962, and 1963) in which Kenya's constitutional framework and independence were negotiated.

Linking the *shifita* war to present day, a renewed call for self-determination is spreading within the coastal region and North Eastern Kenya. This has been chiefly influenced by the historical and present day injustices and unaddressed grievances being experienced in the regions. Extremist groups such as Al-Shabab and separatist organization like Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) have taken advantage of this, using it as a channel to other motives. Despite the disparities of these groups in their goals and objectives, the main underlying reasons are remarkably similar: socioeconomic, marginalization and historical injustices. Such grievances can be echoed in the sentiments of Sheikh Aboud Rogo in one of his preaching's before the Mpeketoni attacks. He states that:

“It has been 50 years since we began participating in the voting system day in and out; the Muslims have had their lands taken away from them. For example, the ‘disbelievers’ came to Mpeketoni in 1972 and right now there are 100 churches and one mosque in the town, despite the fact that the land ‘belongs to’ Muslims. Therefore, dear Muslim brothers we have tried this system for over 50 years and it did not bear any fruits. Let us now try this system (‘Jihad’)” (Zelin, 2015).

From the above misleading statement, it is evident that rouge Muslim leaders such as Rogo have hijacked the grievances of the people of the region into a radical message of justifying extremism. He does this manipulatively as he emphasises how they have tried to follow the system in place but have not gained any fruits from it, hence calling for the believers to try another system, that of extremism. Before bashing out the statement as irrelevant and solely corrupt, it is important to pinpoint that there is indeed a loss of faith in the system in place. This lack of confidence creates such radical statements that encourage radicalization and its calls of defying the system in place. Therefore, to counter radicalization, we must begin from the

historical genesis of such statements and not only seek to address the outcomes of such statements.

11.7 Religious Link to Radical Ideologies

Religion is often associated with extremism, and is perceived as one of the major contributors to the spread or belief of radical interpretations of any religion. As for extremism in Kenya, the case is neither different, from previous analysis extremism is linked to the Islamic faith. Like in many other parts of the world, the indoctrination of Muslims youths into the belief that wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and other parts of the Middle East is a global campaign against Islam, hence the need for ‘Jihad’ against this campaign. However, it is important to remember the words of William Chittick when analyzing Islamic extremism. He emphasized that; “If we realize that jihad does not mean ‘holy war’ but ‘struggle’ then the struggle can take place on three levels: against a visible enemy, against the devil or against self or (*nafs*) ego” (Chittick, 2001). It is this struggle to understand the meaning and purpose of Jihad that has made extremist preachers to hoodwink worshippers into believing that Jihad is a call for war. These deceptive interpretations have also been preached in Kenya and the results have led to a rise in extremism.

The deceased infamous Muslim cleric Aboud Rogo was a skilful indoctrinator. In one of his many teachings he cleverly uses verses and *hadiths*³³ from the Quran to manipulate and justify the need to wage violence. The Quran quotes that;

‘Jihad is ordained for you though it is repugnant to you, it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows all things and you know not’ (Al-Bagarah 217).

³³ Are the collections of the reports purporting to quote what the Islamic prophet Muhammad said verbatim on any matter

From this scripture the Sheikh twists around these wordings to give the congregation another interpretation. He states that; “it is incumbent upon the Muslims to rise up and declare that this Kenyan constitution does not suit us as we have the Quran as our only constitution and we want to live by it, as soon as the Muslims do this, the *Kuffar* will wage war against us and the Muslims will be obligated to counter this by rising up to fight, hence we must implement Al-Bagarah 217” (Al-Kataib, 2015).

He later draws from the hadith by Prophet Sallallahu Alayhi Wa-sallam when he said: “if you trade in *inna* (a type of usury) and follow the tails of cows and become content with being farmers and ignore jihad, Allah will impose on you a humiliation that would not be taken away until you go back to jihad” (Al-Kataib, 2015). He relates this with the current status of Muslims in the coastal region and country at large. Emphasising on the persecution they have experienced throughout the country’s history. He concludes by highlighting that:

“Our country Kenya is now openly waging a war against Islam and the Quran and the Muslims are constantly being oppressed. Whoever decides to sit back and stay there will remain in a state of humiliation and fear. He does not know when he will be caught; does not know when he will be oppressed or tortured because the government has openly come out and is blatantly waging a war against Islam. Muslims will never succeed without taking up arms. Let us not be deceived by their parliament and the system of the *Kuffars*. If we really want to follow Islam, then the solution is for Muslims to rise up, take up arms and head to the nearest front where jihad has been established. They must exert all their effort and assist their brothers there so that the rule of the Quran can be implemented. Failure to do so will cause us to remain in this state for eternity” (Ndzovu, 2013:12)

The above quotation displays the manner in which, Islamic teachings can be used to propagate hatred that later leads to violent extremism. With such messages being preached to vulnerable youth, it increases the likelihood of them being convinced that surely they have to retaliate against the system. Nevertheless, what is interesting to observe is the contradiction that emerge from his teachings. As much as he criticizes the government for the injustices it has

committed upon the Muslims and urges them to denounce the government and the system. By commencing with the statement (Our country Kenya), depicts how ambiguous it is for Rogo to shun the entire Kenyan system yet again acknowledge that it is our country. Such inconsistency of ideas demonstrates how extremists lack solid claims and only seek avenues to identify with.

11.8 Lack of Kenyan Identity Crafting an Extremist Identity

Exclusivity of Kenyan-Somalis and Muslims from accessing the privileges enshrined in the constitution leaves a gaping gap of identity less individuals. As explained before, the historical ignorance of Somalis and Muslims has led to a feeling of being less Kenyan amongst the community. Especially those from the Coastal and North Eastern regions, the feeling of second-class citizenship lingers constantly. Despite being born and regarded as Kenyan nationals, fellow Kenyans and especially police officers treat them as ‘foreigners’. Particularly since the rise of insecurity after the Kenyan invasion of Somalia, Muslim people are told to ‘go home’, are often disregarded as fellow Kenyans by government officials and arbitrarily arrested.

This mistreatment has led to Somalis and Muslims to be associated as the prime perpetrators of extremist attacks. Take for example how Kenyan nationals turned against and attacked Somali and Kenyan-Somali nationals following the detonation of an explosive device on 18 November 2012 in Eastleigh, Nairobi. This was, however, not the first occasion on which people had retaliated against Somalis: on 30 November 2012 an angry mob armed with sticks and stones attacked Somalis living in Eastleigh after a grenade attack on St Polycarp Church killed one child and injured nine others. During this incident at least 13 Somalis were injured and property was destroyed (Bosire, 2012). The xenophobic treatment of Somalis as the distant ‘other’ has intensified the lack of a sense of belonging. It has also bolstered the chances of them

being recruited into extremist groups as they seek a place to fit in. For this to change inclusion needs to be practiced when responding or countering extremism, since extremist attackers are often un-identifiable and use the masses to hide and wage their attacks. Thus, lashing out against the collective is not only ineffective, but is also counter-productive. In effect, a real danger exists that those not involved in affected communities might see the need to defend themselves against the 'other', thus driving individuals to extremism.

Most extremist attacks in Kenya are usually regarded as terrorist attacks, as controversial as this may seem due to the weaknesses of defining terrorism; it is inevitable not to touch on counter-terrorism strategies. This being the case, it is necessary to evaluate these policies and see how they positively or negatively affect the society. Effectiveness of counter-terrorism initiatives depends largely on the level of cooperation between government forces and local communities (Hastings, 2004). For the case of Kenya, the latter is contrary due to the absence of collaborative strategies while countering extremism. In this sense, there has been a growth of extremism due to the policies initiated to counter it, making it one of the biggest challenges in the country. As Kofi Annan once explained on the influence of counterterrorism strategies he noted that:

Past cases show that Governments that resort to excessive use of force and indiscriminate repression when countering terrorism, risk strengthening the support base for terrorists among the general population, such measures generally invite counter-violence, undermine the legitimacy of counter-terrorism measures and play into the hands of terrorists (United Nations, 2006).

Unfortunately, Annan's words fully describe Kenya's approach towards rising extremism. The brutality that has been enforced towards suspected extremist has resulted to the rapid growth of extremism, radicalization and negative sentiments upon the government. Muslim and Somali youths have joined extremist groups as a counteraction to or in retaliation

against what they see as ‘collective punishment’ driven by a misguided perception around the country, that all Muslims and Somalis are “terrorists or potential terrorists” (Botha, 2013: 18). Since Kenya began to actively counter extremism after the 1998 bombings the Muslims and Somalis have been targeted as the main culprits that instigate this vice. They have been arbitrarily arrested and incarcerated on suspicion of being engaged in terrorist activities, which is part of a wider pattern that intensified after the terrorist attacks in the US on 11 September 2001. Consequently, they feel marginalized, excluded and without justice within the Kenyan society.

11.9 Operation *Usalama*³⁴ not so *Salama*³⁵

To contextualize how this profiling takes place, let’s look at “Operation *Usalama* Watch” that was initiated back in 2014 after a string of attacks in Nairobi and Mombasa. The operation was intended to root out extremist elements within different areas of the cities. In the end, it turned out to be one solely targeting Somalis as the Police Officers focused on neighbourhoods such as Eastleigh and South C that are predominantly inhabited by Somalis. According to a Human Rights Watch (HRW) report; the round-up operation, which began on April 1, was riddled with abuses. Government security forces raided homes, buildings, and shops; looted cell phones, money, and other goods; harassed and extorted residents; and detained thousands including journalists, Kenyan citizens, and international aid workers without charge and in appalling conditions for periods well beyond the 24-hour limit set by Kenyan law (HRW, 2014). It further explains how the community has been stigmatized and portrayed as “terrorists” by the xenophobic narrative of the State, and other Kenyans psyched against them.

³⁴ Peace and Security (Own Translation)

³⁵ Safety (Own Translation)

The detainees experienced harassment and were living in deplorable conditions in the detention camps that were reminiscent of the British concentration camps during colonization. In early 1950s, thousands of Kikuyus were detained in concentration camps by the colonialists following attacks by Mau Mau³⁶, most of the victims of these horrendous actions by the British, and survivors are still seeking remedy in Britain (Elkins, 2005). Today, thousands of Somalis are held in similar detention camps at various police stations and Kasarani stadium in Nairobi undergoing profiling. The script is the same; the actors are different. The British Gulag policy that incarcerated Kikuyu's is now the government's prescription for Somalis (Kerrow, 2014:23). Regrettably, the Kenyan government seems to be reading from the old colonial script and is emulating the same brutal methods used against liberation movements like Mau Mau towards the Somalis.

Many victims of this vicious treatment described the detentions as gruesome. In the operation in Nairobi, detainees said they were typically held until authorities at the Kasarani stadium screened them to establish whether they are lawfully present in Kenya, in what appears to be a slow and non-transparent process, after screening, detainees are charged with either unlawful presence, deported, released, or ordered to relocate to refugee camps (HRW, 2015). Most of the detainees had no clue of what would happen to them and why they were being held even after proving their legality in the country. Many saw this as an extorting mission as the police officers could hint or demand for some payment so as to clear them quickly or release them. Cases of bribery and extortion dominated all through the operation some victims explained how this was orchestrated.

³⁶ Revolutionary group that fought the British to attain independence

Yusuf, a 20-year-old refugee registered in Nairobi, relocated to Dadaab refugee camp after he was arrested at his home in early April, he spent six days in Pangani police station and Kasarani stadium, and was only released after his uncle paid KES 9,000 (80 Euros) to a policeman at Kasarani, he narrated after his arrival in Dadaab: “This is when I came to the camp; the government was saying all refugees should come to the camps, I don’t have close relatives here but there are problems in Somalia so I can’t go there either” (Hassan, 2014). Another victim, Mariam, a 32-year-old registered refugee who was arrested while visiting Nairobi, was among the 83 people deported on April 9 after Kenyan authorities refused to accept her refugee status document. Her children, ages 5, 10, and 15, are living in Kenya’s Kakuma refugee camp with her elderly father. She told Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) “I hope the government of Kenya will let me go back to my family, the only home I have is that refugee camp (Omondi, 2014).” These examples reveal how Kenya’s “counter-terrorism” strategies undermine the rights of Somalis and Muslims in general. It has also served as a radicalizing agent as extremists find reasons to justify their cause.

11.10 Online Indoctrination

The complexities of radicalization seem to have stretched beyond the classical perceived agents. As the world gets technologically advanced each day, so do extremist groups enhance better ways of recruiting followers and spreading their message. This so to speak, has been made possible through the online world that has been granted to us thanks to modern day technology. Online radicalization has taken centre stage in the recruitment and preaching of extremist narratives. The connectivity that technology has offered not only serves advantageously in the handling of day-to-day activities, but also favours those that seek to link up with extremist networks.

