

WOMEN AND DERADICALIZATION EFFORTS IN KENYA: THE CASE OF ISIOLO COUNTY, 2011-2018.

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Declaration

This research report is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other university.

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Table of Contents

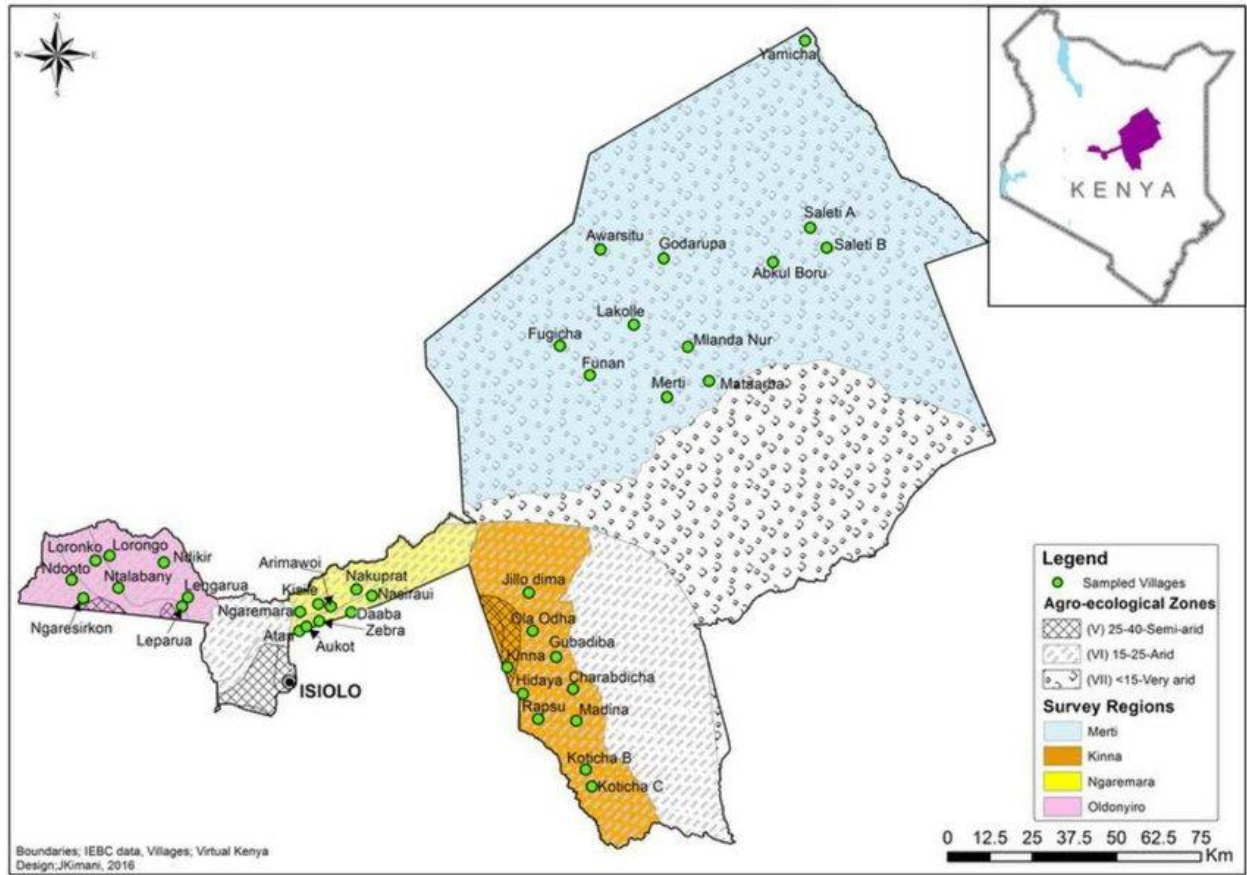
Declaration	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Table of Contents	ii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 : Background to the Study	1
1.2: Statement of the Research Problem	5
1.3: Research Questions	6
1.4: Objectives of the Study	6
1.5: Justification of the Study	6
1.6: Scope and Limitation of the Study	7
1.7: Literature Review	7
1.7.1: Causes of Radicalization	7
1.7.2: De-Radicalization Efforts by Women	12
1.7.3: The Impact of Women’s Efforts on De-radicalization	15
1.8: Theoretical Framework	17
1.8.1: The Rational Choice Theory of Radicalization	18
1.8.2: The Social Identity Theory	18
1.9: Hypotheses	19
1.10: Methodology	19
CHAPTER TWO	21
HISTORY OF RADICALIZATION IN ISIOLO COUNTY	21
2.0: Introduction	21
2.1: Conceptualizing Radicalization	21
2.2: Terrorist Recruitment and Mobilization Network	23
2.3: A History of Extremism in Africa and the World	26
2.4: The Rise of Radicalization in Kenya, 2011-2018	30
2.5: The Spread of Radicalization and Extremism in Isiolo County	33
2.6: Conclusion	35
CHAPTER THREE	36
CAUSES OF RADICALIZATION IN ISIOLO COUNTY	36
3.0: Introduction	36

3.1: The Rationale on how they became Radicalized	36
3.2: The Role of Society in Radicalization	40
3.3: Unemployment and Socioeconomic Marginalization as Factors of Radicalization	42
3.4: Social Media Platforms Radicalization in Isiolo	45
3.5: Regional Challenges and Radicalization in Isiolo County	47
3.6: Religion and Radicalization	49
3.7: Government Agencies Versus the Population	51
3.8: Conclusion	53
<u>VICTIMS OR PERPETRATORS? ROLE OF ISIOLO WOMEN IN DERADICALIZATION</u>	55
4.0: Introduction	55
4.1: Gender Differentiation and Women as Victims of Extremism	55
4.2: Female Roles in Terrorist Groups	57
4.3: Women Working with Security Officers for Terror-Free Isiolo	60
4.4: The Role of Women in De-Radicalization	63
4.4.1: The Role of Women in NGOs in Isiolo	64
4.4.2: The Role of Mothers of the Victims in Counter-Terrorism	66
4.5: Conclusion	68
<u>THE IMPACT OF RADICALIZATION AND DE-RADICALIZATION EFFORTS IN ISOLO COUNTY</u>	70
5.0: Introduction	70
5.1: Abductions and Disappearances of School children, Youth and Women	70
5.2: Mental and Psychological Impact of Radicalization	74
5.3: Women and Community-Oriented Approaches to Counterterrorism	76
5.4: Women Engaging with Individuals at High Risk of Being Radicalized	78
5.5: Women Reaching for their Sons in Al-Shabaab Ranks	79
5.6: Conclusion	81
<u>CHAPTER SIX</u>	83
<u>CONCLUSION</u>	83
6.0: Summary of Study Findings and Conclusion	83
<u>REFERENCES</u>	88
Books and Journal Articles	88
Oral Interviews	90

Abstract

This study investigated both the radicalisation of the youth as well as the role of women in deradicalization in Isiolo county, located in Kenya, covering the period between 2011 and 2018. On the one hand, radicalization refers to the behaviours and activities that the youth of Isiolo county engaged in and which led to terrorism in the county, nation, region, and the world. On the other hand, deradicalization defines the methods and techniques employed, particularly by women in Isiolo county, to repair the harm caused by radicalization. While the national government, local security agencies and the international community, have implemented formal measures to stem radicalization, most of their strategies are silent on the role of women in deradicalization. This study focused on the interventions made by women in deradicalization using Isiolo county as the case study. The research sought to achieve three main objectives: first, to examine the causes of radicalization in Isiolo county; second, to examine the role that women play in deradicalization in Isiolo county; and, third, to determine the impact of women's deradicalization efforts in Isiolo county. My findings show that radicalization in Isiolo was caused by several factors, and these include: religion and parental influence, external stressors such as the effects of the collapse of the government of Somalia, the emergence of *Al-Shabaab* as a regional terror group, the generalized stereotyping of certain communities and the government's high handed response. The study established that women are instrumental in the fight against radicalization in Isiolo county. In Seremala and ACDI Coca Cola villages, for instance, mothers were found to have used platforms including schools, places of worship, and social media to encourage other parents to be vigilant on foreigners recruiting young boys and girls into terror groups. Similarly, the study established that women's groups such as the Isiolo Pastoral Women, Bull-Pesa Women Support Group, Isiolo Women of Faith Group, Isiolo Mothers for Peace, and Star of Hope Women, regularly mobilised women, youth and security organs to engage in open discussion forums on how to eradicate radicalization. This study also found out that as part of their deradicalisation effort, the named women's groups invited selected members of these vulnerable groups to private and confidential counseling sessions and talks, which were conducted either in schools, colleges, churches or mosques. Furthermore, their deradicalisation strategy entailed open public discussions to create awareness on the serious effects of radicalization. During such public meetings, parents were encouraged to share their challenges and success stories. These public forums would also involve joint sporting activities such as football matches between the youth and security officers, which opened up additional channels for the community to share important information on terrorism with the authorities. One key outcome of these efforts was the creation of public awareness on radicalization. Another outcome was the reduction in the frequency of arbitrary arrests and detention of the youth by security agents. The study, through oral interviews, revealed two challenges facing the deradicalisation efforts by women in Isiolo county. One challenge was the secrecy associated with the young people suspected to have links with *Al Shabaab*, which complicates the deradicalisation efforts. The second one was the widespread use of the social media in facilitating the recruitment and dissemination of classified information about upcoming police operations. Finally, based on these findings, this study recommends further research on the role of social media as both a radicalisation platform and a resource for deradicalisation.

Map of Isiolo county.



Adopted from Google Maps

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Radicalization is “the process through which an individual changes from passiveness or activism to become more revolutionary, militant or extremist, especially where there is intent towards or support for violence. It refers to the phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas which could lead to acts of terrorism.”¹ For the purposes of this study, it will also refer to the deeds and actions in which the youth of Isiolo county participated and which encouraged terrorism in the county, the nation, the region, and the entire world. Deradicalization is another strategy employed, particularly by women in Isiolo, to address the issue. The present definition of "terrorism" basically reduces it to the description or study of the unlawful use of violence in terrorist-type actions, but historically, terrorism has been a much more extensive phenomenon. As the most violent kind of psychological warfare, it primarily targets the mind. Religious extremism is viewed as a transcendental act by those who engage in it. The religious leaders defend it, giving actors full approval and turning them into divine tools.² An alienated person, a legitimising ideology (engaged through radicalization), and an enabling environment are necessary for terrorism.³ Radicalization of individuals or groups into terrorism is increasingly becoming a major threat to local, national, and global security.⁴ Radicalization leads to violent extremism that in turn results to governments losing power, and distortion of fundamental religious principles. This may then cause inter-religious conflicts, destruction of many economies, and provocation of humanitarian crises.⁵

Radicalization is often seen as an evolution towards violent extremism and terrorism. An ideology or point of view that is radical in opinion, particularly in political concerns, and is characterised by intolerance for competing interests and alternative viewpoints is known as extremism. This is one of the main characteristics of terrorist behaviour. When people or organisations publicly

¹Butt.R & Henry.T. “European Counter-Radicalisation and De-radicalisation: A Comparative Evaluation of Approaches in the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany”. [p. 6](#)

² Chaliand, G and Arnaud B. (2007). “Introduction”. p. 3.

