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Socio-Economic And Political Factors Conducive To Terrorism In Kenya

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***Abstract:** The 21st century terrorism is synonymous with radical and militant Islam also known as fundamentalism, and Salafi-Jihadism. The ultimate goal for jihadists is the establishment of an Islamic state. Individuals who engage in terrorism do so due to several push and pull factors. In the case Kenya, those compelled to join terror groups or support terrorism have been motivated by the following factors. Firstly, the existence of several historical injustices that remain unaddressed to date. Secondly, human rights violations during security operations. Lastly, discriminatory practices that make them feel less Kenyan. To unpack this thesis, three different parts of Kenya, that is, North Eastern Region, the Coast Region and Nairobi, where the highest incidences of radicalization, recruitment, terrorism and terror attacks take place. It is assessed that the push factors have contributed to terrorism in these regions.*

***Keywords:** Terrorism, Jihadism, Perceived Grievances*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century terrorism is synonymous with radical and militant Islam also known as fundamentalism, and Salafi-Jihadism. The ultimate goal for jihadists is the establishment of an Islamic state that would lead to the establishment of the caliphate where *Sharia* is law. Individuals who engage in terrorism do so due to several push and pull factors. For instance, the Kenya Muslim community, which per the last national census held in 2009 stood at 11.2% of the overall population (KNBS, 2012), has in different forums, including the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission constituted in 2008 following the post-election violence, expressed several concerns that have made some of its members susceptible to terror/extremism messaging. These are: the existence of several historical injustices that remain unaddressed to date; human rights violations during security operations; and, discriminatory practices that make them feel less Kenyan (PSAC, 2013). This paper explores these factors by looking at three different parts of Kenya, namely, North Eastern Region, the Coast and Nairobi, where we find the most Muslims. The study is structured thus: the first part looks at the definitional issues around terrorism. The second part unpacks Salafi-Wahhabi Jihadism. The third part looks at the socio-political and economic conditions conducive to terrorism in the North Eastern Region, the Coast of Kenya and Nairobi. Lastly, the study looks at Kenya's entanglement with terrorism.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. WHAT IS TERRORISM?

Although terrorism has become endemic, and at the very heart of the 21st Century's culture, defining it has proven difficult. First, the term terrorism has been used to describe revolutionary activity, anarchism, and war for national independence, irredentism, secessionism, guerilla warfare, and criminal activity. Therefore, the change in meaning over the ages complicates efforts to come up with a fixed definition (Nimmer, 2011). Secondly, the term is used pejoratively

against the user's enemies and opponents due to differences in race, ethnicity, religion and politics (Wojciechowski, 2009). Those termed terrorists have also been called radicals, enemies of democracy, insurgents, tyrants, and enemies of freedom, murderers and criminals (Ibid.). Third, terrorists perceive themselves as freedom fighters, god's servants, urban guerrillas and liberators, which justifies the use of violence to achieve their goals (Ganor, 2010). Fourth, decision-makers have used the term to sway public opinion against an individual or a group to justify drastic action against it, as was the case after the September 11 attacks when Washington labeled some groups and countries as terrorists to justify the 'war on terror' (Wojciechowski, 2009).

The difficulties encountered in establishing a universal definition of terrorism, however, have not stopped different stakeholders including scholars, government bodies, and international organizations, from generating definitions. The quest for definitions is driven by the knowledge that there is need to distinguish terrorism from other forms of violence so that adequate countermeasures including legislation can be implemented. Academia has generated hundreds of definitions that have the following characteristics. First, all terrorist acts are crimes (Jenkins, 1980) that involve violence or the threat of violence (Laqueur, 1999). Second, terrorist acts violate rules of war (Rapoport, 2002). Third, a terror act is that which is targeted against civilians (Ganor, 2010) and symbolic victims (Schmid & Jongman, 1988). Fourth, a terror act is premeditated (Wilkinson, 2006) and carried out in a manner so as to achieve maximum publicity (Jenkins, 1980). Fifth, terrorism has several targets. Primary targets, or *target of terror*, are those that physically suffer the brunt of the attack (Schmid & Jongman, 1988). Secondary targets or *target of demands* [government], and *targets of attention* [public opinion], are those intended to change their attitudes and polices due to terrorism activities (Ibid.). Sixth, terrorism is a means to an end and not an end in itself. Different actors including insurgents, who seek to change status quo by seizing political power from an established regime, have used terrorism (Hutchinson, 1972).