It is therefore necessary for one to analyze the influence of online radicalization when accessing violent extremism. The myriad of information flowing in the online platform, acts as a theatre of radicalization as this avenue is broad and hard to detect or nub misleading data at a glance. Every minute over 571 new websites are created, Facebook users share over 600,000 pieces of data and over 48 hours of content is uploaded to YouTube (Frenett, 2015). In a space this vast it is inevitable that some of that content will be undesirable, and a fraction of it will incite violence and extremism. Attempts to take down this data have met limited success for this very reason; once one account is deleted; two brand new ones spring up in its place. In January of this year, Al-Shabab had its Twitter account suspended, within hours it had simply added a '1' to the end of its original name, recreated the account and has proceeded to tweet to this today (Frenett, 2015). As a result, online extremism has become more simplistic for the recruiter and more challenging for those trying to de-radicalize or counter extremist narratives. The road to violent extremism has come closer and is just a click away, Facebook like away and twitter following away, leaving the youths more vulnerable than ever towards radicalization.

The most important role for a recruiter is to convince his targets that they can achieve something bigger and better with their lives (Horgan, 2014). Online radicalization easily fulfils this deceitful hope of self-actualization since it lacks much scrutiny and questioning from law makers or society shapers. Additionally, it becomes even simpler if the targeted group is faced with multiple challenges within the society they live in. In Kenya, the atmosphere for online radicalization is fresh and ripe as many youth face difficulties such as unemployment, exclusion, oppression and marginalization. These factors set the right temperature for an oven of radicalization that bakes extremism and violence. Another stimulator is the rapid growth on internet use in the country. Kenya has a high penetration of mobile phones standing at 71.3

percent with 28.08 million mobile subscriptions in the country up from 26.49 million subscriptions (HumanIPO, 2012). Majority of the users are youths that spend most of their time on social media and networks, thus making it easier for them to bump into anything while they are online, this ultimately furthers the risk of online recruitment by extremists.

It begins with preaching's, propaganda videos and verses from the Quran. Then they ask questions about the military, where the police are stationed, and what the security looks like at different addresses, soon enough, even middle-class youth may be tempted to join themselves (Horgan, 2014). These features have been applied indefinitely in Kenya as radical Imams and preachers have delivered online teachings for the populace. Moreover, Al-Shabab has used propaganda videos as an effective tool for traversing their dogma. Extensive videos are available online and can be accessed unlimitedly by whoever wants to do so. As I was conducting my research I analyzed a range of these videos so as to understand the strategies used in online radicalization. One video that struck my attention was the One posted on 3rd March 2015 entitled; Mpeketoni: 'Reclaiming back Muslims lands under Kenyan occupation'

The video represents a dextrous compilation of messages, inspired to propagate the 'victories' of the group in the operation and diminish the government's response towards such assaults. The use of counter-narratives were highly employed in the 34 minute video, this was executed through altering the phrases used by the government to their favour. Phrases such as '*Operation Linda Nchi*³⁷' that lead to Kenya's incursion into Somalia were twisted to '*Operation Linda Uislamu*³⁸'. Another interesting observation was the use of government statements, such

³⁷ Kenyan Military operation to safeguard/protect the countries security launched in 2011

³⁸ Counter-narrative language used by Al-Shabab, operation safeguard/protect Islam

as; President Uhuru's speech after the attacks. One caption was; The president blamed political networks calling it a political attack, while he lies to the Kenyan public, a great transformation is taking place in East Africa as Muslims have risen up to restore their dignity and liberate their land from *Kuffar*. (Al-Kataib, 2015). This caption was repeated severally as the video showed the Al-Shabab militants killing and terrorizing Mpeketoni residents.

Personally, I felt like the video was formulated to reach the heart of disgruntled Muslims and Somalis that feel neglected and oppressed. It was also not meant for the Muslim and Somali audience only but also the larger Kenyan population, as it's scripted in Kiswahili and English. This video is a mix of everything as it carries sermons from Imams such as Aboud Rogo and other prominent Muslim clerics. It also has a repetitive song all through that glorified the actions of the extremist. The song sung in Swahili says: *...sauti za jihadi zimefika Mpeketoni, sauti za jihadi zimefika nyumbani, sauti za jihadi zinakomboa pwani...*³⁹ As I watched the video repetitively so as to grasp the message it conveys, I unknowingly found myself humming and singing to the tune subconsciously. This made me realize how powerful such videos are as I found myself unwittingly chanting to the extremist's song. I imagined how it could be for an oppressed Somali or Muslim individual were they to see the video, could they have resonated more to the message being dispersed? As I wondered about this issue, one thing that stood out was that, online radicalization was indeed a large theatre for extremists as they do not have major barriers in diffusing their message.

³⁹ ...the voices of Jihad have reached Mpeketoni, voices of Jihad have reached home, and voices of Jihad are liberating the Coastal region... (Own Translation)

Chapter 3: Alternative Approaches to Countering and Responding to Violent Extremism

1. Media Counter-Narratives and Discourses

1.1 Online Media

As simplistic as online radicalization may be, counteracting it is the biggest hurdle because of the complexities that accompanies online supervision. Nonetheless, it is always worth trying to engage with this multifaceted online world as positive results can be found. Just like the extremist groups use forms of online media to recruit followers, it is possible to reach out to vulnerable or recruited individuals with counteractive messages that can save them from the deceitful hands of the extremists. In this attempt, a lot of convincing, positive and encouraging stories need to be applied as a counter measure to the daily bombardment of violent images, pictures and stories propagated by extremist groups. This would hopefully assist in designing for alternative “social interactions”. In this endeavour, it is also important to remember the extremist and recruiters as well, countering their messages and infiltration into society is not enough. It is vital to remember the recruiters themselves while designing strategies to counter their actions. Since they have the distorted story of extremism and violence, finding ways of luring them to counteractive side would be an added advantage as they could convince their followers to deserting the path of extremism.

The Kenyan population is very vibrant in the online world as the accessibility to technology and internet has been made easy and cheap by different service providers and the government. This being the case, the increase use of social media and other forms of online media has been on the rise as many citizens gain their news, entertainment and knowledge of what is revolving around them through these online platforms. In this regard, the online world

serves as a point of reference, for action and change within the Kenyan setting. Many movements and calls for action have commenced through the use of social media resulting to positive change. The famous hashtags (#) on twitter and Facebook have created online movements such as the famous #Kenyansontwitter (KOT) that have condemned and rebuked many social problems leading to positive social changes.

One example is the reactions Kenyans had towards Cable News Network's (CNN) statement about Kenya being a "hotbed of terror". This led to a media outrage towards the news network, people used the hashtag #SomeoneTellCNN which appeared on 75000 tweets in only one day to criticise the US network and demand for an apology (Independent, 2015). The outcomes of these reactions had an impact as Tony Maddox, CNN's global executive vice president and managing director flew all the way to Nairobi from Atlanta to apologize personally to President Kenyatta and Kenyans. He stated that; "We acknowledge there is a widespread feeling that the report annoyed many, which is why we pulled down the report as soon as we noticed. It wasn't a deliberate attempt to portray Kenya negatively, it is regrettable and we shouldn't have done it. There is a world at a war with extremists; we know what a hotbed of terror looks like, and Kenya isn't one," (New Times, 2015). From this example we can see how impactful online movements can be, making them vital in countering violent extremism.

Contextualizing how to use online platforms as mediums of change is crucial, especially while dealing with sensitive issues such as violent extremism and terrorism. As a starting point, it's important to analyze extremist contents located online, since it provides a rich stream of data that is helpful to understand the dynamics of extremist groups and the attitudes and beliefs of their followers and sympathizers (Frenett, 2013). In this case it is necessary to interact with the

data provided by extremist platforms so as to know which intervention methods can be used to counter their actions. As one can see with Al-Shabab, taking down their website lead to the quick mushrooming of another one in a darker corner of the web. Therefore, it is paramount for researchers and even security agents to locate these spaces. Knowing where those who we wish to counter are interacting is most useful information gathering tool in an area which is so often information light (Frenett, 2013). Hence, the information gathered should not be thrown away as useless; rather it should be used as a benchmark of addressing extremism ills and needs.

Referring back to the cases of online radicalization and radicalization steered by Al-Shabab, most subscribers show the lack of guidance and stewardship in the understanding of Islamic concepts such as *Sharia*, *Jihad* and *Hijra*⁴⁰. This absence of guidance serves as an advantageous point for recruiters as they easily manipulate the users with their version of these concepts. For us to offset such advancements, it is essential to employ counter-messaging tactics that can provide a clear understanding of the concepts. To be active in this kind of counter-messaging, an individual requires theological expertise and skills in persuasive arguments: The goal is to “use the power of scripture” to delegitimize the radical narrative (Goodstein, 2010). Consequently, the need to collaborate with organizations such as the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims (SUPKEM) and other religious organizations would foster grounds for salvaging the users from being swallowed into the world of extremism.

By diffusing a counter-message the user is left with alternative versions of the story leaving it up to them to decide which path to follow. This being a vulnerable position, it is necessary for one to denounce the actions of the extremist, which cause harm and violence to the

⁴⁰ To migrate from the land of the disbeliever to the lands where Sharia is fully implemented

society as opposed to the proper interpretation of Islamic concepts. In this case counter-narratives could be direct refutation of the religious teachings administered by extremists or former extremists undermining the appeal to joining extremist groups by discussing the grim reality of the extremist world (Frenett, 2013). Another approach could be survivors sharing stories of their encounters with extremist and outlining the gruesome violence committed by the extremist. Such stories will give the subscribers a true picture of extremism particularly, hearing it from different actors. Some other approaches proposed could be the use of former extremist to pose as new recruits in online forums and probing the arguments put forward by extremists of all irks for their weakness, attempting to sow seeds of doubt into the minds of would be extremists thinking of becoming more involved (Petre, 2015).

From these approaches, online countering of violent extremism becomes a sustainable response that focuses on the battle of hearts and minds instead of engaging in heat ridden dialogues that end up to be counterproductive. I say this because, from analysing the reactions of Kenyans online in the aftermath of violent extremist attacks, many messages that fill up the newsfeeds are usually based on hateful sentiments towards Muslims and Somalis. This being the case, we continually contribute in the profiling and discriminating these groups, hence contributing to the one sided discourse of terrorism that has been explained in the first section. As a result we negate to integrate these vulnerable groups thus pushing them further towards extremism.

An initiative that may transform the minds of many Kenyans who quickly criticise the extremist actions to be orchestrated by one community or religion should be inspired by the government. Being the main enforcer of law and security, a commendable initiative could make

a major difference. Since Kenya started combating Al-Shabab in Somalia back in 2011, there have been a lot of accusations and complains about their action both in Somalia and Kenya. Specifically from civil society and human rights organizations that have pointed a finger at the government for using the excuse of “counter-terrorism” to engage in state terrorism.

These accusations bearing much evidence are hardly addressed or acknowledged by the government. To the extremists benefit, they have used this information as a foundation of justifying their actions, claiming to be acting in response to the government’s brutal treatment. From this front, it is imperative for the government to use the tools at its disposal to undermine online communications of extremists, with a particular focus on countering accusations and misinformation spread online about its own policies and actions (National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, 2010). Clearing up these claims by setting the story straight would not only weigh down the claims of the extremists but build trust towards government agencies that are dealing with terrorism. A greater focus needs to be placed on up-skilling, fostering, spreading and nurturing new interactions across the false divides and uplifting the voices of individuals such as former extremists, community leaders and survivors of violent extremism. In the end, countering online extremism should have an agenda that is more than take downs and discarding extremist messages. A need for increased focus on creative designing of counter-messages to directly engaging with extremists’ narratives is required. Unless so, the government will find itself in a fruitless online game with extremist, expending a lot of efforts but with very little results to show.

1.2 Broadcast Media

Moving away from online media and the role it has in counter-extremism, the common classical media is another area that is necessary to analyze. As seen before the news media form a formidable backbone of discourse formation within terrorism studies, having the power to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct narratives, its role in countering extremist ideologies is essential. Media often focuses on violence and sad stories, bearing in mind that bad news spreads faster and profits more than good news, violence has been a focal area of coverage. Unfortunately, this has not contributed positively in the countering of violent extremism. Acts of hate broadcasted over and over again can have devastating consequences for relations between different ethnic and religious communities (Media Council of Kenya, 2014).