³Southers, Erroll. (2013). *Homegrown Violent Extremism*. Anderson Publishing. p. 7 .

⁴ Nzomo M, (2017) strengthening community resilience against radicalization and violent extremism. A comparative assessment of disengagement and rehabilitation programs for returnees in kenya, university of Nairobi. P.12.

⁵ Crossett. C and Spitalletta J. (2010). Radicalization. relevant psychological and sociological concepts. The Johns Hopkins university.p.3.

advocate violence or use violence as a means of expressing their ideological convictions, this is known as violent extremism. Importantly, ideological convictions do not by themselves meet the criteria for a terrorist attack, even though extremism may be a precursor to it.⁶ Radicalization generally connotes ‘Islamist terrorism’ due to the major related events that happened in the country and the world such as the 1998 bombing of United States of America Embassy in Nairobi and Dar salaam, and the 2001 twin tower attacks which Al-Qaeda led by Osama bin laden -a Muslim- was involved. Another related event were the attacks in Kenya and Nigeria where AL, Shabab and Boko haram- alleged Islam terrorist groups- respectively claimed responsibility. This means that radicalization involves an individual or group engaging in violence in order to influence the ideological ideals of their immediate society. The violence may be physical, cultural, or structural. Physical violence is defined as the act of killing or injuring another person. Structural violence can occur as a result of the implementation of structures that deny people their rights and opportunities to prosper.⁷

Although de-radicalization is also referred to as counter-radicalization or rehabilitation, its efforts are distinct as it occurs after individuals or groups commit criminal acts. Therefore, de-radicalization is the process of reintegrating persons who have accepted or shown interest to abandon violent extremist groups back to the society.⁸ This is done with the help of de-radicalization programmes. The success of such efforts could be measured using the number of individuals who revert back from terrorism to peaceful civilian life; the reduction in the frequency and magnitude of terrorist activities; and the reduction in the number of youth recruited by terror groups. De-radicalization efforts are geared towards peacefully removing individuals and groups from violent extremism. These programs and approaches vary across countries.⁹

Initially, de-radicalization programs included prison-based education and post-prison aftercare where theological re-education and vocational training were the core-elements of these programs. However, this approach is different from the newer programs that emphasize wider community

⁶ Southers, Erroll. (2013). *Homegrown Violent Extremism*. Anderson Publishing.

⁷ Noor,S & Hussain D. (2020) women radicalization: an empirical study . from <https://www.researchgate.net>

⁸ Githigaro, J.M. (2018) contributions of community-based approaches to countering youth radicalization in Kenya’s Mombasa and Nairobi. PHD thesis.p.71.

⁹ Githigaro, J. M. (2018). p.73

involvement and resilience. These current initiatives begin by developing early interventions to counter radicalization before it eventually becomes violent.¹⁰

Violent extremism affects the livelihoods of all members of society: girls, women, and men. This was confirmed in research conducted in Jordan. According to the study, 13% of the population interviewed believed women face greater pressure to radicalize than men; 31% believed men face greater pressures; while 53%, the majority, believed the pressures affect women and men equally.¹¹

Although women can be affected as both participants and victims, their dual vulnerability is rarely studied and generally remains unexplored. Yet, according to Hearne, women play many roles in violent radicalization, including being sympathizers, perpetrators, or participants, mobilizers, enablers and preventers of the menace.¹² Indeed, recent developments show that counterterrorism and violent extremism are also linked to women's rights, peace, and security. According to UN Women, because women are the primary pillars and influencers in their families, radicalized groups target them in order to change their ideology as a prelude to manipulating the entire family. According to Zeiger, as cited in Chowdhry, women may embrace violent radical ideologies but refrain from engaging in violent behaviour. They still inspire other people to engage in violent behaviour. This is done in the course of their responsibilities as mothers and wives in their families. In such capacities, they encourage others, primarily young men, to engage in violent struggles and radicalization. Additionally, women can be coerced into violently radical groups. As Noor and Hussain further show, women are more susceptible than men to forced methods such as being drugged, rape and physical coercion. Women are also more emotionally and socially vulnerable hence can easily be blackmailed. Married women may also be limited in ways that force them to follow their husbands or other male relatives' ideas without questioning.¹³

Therefore, empowering women and girls by recognizing them as strategic agents in combatting radicalization is important in reducing the risks that radicalization and violent extremism poses to

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 75

¹¹ Noor S. & Hussain D, (2020). p.53.

¹² Ellie B.H. (2020) Participants , enablers and preventers : the role of women in political violence .from <https://ismuni.cz/el/1423> accessed on 25th July 2020

¹³ Noor S. & Hussain D, (2020). p.27.

women particularly and the society generally. For example, the United Nations Resolution 2122, which reaffirmed the global commitment to giving resources and consideration to the agenda for women, peace, and security, has highlighted this. Women play a critical part in the de-radicalization efforts, hence the UN Resolution urged for improved women's leadership and representation within such initiatives. In addition, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000 called on member states and the UN to support women's participation in peace and security decision-making and to recognise the effects of conflict on women.¹⁴

1.2 Background to the Study

Isiolo county shares proximity to polarised Somalia, the North-Eastern frontier and upper Eastern Kenya regions, which are associated with radical terror recruitment, extremism, and radicalization. For example, Isiolo county is widely considered among the most vulnerable zones to violent extremism as it served as the transit county widely viewed as a 'hotbed' for youth recruitment into terrorism and violent extremism. Although it has minimal terror attacks, terror groupings such as ISIS, Al-Shabaab and Al Hijra have grown in the area, using radical religious dogma to recruit gullible youth hungry for socio-cultural belonging and economic opportunities. Notably, many de-radicalization programs are designed for men, with few efforts targeting women.¹⁵

Radicalization has caused many threats in Kenya. Subsequently, several measures have been implemented to curb it. These include initiatives of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), predicated on the larger global war on terror framework. Further, top-down donor funded governmental initiatives have been instituted to counter radicalization within communities. Many such programs are implemented by both national and county governments. For instance, National Counter Terrorism Centre has its own department that deals with disengagement and reintegration of returnees. The programme entails reintegrating radicalized youths into the society without stigmatizing them, and preparing the society to accept them¹⁶.

¹⁴U.H.S.C.R 1325(2000) On Women, Peace And Security. Accessed on 25th July 2020 from <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi>

¹⁵Ombati M & ombati V. (2016). The resilience of children and youth negotiating urban vulnerabilities and livelihoods in the langas slums of Eldoret. Vol.17 .pp.1-13.

¹⁶Republic of Kenya and Isiolo County Government (2018). Isiolo County Action Plan on Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism (ICAP P/CVE). P. 22.

Isiolo county has ratified a National Action Plan to combat violent extremism. The plan is based on twelve pillars that seek to mitigate the supply matrix of violent extremism. The pillars revolve around enhancing access to justice, enhancing security, and fostering inter-governmental relations at both the macro and micro levels of governance. These pillars are partially informed by women's roles as educators, caregivers, and homemakers. The fourth pillar promotes women's inclusion while working to expand women's participation in CVE management activities and policies. The Action Plan is also derived from the National Strategy for CVE, which is in turn closely related to UN Security Council Resolutions 1624 and 2242. The resolutions demand that women and women's organisations be given priority involvement and leadership in the creation of actions to combat terrorism and violent extremism.¹⁷

Determining how women contribute to deradicalization is the goal of this study. It recognises that the efforts by various stakeholders – government agencies, the County Government, Civil Society Organisations and Faith Based Institutions – have largely borne a male touch, which in most cases lacks a soft touch. In this study, the place of the soft power of women in de-radicalisation is analysed.

1.3 Statement of the Research Problem

Understanding women's roles in radicalization and violent extremism, as well as their participation in deradicalization and combating violent extremism, is of growing importance. Violent activities of extremist groups undermine women's civil freedoms and their human rights. Extremist organisations frequently impose rigid dress codes on women, restrict their participation in public life, constrain women's freedom of movement, and impede their access to education and employment. Boko Haram terror group in West Africa, for instance, continues to kidnap hundreds of women and girls and once abducted, the women and girls are forced into sexual slavery and subjected to sexual harassment.

Women's status as victims, survivors, and agents of radicalization, violent extremism, and terrorism is well-understood. But little research has been conducted into their role as agents of de-

¹⁷ Ibid. P. 27

radicalisation. For example, women are said to be playing direct and indirect roles in perpetrating terror-related violence, recruiting and supporting extremists, facilitating terror acts, sympathising with radical ideologies, and harbouring violent extremists. There is a dearth of scholarly work on women and deradicalisation in Kenya, especially in Isiolo county, and this is why I have undertaken this study to fill the existing gap. Therefore, this research critically sought to examine efforts and roles that women play in deradicalization and prevention of violent extremism in Kenya's Isiolo County between 2011 to 2018. This period was selected because it not only coincides with the entry of the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) into Somalia to stop fight *Al Shabaab*, but also because it is marked by a spike in serious terror attacks in Kenya with a corresponding rise in recruitment of young Kenyans into violent extremism.

1.4 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

- i. What are the causes of radicalization in Isiolo county?
- ii. What roles do women play in the de-radicalization efforts in Isiolo county?
- iii. What is the impact of women's de-radicalization efforts in Isiolo county?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

- i. Examine the causes of radicalization in Isiolo county
- ii. Establish the role of women in de-radicalization efforts in Isiolo county
- iii. Assess women's impact in the de-radicalization efforts in Isiolo county

1.6 Justification of the Study

Stability and security are necessary for Kenya's present and future social, economic, and political development and well-being. These are things that the government must give or make possible under the constitution. Due to radicalization and violent extremism, the government is still struggling with the deteriorating situation of its internal security. Although there has never been a notable terror attack in Isiolo county, it has, however, been considered as a breeding ground and a

possible gateway of most terror groups to Kenya by scholars such as Lokoro¹⁸ and government agencies such as the Anti-Terror police Unit. Furthermore, there have been reports of hideouts and terror cells in Isiolo, which calls for academic research. In the current efforts to curb radicalization in Isiolo, the role of women in deradicalization has not been clearly articulated, hence this study's curiosity to establish their place in this issue. The results of this study will help Kenya's national government, the County Government of Isiolo, and non-state actors evaluate their strategies for combating violent extremism and radicalization. Additionally, this study will contribute to the body of knowledge on how women react to radicalization and violent extremism.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

Only the role of women in de-radicalization in Isiolo County from 2011 to 2018 was the subject of this study. This scope was beneficial because it gave researchers an eight-year head start in examining how women contribute to deradicalization. The year 2011 was chosen because it marked the deployment of the Kenya Defence Forces to Somalia to combat *Al Shabaab*, which resulted in an unprecedented number of terror strikes in Kenya. The research was conducted in Isiolo county, which is not only reported to be home and breeding ground to many suspected terrorists, but also as a transit area through which they cross over to either neighbouring counties or countries.