The first attempt to come up with a universal definition of terrorism was the League of Nations' 1937 Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism (Article 1.1) that defined terrorism as "all criminal acts directed against a state and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of a particular persons or a group of persons or the general public" (Walter, 2003, p. 11). The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has been unable to agree on a universal definition due to two issues: whether or not a state's use of armed forces against civilians is terrorism; and, whether the violent activities by people under foreign occupation, who have a right to resistance, constitute terrorism (Rupérez, 2006). The working definition adopted by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in Resolution 1566 of October 2004 notes that the aim of terrorism is to "intimidate a population or compel a government … to do or to abstain from doing any act … [driven by] political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, [and] religious [motives] (UNSC, 2004).

The Organization of the Islamic Conference, whose membership of 57 states is drawn from Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America, is one of those entities that found the definitions generated by UNGA as problematic. These states agitated for the differentiation between terrorism and the legitimate right of peoples to resist foreign occupation, as was the case in Palestine, which was fighting against the Israeli occupation. The OIC therefore, defined terrorism as:

"any act of violence … notwithstanding its motives … perpetrated to carry out [a] criminal plan with the aim of terrorizing people or threatening to harm them or imperiling their lives, honor, *freedoms*, security or rights or exposing the environment or any facility or public or private property to hazards or *occupying or seizing* them … threatening the stability, territorial integrity, political unity or sovereignty of independent states" (OIC, 1999).

The Prevention of Terrorism Act of 2012 of Kenya does not outrightly define terrorism. Instead, it provides the characteristics of a terrorist act, terrorist groups, and terrorist property. In summary, a terrorist act is the one that involves the use of violence against a person, results in serious damage to property, involves the use of weapons, chemical and biological substances, interferes with the infrastructure, and prejudices national security or public safety. A terrorist act is carried out with the aim of intimidating or causing fear amongst members of the public and compelling the government to do, or refrain from any act (RoK, 2012).

B. WHO IS A TERRORIST?

David Rapoport in "Four Waves of Modern Terrorism," suggests that since the French Revolution, there have been four waves of terrorism occupied by the anarchists, nationalists, new left-wing organizations, and groups inspired by a religious ideology respectively (Rapoport, 2004). According to Rapoport, each wave lasted about a generation, and a wave is "a cycle of activity in a given time period – a cycle characterized by expansion and contraction phases," (Ibid., p. 47). Islam is at the heart of the current wave though other groups adhering to other religions have also sprung up during this period.

'Modern terrorism' is also another term for the current terrorist phenomenon. It is also known as Jihadism, Wahhabism, Salafi-Jihadism, Islamic fundamentalism, and radical Islam. It is largely psychological warfare undertaken with the aim of spreading fear and anxiety within the targets so that they can pressurize the decision-makers to change or enact policies for the benefit of the terrorist (Ganor, 2009). It began in the late 20th Century when Shaykh Abdullah Yusuf Azzam, the spiritual leader of the *Mujahideen* (Afghan veterans who had participated in the liberation of Afghanistan from Communism and Soviet occupation) conceptualized *Al Qaeda al-Sulbah* (the Solid Base). Instead of disbanding the *Mujahideen* after the war, Azzam wanted to use them to reconquer the Muslim world; they were to become the 'standing vanguard' to ensure victory for the Ummah (Migaux, 2007). Azzam died in a car explosion on 24th November 1989 and Osama bin Laden, his deputy, took over the leadership of Al Qaeda. Bin Laden's agenda was to enforce Islamic rule in Muslim Lands by eradicating Western influences (Ganor, 2009). Jihadism has inspired numerous organizations whose collective activities in the 21st century are

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identified as global Salafi-Jihadi terrorism (Wiktorowicz, 2001).

III. UNDERSTANDING SALAFI/WAHHABI-INSPIRED TERRORISM AKA GLOBAL JIHAD

In the beginning was Ahmad ibn ‘Abdul-Halim ibn ‘Abdi-Salim also known as Taqi al-Din Ahmed ibn Taymiyyah who lived between 1263CE and 1328CE. He was born in Mesopotamia, current day Iraq, in a family of scholars of great knowledge and repute (Laoust, 2012). When Taymiyyah was 19 years old, he started issuing legal edicts that included criticism of the Sufi and the Shi’a for polluting the original spirit of Islam through the introduction of innovations *(bid’ah)* in religious practices, which is forbidden by Allah (Tariq, 2016). His teachings were also critical of the veneration of saints and the visitation of their tomb-shrines, which he considered as idolatry or polytheism (*shirk*) (Sells, 2016). Ibn Taymiyyah also set a precedent in the use of the concept *Takfir*. This means excommunicating a Muslim, which renders him an unbeliever and sanctions violence including death against him (Stanley, 2005).