There is little doubt that the media has the potential to deepen divides by offending or confronting cultural and ethnic sensitivities. According to UNESCO the media can serve to promote tolerance and acceptance of difference, accordingly, the media must challenge prevailing attitudes and assumptions concerning religious diversity, move beyond scripted stereotypes and strip away the ignorance that breeds mistrust and suspicion (UNESCO, 2011). Hence, the media should be used cautiously while dealing with issues of extremism and attacks. This is because of the power it has in contributing to societal discourses; we should therefore remember that whoever has the storyline has a great positioning for socially constructing the narrative of “knowledge” for the general public. In a society of winners and losers, good and evil, in or out, this kind of insight into interactions is vitally important. Relating this to terrorism, media can be used to mitigate negative ideologies, stereotypes and other biased views that only reinforce the dominant discourses of terrorism.

In an effort to transform the media's role in maintaining dominant discourses and assist in countering extremist ideologies, a paradigm shift needs to be taken in how media portrays certain extremism issues or perhaps, boost the voice of alternative storytellers. As said before media has focused on violence for a long time and this has underpinned the status quo of terrorism which has largely been violence for violence. To contributively have a part in countering extremist dogma, the media should shift to socially responsible and relevant stories that can have positive impacts in the community. For this to be achieved, the tonality of reporting and coverage of terrorism stories have to be conscious of the viewers' interpretations'.

Take the coverage of the brutal Operation *Usalama* Watch that was carried out by the government in 2014 to fish out Al-Shabaab suspects and sympathisers. Almost half of the TV news stories analysed, or 48% show police either firing bullets to disperse rowdy crowds, ordering youths to crawl on the ground, kneel as they move, lie on their bellies or even being battered as they are forced to board police vehicles, mosques being ransacked and so on, such clips were shown by the media with blatant disregard of the feelings and reaction of the victims' family members (Media Council of Kenya, 2014). From such images, viewers can deduce different narratives if the story conveyed is not rational and unbiased. I consider a possibility of four narratives emerging from such portrayals:

Narrative A: people of Somali origin are potential "terrorists". Being the targeted community during the operation, an uninformed viewer can quickly make this assumption.

Narrative B: All Muslims are potential "terrorists" because most suspected terrorists arrested are Muslims.

Narrative C: Islam “preaches” and “supports” radicalization and violent extremism.

Narrative D: The security forces target of ethnic group is an inevitable process in the war against terror.

Such stories leave the story hanging, the view to make their own assumptions and conclusions and do not show different sides of the story. Issues such as state terrorism committed through human rights violations and other brutal treatment are not part of the story making it easy for the view to conclude that the actions of the government are justified as they are countering violent extremism.

1.2.1 Different Tonalities one Story

For a wider perspective to be realized I believe that positive and neutral tonalities of news coverage’s would serve as catalysts of change within terrorism discourses. Where positive coverage can be defined as stories presenting Islam, war on terror and religious intolerance in ways enhancing the consumer knowledge of Islam by explaining its teachings, its diversity, and revealing a degree of understanding of terrorism and religion as well as presenting a range of opinions, and feature stories on Islamic beliefs (Newman, 2011). Positive stories use non-inflammatory language. Neutral stories on the other hand are those that are neither positive nor negative and are also non-inflammatory.

By applying positive and neutral tonalities, focus on issues like human rights violations, extremist attacks and actions, radicalization and de-radicalization, inter-faith dialogues, interpretation of Islamic concepts, former extremist testimonies and stories, victims and survivors voices amongst many other uniting and unbiased stories can be adopted so as to transform the perception of terrorism and what it entails. Interacting through these stories can

bring together communities and religions that have historically not been at par because of the stereotypes and biases that each had about the other.

If media wants to participate in positive and neutral stories it is important to be cautious of the language used while narrating these stories. As seen before in the first chapter, language plays a formative part of the discourse of terrorism and therefore should be used sensitively. This, I believe is the most challenging part as many even within the field of terrorism studies are faced with this conundrum. Journalists often find it difficult to find the right words and images to help us understand the nature of terrorism and religious fanaticism without falling into the trap of negative media coverage of terrorism (Stocking & Gross, 2000). It is common for media as well as researchers like me to be caught in this trap. We often use words like terrorist, extremist, radical, fundamentalist when referring to violence committed by non-state actors and groups. In other worse case scenarios driven by the biased discourse of terrorism, its association to Islam is prevalent, thus perpetrators are called; Jihadists, Islamic extremists, Muslim fanatics and so on. The language we use often determines and formulates the discourses we consume and believe to be valid 'truths'.

For instance, Al-Shabab the word by itself means youth however today when one mentions the word it is straight away linked to extremism and terrorism, therefore the word lost its classical meaning and is now solely associated with terrorists. Other words such as *Mujahideen*⁴¹ are commonly misused in the media even by Muslim journalists. Especially since the self named Afghan *Mujahideen*'s of 1979-89 who fought the invading Soviet army (Zalman, 2010), the word is linked to these guerrilla warriors. Remembering the two forms of Jihad (lesser

⁴¹ Plural for Mujahid; one who strives or struggles on behalf of Islam

& greater), which both advocate for self struggle, using the word out of its orthodox meaning generalizes it as a practice of armed struggle against foreigner which is not accurate.

1.2.1.1 Transformative Dialogues: Inter-Faith & Intercultural

The media can bring clarity and comprehension of the use and meaning of these concepts by promoting inter-faith and intercultural dialogues that would clear the blurry concepts to the public. Inter-faith and intercultural dialogues facilitated by the media can seek to develop a better mutual understanding and to engage in common activities. Doctrinal, communal, or religious exchanges through the media are of paramount importance, the misperceptions that result from ignorance and misinformation can only be corrected through mediated media efforts (McGill, 2014). Through provision of a platform for dialogue and clarification, the media is absolutely instrumental in enhancing clear positions in terms of ideology.

By participating in such dialogues and discussions, diversity of voices in the terrorism debate is realized leaving the audience with a clearer understanding of the multiple concepts that revolve around this field. It also gives a chance for diverse voices to be heard, hence broadening the perspective of stories being aired. This diversity would allow for critical exchanges and ventilation on issues of radicalisation, religious intolerance and terrorism this makes stories balanced (Wambugu, 2014). Media can take action to mitigate the issue of religious intolerance by: widening dissemination of inter-religious news that reflects compassion and understanding, advocacy for responsible use of the airwaves, and monitoring of the media (Ghassan, 2011). This will create more effective actions that deal with religious prejudices. Despite being difficult to evade religious biases and perspectives in the media, Ghassan believes that it can be tempered with positive stories that demonstrate inter-religious understanding (Ghassan, 2011). Tolerant

and diversity-based religious education can generate compelling stories that eventually advocate for religious tolerance.

2. Bottom-Up Approach: Involving the Community

While media constitutes the representational dimension of violent extremism, down at the grassroots recruiters are working to spread their misleading ideology so as to have many followers. Looking at how this takes place in Kenya, it ranges from forceful recruitment through abductions to seductive means through the Islamic teachings or promises of economic empowerment and other incentives that may convince one to join camp. Responding to this numerous techniques used by recruiters needs a holistic approach that deters the likelihood of one joining such groups at the same time giving an alternative to the vulnerable individual. Not being an easy task, it is important for a multi-layered approach to be taken that starts from the community at the grassroots going upwards to the policy level, where government and policy makers come up with different strategies to respond to the problem. By taking a down-up approach, the roots of extremism will be cut down before it bears any fruits, making it less necessary for government to impose stringent policies that at times accelerate the vice.

Starting from the community level, trust is one aspect that must be the foundation. With the rise of extremism and terrorism, mistrust has been brewing between ethnicities and faiths. Xenophobia has skyrocketed, specifically targeted towards Somalis and Muslims thus, transpiring hatred, confusion, chaos and distrust of these communities. Following the rampant minibuses attacks in Nairobi's Eastleigh ethnic tension between Somalis and other ethnic groups erupted into violence. It should be noted that; the clashes that have rocked Eastleigh in recent just go to show the deep mistrust between non-Somalis and ethnic or even Kenyan Somalis (Soi,

2012). These kinds of tensions limit the chances of initiating community trust that can foster a solid foundation towards countering extremism in the society. Perhaps it is necessary for the community to understand that violent extremism is a shared problem as attacks are experienced by everyone. As one victim Abdul Karim stated; “We are suffering just like everyone else. We suffered the same fate in Somalia. This is where we thought we’d be safe and now we’re not, is there no reprieve? I don’t blame Kenyans for suspecting us – but they must not stereotype,” (Al Jazeera, 2013).

2.1 Cohesion and Resilience

For such tension and mistrust to be eroded, cohesion and community resilience is relevant in fragile communities like these. In order to have productive responses to violent extremism, cohesion must be fostered, this being; the extent to which people bond around shared interests and goals, mutual knowledge, a sense of collective identity and belonging, mutual understanding and trust (OSCE, 2014: 65). Considering the situation in Kenya, cohesion should be built on the grounds of terrorism as a communal problem affecting every individual. Many recognize the possibility of extremist attack but do not feel like they can do anything to prevent or interrupt it from occurring. In this sense, violent extremism has been seen as a problem to be dealt by the security agents who have the mandate to protect the public. Nonetheless, as recent events have proved, the risk of violent extremism may be just next door, in a bus you board, or mall you go to shop. Therefore, cohesion is urgently need as it may lead to forms of collective mobilization, with individuals being prepared to pull together and intervene to address common problems for the public good (OSCE, 2014).

To see how social cohesion can be enhanced, I borrow a leaf from Sydney Australia's social media campaign #illridewithyou. After a hostage situation in a restaurant at the heart of Sydney, a media campaign was launched so as to avert tension and Islamophobia. The hashtag was borne out of goodwill; an Asian Australian woman started it, as the Twitter universe reacted to the story of a woman pledging to walk in solidarity with another woman who took her hijab off following news of the Sydney siege (Bahrawi, 2014). The campaign showed solidarity within a society that is prone to racism and xenophobia upon non-white individual. Although having its criticism with some claiming that it perpetuates the idea of good and bad Muslim, it is still worthy of good elements that shows inclusiveness and building relations between communities that would not otherwise interact. Relating this to the Kenyan experience, a similar campaign could foster harmony between distrusting communities. For example, when attackers were targeting buses a campaign encouraging solidarity and togetherness towards the Somali community that was cast the blame finger could have created social cohesion rather than tension.

To build such cohesion, community resilience is a prerequisite. This refers to the capacity of a community to withstand, respond to and recover from a wide range of adverse events, either natural or caused by an individual or a group (OSCE, 2014). Herby, Kenyan communities should be prepared to handle traumatic events that are launched by Al-Shabab in the case that an attack happens or is not prevented. This approach relies on the co-operation and support that citizens give each other during such incidences. Notably, during many attacks in Kenya resilience has not featured in the aftermath of most events.

Considering the Garissa attacks this year, the response and handling of the occurrence caught many off guard even security agencies that are meant to prevent and protect the public

from such events. Prior to the attack reports suggest that members of Kenya's security apparatus were provided forewarning of an imminent Al-Shabab attack. In addition to a number of foreign government agencies either issuing specific warnings or changing their travel advisories for the country, a number of Kenyan universities advised students and staff to be extra vigilant due to an unspecified threat (Cummings, 2014). Such advisories were even issued in Garissa, where the Garissa Teachers Training College was closed amid concerns about security prior to the attack on the adjacent university campus. The president on the other hand said this before the attacks;

“I have not heard the British issue travel advisories against Paris where ‘terrorists’ attacked the headquarters of a satirical magazine early this year. I have not heard them issue travel advisories against other European capitals. We want to send a message that they will not intimidate us with threats” (cited from the Star Newspaper).

Although highlighting the discriminatory attitudes that countries have towards other countries in the event of an attack, the president would come to chew his own words after the attack happened. This raises a lot of questions, making me wonder why the intelligence was not acted upon by the responsible agencies. Reports later indicate that a Kenya Police Air wing plane was not immediately available to fly the GSU (General Service Unit) Recce Company on the morning of the Garissa University College attack because it was flying a small group of civilians from Mombasa (Nation Newspaper, 2015).