1.8 Literature Review

This section conducts a literature review aimed at giving a clear understanding of radicalization and de-radicalization programs highlighted by earlier researchers. It is divided into three sections, the first of which highlights research on the factors that lead to radicalization, the second of which looks at the roles that women play in countering radicalization, and the third of which focuses on the effects of women's efforts on counterradicalization efforts.

1.8.1: Causes of Radicalization

Radicalization in the world, Africa, Kenya and Isiolo county, in particular, can be attributed to a number of issues. For instance, the rise of violent extremism in the Horn of Africa region is largely

¹⁸ Lokoro, L.D. (2020). Islamic radicalization processes: an assessment of their effects on Muslim youths in Isiolo, Kenya. PhD thesis. Kenya Methodist University.p.64.

associated with the emergence of security threats posed by Somalia's *Al-Shabaab*, whose emergence and flourish has been associated with the collapse of the state of Somalia.

The Collapse of the Somali State

Kenya's security suffered as a result of Somalia's central government falling apart. Notable events included the inflow of refugees, the spread of light weapons and small arms, and later, the radicalization of a portion of the Kenyan population. Following intensified terror attacks in 2010 and 2011, Kenya eventually deployment the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) into Somalia to stem the problem. In response to the KDF's entry into Somalia, *Al Shabaab* organised a series of reprisal terror attacks in Kenya.

The painful toll of these terrorist attacks on the county and the realisation that that there was growing radicalisation of youth within the region, Isiolo county ratified a National Action Plan to combat violent extremism. The plan was based on twelve pillars that sought to mitigate the supply matrix of violent extremism. The pillars include enhancing access to justice, enhancing security, and fostering inter-governmental relations at both the macro and micro levels. The fourth of these twelve pillars, which is influenced by the functions that women perform as educators, carers, and homemakers, is particularly pertinent to the current study. This pillar seeks to promote women's inclusion while raising awareness of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) management efforts and tactics.¹⁹

Radical Religious Ideologies

In their study of the factors determining religious radicalization in Kenya, Rink and Sharma argue that radicalization is strongly linked to psychological trauma experienced at the individual level, including historically strained social ties. Process-oriented elements are also mentioned by Rink and Sharma, particularly religious affiliation and contact with radical networks. Rink and Sharma also assert that radicalization is primarily unaffected by outside factors because it occurs on a personal level. Therefore, a macro-level structural approach is preferable to a relational, idea-driven paradigm for understanding radicalization.²⁰ It was important to recognize the primary

¹⁹ Lokoro, L.D (2020).p.36.

²⁰ Rink A. & Sharma K. (2018). The determinates of religions radicalization. Conflict resolution. Vol.62. No.6. pp.1229-1261. Accessed on 23rd June 2022 from www.jstor.org.

indicators of radicalization on a personal level, especially in the Kenyan context, even though the reasons of radicalization were not the primary focus of this study.

According to Ariel Glucklich, the connection between religion and terrorism is that religion teaches hatred, and that terrorist acts arise from the love of one's religion. This kind of love drives one to do anything in support of their religion and willingness to belong to an entity. Glucklich refers to this as Prozac effect, and argues that some religions cause hatred since aspects of violence are concealed in positive teachings of religion. Ultimately, Glucklich argues that terrorism is merely religious socialization effect. Accordingly, if society social system breaks down, people tend to look for leaders who preach perverted strands of religion. Religion and social systems co-exist. Hence, societies seek justification in religion.²¹ The current study looked at how religion affected people's decision to become radicalised in the Isiolo county using Glucklich's theories.

To Bruce Hoffman, terrorism uses violence to pursue power. Accordingly, terrorism aims to either acquire power, or to use power to seek political change. Hoffman characterized terrorism as something which is systematic, meaning it is planned and calculated. Nationalism and ideological differences are at the centre of every of violent extremism. Thus, religious extremism has become a global concern, especially focusing on religious extremism. It is noteworthy that religious extremism is only practiced at the grassroots level. Hoffman argues that terrorism perpetrated in the name of the religion was a part of routine life in ancient times, through membership to a certain group. Leaders in ancient times were the true believers and engaged in violence in the name of religion to protect their belief systems. Religious extremists were motivated by different reasons; for self-defence, or for spreading their religion. Religious terrorism takes different forms regarding the degree of atrocities committed. Some target whole communities; it could be genocidal, or aimed at causing revolutionary change. Religious terrorism can also be committed by different groups, individuals, or governments.²² This study focused on why the residents of Isiolo county are readily recruited into terrorist groups in Somalia.

²¹ Glucklich A. (2009) Dying for heaven: Holy Pleasure and suicide bombers. Why the qualities of religion are also the most dangerous. p.56.

²² Hoffman B, (1998). Inside Terrorism. Columbia University Press.

Laurence Dobrot argues that terrorist groups flourish within the Islamic religion because of some aspects of Islamic belief. According to Dobrot, some Muslims believe that Islam is the chosen religion and it is superior to all other religions, hence making it their obligation to spread Islam by any means possible. Such people believe that such spread of Islam can only be achieved by establishing an overall Muslim caliphate to reign in the world that has ever since the dawn of the Post-Cold War era been largely dominated by the predominantly Christian West.²³ The current study sought to establish if the radicalized individuals in Isiolo county were motivated by calls to spread Islam.

A majority of these individuals were veterans of Mujahedeen war to expel the then-Soviet Union, which had militarily occupied Afghanistan from 1979-1989. The war had ended with Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. Inspired by the victory in Afghanistan, the Mujahedeen and Soviet-Afghan War veterans turned against the West, which was widely perceived as acquiescing in the continued occupation of Palestinian land by Israel. Some of these Mujahedeen, who morphed into terrorists, sought refuge in lawless Somalia. This resulted in a spill over of terrorist activities and radicalization from Somalia into Kenya, beginning with attacks against Western interests in the country.

The Role of Culture

Culture is always blamed for contributing to terrorism. For instance, cultural perspectives emerge in places where terror conflict has occurred. For illustration, cultural perspectives on terror were evident especially after the Cold War, giving way for patterns of culture-influenced interpretations of terror. While previously it was purely between nations, now even differences between leaders with contending ideologies bring out conflicts between nations, laying the dangerous foundation for conflict between different civilizations.

According Samuel Huntington, civilization and culture are one and the same since both have the same forms of identification. For instance, both share elements such as language, history, tradition, religion, and customs. Civilization is dynamic in nature simply because its boundaries keep on

²³ Dobrot L.A, (2007). The Global War on Terrorism: A Religious War? Washington, US Government. P 3.

changing. Sometimes, these boundaries fall; other times they rise, depending on the situation. Huntington argues that the end of ideological war will be marked by a start of cultural war – that is, war will be between cultures rather than countries. Accordingly, there exists a very thin line between differences in civilizations and people’s cultures, hence culture can be the main cause of future conflicts. Such conflicts will likely occur between and within nations with different cultures. Such cultural differences, or rather different civilizations, bring out the religious factor, as seen for example in the civil wars in Sudan and Nigeria.

Huntington’s thesis on the clash of civilizations is especially important in a globalized and western dominated world because it helps to demystify terrorism, especially the notion that terrorism is orchestrated by the Muslim revolutionary vanguards. It is worth noting that the increase in terrorism attacks is largely attributable to a clash of the West’s predominantly Christian civilization and the Muslim world in a global arena, where the West dominates the world, including the Muslim world. The Western world also tends to export her culture to the Muslim world, which goes against the latter’s theological teachings. In addition, the very adoption of a dynamic culture that incorporates elements of terrorism makes its usage possible.²⁴ Huntington’s work is important in this study because it offers a better way of understanding radicalization and violent extremism.

Further, modernization could bring about conflict. The process of modernization includes industrialization, urbanization, increased literacy levels, education, and wealth accumulation, all of which have a Western orientation. Modernization weakens already existing cultural identification and it is human nature to look for familiar forms of identification. Such forms most likely tend to be one’s belief system, hence leading to revival of religion which provides another form of national identity much stronger than nationalism.²⁵ The current study sought to establish the extent to which globalization is responsible for radicalization of individuals in Isiolo county.

²⁴ Huntington S. P, (1993). The Clash of Civilisations, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 72 No. 3 p. 22.

²⁵ Smuts L, (2010). Culture As A Cause Of Conflict In Africa, accessed 27th July 2020, retrieved from <https://www.polity.org>

1.8.2 Deradicalization Efforts by Women

In peace building initiatives, women tend to be resilient, innovative and influential. They can mediate, reconcile, mobilize, and organize despite being excluded from official decision-making processes. Conflict is normally fuelled by politics of individualism. In all, personal interest and women commit to grow peace efforts to challenge individualism. Women in peace effort advocate for consensus building and structural changes rather than individual gains.²⁶ That is why this study investigated the roles that women play in de-radicalization efforts.

Generally, what makes women groups unique is how unified and persistent they are. This boosts their influence in peace building. For instance, in Northern Ireland, women played an important role of bringing stakeholders together to enhance their synergy through meetings. In Sierra Leone as well, women's groups played a major role in ending the war by negotiating between the warring groups. Women also conducted peace campaigns, public prayers, and sports. Sierra Leonean women mediated negotiations between the government and rebels without direct confrontation.²⁷ Based on these foregoing examples, this study examined how women in Isiolo County use their soft power to influence radicalized individuals to denounce radicalization with a view to reintegrate them into peaceful society.

Additionally, one of the most important perspectives in peace building and conflict management is inclusion of marginalized groups. Inclusivity rules out claims of social injustice. Therefore, women's push for inclusion cannot be ignored since they regularly practice it. Hence, the inclusion of women's effort is very critical in the broadening of social justice, especially since they tend to be perennial victims of violent conflict.

It is also noteworthy that many decision-making bodies tend to be biased in their policy outcomes. Usually, the final decision is based on the decision makers' personal interests in the conflicting groups, rather than justice. Eventually, the root causes of conflicts are not addressed. Therefore, it is important to include women groups since they pursue interests of wider communities. That is why this study assessed the extent to which de-radicalization efforts in Isiolo County has included

²⁶ Conciliation Resources, (2013). Women building peace. London: Conciliation Resources.

²⁷ McCartney C. (2003) Suspending judgement: the politics of peacebuilding in Northern Ireland.p.78.

women. This researcher holds that the inclusion of women is key for the success of de-radicalization efforts.