Ibn Taymiyyah’s teachings had a profound influence on Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab who lived between 1703CE and 1792CE in Najd in Central Arabia. According to al-Wahhab, Muslims had been apostates since the 8th century as they espoused beliefs and practices that negated the oneness of Allah (Ibid.). Consequently, in 1744CE, al-Wahhab made a religio-political pact with Muhammad ibn Saud, a local chief of the Saud tribe (Sells, 2016). The pact established the model for future Saudi-Wahhabi rule: the clerics from the lineage of al-Wahhab would establish what pure Islam was while ibn Saud’s lineage would make sure that the clerics’ interpretation of Islam was enforced by eliminating improper beliefs and practices as well as managing affairs of state (Ibid.).

Al-Wahhab outlawed numerous Arabic cultural activities that he considered *shirk*. These were the building of mausoleums and grave markers that rose more than a few inches from the ground; making or displaying images of animals, humans and angels; wearing of talismans; celebrating *Maulid* (the Prophet’s birthday) and communal festivals; and, secular lifestyles polluted with music and dance (Sells, 2016). He also ordered all Muslims to individually pledge their allegiance to a single Muslim leader (a *Caliph*) (Crooke, 2014). Those who did not pledge their allegiance and carried out these belief and practices were declared to be apostate and were to be put to death (Ibid.).

In the early 20th Century, Sheikh Hassan Ahmed Abdel Rahman Muhammad al-Banna founded *Jamiat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*, also known as the Society of Muslim Brethren and the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, as a protest against British Imperialism and the negative spread of Western culture that threatened Islamic values (9 Bedford Row, 2015). To counter the spread of Western ideas, and to provoke complete spiritual revival, the Brotherhood built mosques and Quranic schools, clinics and hospitals. In 1950, al-Banna established the Brotherhood’s secret military branch (*El-Nizam el-Hass*) to defend the Muslims against the Zionist movement (al-Banna, 2013) and revolt against the British colonialists and Egyptian businesses that spread Western culture (Friedland, 2015). Al-Banna also supported death and martyrdom, recommending that all youth be encouraged to engage in *jihad* “as they would only reap the great reward” (al-Banna, 1947). The Brotherhood’s involvement in militancy and assassination of among others, Mahmud Fahmi al-Naqrashi, the Prime Minister, led to its disbandment in December 1948 (al-Banna, 2013). On 12th February 1949, individuals suspected to be under the orders of the Egyptian government assassinated al-Banna was assassinated in the streets of Cairo.

In 1951, an individual known as Sayyid Qutb returned to Egypt from the United States of America where he had gone for further education. He immediately joined the Brotherhood. He was more radical in his worldview than al-Banna, and he espoused militancy as a means of achieving the Brotherhood’s goals. He also lived during a period of great persecution of the Brotherhood by Gamal Abdel Nasser’s government because the former’s ideology clashed with Nasser’s ideology of secularism (Stahl, 2011). In 1954, Qutb was arrested and sentenced to 15 years in prison. It was while in custody that he integrated Salafism into the Brotherhood’s ideology. Qutb was critical of Nasser’s rule for forsaking applying Islam and instead adopting democracy and secularism. He therefore, advocated for ‘offensive jihad’, which is militancy aimed at reforming societies by spreading Islam to liberate all men from man-made laws (Ibid.). Qutb also widened the scope of enemies of the Muslims to include the West, and the Jews who had invaded and occupied Palestinian territory. Qutb was released in 1964 but rearrested in 1965 and charged with subversion, terrorism and sedition for which he was hanged on 29th August 1966. The writings and ideologies of Qutb, known as Qutbism or Salafist Qutbist thought, influenced the belief systems of leaders of present-day violent jihadist groups including Azzam, bin Laden, Ayman al Zawahiri of Al Qaeda and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi of the Islamic State.

The 21st Century Saudi rulers and clerics denounce the use of the terms Wahhabi and Wahhabism, as they are derogatory (Mahdi, 2010). Calling them Wahhabis implies they are idolaters as followers of al-Wahhab (Durie, 2013). They instead prefer to be called Salafis (Shukla, 2014). Salafism is a loose term referring to a series of revivalist movements that emerged in the beginning of the 20th Century seeking the true Islam of the *Salaf* who were the first followers of Prophet Muhammad (Sells, 2016). Nevertheless, both Wahhabis and Salafis are anti-*Shi’a*, anti-Sufism, and are literal in their interpretation of the Quran. Additionally, they are supporters of Takfirism, which allows for targeting of those Muslims who do not espouse same beliefs as them. Lastly, they are anti-Western and anti-secularist as these go against the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (Durie, 2013).

Salafism has gradually become synonymous with terrorism because a majority of terror groups that have emerged in the 21st century claim to have in one-way or another, been influenced by this ideology. These groups include Islam State (has numerous offshoots all over the world), Ansaru (Nigeria), Boko Haram (Lake Chad Region), Al Shabaab (Somalia), Abu Sayyaf Group (Philippines), Ansar al-Sharia (Egypt, Libya, Mali and Tunisia), East Turkestan Islamic Movement (East Asia), Indian Mujahideen, Jaish al-Ummah (Gaza), Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group

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(Morocco and Western Europe), and Muslim Defense International (Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda).