In this case resilience towards attacks is very minimal, leaving the security officers' priorities misplaced and the general public more vulnerable to such attacks. The lack of a proper response to incidences like this leaves the public terrified and with nowhere to turn to as authorities shows a lack of responsibility. This deteriorates social cohesion as everyone may feel targeted after such a horrific raid. Community resilience is vital during such moment, especially for victims and survivors of such events. Considering how the attack was orchestrated it was

meant to bring a breakdown and mistrust between Christians and Muslims, hence, creating religious tension. In such a scenario, emphasis must be put on inter-faith resilience and dialogues that can enhance healing and reconciliation. Since Christians may point a finger at Muslims, it is important for religious leaders to come together and demonstrate that religion has nothing to do with the events that transpired; rather it was used as a justification. If this kind of attitude is taken in the aftermath of such events, religious tension can be calmed down immediately. To top on it there must be an open rebuke of the actions from both entities, denouncing the actions distances the religion from the deeds committed, emphasis should be put on how to bounce back from the incident.

In the aftermath of the Garissa attack, residents of Eastleigh ‘Little Mogadishu’ showed how resilience can be used in times of crisis and atrocities. In a show of solidarity, residents made contributions and donations to the grieving families, making donations to the Kenyan Red Cross as it tried to manage the fallout from the assault (Sperber, 2015). Three days after the attack, there was a peaceful protest against the Garissa attacks in Eastleigh, the day after that, the community leaders of Eastleigh held a food drive, followed by a blood drive the next day, six days after the massacre, Eastleigh held an interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims (Sperber, 2015). Such initiatives seek to bolster cohesion, trust and resilience within communities; it negates the intention of the perpetrators which is to divide religions. This demonstrates how communities can work together to fight a common enemy, which is violence.

Another important aspect that should be considered in the aftermath of an attack is the commitment shown by leaders. Since communities look up to leaders for solutions, answers, results and so on, their role in promoting cohesion and resilience is ultimately significant. State

officials and political leaders need to encourage cohesion and solidarity in society in the face of terrorism, to reaffirm their commitment to the rule of law and to reject violence and divisive ideas and stereotypes (Durodie, 2005: 24). Communication in such times of crisis is indispensable, yet delicate, and needs to be carefully prepared, as the public will be expecting information, statements and other interventions from state officials and political leaders (Horgan & Taylor, 2006: 593). Leaders should therefore trade their words carefully while addressing citizens after such occurrences; it is one thing to rebuke the actions perpetrated but it is another to condemn the actions in a manner that makes other communities feel blamed or targeted.

2.2 Community Security

Establishing trust, cohesion and resilience within a society is essential, particularly within a divided society that is now facing a similar problem. This unity can be a stepping stone for the communities to work together against violence that is further dividing them. In this spirit, communities can be able to work together to enhance security within their own capacity. Having already depicted the present challenge by security forces to detect, prevent and enforce security, I think it is important for the community to look for ways of assisting or providing itself security. Community security goes beyond a focus on physical security and crime, and also includes a wide range of issues affecting the quality of life of both men and women in the community, such as anti-social behaviour and social disorder (Durodie, 2005). It further looks at how communities can be made safer through crime prevention and reduction, as well as through the introduction of physical and social changes within the areas where the community is located.

In countering violent extremism community security can be one strategy that may reduce the risk of an attack, recruitment of individuals and the spread of malicious ideologies. The

community members can identify individuals being dragged towards the path of extremism through studying different behavioural changes. By being detectors of such individuals, members can salvage those who were about to be radicalized or have already been radicalized. Countering extremism should therefore be a shared responsibility and requires the joint involvement and co-operation of the police, other public authorities and members of the public (Spalek, 2012). The public can give support to those that were falling in the hands of extremist by not expelling them from the community but by understanding their condition. This may need a lot of empathy and forgiveness, being a shared responsibility the state agents should be ready to provide psychological support for both parties.

3. A Need for Empathy and Compassion

While community based projects may be one strategy of countering violent extremism, it may be difficult to implement them or make any advancements if the community does not accept such initiatives or is not ready to empathize fellow community members. Empathy is not only necessary to fully appreciate why an individual is vulnerable to the influence of violent extremism, it is also a prerequisite for programs that aim to disengage and reintegrate the potential violent extremist into the community (Holmer, 2014). CVE only works in environments with space for forgiveness and understanding and a willingness to build “exit ramps” opportunities for individuals to retreat from the influences of extremism, even if they have dabbled in the experience (Holmer, 2014: 13). Empathy is therefore a key requirement in the success of community-based initiatives.

Empathy can be seen in three ways; cognitive empathy is the ability of an individual to recognize and imagine someone else’s thoughts and feelings; putting yourself in another’s shoes

(Goleman, 2012). This kind of empathy is easy to attain as we only need to imagine ourselves in the others position and empathize with them. Affective or emotional empathy; is when you feel physically along with the other person, as though their emotions were contagious, leads to a drive to respond with an appropriate emotion of what someone else is thinking or feeling (Ekman, 2007). Lastly, there is compassionate empathy; this kind of empathy we not only understand a person's predicament and feel with them, but are spontaneously moved to help, if needed (Ekman, 2007). In this sense, we have 'empathic concern' for the other individual as we need to alleviate them from their situation. Empathy, when working against violent extremism, would entail all three types but I would put more emphasis on compassionate empathy. I feel that this serves best within communities that are experiencing violence and are not cohesive enough to work against the violence. With compassionate empathy cohesion may be slowly realized.

Communities can start to empathize, forgive, understand and harmonize if we try to implement the prior principles. It is also vital to remember that effective CVE requires willingness not only on the part of the state authorities but also from the community who among themselves face and suffer the risk of attacks, to expand their understanding on what or who drives the violence. CVE must move from the simplistic understandings of terrorism, rather it should seek to explain extremism as a fluid, nonlinear, highly individualized process, thus, reflecting interplay of drivers on several levels (Horgan, 2013).

Communities must be able to understand the factors that contribute or lead individuals towards such entities, by having such comprehensions; empathy is easily achieved, leading to actions of liberating the radicalized persons. Push factors such as; structural conditions, poverty, grievances, lack of opportunities, political processes and justice (Holmer, 2014) must be brought

forward to the community. This will enable people to understand that, success of extremist groups in attracting foot soldiers can be attributed to their ability to recognize and address the unfulfilled needs in the society. This being the case, recruiters study individuals' psychological and emotional characteristics and use this to gain favour. Revenge seekers need an outlet for their rage, status seekers need recognition, identity seekers need a group to belong to and thrill seekers need adventure (Mitroff, 2011). All these characteristics are well known to recruiters; hence, the community must be aware of these signals so as to interrupt the possibility of these seekers having their desire fulfilled. Identifying this early gives us the opportunity to create spaces or avenues where the persons can find what they seek without joining extremist groups. In this effort, the community residents, leaders, stakeholders should work hand in hand so as to develop ways of incorporating the individuals properly into society. This should be done cautiously to avoid labelling or stigmatization that may further exclude them from the society.

4. Intervening without Contravening

In identifying the motivation and vulnerability of individuals, it is necessary to remember that this is a sensitive matter. I say this because, stereotyping susceptible groups may lead to a breakdown of cohesion within the community as individuals feel victimized again. This being a puzzling dilemma that one may be caught up with, caution is needed in the way vulnerable groups are identified. On the other hand, in some situations like that of Kenya, the marginalized and victimized Somali and Muslim communities have been the main target although not exclusively they serve as the groups with highest risk of recruitment by extremists. However, as the Kenya Transition Initiative (KTI) research group emphasize, the objective should not be to precisely identify individual 'types,' but more modestly to narrow targeting efforts on a

probabilistic basis (Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014: 7). Indeed, this logic was in any case applied by KTI through placing an emphasis upon Somalis and youth (taken to be those between 16 and 35) as specifically ‘at-risk’ (Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014). It also applied a geographical sense in that the program focus was upon specific coastal regions and Eastleigh’s environs, rather than Kenya in its entirety, as these locations were deemed to be highly susceptible.

From such an approach, there are pros and cons that are unfortunately inevitable. By skewing down the vulnerable groups to be Somalis and Muslims it may help in a number of interventions against the most ‘at risk’ within the broad perspective of the groups. Herby, meaning that a careful intervention approach needs to be done where interveners like state agencies should not engage in profiling or discrimination of such groups just for being vulnerable. On a different front, such an approach may de-motivate vulnerable individuals from these groups to participate in the intervention events as they may feel targeted. This makes such an initiative sensitive as the receptiveness of the program may not gain a consensus acceptance. In this case, using former extremists from these groups may serve as a convincer to the vulnerable individuals as they may resonate with someone from their group.

5. Beyond Community: Role of the State

5.1 Assisting to Foster Success of Community-Based Programs

Intervening or interrupting extremist advances should be done carefully and at the same time should have a logical result in the end of it. The community cannot solely intervene or work alone against violent extremism but it also needs support and backing from the state agencies and civil society. For instance, it is beyond the scope of community to provide protection to individuals who are coerced into VE, or to attempt to cut the funding of VE entities in order to

undermine their ability to offer material incentives for such acts (Nasser-Eddine, Garnham, Agostino & Caluya, 2011). Communities need to work closely with law enforcers, policy makers, leaders and other stakeholders that can provide assistance to the individuals who have been detracted from the extremism path or who have left it. Without offering the proper support the likelihood of going back to the extremism route is possible.

Intervention would mean nothing if after-care programs are not provided. The community and state should invest in after-care groups that can look into the reintegration and rehabilitation of former extremists. Despite this being a costly venture that may be hindered due to lack of funding or willing investors, its relevance is most important. The goal is to have assumption free programs that would serve best the interests of former extremists, as hard as it may be to achieve such programs it is still worthy to try. Efforts to combat post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) amongst former members should not be rested upon assumptions. However, they should be built on the willingness of individuals to join the groups, facilitators and the community should not stigmatize those who join the programs but should encourage them to be a part of it. The state should provide experienced counsellors and psychologists that can assist the persons during their recovery, also, some opportunities should be provided for the rehabilitated individuals, however scare it may be.

Community-based initiatives can be a good starting point towards effective CVE, but without governments support and change of strategy, the status quo will remain. The state is the responsible agent that provides and assures the safety of citizens and is expected to act when security is threatened. Having this mandate the state can employ hard or soft power in the CVE; hard power, which can be either defensive or offensive, includes states' military; legislative;

policing; crisis planning; and border security efforts, or, soft power, which is often pre-emptive in nature, includes opportunities for the state to focus efforts along the ideological; communicative; political; and social arenas (Herbert, 2014). I will focus on the latter option as I believe that it has more advantages and promotes healing, reconciliation and cohesion.

Just like in community-based approaches, the state has the burden of identifying the targeted audience that needs to be emancipated from extremism. This challenge is harder when the government has enforced hard power on the targeted group and now is seeking for a way to intervene through soft power. For the Kenyan government, brutal treatment and discrimination of populations targeted by Al-Shabab for recruiting has made these groups feel more marginalized and alienated. The state needs to remember that they should not blanket target entire Muslim or Somali populations. Targeting should be specific to those that have the intention to commit violent acts, rather than those that harbour fundamentalist ideologies (SAHAN, 2015). Poor targeting may promote the notion of “good Muslim/Somali” and “bad Muslim/Somali”. There needs to be just as much of a platform for those with fundamentalist interpretations of Islam as there is for other Muslims. The lack of such a platform risks further marginalising an already at risk population.

To also consider while implementing state CVE initiatives is the narrative the state relays to the people, having outlined the importance of narrative in the understanding and handling of terrorism, its importance cannot escape reiteration. In most cases, a state’s narrative is dictated by its responses to acts of extremism and terrorism, as seen so far the state’s narrative can be regarded as a brutal response. The war on insecurity and the threat posed by the Al Shabab cannot be won without winning the hearts and minds of the local people, violating their rights is

absolutely not the way to go (Ali, 2012). Being a battle of winning hearts and minds, the state needs to have a positive narrative that is sensitive to the rights of everyone including the violators. Brutal government responses have provided Al-Shabab with much more ammunition to feed its narrative and propaganda. A key takeaway is that states need to be extremely careful when designing responses and legislation since not only could poorly designed measures push people to radicalisation; they could also become one of the root causes of violent extremism.

Kenya's government has remained stagnant in the way it engages in responses to violent extremist attacks, sometimes acting haphazardly without thinking of the repercussions that may emerge out of the decisions made. After the Garissa attack early this year, Deputy President William Ruto said the government had told the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) that it must close Dadaab refugee camp within three months and return its residents to Somalia, otherwise Kenya would 'relocate them ourselves' (Austin, 2015). Declaring such a statement gives a narrative that Somalis are the ones responsible for all extremist actions in the country and without the Somali refugees Kenya will be a 'safe haven'. This further alienates the Somali community, which has been picked on by the government for decades. Thankfully enough, pressure from human rights groups forced the government to tow down this decision.