The inclusion of women in de-radicalisation and peace-building has witnessed success stories in some protracted conflicts around the world. As was already established, the success of the peace deal between the British and Irish governments and the majority of political parties in Northern Ireland was made possible by women's efforts to achieve the Belfast Agreement. During the negotiations for peace in Ireland, women from Northern Ireland made sure that victims' rights were included in the Belfast Agreement. The agreement was to bring about devolved government for Northern Ireland by addressing all the underlying causes of the conflict. Moreover, one of the issues that women lobbied for – which is victims' rights – led to the success of the referendum.

In Cambodia, women's role drastically changed from traditionally assigned social duties to more visible and impactful political ones. Through their new roles, women lobbied for social development by focusing on the rural areas with majority of the population. Similarly, in Sierra Leone, women groups developed an integrated strategy by organizing football matches, discussions, as well as inter-faith prayer meetings between Muslims and Christians. They lobbied for all parties in the conflict to consider democracy for peace as a worthy agenda.²⁸ It is, however, important to take cognizance of the fact that although women tend to be viewed primarily as victims of radicalization, they are also increasingly becoming perpetrators of radicalization.

In spite of the roles that women play in bringing about peace, they still face challenges such as lack of fair participation in politics. This gap is due to either the patriarchal society or lack of required resources to participate in political process, hence weakening their effective engagement with peace-building processes. To realise effective peace building processes, women need to be included in all spheres of decision making. Politicians hold a bigger part of decision-making, but the lack of resources is not only a challenge in politics, but also in day-to-day life of bringing about peace. This affects women more, because there is lack of political good will for their activities that are considered to contradict what most male politicians try to achieve. These challenges

²⁸ McGrew L., Frierson K & Chan S, (2004). Good Governance from the Ground Up: Women's Roles in Post-Conflict Cambodia. The Hunt Alternatives Fund.

notwithstanding, we have the outstanding example of how women from Northern Ireland managed to secure women's and civil society's participation in politics to influence formal political negotiation²⁹.

The role that women play in conflict prevention is primarily hinged upon establishment of early warning systems. The only way to stop this unending cycle of conflict is by establishing a system that collects early threats to peace and which prevents conflict from happening. An early warning system works by gathering intelligence and solving prevailing grievances.

In this regard, for sustainable peace to be attained, all the efforts should be incorporated to address the root cause of conflict by considering different actors and victims of conflicts. This will show that conflicts affect people differently. Examples of this include the Rwandan genocide and the civil war in Kosovo. In both cases, there was extreme discrimination and women were targeted although they were not the only victims. While women are generally better judges when it comes to impending danger, their opinion is often overlooked by the patriarchal society. In Kosovo, for instance, women had knowledge about the rise of arms caches but they had no channel of reporting. Women also face a different challenge: apart from not being heard, they are also often threatened by those instigating conflict. For illustration, in Sierra Leone, a majority of women knew in advance about the impending attack on UN peacemakers. However, fear for their own lives and the safety of their families inhibited them from passing on that information.³⁰ Therefore, the current study sought to establish how women can serve as early warning systems against radicalization in their communities in Isiolo County.

From the above examples, it is clear that inclusion of women in every sphere of decision making is crucial. Therefore, it is important to develop a system that is all-inclusive. For instance, in early warning systems, women's roles should be incorporated in reporting any kind of threat to peace. Women should be heard and probably protected against any threats. This will empower women to participate in societal matters equally with men.

²⁹ Conciliation Resources, 2013.

³⁰ Agbajobi D.T, (2009). The Role of African Women in Peace Building and Conflict Resolution: The Case of Burundi, Ogun State Redeemer's University.

1.8.3 The Impact of Women's Efforts on Deradicalization

It is crucial to make the distinction between counter-radicalization and de-radicalization activities before I review the literature on the effects of women's efforts on deradicalization. While counter-radicalization efforts occur prior to any suspected criminal act, de-radicalization interventions usually occur afterward. Counter-radicalization entails “hard” policies; criminal justice departments, the police, or military: these efforts target specific individuals at risk of adopting or who already hold radical views. They may have committed acts of violence inspired by radicalization. However, women groups broadly use de-radicalisation efforts that address at-risk communities.³¹ To further elaborate, UN defined Counter-radicalization as “a package of social, political, legal and educational and economic programmes specifically designed to deter disaffected (and possibly already radicalised) individuals from crossing the line and becoming terrorists.” And de-radicalisation as “programmes that are generally directed at individuals who have become radical with the aim of re-integrating them into society or at least dissuading them from violence.” De-radicalization aims to reverse the process by assisting in the debunking of extremist doctrines and making it easier for people to leave extremist groups, whereas counter-radicalization focuses on prevention.³² Hence, this study examines women's de-radicalization efforts in Isiolo county.

With the rise of violent extremism among the youth, there is greater need to disengage and integrate this radicalized youth. Disengagement involves altering behaviour or refraining from interacting with or using violence in potentially violent groups, but it does not always involve altering political or ideological convictions.³³ The United Nations has come up with many Security Council resolutions to incorporate women in different spectrums of decision making. Many United Nation member states have adopted one or two UN Security Council resolutions. One common resolution is 1325, which advocates for participation of women in peace building. Therefore, whereas women's role in countering violent extremism is recognised as crucial, in practice, women's efforts are largely ignored. It is important to note that women are the mothers of the

³¹ Katherine E. Brown, 2013

³² United Nations (2008), “First Report of the Working Group on Radicalisation and Extremism that Lead to Terrorism: Inventory of State Programmes”.from UN website.

³³ Ibid

radicalized youth and they are able to take notice of early warning signs of radicalization among the youth. Women are also persuasive in nature, hence, they potentially a very important tool in de-radicalizing the youths. Women are also known for long-term thinking and planning for their families, which locates them in a critical position to resist radicalization among the youth who are given to shortcuts in life.³⁴ This is the reason why this study examined the extent to which women are involved in de-radicalization efforts in Isiolo county, in line with UN resolutions.

In France, de-radicalization went higher, particularly by involving women such as Dounia Bouzar, who has been named as France's "Madame Deradicalization," because of her dedication to saving young people ensnared by terror groups. Bouzar's approach is a trial protocol that uses de-radicalization programs to change youth attitude towards violent extremism. The protocol employs different tactics such as analysing the level of engagement of the radicalized person, their needs and levels of paranoia.³⁵ The current study, therefore, assessed the role of individual and groups of women in the de-radicalization efforts in Isiolo county.

Kruglanski *et. al* offer a model that aptly describes the radicalization/de-radicalization dichotomy as a distinct process on its own. Kruglanski *et al* argue that the processes of radicalization/de-radicalization are influenced by three factors: first, the quest for personal significance; second, the definition of the means of violence to appropriate one's personal goal which is also an ideological component; and thirdly, the quest to belong to a certain group of people. This apparently justifies one's violence. This study examined how these three aspects determine the success of de-radicalization by women in Isiolo county.

In examining de-radicalization efforts across the globe, Wulan sees de-radicalization efforts in Indonesia as part of wider counter-terrorism practices, entailing the usage of hard and soft approaches. The soft approach targets the individual perpetrator and it largely involves the family and community members of the individual in question and who are keen on changing the radical

³⁴ RASED (2013). Women and Violent Radicalization in Jordan. Jordan UN Women.

³⁵ Symons E (2016). Beyond Reason: The Madame Deradicalization of France is Rehabilitating ISIS's Youngest Recruits. Women in the World.

mind-set.³⁶ Mothers are, therefore, best placed in carrying such de-radicalisation activities. To this end, disengagement and de-radicalization work must take this into account. The challenge with the Indonesian de-radicalization efforts is that whereas the approach combines soft and hard approaches to countering radicalization and terrorism, much of it does not consider the potential for women to significantly engage in de-radicalization initiatives. The approach glosses over the core mandate and position of women in society and institutions such as the family. In the family, women play key roles including formation of character of children. Furthermore, women also offer diverse perspectives on problem solving. Women's softer approach can complement or even complete traditional de-radicalization actions. Thus, there should be increased roles for women in counterterrorism, especially in de-radicalization projects.³⁷

To Calfas Amy, women's importance in de-radicalization initiatives resides in the fact that they have advantages over their male counterparts. First, women are the majority in society; second, women and children are the victims of violent extremism; thirdly, they are best placed to provide information to those working on countering violent extremism. Amy slams the role of government-led counter-radicalization initiatives by opining that the practitioners of such counter-terrorism initiatives usually ignore women and the civil society. Instead, government chooses only profiled members of society. This is against social psychology which argues that women hold the family together. Because of this critical role at the family level, women are also important drivers of society towards positive change and can be critical predictors of extremism at an early stage.³⁸ From these examples across the world, it is clear that women as individuals or groups have a significant role to play in de-radicalization.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

This study was grounded in two theories that complement each other in examining the role of women in de-radicalization efforts in Isiolo county. These theories are: the Rational Choice Theory of Radicalization and the Social Identity Theory.

³⁶ Kruglansk A.W. (2014). The Psychology of Radicalization and Deradicalization: How Significance Quest Impacts Violent Extremism. *Advances in Political Psychology*, Volume 35.

³⁷ Glaser M. (2016). Disengagement and Deradicalization Work with Girls and Young Women—Experiences from Germany. *Gender and Far Right Politics in Europe*.

³⁸ Calfas A, (2016). Why Women Are the Missing Link in Countering Extremism, Fair Observer.

1.9.1 The Rational Choice Theory of Radicalization

The Rational Choice Theory is largely hinged on the individual premises for radicalization. The theory delves into the religious, personal, and social incentives that predispose individuals to radicalization. Proponents of the theory postulate that even though the behavioural trajectory of individuals may seem irrational, especially in lieu of the dangers posed to the self by radicalization, they are motivated by considerations of future self-gratifying benefits. According to Hasisi and Perry, radicalization, a self-destructive behaviour is not driven by philanthropic impetus. Rather, it is largely influenced by future benefits that are either religious or political.³⁹ The Rational Choice Theory was relevant to this study as it provided more insights in understanding why individuals in Isiolo county are vulnerable to radicalization and why they engage in violent extremism at grave personal risk. The Rational Choice Theory also offered insights into why women engage in violent extremism and the best way to de-radicalize them.

1.9.2 The Social Identity Theory

The Social Identity Theory is largely hinged on the innate desire among human beings to belong to a social group. The Social Identity Theory contends that in order to enhance their perception of themselves, members of an in-group actively seek out the negative traits of an out-group. As a result, individuals' sense of self-worth comes from being viewed favourably by other groups. Hence, groups compete not only for resources but for identities.⁴⁰

Subsequently, individuals derive gratification in situations where their seemingly altruistic motivations benefit the group at the detriment of other groups in cases of resource mobilization and/or competition.⁴¹ The Social Identity Theory was useful to this researcher in her understanding of the extent to which identity and belonging motivate individuals in Isiolo county to be radicalized and to join terrorist groups.⁴²

³⁹ Perry S & Hasisi B, (2015). The Rational Choice of rewards and the Jihadist Suicide Bomber, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol 27 Issue 1 .pp. 53-80.