IV. KENYA: A "HOTBED" OF TERRORISM?

The case study for this article, Kenya, has had a long history with terrorism. During colonial period, the British termed the Mau Mau uprising as terrorism. Transnational terror groups turned their attention to independent Kenya in 1976 when the Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) combined forces with the West German Baader-Meinhof Gang, also known as the Red Army Faction (RAF), to shoot down an El-Al flight landing at the Embakasi International Airport using surface-to-air missiles (Hornsby, 2012). On 31st December 1980, the PFLP was successful in its attack at the then Israeli-owned Norfolk hotel killing about 20 revelers ushering in the New Year. The 1998 Al Qaeda twin terror attacks at the American Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es-Salaam put Kenya on the map with regards to transnational terrorism. In 2002, individuals affiliated to Al Qaeda successfully carried out a 'complex coordinated terrorist attack' (Criswell, 2018) at yet another Israeli-owned hotel in Kikambala, at the Kenyan Coast, and also attempted to shoot down an Israeli-chartered flight as it took off from Mombasa International Airport. In these instances, Kenya was a 'soft' and 'secondary' target for terror elements who sought to send a message to a wider audience by targeting Western interests (Munene, 2013). Following Kenya's incursion into Somalia in the quest for Al Shabaab, Kenya became a 'primary target' in its own right as Al Shabaab declared war against it. Consequently, between 1999 and 2017, Kenya has experienced more than 465 terror attacks that have caused about 1074 deaths and more than 1665 injuries (START, 2017).

The different terror groups, PFLP, Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab, had different reasons for targeting Kenya. The PFLP in conjunction with Baader-Meinhof Gang initially targeted Kenya in January 1976 because they considered it an easy target (Whine, 2003). In the late 1968 and most of the 1970s there had been an escalation in hijackings across Europe. This led to airports in the Western world to adopt stringent security measures such as metal detectors, which made them hard targets for criminal elements. This was not the case in Kenya. The attack was foiled when the Israelis shared prior intelligence with the Kenyan security leading to the arrest of five members of PFLP and Baader-Meinhof gang (Hornsby, 2012). During the July 1976 Entebbe siege, one of the demands by the PFLP was for the release of the five attackers associated with the January attempt. In the 1980 Norfolk Hotel attack, Kenya was targeted for providing support to the Israelis during the Entebbe Raid (NCTC, 2014). Apart from being a 'soft' target, Al Qaeda attacked Kenya for allowing the Americans to use its territory to fight Somalia and for collaborating with Israel. Al Shabaab targets Kenya for invading and occupying Somalia, and also for its close relationship with West.

Generally, the following have been identified as some of the reasons for the involvement by a cross-section of Kenyans in terrorism. First, there is institutional discrimination in the issuance of Kenyan identification documents for Somalis and others from the Cushitic communities who generally go through special vetting committees to establish the verity of their claim of 'Kenyanhood' as part of the process in acquiring national documents, which makes them feel like second-class citizens. Second, security agents charged with counterterrorism operate without regard of established laws (PSAC, 2013). They purposefully target the Muslims in counterterrorism operations that include detaining them, 'disappearing' them, and extraditing them to other countries. Third, a majority of Muslims live in underdeveloped areas. For instance, those in the North Eastern Region (NER) live on semi and arid land, suitable only for pastoralism. Land issues also besiege them with many especially those at the Coast and Nairobi, claiming of being disinherited their ancestral land. Consequently, they live as squatters in temporary structures with no basic amenities. Fourth, past historical injustices and human rights violations, especially against residents in NER and the Coast, have not been resolved. Lastly, Kadhis Courts enshrined in the Constitution as a means to implement Islamic law lack adequate human and financial resources, which undermines their effectiveness (Ibid.).

Partly due to such perceived grievances, some individuals have been attracted to the idea of establishing and living in an Islamic state/Caliphate where *Sharia* is law and there is no discrimination/marginalization based on culture and religion. They believe they have problems either because they are a minority in a Christian/Buddhist/atheist country or because they live in a Muslim country that is secular and 'Americanized' state. They are, therefore, susceptible to radicalization as terror elements are aware of these grievances and have used them to recruit youth and elicit support from the communities. In Kenya, NER, the Coast, and Nairobi have been the most susceptible to radicalization and terrorism (National Crime Research Center, 2012). They have also been the ones most targeted in terror attacks. The next part of the article studies why this is the case.