What comes out of the intended action such as this shows that, the government has increasingly viewed the Dadaab refugee camps as a "cancer" that must be addressed more aggressively. According to Kenyan government officials, Dadaab has become a de-facto rest and relaxation site for Al-Shabaab fighters, as well as a rich source of new recruits, as a result, the government has portrayed Dadaab as a breeding ground for terrorism and as a base for the growing Al-Shabab presence in Kenya (The Star, 2015). The government has increased

restrictions on the movement of refugees and in some cases, forcefully repatriated refugees to Somalia. This further compounds the plight of refugees, and may inevitably push greater numbers toward radicalisation, or worse, committing acts of extremism.

To alter such positions or threats by the government, there needs to be a good working relationship between government and other Non-state actors who are dealing with vulnerable groups such as Somali refugees. By having a cordial relationship, this will build confidence and trust between the state and non-state actors leading to successful implementation of CVE. Government harassment of independent organizations is as old as the state system itself, but this wave has a twenty-first-century twist, specifically, as citizens find new ways to organize, assemble, and express themselves (Mendelson, 2011). Therefore, collaborating with civil society in eradicating extremism would give more credit to government led programs, which are at times feared by vulnerable groups because of previous government practices. Consequently, these groups turn to non-state organizations where they feel better protected from the state's brutal treatment. In this respect, government must collaborate with civil society and other non-state actors, as securing support of the citizenry is an effective approach to realizing CVE.

In a way of building trust and support, the government needs to advocate for the implementation of credible amnesty programs. Since preventing individuals from joining extremist groups may not reach out to everyone, giving them a second chance is important. As seen in the recent past the government has adopted this initiative, and had given an amnesty window for those who were willing to give up an extremist life with Al Shabab. In a statement given by security Minister Joseph Nkaissery he said; "The Government hereby calls upon all individuals who had gone to Somalia for training and wish to disassociate themselves with

terrorism to report to the National government offices,” (Ombati, 2015). This called for the amnesty and reintegration with the hope that deluded individuals can be rehabilitated back into their communities.

Taking such an initiative is a commendable way that the government can respond to violent extremism it shows the willingness to give a second chance to those that might have chosen a wrong path. However, some conditions that accompanied this call for amnesty may discredit it or make it not as effective as it should be. To start with, the amnesty window had a time frame and those who failed to prescribe to the call within the given time frame were to face the full hand of the law. In my opinion, having a time frame makes it difficult for those who may want to give up an extremist life but cannot do so at the given time due to certain hindrances to come out and seek reintegration.

Acknowledging that the government may be working at a specific time frame, it is not effective to only give a one time opportunity for possible converts. Establishing a proper amnesty program that can constantly welcome deserters may be more effective as there is always somewhere to turn to if individuals want to surrender. Another discouraging demand was that given to parents and guardians, whose children were missing or may be suspected to have joined Al-Shabab. The minister encouraged them to report such cases but emphasized that; “Failure to report will lead to presumption that they are aware and condone or are party to the terrorist training with attendant criminal consequences,”(Ombati, 2015). Such a demand fails to look at the needs of families who may be undergoing stress, stigma and seclusion from their relatives or communities for having children who have joined Al-Shabab. The pressure and conditions put towards these families may lead to a lack of trust and cooperation, demeaning the goal of CVE.

5.2 Implementing Credible Amnesty Programs

Amnesty programs can be a good way of CVE if initiated well, the aims of such programs should be to restore trust and build cohesion that had been lost or broken down due to conflict. Many may want to be part of these programs but if trust is not built, the goal of the cause may be futile therefore it is paramount for the programs to be based on trust which will attract the radicalized individuals who can seek refuge in them. From early reports, Kenya's amnesty program attracted some individuals who left the extremist life and sought refuge in the program. As Interior ministry spokesperson commented; "So far from the time the amnesty was given up to now, we have had 85 people surrendering, and they are undergoing rehabilitation and counselling. These are the people who had joined Al Shabab in Somalia and they are from all parts of the country," (Kaberia, 2015).

This is a positive start, as the program seems receptive. However, having a limited time frame may not result to a tremendous response that may encourage many to join the program; therefore I reiterate that having a timeline is not a conducive approach as it locks out possible converts. Receptiveness and trust in the credibility of the program are vital for those who may want to join government led initiatives. In Kenya, sentiments of mistrust were expressed by some individuals who were not ready to join the government program due to past practices. One man expressed this feeling; Abu Mussa (not real name) told AP that "I cannot trust the Kenyan government, they killed many returnees in the past, including my closest brother, the ATPU killed him," referring to Kenya's Anti-Terror Police Unit (Mohammed, 2015). From this statement it is clear that the government actions are haunting its efforts to CVE, thus an urgent need to rethink the strategies used by state agencies when responding to violent extremism.

6. Counterterrorism Hampering CVE

Kenya's counter-terrorism policies have been of grave concern in the national atmosphere as well as international. Many critics of these policies have labelled them to be outrageous and going beyond their mandate and goals resulting to infringement of human rights in the name of counter-terrorism. The mandated agency for counter-terrorism is the Anti-Terror Police Unit, which is a part of the Kenya National Police Service. This body was established in 2003 with the directive of combating terrorism with a mandate to; "Prevent, detect, disrupt and interdict imminent terrorist activities within the country; exhaustively investigate all terrorism and terrorism related cases; take control, secure, and cordon all scenes of terrorist incidents; create profiles for suspected terrorists and establish a databank; share intelligence with other security related agencies operating within the country; and review and monitor security of foreign missions accredited to Kenya" (Constitution, 2010).

This constitutional mandate makes it one of the most powerful security agencies of the country. The ATPU operates with a strong central command structure. In its 2004 report to the UN Counter Terrorism Committee, Kenya described the ATPU as being "located in the Office of the President" (UN, 2004). This insinuates that it gets orders from the President and other high level state officials, the authority that the ATPU bears have made it very powerful and responsible of sensitive intelligence that determine the country's security level. Despite being responsible of the country's safety, the unit has been accused of overstepping its mandate and as a result violating the rights of suspects and other individuals.

Numerous challenges arise in counterterrorism policing as authorities need to enforce some measures when necessary that may appear crude. However, it does not in any way excuse the ATPU's regular perpetration of human rights abuses, including use of excessive force during

house raids; torture and ill-treatment of detainees; arbitrary detentions, including disappearances; and rendering terrorist suspects to countries where they face a real risk of torture (Human Rights Watch, 2012). In addition, counterterrorism-related abuses often indiscriminately target entire communities and, as a result, erode community trust in government. As an editorial in the weekly newspaper Friday Bulletin which criticized Kenyan security forces for human rights abuses against ethnic Somalis, observed: “Violence against locals will only alienate the community further thereby making them hostile to security machinery (2012). Human rights violations by police and other security forces are both unlawful and counterproductive. Violent extremists can employ human rights violations as a recruitment tool and can use them to claim justification for terrorist violence.

After the Westgate mall attack in 2013, the ATPU overstretched its mandate as the number of government linked disappearances, abductions, torture and extra-judicial killings among other violations increased. Media reported that authorities had arrested or questioned over 40 individuals in relation to the Westgate attack (Xinhua, 2013) one of the men arrested by the ATPU for suspected involvement in the Westgate attack was Swaleh Abdullah Said, a Kenyan who lived in the Mombasa area with his wife and her young child. According to Swaleh, he was arrested in Mombasa on October 9, 2013, by civilian-clothed ATPU officers who covered his face with a jacket, wrestled him to the floor, and threw him into a waiting car; the officers beat him and took him for questioning at the ATPU’s offices in Mombasa (Open Society Foundation, 2013). On October 17, Swaleh was brought to Mombasa Lower Court No. 3 and charged with attempting to commit a felony, possession of a weapon (a grenade), and being a member of Al Shabaab. Separately, security officials told the media that Swaleh was involved in the killing of dissident Al Shabab members (Oketch, 2013). During his October 17 court appearance, he

complained to the court that he had been beaten and continued to complain about his health. The judge denied Swaleh bail after the investigating officer said that Swaleh was a national security threat and that terrorist suspects in the past had fled after being granted bail (Reuters, 2013).

Experiences like that of Swaleh and many others became a common treatment of suspected individuals and communities. During the brutal Operation “*Usalama Watch*” the detention, arrest and disappearances of suspects and targeted groups became a daily occurrence. These actions targeted the Kenyan Somali’s who were being used as a scapegoat in a counter-terror operation, which saw thousands subjected to harassment, extortion, ill-treatment, forcible relocation and expulsion. HRW noted that; “Kenyan police and security forces are using abusive and discriminatory tactics in the name of national security, targeting entire communities, this crackdown clearly violates basic rights of Kenyans, refugees, and other foreign nationals and does nothing to improve security (HRW, 2014). The numerous violations were largely overlooked by the government, which claimed to be acting in the best interest of the countries security. On the contrary, the number of attacks as highlighted in the previous chapter did not diminish but rather augmented. This period; saw the use of state force to “counter-terrorism” which led to the state practicing terrorism itself. The kind of treatment that Somalis and other suspected groups went through was reminiscent of the post-colonial treatment of the Somalis by the government. Applying similar techniques and discriminative policies made it clear that the government’s perception and strategy is to deprive the Somalis an opportunity to live in the country without being handpicked as the group that is always involved in extremist acts.

Besides brutal counterterrorism operations, the security agents have allegedly been engaging in unlawful killings and disappearances of suspected persons whose whereabouts are

never acknowledged. One infamous case is that of Sheikh Aboud Rogo, the coastal based Muslim preacher was considered an influential and charismatic Imam by his followers but was also seen as a recruiter and major threat by security agents. He was on U.S. and UN terrorist sanction lists and was facing criminal charges for terrorism-related activities and had also been charged and acquitted of crimes relating to a 2002 hotel bombing in Kenya (Odula, 2012). The man who was considered a “hero” by his followers and a “villain” by the authorities would come to meet his death in suspicious way. Rogo was killed in his car in late August 2012 by unidentified gunmen. His wife, Haina Said Saggar was with him in the car at the time of his shooting, she recounted the events as follows:

My husband was driving and two of my daughters and other relatives were in the van. There were six of us all together. It happened so fast. It sounded like a machine gun. Like a rat-tat-tat. At that time I was looking at my husband. I couldn't understand what was going on. I was shocked. There was a loud bang. Then I realized the loud sound was gunfire. My 16-year old daughter was shot in her left knee. My grandfather was injured in the head and hand from the gunshots. I was sitting behind the driver on the window side. The gunshots were fired just as we passed the Bamburi Police Station gate. My husband looked back at me but kept driving. Then the car pulled over off to the side of the road and my husband slowly fell sideways. And it was over (Onsarigo, 2013).

This sudden death occurred in broad daylight when his van which he was driving filled with family members was riddled with bullets as he passed by the Bamburi Police Station in Mombasa. No culprits were identified and government officials have denied involvement, but many suspected the government killed Rogo. His death did not come unannounced as he had often complained of being threatened and harassed by police officers. Human Right Watch reported that; that Mbugua Mureithi, Rogo's lawyer, said Rogo frequently expressed concern about being followed by police and spoke of threats from known police agents who he said told him that, “The state will find a way of dealing with you” (HRW, 2012).

Rogo's murder proved a tipping point in the rising tensions between Kenyan anti-terrorism security forces and members of the Muslim community in the coastal region. Protests and riots erupted in Mombasa, with rioters killing a man near a mosque; two hand grenades were thrown at police, killing at least five officers and injuring several others, 160 People also set fire to three churches and there was heavy looting. Protestors threw stones at riot police and security forces fired back with tear gas (Horowitz, 2012). According to media reports and civil society groups, some of the protestors were Rogo supporters; some were poor, unemployed youths angry at their government; others simply took advantage of the chaos to loot stores for personal gain.

With such reactions from supporters and other groups, one can conclude that some counterterrorism practices can be detrimental resulting to groups joining extremism or losing trust in the security system. As reported by NTV journalist Denis Okari, in the documentary (Fouls Mind), he investigates radicalization of youth in the Coastal region. One person interviewed said that; "The youth believe that Aboud Rogo died a martyr and they will follow his footsteps" (Okari, 2013). Many of the youths interviewed shared similar feelings, they expressed that they turned to religion because they believe that it is there to save them from the many challenges that they face in their daily lives. Now that the only hope they had in religion is being tarnished and threatened, many wondered what they are supposed to do with their lives. It is indeed from such oppressed youth that extremists will intervene and renew their hope by convincing them to join and fight for their religion that as clearly shown by the actions of the government is being targeted and threatened. Such killings do have an impact towards believers of a faith and as a result undermine the progress being made by CVE programs.