⁴⁰ Al Raffie D, Social identity theory for investigating Islamic extremism in the diaspora. *Journal of Strategic Security*.

⁴¹ Emeka E.D. (2017). An Integrated Theoretical Approach to the Persistence of Boko Haram Violent Extremism in Nigeria. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, Vol 12.

⁴² Al Raffie (2013).

1.10 Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following hypotheses:

- i. Radicalization in Isiolo county is caused by religious factors.
- ii. Women play a key role in the deradicalization efforts in Isiolo county
- iii. Women's efforts have led to the success of deradicalization efforts in Isiolo county

1.11 Methodology

The study was qualitative and using a descriptive research methodology to assess the contribution of women to deradicalization initiatives in the county of Isiolo. The goal of this study's descriptive approach was to gather information and describe the deradicalization efforts taking place in the county as well as the key terrorism-related problem of radicalization. Data classification, analysis, and interpretation were required by this methodology. The study used primary and secondary data sources to reach the aforementioned objectives. Printed material on radicalisation, terrorism and de-radicalisation including Books, journal articles, theses, print and online newspapers, reports from the government or from non-governmental organisations or from humanitarian organisations, as well as archival sources, were the secondary sources consulted in this study.

Primary data was collected from the following categories of respondents: individual women in Isiolo county as well as women's grassroots organizations such as Isiolo Pastoralist Women, Bulla-Pesa Women Support Group, Isiolo Peace-link, and Isiolo Gender Watch organisation. The Isiolo county security officers and the National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC) officers also gave us the much needed support and information to complete this work. The study also utilized two sampling techniques: purposive sampling and stratified sampling, which identified the respondents. The researcher, who was born in Isiolo, also relied on her knowledge of the region and her networks to access key informants in the region.

We used open-ended questions in our interviews that were arranged thematically to get the crucial data we needed from our respondents. Three main topics, each reflecting the research aims, were used to divide the questionnaire that the researcher gave out. Additionally, the respondents who could read, understand, and write were given an open-ended inquiry. This gave them an opportunity to not only provide additional information, but also a chance to express their opinions,

experiences, feelings, ideas and beliefs on the efforts of women in de-radicalization efforts in Isiolo county. The goal was to learn about people's attitudes and opinions regarding the whole topic of radicalization and the role played by women in deradicalization. We also utilized observation and eye witness accounts. With the respondents' consent, the in-person interviews were taped and afterwards transcribed. In order to supplement our oral recordings, we also took some crucial notes.

In-depth face-to-face interviews were used to gather the qualitative primary data, which was then descriptively analysed utilising content and thematic analysis. The findings were interpreted through the lenses of Rational Choice Theory and the Social Identity Theory. The study's findings were displayed in narrative and non-linear formats.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY OF RADICALIZATION IN ISIOLO COUNTY

2.0 Introduction

Radicalization is currently one of the major threats facing societies, states, institutions and even individuals worldwide. Radicalization is even worse when individuals or groups use terror means to promote their political, ideological and religious demands. Radicalization across the world has led to the emergence of terrorism, insecurity, and has even rendered governments powerless. It is an aberration and deformation of cardinal religious principles. It relegates key religious truths and gospels to the periphery in the minds of the recruited men, women and youths. Despite radicalization being a trans-gender challenge of the 21st Century society, there has been a tendency in policy circles to exclude women from playing a key role in de-radicalism.

For long, women have been victims of radicalization. Recently, however, there is increasing recognition of the multiple roles that women play in violent extremist organizations. Women are shown to be recruiters, fund raisers, as well as combatants. Some women also act as whistle blowers against rampant radicalization of their children. They offer early warning hints that may help policy-making in contending with extremists.

Despite the diverse and enormous role played by women, little has been done to acknowledge women's role not only as perpetrators but also as forerunners in de-radicalization campaign in Isiolo county. Therefore, the objective of this chapter is to explore the historical background of radicalization by contextualizing the process involved in radicalization. To achieve this, the chapter brings into perspective the terrorist recruitment and mobilization networks, a panoramic view on radical extremism in the world, the spread of radicalization in Kenya and, finally, the spread of radicalization and violent extremism in Isiolo county.

2.1 Conceptualizing Radicalization

Past experiences of community radicalization show that as an ideological issue, radicalization involves enculturation of persons or groups of people, especially youths, to participate in violent actions. Such actions aim to achieve political ends. This emerging phenomenon has elicited an ongoing debate from both scholarship and its stakeholders alike on the basic definitions and

understanding.⁴³ Generally, scholars have in the past engaged the subject of radicalization as a process of socialization that could lead some people, especially the vulnerable women and youth, to become extremists or hold violent extremist views on socio-cultural, economic, and political dimensions.⁴⁴

According to Lopez, radicalization is a systematic and gradual action that causes one to change from meaningful participation in political activities through legitimate means to the use of violence for political interests.⁴⁵ As a result, individuals or groups are exposed to ideological speech and ideology that promotes the transition from traditional, moderate viewpoints to radical ones. When people use violence to advance their political rights, they put the security of the state at risk.⁴⁶

In other places, Schmid conceptualises radicalization as a process that entails a rise in the use of violent tactics and strategies in response to any political problems. Violence may even change and develop a certain animosity towards specific social groups, societal institutions, or structures and increase instances of strategic use of violence means to influence audiences.⁴⁷ Violence only succeeds in convincing the minds and the hearts of youth and women into extremist narratives through a distorted interpretation of Islam, thereby assigning relevance to violence as a religious duty. The apex of radicalization is often the involvement in suicide bombers or violent attacks.⁴⁸

Another scholar, Horgan, identifies three important phases through which individuals go before they become terrorists. These are: i) the way to terrorism ii) existing as a full terrorist being, and iii) detaching and breaking lose from terrorism. Disowning terror activities involves not only physical actions but also cognitive aspects. Cognitive aspects include the sudden or well-taught

⁴³ Lokoro, L.D (2020).p.50.

⁴⁴ Davies, L. (2009). Educating against extremism: Towards a critical politicization of young people. Springer. International Review of Education.

⁴⁵ Lopez M.A.G., & Pasic, L. (2018). Youth work against violent radicalization: Theory, concepts and primary prevention in practice. Council of Europe and European Commission. Council of Europe Publishing, retrieved from <http://book.coe.int>

⁴⁶ Rik C(2019). Radicalization: The Origins and Limits of a Contested Concept. In *Radicalisation in Belgium and the Netherlands : Critical Perspectives on Violence and Security*, ed. Nadia Fadil, Martijn de Koning, and Francesco Ragazzi, Pp29–51.

⁴⁷ Schmid P.A (2013). Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review, international center for counter terrorism- The Hague retrieved from www.icct.nl

⁴⁸ Lokoro, L.D (2020).p.50.

change of personal goals and lifetime vision in one's mind towards the group. One has to develop different opinions from those of their previous terror organizations. The body or organic structure detachment entails moving away from all available chances to involve in a rampage and fierce behaviour.⁴⁹ Similarly, Tore Bjorgo notes that there exist two forces that may cause one to engage in or exit a terror group. The first is the push factors that guide one's decision to exit the group. These factors include the damaging and negative challenges surrounding the group that eventually prompts an individual to exit. The second set consists of pull factors such as job opportunities, educational chances, and opportunities for high-ranking networks.

2.2 Terrorist Recruitment and Mobilization Network

Depending on who, what, where, and why it is used, the term "terrorism" has several meanings.

According to the United Nations, terrorism is:

Any action that is designed to kill or seriously injure civilians or non-combatants, when the goal of such an action, by its very character or context, is to frighten a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to perform or to refrain from doing any act.⁵⁰

On his part, Spencer writes that the term is largely contested, particularly in the social sciences, because of the way it might be applied dependent on not only the location but also on historical, power, morality judgments, and international connections.⁵¹ Despite the various definitions, many, Researchers have come to the conclusion that terrorism is a politically driven strategy that employs violence and threats, and that gaining attention is a key component, notwithstanding the numerous terminologies of terrorism that have been evolving over the years. According to Vertigans, the definition of "terrorism" varies depending on the agency.⁵²

⁴⁹ Horgan, J. (2008). From profiles to pathways and roots to routes: Perspectives from psychology on radicalization into terrorism. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*.

⁵⁰ United Nations (2004). Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change: A more Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility. New York: United Nations. p.52.

⁵¹ Spencer, A (2010). —The "new terrorism" of Al-Qaeda is not so new. In S. Gottlieb (ed.) *Debating Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Conflicting Perspectives on Causes, Contexts, and Responses* (pp. 1-4). Washington, DC: CQ Press. pp.1-4.

⁵² Verigans, S. (2011). *The Sociology of Terrorism: People, Places and Processes*. London: Routledge. P.40.

The track to joining terrorism networks is highly complicated and intricate in structure. It is an assemblage of the inter-related webs running from the family as a basic social unit of any nation to higher learning institutions. Recruitment into terrorism has been done through kidnapping, young men and women joining voluntarily, and introduction by family members. Other terrorists are born and raised by members and leaders of terror formations like *Al-Shabaab* and *Al-Qaeda*. Currently, many young people and women are duped, trafficked, kidnapped, or forcibly recruited.⁵³

For instance, in 1987, Uganda experienced the highest number of the kidnappings of over twenty thousand children⁵⁴. This was closely followed by Nigeria's outlawed terror group Boko Haram, which embarked on mass kidnappings and abduction of schoolgirls in different parts of Nigeria. The most affected regions were Chibok and Dapchi in 2014 and 2018, respectively. In Somalia, some terror groups used detention, great force, intimidation, and daunting recruitment of over 1, 770 young men and women in 2017.⁵⁵ Similar tactics and strategies were employed by ISIS who kidnapped thousands of children from homes, schools, and orphanages and correctional centers.⁵⁶

Although abduction and kidnapping have been major ways of recruitment of members into these violent groups, there are other incidences where people have willingly sought admission into terror groups. Young people all over the world, for instance, have joined terrorist groups due to a range of pull factors. The most affected youth include those who suffer from identity crises, the ideological attraction and motivation towards the group, perceived marginalization, and anger over outdated cultures, especially against women. The recruits for economic tractions and long-term economic growth have become even more susceptible to terrorists' indoctrination, drugging and the threat of harm to their families so as to remain in the group and used for suicide bombing, sex, and drug trafficking.⁵⁷

⁵³ Lokoro, L.D (2020).pp.241-243.

⁵⁴ Schwartz M. S, (2019).