A. THE KENYAN SOMALI: FEELING "ALIEN IN MY OWN COUNTRY"

The Somalis are one of the largest single ethnic blocks in the Horn of Africa (Lewis, 2002). Kenyan Somalis have had a long history of uneasy relationships with the governing structure of Kenya. The British found Northern Frontier District (NFD) difficult to administer since it was arid and agriculturally unproductive and thus only suitable for herders. Secondly, the porous borders and the homogeneity of the peoples on both sides of the border made administration of the region problematic. Fundamentally, the Somalis are a people to whom the Mexican adage "we didn't cross the border; the border crossed us" truly applies (Bhandar, 2016). The Somali nomadic lifestyle in search of pasture was blind to the artificial borders imposed by the colonists. Therefore, containing them to a particular region proved a challenge. Lastly, the Somalis sought to unify with their kin across the borders in Ethiopia and in Italian Somaliland to form a 'Greater Somalia' (Castagno, 1964). The 'Greater Somalia' agenda started in the late 19th Century when Mohamed Abdille Hassan ("the Mad Mullah") together with his followers known

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as the Dervish, rebelled against the colonization of Muslim land by Christians (Rinehart, 1981). For Mohamed, 'Greater Somalia' was to unify areas occupied by Somalis, that is, the French Somaliland (Djibouti), the former Italian and British territories, the Ogaden Region of Ethiopia, and the Northern Frontier District of Kenya, into one territory.

In the latter days of colonialism, the Somalis in Kenya sought to secede and be part of the independent Somalia Republic. However, both the British government and the African nationalists, that is the Kenyan leaders-in-waiting, were opposed to this as it meant losing a big chunk of territory as well as establishing a precedent for other tribes including the Maasai, the Swahili and Arabs at the Coast who had also expressed similar concerns (Kariuki, 2015). Consequently, the Republic of Somalia broke diplomatic relations with Britain on 18th March 1963 while the Kenyan Somalis refused to participate in the May 1963 general elections and declared that they would not cooperate with the Kenyan government (Castagno, 1964). This, and the engagement of the region in the *Shifta* war, made the relationship between the government and the community distrustful and volatile. Over the years there have been other incidences where the region experienced collective punishment as a government's response to acts of violence such as the 1980 Bulla Karatisi massacre where at least 300 people lost their lives during a security operation in response to the killings of five government employees (TJRC, 2013). Another such incident is the infamous Wagalla massacre of 1984 that occurred when about 5000 Degodia males were rounded up and held by security forces at the Wajir airstrip for five days without sustenance following their refusal to disarm.

The region remains the focus of focus of security operations with regards to terrorism in particular and national security in general. Its proximity to Somalia, the porous border between the two countries, and old suspicions and hostilities between the government and the NER residents make the region an easy target for the Kenyan government in its counterterrorism agenda. For instance, following successful terror attacks in NER and other parts of the country, police and the military are known to descend on the region where they conduct retaliatory raids that lead to arbitrary arrests, loss of life, and damage to property (HRW, 2012).

B. THE COAST OF KENYA: PWANI SI KENYA!

The Kenyan Coast region comprises of Mombasa, Kwale, Kilifi, Tana River, Lamu and Taita Taveta counties. Diverse ethnic groups, languages, cultural practices and religion characterize the region. It is also Kenya's first point of contact with the external world with the first foreigners arriving around 8th Century CE from the Persian Gulf (Sperling, 1988). The interaction with the outside world opened up the region to international trade as well as new religions such as Islam. In October 1886, Britain and German, which had interests in the region, signed the first Anglo-German Treaty to determine their spheres of influence more so since the Sultan of Zanzibar already had sovereignty over some parts of the East African Coast. The treaty, therefore, accorded the Sultan the Ten-Mile Coastal strip that stretched "2,116 square miles from Kipini in the north to Vanga in the south, and inland from the Coast for ten nautical miles" (Ndzovu, 2014, p. 19).

In 1887, the Sultan leased the northern part of the Strip to the British East African Association (BEAA) for a period of 50 years (Singh, 1965). In 1889, Mombasa became the 'capital' of British East Africa. On 1st July 1890, the second Anglo-German Treaty was signed in which Germany agreed to recognize a British Protectorate over the Sultanate of Zanzibar (Olson, 1991). In 1895, following the 'Scramble for Africa', the territory between the Coast and Lake Naivasha became the East Africa Protectorate and Imperial British East African Company (IBEA Co.), previously BEAA, surrendered the lease of the Strip to the British government with the agreement that the latter would "administer it for an indefinite period subject to the sovereignty of the Sultan and to make an annual payment of £17,000 to the Sultan" (Singh, 1965, p. 879). In 1907, once the railway was completed, the British moved the capital inward to Nairobi. As a result, Mombasa lost its political relevance and was relegated to a transit point for goods and persons.