The public outcry over Rogo's death, as well as the riots, produced a reaction from the Kenyan government that contrasts with the government's usual unresponsiveness to the murders of suspected terrorists. The public prosecutor's office established a task force to augment a police investigation team sent from Nairobi (Mudi, 2012). This task force included representatives from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the police, the Law Society of Kenya, the Commission on Administrative Justice, Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, and the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (Kenya Gazette, 2012). The task force began its work on September 4, 2012, reported to the director of public prosecutions, had oversight of the criminal investigation into Rogo's murder, and had the authority to gather additional information. It also had jurisdiction over the other riot-related violence. But media reported in November that the task force's work had stalled after "representatives from the law society resigned citing frustration," explaining that they resigned in "what they termed as lack of will from the government to resolve the murder" (Onsarigo, 2013).

The investigations did not go much further as there seemed to be a lack of will and cooperation especially from the police. Finally, in August 2013, the task force submitted its report to the director of public prosecution. The task force said that the investigating team sent from Nairobi was "inadequately constituted to handle the sensitive investigation" and "no statements of any civilian witnesses had been recorded more than a week after the incident" (HRW, 2013). In its recommendations, the task force instructed the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to lead a public inquest and to provide proper security assurances to potential witnesses (HRW, 2013). The manner in which Rogo's killing was executed and later investigated raised flaws on how the government is CVE; it also showed how such actions can lead to violence, division and unfortunately a rise in extremist behaviour by vulnerable groups.

The impact of actions like that of ATPU and other police agencies are serious and need to be looked at as serious catalysts of extremism. The impacts of such actions have proved to have more negative results being counterproductive in the end. Even though violent extremist groups violate the rights of individuals and the law, by doing the same to suspects and vulnerable groups only produces a vicious cycle. Moreover, counterterrorism-related abuses erode community trust in government. A relative of Aboud Rogo, explained, “The government becomes unpopular killing people, even boys who want to surrender don’t feel safe to come out and do so, we need rehabilitation, but instead they are killing them, this thing terrorism must end to bring the country to peace...the community has to be part of the solution” (Open Society Foundation, 2013: 47). The impact of ATPU abuses in Kenya demonstrates that the unit’s counterterrorism strategy is deeply flawed and is hampering, not helping, the fight against terrorism. The tension between many in the Muslim community and Kenyan law enforcement has been on the rise.

The ATPU’s abuses damage the credibility of the government generally. Hassan Omar Hassan, Mombasa senator and a former commissioner of the Kenyan National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) explained, “We have a new constitution and if we leave these types of practices unchallenged, the new constitution will not move forward... they are playing games with the constitution and it sets bad precedent, the Kenyan government is looking for what’s convenient rather than upholding the rule of law. The public is so fearful of the terrorism threat and is so prejudicial towards certain communities that it became acceptable for the government to do what public opinion allows⁴². The daunting practices and image that government has

⁴² Hassan Omar Hassan, speaking at the first annual Convention on Counter-Terrorism Practitioners in Eastern Africa and the Horn (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia), May 22–23, 2012.

shown through its counterterrorism practices need to be reconsidered or done away with, to give room for counterproductive strategies that will contribute effectively to the terrorism menace.

6.1 Filling the Gaps in Law to Enhance CVE Success

The first step towards a more responsible and productive strategy by the police units should start by abiding the law and the constitution. The bill of rights, the National Police Service Act (2011), the Independent Policing Oversight Act (2011), and the formation of the National Police Service Commission are fundamental starting points for effective CVE by the police force. These reforms increased the potential for internal police accountability, independent oversight, and police vetting procedures, they placed limits on the use of force, use of firearms, and on the powers of arrest and detention and importantly, in an attempt to end rampant impunity, the new legislation established an Internal Affairs Unit (Kenya Law Reports, 2011), and, separately, an Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA) charged with investigating police crimes and misconduct (Kenya Reports Law, 2011). The all “powerful” ATPU, which sits within the Kenya Police, is subject to the National Police Service Act and the scrutiny of these new police reforms and oversight mechanisms.

Aside from constitutional laws and reforms, Kenya is signatory to multiple International and Regional treaties and conventions that protect the rights of individuals. As it is enshrined in the constitution, Article 2(6) of Kenya’s Constitution states that, “any treaty or convention ratified by Kenya shall form part of the law of Kenya under this Constitution (Kenyan Constitution, 2010). Among these are multiple conventions and treaties that cater for human rights protection, Kenya is a State Party to the African Charter of Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); Convention Against

Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and Punishment (CAT); Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Collectively, these treaties prohibit extrajudicial killings; excessive use of force; torture and other forms of ill-treatment; disappearances; arbitrary detention, including renditions; and other forms of practices that can lead to risk of torture.

With all these legislations and treaties, why are Kenya's counterterrorism enforcement units not abiding by them? To answer this, it is important to look at how gaps in the law and its implementation have contributed to this. The police reform process has suffered from slow progress and, at the time of writing, there were proposed amendments to the National Police Service Act and National Police Service Commission Act that, if implemented, would erode important human rights gains. This makes police reform an uphill battle and contribute to the ATPU's ability to operate outside the law.

In 2013, the UN Committee Against Torture criticized Kenya for its failure to adequately provide legal protections against torture and other human rights abuses (UN, 2013). A report compiled by a coalition of civil society organizations dealing with Human Rights pointed out that Kenyan domestic law does not contain a definition of torture, "nor do they establish any means of attaining a remedy leaving it as a bald statement with no practical application" (IMLU, 2013). Another gap noted is that enforced disappearance is neither defined nor criminalized additionally, Kenya's Prevention of Terrorism Act of 2012 places no limits on the types of evidence including evidence obtained by torture that investigators can use to designate terrorist groups (IMLU,2013). The report also recommended that Kenya should amend national laws so that any deportation, extradition, rendition, expulsion, or return where an individual would

appear at risk of torture or other ill-treatment is legally prohibited. The Kenya government recognized there were “gaps existing in the Penal Code, Evidence Act and Criminal Procedure Code” and said it would address this problem by passing the Prevention of Torture Bill, 2011, into law (Republic of Kenya, 2013). Based on all gaps and legal deficiencies, advocating for stronger legislations would significantly contribute to protecting individuals from police abuses.

Another challenge in the legislation of friendlier laws is the slow progress it takes for their implementation. Numerous delays in the police reform process have hampered Kenya’s human rights reforms and have therefore prevented the police from becoming less corrupt, more professional and accountable, better managed, and more respectful of human rights. This calls into question whether the political will exists to institute these reforms. A 2013 report by Kenyan civil society groups similarly noted:

There was a cautious approach in the implementation of police reforms where the pace slowed down as Kenya approached its general elections in 2013. The vetting of Police Officers which is critical to the reforms agenda has been relegated as a non-priority... [Because of internal fears] with regard to the approach the vetting should take. Complementary organs such as the National Police Service Commission and the Police Oversight Authority are in place but are faced with inadequate financial resources (IMLU, 2013).

It becomes evident that the slow pace and commitment for implementing passed legislation is hampering the full realization of human rights, allowing police officers to misuse this lack of implementation. Speedy and proper implementation of these laws would be realized if the police reform their old operational orders, often called Force Standing Orders, to ensure the police have the instructions necessary for how to implement the new National Police Service Act (Open Society Foundation, 2013). The police reforms debate has been a major challenge for the government since they were proposed. The continued lack of dedication and motivation is not

only unfavourable for the general public but also towards the police force itself. These reforms were meant to improve conditions for the police as well, who have been living in poor conditions and underpaid. Hence, leading them to engage in corruption and other vices that eventually impact the country's overall security, once again a vicious cycle occurs.

Out of all the legislations passed or proposed in the Kenyan parliament, the elephant legislation would be the Prevention of Terrorism Act-2012. Kenya's former president, Mwai Kibaki, signed it into law in an attempt to strengthen counterterrorism powers in the country. This passed legislation, however, joined many other counterterrorism laws passed since September 11, 2001, that contained overly vague definitions of terrorism, created terrorist blacklists with inadequate due process guarantees, and expanded police powers, all of which can be used both against terrorist suspects and as a tool against political opponents, civil society, religious and ethnic groups, minorities, and common criminals (Serem, 2012). Human rights groups have routinely criticized anti-terrorism legislation that contains vague and broad language and permit states to engage in excessive investigatory, detention, confiscation, and punitive action.

Kenya's anti-terrorism act is caught up in the definitional problem that many encounter while trying to solve issues related to terrorism. The act is similarly vague in its definition of terrorism, defining it as an activity carried out with the intent of "intimidating or causing fear amongst members of the public or a section of the public," "intimidating or compelling the Government or international organization to do, or refrain from any act," or "destabilizing the religious, political, constitutional, economic or social institutions of a country, or an international organization" (Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2012). The definition bears weaknesses that I

discussed in the first chapter; it lacks important description of who commits the act, and also fails to include other forms of terrorism such as state terrorism and international terrorism. It solely focuses on acts that can be decided by the government, hence giving them full mandate to decide who is causing acts of terrorism or not. This characteristic once again gives the state a leeway of getting away with human rights violations all in the name of “countering terrorism”.

6.1.2 New Laws Creating More Challenges

Even as the Kenyan government is challenged with the implementation of some legislation, new bills keep coming up in the Kenyan parliament and some have been passed rapidly despite being controversial and facing public opposition. The major challenge that governments face while attempting to counterterrorism is that many at times the proposed measures seem to curb or deny citizens their liberties and freedoms. This was the case as Kenyan parliament introduced the National Security law 2014. As soon as President Uhuru Kenyatta signed the bill into law, a massive outcry from the civil societies and media who claimed that the law would deny citizens their civil liberties. The new measures will allow police to hold "terror suspects" for up to 360 days without trial, from the current 90 days and will also increase sentences for acts of terror and broaden the government's power to tap phones (Al Jazeera, 2014). The law also includes measures directed at the press. Journalists could face up to three years behind bars if their reports "undermine investigations or security operations relating to terrorism," or if they publish images of "terror victims" without permission from the police (Al Jazeera, 2014).

With such powers given to the already questionable police force that is in dire need of reforms, the possibility of continued state terrorism is inevitable. Acknowledging that the

government needs to protect citizens from acts of extremism, the hasty passing and implementation of the law raises questions about the true intentions of the bill. Even after facing much opposition from civil society and some parliament members, leading to a physical brawl in parliament between government and the opposition, the bill managed to gain enough quorums for it to be passed and assented by the president. The selective application and implementation of crucial bills tarnishes the government's credibility in its efforts to counterterrorism. Even if the passed law has good intentions, the many loopholes present within the police and other security agencies would provide an opportunity for these laws to be easily violated.

From empowering the police force and harnessing media freedoms, another suspicious bill has crept into the floor of parliament, this time seeking to empower the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF). The controversial Kenya Defence Force Bill 2015 has brought shock waves on the Kenyan scene as the proposed amendments depict Kenya heading to a "military state". The bill that is now open for public views will give the military new powers and financial independence and limit the role of the Defence Cabinet Secretary. It seeks to give the military financial autonomy by moving its budget away from the Defence ministry. Defence expenditure will not be monitored by the Auditor General but will be passed by the National Assembly (Mwere, 2015). Furthermore, the Bill seeks to remove the role of parliament in assigning functions to the Defence CS and the requirement for the CS to report to the President and parliament. It will also allow court martial to try civilian suspects and the KDF to specify the kind of court a suspect can be referred to (Mwere, 2015).

The bill, which has many more proposals that give the army more power will overlook many guidelines present in the current constitution, causing an overlapping of legislation which

may lead to irrevocable damage of the constitution. One of the amendments proposes for domestic deployment of KDF where necessary, this is inadvisable as the failure to fully implement the National Police Service Act 2011, which has the potential to equip Kenya with modern, cost-effective internal security architecture, has not been fully implemented (Franklin, 2015). The KDF Amendment Bill 2015 formally expands KDF missions without increasing KDF capabilities. Creating an "Auxiliary Reserve Force" comprising "civilians" who wear uniforms and/or carry firearms to serve as instant KDF soldiers, sailors and/or airmen may look great on paper, but does nothing to enhance national security (Franklin, 2015).