⁵⁵ Harnisch C (2010). The Terror Threat from Somalia: The Internationalization of al Shabaab. Critical Threats Project

⁵⁶ Horgan, J (2008).p.618.

⁵⁷ BBC "Trafficking of Pills Used by Suicide Bombers Soars in Sahel," December 12, 2017 from <https://www.bbc.com>

In most developing countries such as Kenya, poverty and socio-economic marginalization play major roles in increasing the expansion of terror recruitment networks. The allure of financial incentives is critical to push individuals to join radical groups such as Al-Shabaab.⁵⁸ Radical Islamists thus capitalize on the widespread poverty in the region and the marginalization of the Muslim constituencies from the mainstream political system as recruitment tools.

Studies in social security and communication indicate that terrorist groups such as *Al-Shabaab* use the Internet for recruitment, incitement, and radicalization. With easy connection to all parts of the world, one is vulnerable to radicalization by organized, systematically and neatly packaged extremist materials that are choreographed to attract innocent users into joining the ranks of the insurrectionists. Al-Shabaab in Isiolo has additionally utilized a variety of online forums and chat rooms to entice and recruit female followers as well as to find potential members who have been affected by extremist groups out of interest or sympathy. The use of writings to enlist new recruits into their ranks has been made most effective by Al-Shabaab and its kindred organizations in Africa and other parts of the world.

Arguably, terror groups understand well that family is key in their continuity. This has led to formulation of stricter religious laws to curtail the freedom of women, especially in territories controlled by terror groups. Women have been forced into marriages by terrorists as a strategy to provide continuity of the group. For instance, in Somalia, Al-Shabaab soldiers choose the women they want from any family and the leaders compel their families to accept the dowry payment. The families that resist face threats of ostracisation from Islam, whose punishment is being beaten/stoned to death⁵⁹.

These forced marriages have led to another rarely mentioned way of recruitment, which this study refers to as ‘terrorism by birth.’ Thousands of infants around the world are born and raised by members of different terror groups. For instance, in 2015 alone, over 730 children were born of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) parents.⁶⁰ Chulov estimates that in a span of a year, children

⁵⁸ Hitchens H, (2014).

⁵⁹ Stern O (2002). Married in the shadows: The wives of Al-Shabaab. Adam Smith International.

⁶⁰ Chuloy M (2017). Scorned and Stateless: Children of Isis Fighters Face an Uncertain Future,” Guardian, October from <https://www.theguardian.com/world>

born either by or in the territories controlled by terror groups range from 5,000 to 20,000 across the world. In this case, a family acts as the primary site of radicalization. Chulov further argues that the children born of violent extremists may have a higher attachment to advanced radical beliefs and, therefore, require more robust efforts to counter their indoctrination. According to Schwartz children born of terrorists later become leaders who may also serve a vital role in the organizations and safeguard longevity of the groups. An example was Osama bin Laden's son, Hamza, who immediately assumed the role of his father in Al Qaeda.⁶¹ Similarly, the sons and daughters of the left-wing rebels such as Cheri Laverne Dalton, Joanne Chesimard and William Morales are still financing and leading the radical groups, years after the demise of their parents.⁶²

2.3 A History of Extremism in Africa and the World

The study of radicalization and extremism in the world is quite long. This subject has been documented for over 2000 years, with the earliest case reported in the 1st Century BCE. However, at every emergent evolutionary stage, the study has been adding a new concept while retaining the old form.⁶³ In its conception, the idea of terrorism simply meant the espousal of anti-capitalist ideological perspectives by the Muslim world with Iran as the epicenter of this insurgency.⁶⁴ The widely used typologies of terrorism are currently categorized into four. The leftwing or social revolutionary, the right-wing, the nationalists or separatists, and the religious terrorists. The left wing for instance developed from the working-class movements seeking in theory to eliminate class distinctions in the society. This was the case with the communism which evolved from left-wing ideologies and refused to die with the end of Soviet Union. The left-wing activities are responsible for over 74% of terror attacks in the United States since 1970s⁶⁵.

Stacey Reeser (2011) categorises right-wing extremists into six sub-divisions, namely: revolutionary terrorists, reactive, vigilante, racist, millenarian, and youth counter-culture terror

⁶¹ Mathew S. Schwartz M.S. U.S. Offers \$1 Million for Info Leading to Son of Bin Laden,” National Public Radio, March 1, 2019, from <https://www.npr.org/2019/03/01/699264405>

⁶² Seger K (2001). Left-Wing extremism: The current threat. Center for human reliability studies, Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education

⁶³ Koomen W & Joop V.D (2015). Pligt. *The psychology of radicalization and terrorism*. Routledge. From <https://scholar.google>.

⁶⁴ Rik (2009).

⁶⁵ Seger (2001).

groups.⁶⁶ According to Kaplan and Bjorgo, the right-wing movement adopted the anti-government, antisemitic, anti-homosexual and anti-immigration as their key ideology.⁶⁷ Similarly, Vohryzek-Bolden justifies the argument of the former and latter scholars by delineating the right-wing terrorists further into other categories such as black supremacists, Jewish extremists, patriotic and white supremacists. He observes that the underlying belief in racial superiority is essential to the groups' ideology and serves as the driving force behind their attempts to establish domination and control.⁶⁸

These movements have reached an extreme state of adversity with hundreds of thousands of incidents of terror attacks around the world⁶⁹, including the attack on Times Towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington DC on 11th September 2001; as well as the Madrid bombing of 2004 and the London bombing of 2005. A total of 19,828 acts of terrorism and political violence were committed around the world between 1968 and 2004, resulting in 25, 408 deaths and 61,160 injuries.⁷⁰

Between 2011 and 2018, the world experienced a widespread spiraling of terror coordinated attacks as a result of the improvement of the global interconnectedness of terror groups through the digital superhighways and shared philosophies⁷¹. The internet has linked world terror groups enabling them to coordinate their activities under one accord. For instance, Jihad groups in the West such as Islamic terrorists in Balkan and Jihadists extremists in the US are linked to the Al-Qaida insurgency, Taliban and Arab mujahedeen in the East. These groups have affiliates in the East, West, and North Africa. In North Africa, Egypt, Libya and Algerian jihadist pledge their allegiance to Al-Baghdadi terror groups. In East Africa, the al-Shabaab of Somalia has spread its

⁶⁶ Stacey A.M (2011). The Tipping Point to Terrorism: Involvement in Right-Wing Terrorist Groups in the United States, from <https://digitalcommons.unomaha>

⁶⁷ Kaplan J., & Bjorgo, T. (Eds.). (1998). Nation and race: The developing Euro-American racist subculture. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

⁶⁸ Vohryzek (2003)

⁶⁹ Hasida B & Zeidner M. (2009). Threat to life and risk-taking behaviors: A review of empirical findings and explanatory models. *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 13, no. 2 <https://scholar.google.com/scholar>

⁷⁰ Hasida B & Zeidner M (2009).

⁷¹ Rink A & Sharma K. (2018).

tentacles to northern Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania and South Sudan.⁷² In West Africa, Nigerian Boko Haram and Ansaru terror groups are linked to Al-Qaeda and have since abandoned Nigeria oriented objectives to have a regional face by recruiting members from Chad, Mali, Benin, and Cameroon.

Generally, recruitment into Islamic radicalization has been promoted, to a large extent, through inducement, abductions, sacred texts, madrassas run by jihadists and internet sites.⁷³ Key players in radicalization have especially created and used radicalization sites, print and social media, CDs/videotapes, as well as befriending vulnerable girls and young women. Furthermore, the narratives peddled online that Muslims are oppressed, marginalized and denied rights have caused alienation which foster feelings and belief that implementing Sharia law is the recourse⁷⁴. According to Willem, the recruits into terrorism are taught the acts of threatening and coercion to achieve their individual and group interests which are preceded by a process of radicalization to instill beliefs that result in the person committing acts of terror.

In West Africa, the terror group, *Boko Haram*, intensified its offensive attacks on innocent citizens. Countries such as Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon and Burkina Faso, have been on the receiving end of *Boko Haram's* systematic bombings, kidnappings of school children, women and foreigners as well as targeted assassination of senior government personalities and civilians⁷⁵. For example, in 2014 *Boko Haram* abducted over 200 girls from Chibok and threatened to sell them as slaves. Shortly after the Chibok incident, *Boko Haram* also took hostage twenty additional school girls from Garkin Fulani village.⁷⁶ Thousands of Nigerians have also fled into neighbouring countries fearing retaliatory attacks and general insecurity. Over ten thousand people in Nigeria have crossed over to Chad, others to Niger's Diffa region, and to Cameroon. Nigerian refugees in Cameroon rose to 44,000; 2, 700 in Chad, while 650,000 more remain as IDPs.⁷⁷

⁷² Chilwa I. (2017). The discourse of terror threats: Assessing online written threats by Nigerian terrorist groups." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 40, no. 4, <https://scholargoogle.com/scholar?>, 02/03/2021.

⁷³ Lokoro (2020)

⁷⁴ Lokoro (2020). Pp 241-243;

⁷⁵ Agbiboa D.A (2014).

⁷⁶ Ayaan (2014). Boko Haram and the Kidnapped School Girls', Wall Street Journal Eastern Edition, 3/7/2014.

⁷⁷ Agbiboa D.E (2002).p.66.

After the fall of Mohammed Siyad Barre's regime in Somalia in 1991, the civil war there became the origin of modern-day terrorism in East Africa. After the fall of Mogadishu, clan-based rebels and warlords unleashed endless bouts of violence, which devastated an already traumatized country.⁷⁸ People from the general populace fled to refugee camps in neighbouring nations, and Somalia went for a long time without a stable government. Then, in the middle of the 2000s, the order in which politics was conducted in Somalia changed. The Hawiye clan, which controls the city, and militant Islamists were the main constituents of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), which was founded gained the support of many Somalis, especially in the capital city of Mogadishu, and defeated various warlords.. Residents of Mogadishu welcomed the ICU's restoration of security but had to contend with some of its leaders' strict Islamist tendencies. Famine has also been a constant menace in Somalia during these three decades of anarchy, leaving many children and women malnourished due to lack of food.⁷⁹.

According to Hassan and Lefkow, the Islamist ideologies brought forward by ICU were appealing to the people in early 2000 as compared to the existing democracy and the traditional elder-based clan system, which were offered as alternatives but failed to reestablish public order.⁸⁰ By then, the *Al-Shabaab* was the military wing of ICU that mainly enforced law and order. However, there was a shift of paradigm following the Ethiopian intervention to oust ICU from discussing formal power in 2006. In Somalia, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) troops, the Ethiopian army, African Union (AU) peacekeepers, and TFG troops were the major targets of Al-Shabaab's into an independent and ruthless terror group. Al-Shabaab joined the ranks of terrorist organizations in 2007 with the goal of driving out foreign troops from Somalia.⁸¹

Al-Shabaab started using jihadist terminology in 2006. The gang formed and maintained relationships with *Al-Qaeda*. This new development led to the radicalization of the entire Islamic politics, an increase in terror attacks and the change to targeting civilians. Additionally, the group

⁷⁸ Hassan , H. & Lefkow, L. (2007) Caught in a Quagmire: The World Today, Vol. 63, No. 12, pp. 6-8 Published by: Royal Institute of International Affairs; from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40477917> .