On 11th June 1920, the East Africa Protectorate was annexed to the British Dominions and became known as the Colony of Kenya while the Sultan's possessions became known as the Protectorate. The protectorate remained under the Sultan's hegemony, which meant that, "the native civil administration dating from the time of the Sultan's direct government" (Eliot, 1905, pp. 193-4) were all Muslim Arabs. Leaving the Strip under the Arab rule might have initially soothed the Muslims, but in the long run it isolated the region from development that the colonial administration was undertaking in the rest of the country (Ndzovu, 2014). In the latter days of British rule, the Arabs/Swahili foresaw a future under a Christian African government where their rights and interests would not be adequately protected. Consequently, during the First Lancaster House Conference held in 1960, a delegation of residents of the Strip (Mwambao) was present seeking secession to either join the Sultanate of Zanzibar or form a self-governing territory (Bethwell, 1995). The British government appointed a commission on 1961 to look into the issue of the Coastal Strip and the demands of the Coast people to secede. The commission's findings in summary declined to allow the Strip to secede since that would make Kenya a landlocked country and the Sultan had no objection to the incorporation of the Strip to independent Kenya as long as safeguards were put in place to protect the interests of the Arabs therein.

Immediately after independence, the Arabs and Swahili embraced the idea of Majimboism (federalism) as a substitute to an independent Mwambao when it became evident that secession was improbable. Majimboism would have "offered them a measure of control over land, education, and the composition of the Civil Service" (Anderson, 2005). However, Majimboism failed to take place due to inherent weaknesses in the system and from inadequacy of requisite funds for operations (Kagwanja & Mutunga, 2001). Consequently, the Muslim community at the Coast believed that the Christian hegemony was responsible for the region's marginalization and discrimination and severally clamored for secession (Ndzovu, 2014). In 1999, the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) was formed. It remained dormant until 2008

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when it reemerged under the banner, *Pwani Si Kenya* (the Coast is not part of Kenya). Its agitation for secession stirred the residents of the region to demand for their fair share of the fruits of independence including the right to: administer themselves; land; quality and free education; equitable distribution of resources; modern and free medical care; and, control of the tourism sector, wildlife and natural resources (MRC, 2011). As a result of MRC's secessionist tendencies, the Kenyan government banned the organization in 2009. However, this was overturn in court June 2012. Nevertheless, the government banned the group once again in 2012 by also associating it with Al Shabaab (Botha, 2013).

C. 'UP-COUNTRY' MUSLIMS

Islam arrived at the East African Coast around 8th Century CE. However, for nearly 11 centuries Islam remained a coastal phenomenon concentrated in the towns of Lamu, Pate, Malindi and Mombasa since Muslims did not actively seek to proselytize Islam (Sperling, 2000). Additionally, attempts to spread Islam to the hinterland were undermined by dangerous and strenuous long distance travel, and resistance on the part of various African communities. Slave traders also discouraged conversion in the hinterland since it would have impacted negatively on the supply of slaves (Loimeier, 2013). Conversion, therefore, occurred when people traveled to the coastal urban centers where they assimilated the culture and religion, while others converted through marriage between a Muslim male and a non-Muslim female (Sperling, 2000). Islam started penetrating the interior in the mid-19th century through trade. Additionally, the advent of colonialism helped spread Islam. For instance, the railway facilitated travel across the country enabling the Muslim traders to access the interior.

In 1899, when Nairobi became the center of operations for the railway, among its first residents were British, Indians and a hotchpotch of African (Swahili, some individuals from Tanganyika, Maasai, Nandi, Kamba, Kikuyu, Nubians and Somali). More conversions occurred within the King's African Rifles (KAR) whose initial recruits were Muslims (Ndzovu, 2014). In all these early conversions, the converts were only taught to memorize parts of the Quran and pray. They could not read the Quran for themselves since it was in Arabic. Additionally, they had to rely on spiritual guidance from the Islamic leadership at the Coast and from the Swahili in Nairobi. The Swahili, however, did not regard the converts as equals but as mere neophytes who exhibited airs as if they had made pilgrimage to Mecca (Oded, 2000). Moreover, the Swahili went ahead and constructed separate mosques (Ibid.). The converts refused to tolerate discrimination, more so from 'foreigners' who did not even adhere fully to the teachings of the Quran (Nzibo, 1995). To remedy this, a few converts went to Mwambao to learn Islam after which they came back to Nairobi and set up Islamic schools and mosques where they helped enlighten their people about the tenets of the faith.