The bill, which deserves opposition from the electorate, would not do much to enhance security. It would be myopic to give the KDF such powers especially in a society like Kenya where impunity is institutionalized. During the Westgate siege in 2013, the military came in to assist the police forces and intelligence agencies to nab the hand full of Al Shabab extremist that were terrorizing the mall. The confusion that came about between the General Service Unit (GSU) and KDF, sources allege that the soldiers opened fire upon officers from the Recce Squad perhaps because the officers were out of uniform; they were mistaken for terrorists (Gisesa, 2013). Such an erratic judgement is not expected from trained soldiers going for a dangerous mission; the lack of co-ordination between the security forces exhibits the inefficiency of the security system.

KDF was also put on the integrity test; thanks to CCTV footage that was able to capture events as they unfolded, the soldiers were captured looting merchandise during the mission. The actions were revealed Kenya Television Network's (KTN) investigative program *Jicho Pevu* (Grim Eye). The feature showed soldiers stealing from the shops as soon as they arrived at the

mall shortly after the attack. Closed-circuit video footage showed soldiers carrying shopping bags allegedly filled with cash and other valuables (Sahan, 2013). The revelations brought an outrage from civilians who were disgusted by the behaviour of the army personnel, who were supposed to pursue the gunmen and rescue hostages trapped in the mall. The distorted image of the KDF made many to lose faith and trust in the army, this is expected as the forces acted to their best interest instead of the country's, granting them more power will replicate this behaviour only this time it will be officiated by law.

With many laws being drafted and redrafted so as to counterterrorism, the reality on the ground is that the manner of response is what really counts when it comes to terrorism. Within terrorism the general assumption is that there are limited options for responses towards terrorism, leaving authorities to mainly respond forcefully. In Kenya, this has not been evitable, often, after an attack; the message sent out by leaders and security personnel is that of revenge and an eminent violent response. Kenya has been fond of this method, immediately after the Garissa attack the Kenyan air force claimed to have destroyed two Al Shabab camps in Somalia, in the first major military response since the group massacred students at a Kenyan university. (Honan, 2015). Al Shabab in its counter narrative refuted this claim, Sheik Abdiasis Abu Musab, Al Shabab's military operations spokesman, told Reuters that none of its camps were damaged in Sunday's raid, and that the fighter jets had instead struck farmland (Jorgic, 2015). Such on and off claims and responses have not been new to Kenyans in the aftermath of an attack. It makes me wonder, if the government knew where an Al Shabab hideout was, how comes action was not taken way before the attack happened. This kind of response leaves so many unanswered questions.

The violent approach towards terrorism always has the same characteristics and narratives, both the state responding to the violent extremist and the non-state extremist groups seek to glorify their victories through the number of casualties they have and the amount of destruction each party has caused to the other. In my opinion, the state ends up losing in the battle of casualties with groups like Al-Shabab. Indoctrinated into believing that dying as a martyr is more honourable than living as a prisoner the group's fighters would not worry too much about dying. The government on the other hand will be held accountable for any civilian or military death caused by Al-Shabab. I believe that such a militaristic approach is narrow in nature as it focuses on the killing or capture of 'enemy' soldiers and interrogate than operational intelligence but do not consider them as possible recourses to aide in counterterrorism.

6.1.2.1 Moving from Coercive-Reactive to Persuasive-Proactive Approaches

Within the debacle of terrorism, a range of approaches can be explored to deal with the issue. These range from domestically orientated to international measures, from coercive to persuasive, reactive to proactive, short-term to long-term and measures designed to suppress or control terrorism to those aimed at resolving deeper causes of terroristic violence (Martin, 2003). Comparing the available approaches to that of Kenya, it has mainly been coercive, reactive and short-term approach that has not reaped much positive results. The use of force which has been dominantly used in Kenya involves; deploying military and coercive apparatus of the state to destroy, disrupt, deter or prevent future acts of terrorism; capture wanted terror suspects or retaliate against groups for particular terroristic attacks (Jackson, et al..., 2011: 225). A forced based tactic which has increasingly received over the years is that of targeted killings by secret intelligence agencies such as ATPU in Kenya or unmanned aerial vehicles or drones by states or international actors.

As explained before when discussing community-based approaches, intelligence and policing is another common approach in counterterrorism. These approaches has been used at the societal level but has often excluded the community's role in counterterrorism. Intelligence and policing involves; deploying broad range of state security agents to gather information on terrorist activities in order to interdict and arrest the operatives either before or after they have acted (Jackson et al..., 2011: 226). This approach has been applied in Kenya through the ATPU, its application as mentioned before has lacked credibility and observation of human rights. Elimination of suspects, disappearances, detentions and torture have been used to clump down the terrorist suspect, this has led to mistrust and unfortunate increase in radicalization.

The other approach that shuns force or violence is the conciliation and dialogue approach. This approach treats terrorism as a cultural psychological problem that needs to be countered from the roots rather than from its fruits. The approach advocates for; the use of non-violent measures to try and curb the so called 'roots causes' and underlying motivations of terrorism, or to change the behaviour through inducements or material sanctions (Jackson, et al..., 2011: 227). This persuasive approach tries to win back the hearts and minds of extremists by reaching out to them through humanistic approaches that may convince the individuals to reintegrate back into society. This approach views terrorism as an expression of legitimate grievances and deep social conflicts, by resolving these deeper issues will go a long way towards ending their actions.

In Kenya conciliation and dialogues has rarely been on the table of policy makers who deal with the subject and many strategies have focused on reactionary and coercive means. Convincing the government and citizenry that a non-violent approach would pull out more results is not easy. Terrorism leaves a lot of damage, loved ones are lost, and survivors remain

scared for eternity, the population panics and the government is left to answer many questions about security. These factors make the violent approach popular as people seek revenge or some kind of compensation for their misery. Hence, the narrative of non-violent approach needs to be sold to the people as an effective and appropriate approach. This discourse should be culturally-specific and infused with creativity, it should recognize that the chief weakness of terrorism is the ideas and assumptions that support it. The fundamental start should be to rebut the efficacy of terror and promote nonviolent struggle on every level: religious, psychological, political, cultural, and linguistic.

The role of discourse as seen before is an elementary aspect in the comprehension of any subject particularly, in terrorism. Unfortunately, the foundations of many terrorism discourses begin from the pretext of religion, particularly Islam. In Kenya this is not novel, religion and marginalized groups like the Somali bear the biggest burden of being suspected to engage or sympathize with extremists. Therefore, it is inevitable to begin advocating the non-violent approach from a religious level. Drawing the importance of non-violence from the suspected religion is a good starting point for a shift in discourse. The layperson could be convinced that Islam advocates for violent Jihad and killing of non-believers based on the prominent discourse he or she is used to. Twisting this thought needs to be done by using the extremists' narratives and actions against their destructive cause. With the help of religious leaders and leaders, denouncing the distorted narrative of extremist that advocates for killing and encouraging extremist to rethink their deeds is a start, as simplistic as it may sound, opening our arms and giving extremist opportunities for dialogues and encouraging them to air out their grievances through other means introduce a non-violent approach for both sides.

7. Effectiveness of Non-Violent Approaches

7.1 Deterioration of Terrorist Groups

Governments hardly pursue the non-violent approach because of the costs, duration and hunger for results. Non-violent approaches would seek to implement CVE programs that do not only focus on the terrorism problem but also look into other social problem, which the government may not be equipped or willing to address at the moment. Much patience is needed when countering terrorism as it is hard to get results overnight. Studies have shown that most non-violent programs have managed to terminate extremist activities than the militaristic approach which ignites the thirst for revenge and recruitment of more foot soldiers. Research by the RAND Corporation that analyzed 648 groups since 1968 found out that most groups have ended because; they joined the political process (43 percent) or local police and intelligence agencies arrested or killed key members (40 percent) (Rand Corporation, 2008). Military force led to the end of terrorist groups only in 7 per cent of cases. The authors found that military force against most terrorist groups was usually too blunt an instrument (Fransceschi, 2015).

Gauging from the research done by RAND, a non-violent approach seems to be curbing terrorism more than the violent route. An important aspect to consider while employing non-violent approaches is the society's reception to these initiatives. Many societies fail to accept non-violent approaches as they feel that justice has not been achieved. This is quite normal in human behaviour; individuals need to feel compensated or to have received justice through punitive measure that would range from incarceration to the death penalty. Terrorism being a unique kind of crime, non-violent approaches has not been popular when responding to it.

7.2 Restorative Justice Necessary for Reconciliation

In an effort to bring in non-violent approaches to terrorism the conciliation and dialogue approach needs to be applied and put a focus in restorative justice. Terrorism crimes are associated with severe mental and physical injuries, death and significant loss to private and public property (Yanay, 2009). It is important for one to look into the possibility of applying restorative justice within the field. This novel approach could assist in fostering healing and reconciliation within the community that has been scarred by terroristic actions. However, restorative justice is not so popular and not easy to be applied in the field because of a few barriers. To start with, many extremist groups disassociate themselves from the society completely and only associate with it when they venture to harm it aggressively. By aiming at the public and admitting to commit the actions at the same time being proud of them, showing no shame or remorse (Staiger, 2010) communities are barely ready to forgive or reintegrate such individuals.

Besides extremist group isolation from society once apprehended or identified, they are quickly excommunicated by the security state agencies, accessibility to terrorists is almost impossible for the community. Police and prosecution keep terrorists far from the public, it is usually special units that lead the investigations after all, and state security matters are involved, the community, victims included, is kept out of the process leaving no space for voluntary conferencing (Yanay, 2015). Another obstacle is that even when justice is being delivered, community is left out of such hearings. Courts are often closed to the public when security matters are discussed, victims have no say and their voices are not heard in such cases (Yanay, 2015). Locking out the public from interacting with justice processes dealing with terrorism

crimes makes it difficult for a restorative justice discourse conferencing to be achieved; giving it a try would shift discourses and understandings of terrorism in the community.

In a battle to win the hearts and minds of individuals, applying restorative justice is a good way of bridging the gap between the offender and the victim. In Kenya, the community hardly interact with the perpetrators of terrorism and only see their faces when they are being pursued by authorities or already exterminated. After the Garissa attack, police displayed bullet-ridden, swollen bodies of four Al Shabab attackers in Garissa town, hoping that crowds coming to view the corpses might identify them (The Star, 2015). Here, many may feel that justice has been achieved and that the criminals deserved to die because of the misery they have brought. I acknowledge this sentiment, especially being cornered while terrorising innocent civilians, their paths were bound to end with merciless death and humiliation. However, the role of restorative justice is missing, the display may be meant to act as a form of deterrence but in some way it acts as an instigator of extremism. Colleagues, family and friends of the deceased would rarely speak out and identify themselves as associates of the perpetrators. This hinders one from understanding the motivations and lives of the perpetrators, which can be used to interrupt others from following a similar path.

A restorative approach would imply an inherent concern for victims' needs and their role in the criminal justice system and encourages offenders to understand the harm and the consequences of their behaviour, further aim is that the offender accepts his responsibility and tries to repair the harm done to the victim (Stager, 2010). Imagining this in Kenya seems unrealistic as gaining acceptance would be challenging, nonetheless, working with former extremists who have accepted the consequences of their heinous deeds and are willing to set an

example can be a good start. Zakaria Ismaili Hersi aka Zaki a former Al Shabab member in Somalia recounts his time with the group. He recognizes that the original aims and objectives of the group were well intentioned and many people would have welcomed it in Somalia, however, individuals hijacked these objectives and put in their own devious agenda (Hassan, 2015). He continues saying, the results have been terrible, a distorted implementation of Sharia Law and corrupted form of ‘Holy Jihad’ that has lead to violence in a once peaceful region, the organization lacks unity and there is no room for consultation within the group, their actions worsen the conditions of individuals and violate rights of people even those within Al Shabab (Hassan, 2015). Using stories of such individuals can give hope to a restorative justice process.

Restorative justice tries to instil contact between the victim and offender through victim–offender mediation. Research reveals that the most decisive elements of an encounter between victim and offender are communication, the need for information, and the need to gain some sense of closure; the findings show that most of the victims experienced these meetings as powerful and healing (Nelson, 2009). This can be through a direct face-to-face meeting with the offender; indirect victim–offender mediation is a possible alternative to communicate through an intermediary with the offender. If the victim cannot meet the offender, because he is unknown or dead, victim impact panels offer victims a forum where they can tell their story to an offender who is linked to the victim by a common kind of crime (Nelson, 2009). In the case of terrorism, this could be a member of the same terrorist group or other representatives. Applying such measures may be challenging due to different perceptions of victim-offender relationships, but it is a crucial way of bridging the gap between the two entities.