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁰ Hassan, H. & Lefkow, L. (2007). P. 8.

⁸¹ Menkhaus K. (2007) The Crisis in Somalia: Tragedy in Five Acts Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of Royal African Society. African Affairs, 106/204, 357–390.

began showing an increasing shift to online campaigns and the technological execution of simultaneous attacks on different targets, claiming territorial spheres, and providing governance services.⁸² Conversely, the formation adopted the attrition strategies and drawing advantage to the historic hatreds of Ethiopia. The approach generates fairly firm grounds of civilian support. Gains at home prompted Al-Qaeda fighters to support the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and Al-Shabaab in their conflicts with the US-backed Ethiopian forces and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Somalia. Initially fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan.⁸³ By mid-2009, *Al-Shabaab* had captured and was controlling a large portion of southern Somalia, including the very strategic port of Kismayu and parts of Mogadishu.⁸⁴ The turning point for Kenya-Al-Shabaab relations occurred when the terror network carried out a series of attacks on social joints in Mombasa, bombed public transport vehicles, attacked crowded markets and kidnapped foreign tourists. This forced President Mwai Kibaki to declare his interest in restoring the security of Somalia and also safeguard Kenya's borders in 2011. The Kenya Defense Force was, therefore, sent to Somalia to displace Al-Shabaab's territorial control of southern Somalia (Lower Juba) and to end the insecurity it posed to Kenya.⁸⁵

2.4 The Rise of Radicalization in Kenya, 2011-2018

After the terror attack on the US in 2001 and on London in 2004, Islam and Islamism across the globe came under sharp focus and criticism.⁸⁶ This led to subsequent worldwide violent extremism and reciprocal counter-extremism military adventures around the world. Therefore, the announcement of the worldwide war on terror by the administration of president George W. Bush branded all sanctuary and protection seekers as well as refugees, especially from Islamic states, as a threat to US security leading to their abuse and exclusion⁸⁷. In the ensuing struggle against terrorist groups, countries perceived to have cordial relations with the major Western powers such

⁸² Durch J. (1996) Introduction to Anarchy; Humanitarian Intervention and State Building in Somalia.

⁸³ Daniel C. (2012) Somali Piracy and Terrorism in the Horn of Africa.

⁸⁴ Little, P. "On the Somalia Dilemma: Adding Layers of Complexity to an Already Complex Emergency Emory" University African Studies Review, Volume 55, pp. 191.

⁸⁵ Kenya's Foreign Policy Towards Somalia, 2011-2016; A Contribution to Insecurity. Okwany, Clifford Collins Omondi. International Relations. Master's Thesis M60-IR. NORAGRIC

⁸⁶ Kimball C (2002) When Religion becomes Evil. New York, NY: HarperCollins Books. Leyens J-P, Yzerbyt V and Schadron G (1994) Stereotypes and Social Cognition. London: Sage Publication.

⁸⁷ Juma MK and Kagwanja PM "Securing refugee from terror refugee protection in East Africa after September 11. In: Steiner N, Gibney M, Loescher G (eds) Problems of Protection: The UNHCR, Refugees, and Human Rights, (2003).

as Kenya in East Africa and Nigeria in West Africa, have increasingly become targets of terrorist strikes. These countries are also grappling with the systemic radicalization of their youthful populations including women⁸⁸.

In Kenya, for instance, tagging Islamic religion with terrorist activities has stereotyped the Somali community, in particular, and Muslims, in general. This trend of pushing away and segregating Muslims has been spurring xenophobia and immense dislike, hatred, fear and discontent among non-Muslim Kenyans⁸⁹. The Somalis, who were linked to the simultaneous terrorist strikes on several installations around the nation, are the target of this xenophobic speech in particular. The emerging animosity by the security officials and the general public on Somalis and religion is a result of them being predominantly Muslim. Kenyans openly blame Somalis for spiraled assault attacks on their people and infrastructure⁹⁰.

In 1980, there was a terror attack on the then Israeli-owned Norfolk Hotel in Nairobi, which left fifteen people dead. It was later revealed that this strike was an act of revenge by Palestinian terrorists for Kenya's perceived support to Israel during the successful Operation Entebbe or Operation Thunderbolt in 1976⁹¹. It is worth noting that this act marked the beginning of terror attacks on Kenya. The increase in violent activities, however, coincided with the beginning of the 21st Century United States-led global counter-terrorism campaign. In 2002 for instance, the Israeli Paradise Hotel near Mombasa was attacked, killing nine people. This was followed by two air-to-air missiles launched at Israeli aircraft with two hundred and sixty-one passengers on board. Fortunately, the missiles missed the target⁹².

Terror activities worsened in 2011 when Kenyan military forces joined other East African forces to push out Al-Shabaab from Somalia, liberated Kismayu port, and reduced cross-border insecurity

⁸⁸ Richardson, P. 2016. Islamic State Splits, Better Intelligence Ease Kenya Attacks [Online]. Bloomberg. Available:<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-02-09/islamic-statesplits-better-intelligence-ease-attacks-on-kenya> [Accessed February 9, 2016 2016].

⁸⁹ Nyamnjoh FB (2006) *Insiders and Outsiders: Citizenship and Xenophobia in Contemporary Southern Africa*. Dakar: CODESRIA.

⁹⁰ Juma MK and Kagwanja PM (2003). P. 6.

⁹¹ Onyango, P. 2013. Israeli connection in Westgate Mall terror attack. Standard Digital 28th September 2013.

⁹² Juma MK and Kagwanja PM (2003).

in Kenya. Kenya's military action caught *Al-Shabaab* at its weakest period since it was suffering from internal strife that had caused divisions between a nationalist identity and an international Islamist image⁹³. Kenyan forces managed to reclaim territories initially owned by the rebels who moved to a more dispersed region of Somalia. However, the Al-Shabaab changed their strategies and model of operation. It increased its intelligence, recruiting many members in Kenya and the neighboring countries and planned terror attacks⁹⁴.

According to AMISOM reports, the new tactical shift increased patterns of high-profile international attacks such as that of 2011 in Lamu and Westgate Mall in 2013⁹⁵. During the attack on Westgate Shopping Mall, the suicide bombers spared Muslim shoppers but opened fire on other people, mainly Christians. They held civilian's hostage and called upon the Kenya government to withdraw their troops from the Somali territory in exchange for the hostages. During the Westgate Mall attack, seventy-two people were killed and over 200 wounded⁹⁶. Five aggressors were killed, eleven were arrested. However, the government of Kenya did manage to release an estimated sixty hostages whom the militants were holding, which probably raised the casualties to approximately 120 people. Similarly, in 2014 sixty-two people were injured and two killed due to the bombing of a bus in Nairobi and more than four people killed by explosives in a bus in Mombasa.⁹⁷

In Mpeketoni, Lamu County, forty-eight people lost their lives in a similar attack. This was after fifty masked gunmen were reported to have raided a police station, taking over the weapons, and paralyzing all police radio communication⁹⁸. The attacks intensified after the official opening of the international tourism season, in one of the major tourist resorts in attractive areas of Malindi and Lamu. This also happened in the northeast of Mombasa, where over 100 people were killed drive-in shooting and bombing.

⁹³ Nyagaka H et. al (2020). The role of teachers in countering student radicalization into violence in Kajiado County, Kenya. *International Journal of Science and Research*. Vol.10.

⁹⁴ Harnisch C (2010). The Terror Threat from Somalia: The Internationalization of al Shabaab. AEI's Critical Threats Project. <https://www.criticalthreats.org>

⁹⁵ AMISOM (2015). Background', at ><http://amisom-au.org/amisom-background>.

⁹⁶ Institute for Economics and Peace, The Global Terrorism Index 2014, at, 8 September 2015.

⁹⁷ Institute for Economics and Peace, The Global Terrorism Index 2014, at, 8 September 2015.

⁹⁸ Standard (2014). Uhuru Kenyatta's statement on Mpeketoni killings unfortunate, says Raila Odinga. Standard, 18th June 2014.

The attacks extended into 2015 when Garissa University was attacked. The University was barely five years old. This was the only institution established by the national government to save thousands of students from travelling for long distances in search for higher education. Garissa University was located about 200 kilometers from the border of Kenya and Somalia. During the attack, at least 150 people were killed, including 142 students, three security officers and three policemen, while eighty were injured. A total of 587 students escaped with their lives. *Al Shabaab* openly celebrated the attack as a revenge mission for Kenya's support for AMISOM⁹⁹.

In these attacks, the role of women and young girls in Kenya were not restricted to brides of the militants. They also participated in recruitment, radicalization and suicide bombings. Similarly, the women were also at risk due to the attack by extremist groups. Members of Al-Shabaab have disseminated threats urging women to curtail active participation in public sphere¹⁰⁰. In Nairobi, Mombasa, and Isiolo, these militants use sex workers as special intelligence agents who are paid to deliver information about the police officers who are also clients. They also hire Kenyan women and young girls to be given to the *Al-Shabaab* military as sex partners. They are sometimes forced to give information about the country¹⁰¹. Though most of these women are independent businesswomen, the information they leak in exchange for money has since 2011 caused untold suffering to many families especially in Isiolo county.

2.5 The Spread of Radicalization and Extremism in Isiolo County

Isiolo county has identified as a breeding ground and bastion for Islamic extremism in Kenya. The extent of Islamic radicalization in Isiolo county is affected by the Al-Shabaab extremist activities in the region. Furthermore, the global interconnectedness of terror groups especially through the open digital platforms has enabled the spread and sharing of philosophical ideologies reaching far and wide. This has made it possible for women in Isiolo county to be influenced by *Al-Qaeda*, *Hezbollah* and the *Taliban*, whose key bases are located outside Kenya¹⁰². According to Lokoro,

⁹⁹ The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) 2007.

¹⁰⁰ Maureen C F (2021). Strengthening community resilience against violence and extremism: The role of women in South Asia. <http://www.jstor.com>

¹⁰¹ Patrich K & Donnelly P (2009). Worth many sins: Al-Shabaab shifting relations with Kenyan women. Small wars and insurgency. <https://doi.org>.

¹⁰² Anselm R. & Sharma K (2018). The determinants of religious radicalization: Evidence from Kenya." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62, no. 6 Pp.1229-1261.