During the colonial period, Africans were settled in the eastern part of Nairobi, which was characterized by underemployment; female-led households as men migrated in search of work; orphaned or vagrant children and delinquency; inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure; poor structural quality of housing, overcrowding; and, insecurity (APHRC, 2014). Two such settlements, Majengo and Eastleigh, currently play a key role in the government's counterterrorism efforts since they have produced a large percentage of youth that have joined Al Shabaab as well as those seeking join the Islamic State (Botha, 2013).

V. THE BIRTH OF RADICAL ISLAM IN KENYA

In the 1970s, in order to escape the poverty of the informal settlements as well as lack of employment opportunities in independent Kenya, a number of youth left for further Islamic education and employment opportunities in the Middle East. Those seeking higher education found themselves in Medina University in Saudi Arabia and Omdurman University in Khartoum (Bakari, 2013). These universities accepted Muslim students from Africa with little formal education as well as little Arabic knowhow (Ibid.). It is in this setting that the Kenyan Muslims were exposed to Salafism and Wahhabism.

When they came back home in the early 1980s, they embarked on spreading this ideology since they felt that the Islam practiced in Kenya was polluted by incorporation of elements drawn from indigenous African religions (Patterson, 2015). For instance, the first converts in Nairobi had been proselytized to using a largely 'Swahilised' brand of Islam that incorporated some traditional Swahili practices. These included wearing of amulets with Quranic verses to wade off evil, seen as a compromise for the traditional talisman and medicinal packets; sacrificing of animals; the belief in spirit possession; and, Swahili wedding rituals. This explains the uniqueness of the converts, especially those in Majengo, who despite originally being Kikuyu, Maasai or Kamba, could be mistaken for Swahili. Similarly, the Somali graduates decried the lack of knowledge of the Arabic language in their community, which hindered the reading of the Quran, hence the over-reliance on Sheikhs (Maingi, 1987). They also sought to remove the influence of Somali traditions and beliefs from the practice of Islam including the circumcision of girls and chewing of *miraa* (*khat*) (Ibid.).

The Wahhabis actively proselytized through the use of street preaching and distribution of pamphlets and books. Their 'radicalizing reformist' stance was attractive to the young generation of Muslims due to its empowering and liberating messages (Ndzovu, 2018). Additionally, some within the Muslim community saw this reform as necessary in countering pressures from outside especially at the Coast where Westerners had exposed the youth to substance abuse, immodest dress and other immoral behavior (Patterson, 2015). However, this type of messaging also led to schism between the Islam practiced by the Muslims in Kenya and the one imported by Wahhabis.

During the same period, the Saudi government, wealthy with petro-dollars, started funding Wahhabi schools, mosques and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) across the globe. In Kenya, these NGOs included Al Haramain Islamic Foundation, the Islamic Foundation, the Young Muslim Association, and World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), which provided basic social services such as

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healthcare, education, vocational and sports training, inadequately provided for by the state (ICG, 2012). Not all these humanitarian activities however, were altruistic since these Islamic groups integrated proselytization into their activities requiring beneficiaries to abide by the strict requirements of Wahhabism (Ali-Koor, 2016). Consequently, some non-Muslim youth living in the informal settlements that also benefited from the NGOs' charity, were converted to this puritan and uncompromising brand of Islam.

Between the 1980s and 1991, the spread of Wahhabism and its radicalizing rhetoric went largely unnoticed. The government was involved in dealing with the aftermath of the attempted military coup in 1982. The government also had to grapple with the debt crisis including the adoption of Structural Adjustment Programs, which were intended to restore efficiency in all sectors of the economy but instead withdrew social security from the citizens, led to underemployment, inflation and lowered living standards (Rono, 2002). Additionally, the Wahhabi community grew more insular since it was facing backlash from the larger Muslim community for claiming that the latter had been co-opted by the *kufar* government (ICG, 2012).

With the advent of multiparty democracy in 1991, there emerged the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) at the Coast whose main aim was to help the Muslims vocalize their issues that included discrimination in acquiring identification documents, neglect of towns in the Strip, inadequate education facilities, and meager representation in government and public institutions (Oded, 1996). One of IPK's members was Sheikh Khalid Salim Ahmed alias Sheikh Balala, a graduate of Medina University, who due to his charisma and religious rhetoric took over the party's leadership. Under his reign the party became radical. For example, during one particularly violent demonstration in the streets of Mombasa, the youth membership was heard chanting "Jihad!" (Ibid.). These types of demonstrations at the time were a rarity and the media portrayed them as the Muslim community against the Kenyan (Christian) state (Kresse, 2009). The party was also linked to funding from extremist groups in the Middle East as well as to issuing threatening messages against opponents including *fatwas*. Consequently, the government declined to register the party due to fear that the group would seek secession, its non-secular membership and its inclination towards fundamentalism. The state also withdrew Balala's passport while he was out of the country on grounds that he was not Kenyan but Yemeni. Nevertheless, the grievances raised, and the presence of Balala's army of followers, amongst them Sheikh Aboud Rogo Mohamed, made the ground favorable for advancing *jihadi* ideology at an opportune time in the future (Ndzovu, 2018). Such an opportunity presented itself in the form of Al Qaeda's foray in East Africa via the Coast where the terror attacks in the late 1998 and 2002, for which Aboud Rogo was arrested for, were planned.