7.2.1 Trauma Healing for both Victim and Perpetrator

The idea of having restorative justice in terrorism is for victims to be turned into survivors while offenders revert to acceptable people of the society. For this to happen, trauma healing for both sides is needed so as to prevent individuals from engaging in violent extremism and also an empowering tool for the others who have been scarred by violence to work as preventers. To move from victim to survivor is a challenging journey as it involves a lot of psychological processing that may take a while. For one to be a survivor establishing trust again is paramount and to be able to speak and be heard within a “safe space”, where one can be able to tell the truth (story telling) and society bears witness to this, to establish normalisation in daily life routine again –to know that what happened to them was wrong and that their emotions are legitimate (Herman, 1997). To experience restitution both symbolic and real, giving voice to anguish and recognizing that offender has admitted to wrong, to be empowered again, to make decisions for their own life and healing – trauma strips the victim of his/her power by force. To Re-affirm Human Worth and Dignity, to re-connect with support structures in family and community that gives meaning to life and relationships and finally to establish “Safety Anchors” healthy coping mechanisms for the future (Herman, 1997). These strategies need to be incorporated in the field of terrorism, often victims are left to carter for their traumas by themselves and lack proper support, resulting to them being victims forever.

Perpetrators need to undergo this journey of rediscovery as well, as stated before admitting to wrong doing is important in restorative justice and trauma healing. Recognizing the extent of wrong-doing will lead to the feeling of the effects and consequences of their action, this helps in acknowledging full responsibility for their actions which leads to taking steps to prevent recurrence and be willing to offer a restitution plan ‘making things right’ (Block, 1999). The goal

of victim-offender mediation is to reach a common understanding between communities members that will make us embark on a reconciliation journey. This journey is supposed to prevent us from bouncing back into violent behaviours like terrorism.

When combatants in groups such as Al-Shabab want to rejoin society, the internationally acclaimed efforts of doing this is through the popular Demobilization, Demilitarization and Re-integration (DDR) programs. Most of these programs involve setting up demobilisation camps where ex-combatants come to hand in their weapons and uniforms in exchange these soldiers are given immediate medical attention and short-term food aid, in most cases ex-combatants are given some form of compensation for handing in their weapons usually this is in the form of a 'once-off' payment of money (Hanson, 2007). Many programs are undertaken in post-conflict scenarios where stability has resumed and there is no more active combat, with violent extremism this is a bit challenging as active combat has no time period. For this to work, it should be incorporated within amnesty programs already mentioned before.

The DDR system as it is currently envisioned functions to serve a very critical role in the efforts to contain and manage the external volatility inherent in post-war demobilisation processes. However, what it fails to accomplish is the internal transformation work that needs to be done in order to 're-civilianise' the former combatant and those traumatised by war so that peace can become a long-term reality in society (Stauffer, 2012). Some scholars within the DDR field have work towards redefining the essential work of DDR to Demining the motivation of violence, Decoding the mindset of violence, and Restoring the circle of the community (Stauffer, 2012). This approach believes in building peace through capturing the mind and heart of a potential adherent so as to deter them completely from turning or returning to violence.

In communities that are encountering terrorism like Kenya, adopting this humanistic model will produce better healing and cohesion. It would be aimless to proceed with de-radicalization, amnesty and community-based programs if integration is not the final product. The redefined DDR would provide an environment for integration to be achieved and also erode the possibility of violence to recur when distressed groups are airing out their grievances. The cycle of violence as illustrated is the worst nightmare when trying to counter extremism. It breeds on quenching the thirst of revenge which is sadly never quenched. For reconciliation to work the quest for revenge must be deterred so as to evade violence. This is not easy because forgiveness may be attained but this does not assure that the community has forgotten. Forgetting is hardly possible, unless the community or individual undergoes severe trauma.

Establishing an environment where people can remember without revenge is crucial while seeking reconciliation. Violence and trauma result in “dis-membering” us if not literally physically, figuratively in our emotions and spirits, the opposite of that process is to “remembering” (Stauffer, 2012: 48). To remember is to put back in place, or to fit the pieces of the past history and traumatic experience together in order to create meaning in life again. If we can find ways to use the process of remembering to heal ourselves and others, then we are contributing constructively to a peaceful future. In this respect, remembering should be done carefully, this can be done by remembering to re-educate next generations, remember to reconcile or restore differences or remember to rewrite history.

Recommendations

My research has been an analysis of Terrorism from its discursive sense to its historical and present day application in modern warfare by different entities that are either seeking a certain objective or responding to the actions of those seeking objectives. This analysis has also focused on violent extremism which in the end leads to terroristic acts. The focus has been on the Kenyan experience and how hegemonic discourses of terrorism has shaped Kenya`s efforts to Counter Violent Extremism, which has leaned towards militaristic and coercive approaches. From the research some notable recommendations needs to be highlighted that can assist in shifting the present approaches to ones that may produce better results in the efforts of curbing terrorism.

The first proposal would be on the discourse of terrorism, reiterating that it has aped hegemonic perceptions and approaches, this I believe needs to change. The ‘Us vs. Them’ attitude taken in the handling of attacks and treating of suspected communities and groups is replicates dominant discourses and is proving to breakdown societal cohesion. I believe that Kenya can define its problem with terrorism without necessarily applying hegemonic policies that have proven to bring a never ending “war on terrorism.” We must remember the colonial-terrorism that we faced and not become oppressors who were once oppressed. Although facing attacks from Al Shabab which has proven to be a problem in the region. We must stop and ask ourselves, are we part of the problem? Are there any historical practices that influence today’s aggression? By taking a look at our in-house practices and matters we can begin to deal with the challenge through better approaches that would not treat the problem as ‘enemy’ against ‘friend’ but rather a friend/neighbour in need of help and turning our backs against them will only harm us.

The issue of terrorism in Kenya should be taken as a collective responsibility by all members of the society. Having demonstrated how detached society feels from responding to terrorism, it is vital for the role of community not to be taken for granted. Effective community-based approaches may produce much more results than the commonly used coercive approaches applied by the government, therefore a collaborative effort between government and communities in the handling of terrorism would limit the use of force and instead advocate for proactive approaches that would steer integration. Putting the community at the fore front of countering terrorism would diminish radicalization, indoctrination and augment inclusion and understanding between social groups that hardly interact. This would make marginalized, suspected and vulnerable groups to start feeling like being part of the country.

From the government side, much needs to be done, especially the responsibilities bestowed upon the ATPU which is in charge of combating terrorism threat. In the process of carrying out its counterterrorism responsibilities, the ATPU has committed a wide array of human rights abuses that violate international, regional, and domestic law. These abuses are not only unlawful, but counterproductive. Violent extremists use such abuses to justify violence and to recruit others. Counterterrorism-related human rights abuses also erode community trust in government, as demonstrated in the thesis. This cuts off authorities from the very communities that can be most helpful in reducing extremist violence. As the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has stated, "Too often, extreme measures to curtail rights simply create greater unrest" (Republic of Kenya, 2014). It is particularly disturbing that many ATPU abuses occurred after 2010, after Kenya embarked on a committed effort to develop stronger human rights protections.

With this poor human rights record, it is critical that Kenya and the international community at large support the country's sweeping police reforms aimed at ending unlimited police powers. More specifically, Kenya's accountability mechanisms, such as its courts and the Independent Police Oversight Authority, must place the ATPU under close scrutiny and hold ATPU officials accountable for committing human rights abuses. Victims of these abuses must also receive reparations. Finally, it is imperative that Kenya does not backtrack on the human rights progress it has made by amending its robust rules prohibiting the use of force. Instead, those rules should remain, the Prevention of Terrorism Act should be repealed or amended to meet international human rights standards, and the Kenyan government should expand its human rights commitments through such measures as passing an anti-torture bill, accepting additional international human rights monitoring mechanisms, and ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

Conclusion

The task of investigating Terrorism and Violent Extremism is by no means an easy one: as we have seen through this Thesis, the history and discourse of terrorism has largely been biased. The violent extremists have often been identified as barbaric and uncouth therefore, most of the narratives depicting them are singularly full of stereotypes which prevent an exhaustive analysis of their acts. Equally, any research on terrorism and violent extremism is subjected to the danger of appearing to legitimize their violence. However, throughout this Thesis, I tried to show that these violent individuals are human beings, and that we need a more comprehensive approach to terrorism in order to transform their motivations and violent deeds into politically engaging nonviolent struggle. Besides, the task is not impossible as most of the former extremists have lately come to understand that there are other means of channelling their political grievances and more often than not, express their regrets with regards of their intention to commit violent acts. From this standpoint, I thought that a first step towards this was to reconsider the mainstream discourses of terrorism and, furthermore, to include the study of these discourses within the debate of our Chair of Philosophy for Peace.

The main objective of this Thesis was to analyse the dominant of terrorism, from a critical perspective, the phenomenon of violence in the context of extremism in by creating a philosophical framework that will allow better understanding of extremist groups implicated in violent acts.

Consequently, three specific objectives were animating the writing of this Thesis. First, I aimed to situate, rethink and enhance the debate on terrorism and extremism within the Kenyan society and the broader area of Peace Studies, in order to shift the classical approaches undertaken in this field. Second, I attempted contribute to the knowledge on terrorism by

deconstructing the hegemonic narratives and our own perceptions of the subject in order to critically understand the underlying judgments and stereotypes that accompany the field. Thirdly, I proposed alternative responses towards terrorism in Kenya, ones that focus on human-centred solutions and foster social cohesion through strengthening interactions of different social groups, with the aim of placing emphasis on non-violent responses.

The present Thesis has various key findings. First of all, I should specify that it demonstrated the importance of analysing the phenomenon of Terrorism following an interdisciplinary approach. The method I chose was to discursively interrogate terrorism by interacting with different agents that shape its discourse such as media, language, politics, religion and cultural perceptions, political ideologies amongst other things. This helped me to foment a more comprehensive approach to the problem of violent extremism in Kenya.

In chapter two, in trying to go beyond the discourse, I realized that the hegemonic narratives are influencing the responses to terrorism in Kenya by “othering” of some groups, in particular, Muslims and Somalis, in general, and that this contributes to the prolonging of discriminative strategies. These hegemonic narratives that portray the groups along the lines of barbarism, backward or irrationality accentuate the victimization of these groups while not contributing to a nonviolent transformation of the problem. Finally, in chapter three, by analysing alternative approaches and challenges. I concluded that a holistic approach towards countering extremism makes us understand the complex dimensions revolving around the subject. In fact, I conclude that Terrorism should be read from the act committed and not the identities of the individuals. Countering it should involve a holistic approach that battles to win the hearts and minds of the individuals involved in the acts and not eliminating them from

society as a remedy to the problem. From there, we come to acquire a social responsibility towards them and, finally, a nonviolent response can be possible as the analysis of their violence in the condition of emergence serves us as a point of departure for those responses.

On a different scope, I found that the literature on terrorism and extremism is widely dominated by Western writers, mostly American, which is a problem in itself but it could be an enrichment to consider what Islamic Preachers, or Islamic writers in general, have to say regarding terrorism and extremism, especially since Islam is unfortunately associated with mainstream discourse of terrorism. Following in this, it would be interesting to carry out a deeper analysis on the relationship between religion, and terrorism with a special focus on the conceptualization of Jihad in Islam, this I believe would be an interesting avenue to explore.

Finally, violent extremism is not the only form of terrorist violence. On that ground, I suggest that Philosophy for Peace, and more broadly Peace Studies, should take a stronger stand to analyse the different roles of these other violence in terrorism and how this violence can be addressed by nonviolent means, “compatible with the ridding of direct, structural, and cultural violence (Toros & Gunning, 2007: 107).

It is a long way to go. First because changing our way to interpret violent acts is not an easy task as we are governed by epistemological frames that channel our thoughts and problematize our responses to these acts. Second, because terroristic violence is particular, and as it is intentionally directed, equal punishment becomes difficult to administer. But there is a ray of hope as most violent attacks perpetrated by terrorists do not lead to any tangible gains in the their cause. Therefore, opening doors to convince would be attackers of alternative ways of achieving their grievances by following political processes.

But in the end, violence does not appear from nowhere; it has its own history, and the individuals that decide to commit it also have a background. Terrorism and extremism are part of global contemporary politics, the concepts make us question the mannerism used to respond to them, which has led to a prolonged “globalized war on terror”. As I introduced in this Thesis, the curiosity towards these concepts comes from a personal experience that I tried to channel and transform into an academic work. I do believe that each individual has a social existence that exceeds its materiality; each body, and life by extension, is worthy of humanity. I suppose that this Thesis was finally a call to foster nonviolent verbal and physical actions to counter violent extremism and terrorism based on our common vulnerability...

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