One of the planners of the 1998 US Embassy attacks, Harun Fazul, settled in Lamu after the attack where he married a local girl, established an Islamic school (*madrasa*) and recruited locals including Aboud Rogo Mohammed. On 28th November 2002, this group participated in carrying out an attack against the Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel at the Coast as well as firing two missiles at an Israeli-chartered plane as it took off from Moi International Airport, also at the Coast. These attacks brought to the limelight the Kenyan face of terror, that is, Rogo, the suicide attackers that blew themselves at the hotel, and others associated with the planning. Prior attacks on Kenyan soil had been perpetrated by foreigners. The arrest and subsequent highly publicized trial gained Aboud Rogo a lot of notoriety (SEMG, 2010). When Rogo was acquitted in 2005 for lack of evidence, he joined forces with two other radical Sheikhs at the Coast, Samir Khan alias Abu Nuseyba and Abubakar Sharif alias Makaburi, and engaged in radicalizing and recruiting youth for the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) in Somalia and later Al Shabaab. Others remained in Kenya as sleeper cells (SEMG, 2011). This was the birth of Al Qaeda in East Africa and the Horn (AQEA).

It is from AQEA the Muslim Youth Centre (MYC), the largest contributor of foreign fighters to Al Shabaab, emerged. Ahmad Iman Ali, of Majengo in Nairobi, one of Aboud Rogo's recruits set up the MYC ostensibly as a self-help group established to address spiritual, social and economic needs of its members. However, in reality the MYC was the epitome of radical Islamism in Nairobi since it had ties to both AQEA and Al Shabaab. It is through the MYC that youth were identified and recruited. Those who were non-Muslim converted. The recruits were then sent to local radicalization centers. The recruits were then smuggled to Somalia to join Al Shabaab (SEMG, 2011). The first of these recruits from Nairobi to reach Somalia did so in the late 2006 and early 2007, the first days of Al Shabaab (SEMG, 2010). Notable members of the MYC included Mohamed Juma Rajab alias Qa'Qa, considered a hero for dying in combat against the Ethiopians in Baidoa in 2008 (SEMG, 2010). Steven Mwanzi Osaka alias Duda Brown and Jeremiah Okumu alias Duda Black who were behind a grenade attack at a political rally in Uhuru Park in 2010 where six people were killed (Ibid.) John Mwanzi Nguli alias Yahya and David Kihuho Wangechi alias Yussuf who were behind two grenade attacks that killed three police officers in December 2010. Elgiva Bwire Oliacha alias Mohamed Seyfdeen who is currently in jail service a life sentence for perpetrating the grenade attacks against a bar and a bus station in Nairobi a few days after the Kenya Defense Forces' incursion into Somalia (Angira, 2011). Other similar attacks took place at the Coast.

VI. CONCLUSION

In Kenya, it is individuals adhering to the Salafi strand of Islam that are behind *jihadi*-inspired terrorism. Apart from those terrorists drawn from abroad, the ones from Kenya are from the Somali community, the coastal region and coverts from the urban centers. The diverse communities share several grievances that have made them susceptible to radicalization. These are discrimination, marginalization and securitization. Although individually these structural difficulties do not justify terrorism, seeking to counter the menace would not be practicable if these socio-economic and political factors remain unaddressed. The government has securitized the NER by dealing with security threats and opposition from the region with military force. Consequently, the Somalis are distrustful of the government, which has undermined the former

counterterrorism efforts. The residents at the coast continually complain about marginalization, hence the clamoring for secession. The converts and Muslims from the urban centers also have their share of issues that make them susceptible to radicalization. A majority live in informal settlements, are either orphaned or fatherless, have minimum education, and little chances of gainful employment.

Terror groups are aware of all these grievances and have tailored their recruitment messaging to appeal to the different target groups. For instance, in the NER it is not poverty but the desire to be part of a Muslim state where there is no discrimination and where purity of Islam is adhered, that drives youth to Al Shabaab. Therefore, Al Shabaab has offered the ideal of an Islamic state. This too applies to people at the Coast whose long list of grievances has been used as justification for supporting and engaging in terrorism. The converts are largely poor, with a plethora of issues that make them easy targets for recruitment to terrorism and violent extremism. Jihadism provides them a better way of living their lives since death for the cause is more profitable than death as a common criminal.

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