Al-Shabaab, an affiliate of Al-Qaeda, is the key radicalizing agency in Isiolo and the entire northwestern region of Kenya. Terror groups have well-established underground radicalization cells that are embedded in the mainstream fabric of the community, such as homes, villages, orphanages, mosques, schools and government offices. These cells are used as recruitment and training grounds for innocent and vulnerable girls, boys and women into Islamic extremism¹⁰³.

In a clandestine manner, radical clerics, Imams, Mujtahid, peers, foreigners and parents have played critical roles in fanning radicalization in Isiolo county. Homes and villages having both homogenous and heterogeneous characteristics that favor socialization have also supported radical indoctrination¹⁰⁴. The social setting of the homes and villages in Isiolo allowed friendship and bonding to occur as girls, boys and women from same families, clans or who share similar characteristics interact. Similarly, mosques are sampled out as hotbed institutions that have recently attracted attention and supposedly deemed prone to women radicalization. They are often capitalized by the radicalizers, agents and recruiters who fan sympathy from the minds and hearts of the less informed groups such as some women in the society.¹⁰⁵ Ideally, the recruiters rarely target the entire population for the indoctrination process, since few qualify to serve the best interest of the violent extremist groups. This, therefore, means that the recruitment process is well crafted, thorough and secretive¹⁰⁶.

The school, in the same way, has a conducive social environment and setting where radicalization occurs not only through peer groups and pressures but also through school authorities. Influential personalities in society and within the school environment have secretly radicalized innocent learners who do not understand the difference between mainstream Islam and violent religious extremist ideologies. For instance, the *Al-Qaida* networks through Sudanese National Islamic Front Charities to Islamic Party of Kenya to Mosques, schools and Madrasas are instances where schools were singled out for radicalization. On graduating, children disappear from schools and the society only to be located outside the country already operating within the files and ranks of

¹⁰³ Lomojo (2020).

¹⁰⁴ *ibid*.

¹⁰⁵ Nabil, O (2016). *Fighting Terror Within the Law: Challenges and Prospects of Kenya's Counter-Terrorism Measures*. Leading Legal Issues in Sub-Saharan Africa, Maulana Ayoub Ali (Ed.).

¹⁰⁶ Anneli B. (2014). Political socialization and terrorist radicalization among individuals who joined al-Shabaab in Kenya. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 37, No. 11.

Islamic militant groups¹⁰⁷. In Isiolo county, some schools have run a parallel curriculum that propagates religious radicalism.

2.6: Conclusion

Although terrorism is as old as humanity, recent radicalization events around the world have shown that the greatest threat to the current and future of human security is not necessarily a nuclear war but radical religious extremism. The world has also noticed the role of women as both perpetrators of violent extremism and as preventers of radicalization. This chapter began by conceptualizing radicalization, drawing various scholarly definitions and understandings of the process of conversion into radicalism. The recruitment process and terrorist network worldwide, in Africa, East Africa, Kenya and Isiolo county. The chapter proceeded to explain the origins and spread of terrorism and radicalization, focusing on various terrorist groups in the world, Africa, East Africa and Kenya. *Al-Shabaab*, for instance, has been involved in kidnapping foreigners in Kenya and well-planned attacks on churches, schools, hotels, embassies and military camps. Finally, it then focuses on terrorist activities in Isiolo county and how women are engaged not only as victims, but also as active recruiters and militant bombers.

¹⁰⁷ Lomoro (2020). Pp. 219-221.

CHAPTER THREE

CAUSES OF RADICALIZATION IN ISIOLO COUNTY

3.0: Introduction

Kenya's Isiolo county, with most families related to warring clans in Somalia, has been particularly vulnerable to radicalization activities by *Al-Shabaab*. Since 2011, *Al-Shabaab* has been active in Isiolo county recruiting new members, spreading extremism ideologies, and launching attacks on other parts of the country. On the one hand, women are involved in these terror activities as agents, spies, recruiters and hosts of the perpetrators. On the other hand, they are both victims of violent extremism and active agents of deradicalisation. As a result, this researcher investigated the causes of radicalization and the place of women in de-radicalisation. This instant chapter examined the role of the internet and particularly social media platforms, as tools for clandestine radicalization and terrorism. The chapter also analysed the role of vulnerability and poverty in radicalisation.

3.1 The Rationale for Radicalization

Within the radicalization debates, there exist multiple competing explanations detailing how individuals are radicalized. This is because different pathways operate in diverse ways for various people at varied points in time and perhaps in different contexts.¹⁰⁸ This explains how, why and what exactly caused one to be recruited into radical groups such as *Al-Shabaab*.¹⁰⁹ To scholars such as Schmid Alex, one's decision to join a radical group is a rational choice decision after serious calculation of the costs and benefits of their involvement. According to Daniela, human beings make rational decisions based on the calculation of the losses and profits. Similarly, Islamic radicalization can be seen as an occupational choice where an individual decides to specialize in terror activities as one can choose any other career by evaluating the downsides and rewards.¹¹⁰ Some of these rewards include social standing and recognition, a sense of heroism, a special type

¹⁰⁸ Bokhari, L Hegghammer T, Nesser P, & Tonnessen T (2006). Paths to Global Jihad: Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terror Networks. FFI Seminar hosted by the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment (Kjeller, Norway).

¹⁰⁹ Oral interview with Amiwa Abdi, *nyumba kumi* elder Kiwanjani Isiolo Town

¹¹⁰ Schmid, A. P (2011). Daniela PISOIU. Islamist Radicalization in Europe. An occupational change process. *Perspectives on Terrorism* 5, No. 3.

of elitism as well as enjoying the vast and lucrative social and economic networks associated with world terror groups.¹¹¹

Similarly, radicalization is widely driven by perceived socio-economic marginalization and high unemployment especially among youth and other vulnerable groups. The scholarly literature holds that poverty, marginalization and socio-exclusion have been linked to the appeal of terrorism. According to Silber and Bhatt, social and economic marginalization have triggered individuals to change their worldviews including the adoption of new religious ideologies. Many recruits were introduced into Salafi-jihadi ideology as a result of altering their belief systems using financial impetus.¹¹²

Tore Bjorgo argues that deep rooted economic seclusion, poor governance and corruption sinking into all state levels and social-cultural exclusion especially to minority ethnic groups triggers radicalization.¹¹³ In East Africa, the political and the socio-economic marginalization cannot be ruled out. Radical Islamists have capitalized on the widespread poverty in the region, and the marginalization of the Muslim constituency from the mainstream political system as the opportunities for recruitment.¹¹⁴ In Kenya, the pathways to radicalization and violent extremism also point at poverty and socio-economic marginalization especially in peripheral counties such as Isiolo. The lure for financial incentives has been considered a critical push factor for enrolment into *Al-Shabaab ranks*.¹¹⁵ Mohammed Boru says that:

In the last one decade or so, life in Isiolo has literally become difficult especially for young men and women. The harsh economic situations as a result of idleness, poverty and unemployment have made many young people to be easily lured into terror group networks in Isiolo.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Oral Interview with Sheikh Akhmed, Star of Hope Organization Isiolo county

¹¹² Aly A, & Striegheer J (2012). Examining the role of religion in radicalization to violent Islamist extremism. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35, no. 12 Pp. 849-862.

¹¹³ Tore B, (2013). Strategies for preventing terrorism. Springer.

¹¹⁴ Odhiambo E (2020). Domestic radicalization in Kenya. Research Gate. <https://www.researchgate.net>

¹¹⁵ Githigaro, J. M. (2018). p.76.

¹¹⁶ Oral interviews with Mohammed Boru, Teacher St. Kizito, Checheles Village, Isiolo.

Musa Rashid, a youth leader, grass-root human rights activist and a supervisor of *Kazi Kwa Vijana*, a community-based cash for work initiative, in Bula Location, alludes to Boru's argument on the direct relationship between poverty and radicalization in Isiolo county. According to Rashid:

We as youths in Isiolo have lost hope due to idleness, poverty, joblessness and economic segregation. Most of us in Bula Pesa and other areas such as Checheles, Cheraf, Seremala, Kena and Modagashe have been neglected by both county and national governments. This has pushed most youth to indulge in drug abuse. Others have joined Al-Shabaab to get money, employment and brighter future. Youth in Isiolo, even in institutions of learning such as high schools, colleges and universities, have resorted in joining terror groups to fight poverty and revenge on the government for neglecting them.¹¹⁷

There are, however, alternative explanations disputing the links between socio-economic marginalization and radicalization.¹¹⁸ This debate is centered on issues around structural inequalities and injustices in society, which are considered to be the push factors. Pull factors, on the other hand, appeal to the personal rewards of joining extremist groups such as identity and belonging. According to Venhaus, most radicalized persons were seeking something. Most of them wanted to understand themselves, and their mission in the world. This researcher notes that radicalized youth had an unfulfilled desire to define themselves, which the terror groups such as *Al-Qaeda* and *Al-Shabaab* offered to satisfy.¹¹⁹ There were those who sought prospects for excitement, adventure and glory whereas others were driven by the need to belong and be part of something, somebody meaningful or be affiliated to an important group¹²⁰.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Musa Rashid, a youth leader, grass-root human rights activist and a supervisor of Kazi Kwa Vijana, a community-based cash for work initiative, in Bula Location

¹¹⁸ Piazza J. A. (2009). Is Islamist terrorism more dangerous?: An empirical study of group ideology, organization, and goal structure. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21, No. 1 Pp.62-88.

¹¹⁹ Venhaus J. M (2010). Why youth join al-Qaeda. US Institute of Peace, 2010. <http://www.usip.org>, 17/04/2012.

¹²⁰ Venhaus (2010).

Dalgaard also notes that young people looking for identity may be manipulated by any ideology which assists in identity formation.¹²¹ Dalgaard's sentiments were echoed by Constable Ombati, an Officer Commanding Station (OCS) at Cheraf suburb in Isiolo Town. Ombati narrated to us how misleading ideologies, fabricated around religion, have lured many youth especially from middle and well-off families to join and generate income for *Al-Shabaab* extremists:

The security offices have occasionally intercepted and arrested many youth from Isiolo trying to cross over to Somalia to join Al-Shabaab. For example, in 2015, we intercepted three girls at El-Wak. In 2016, parents of two high school boys and four college students reported to us their plan to travel to West Africa.¹²²

Other perspectives have included the contribution of radical teachers who misinterpret religious teachings as a recruitment mechanism. In this respect, there are claims that sections of the Madrassa teachings have been sites of these claimed indoctrination processes.¹²³ Charismatic recruiters, some preachers, fundamentalist clerics, and firebrand intellectual gurus have a role in recruiting new members.¹²⁴ For instance, in Isiolo county, Muslim clerics and madrasa teachers play a pivotal role in radicalizing vulnerable young men and women by promoting a false interpretation of the role of violence and religion. Young girls and boys have also fallen victim to the manipulation, leaving schools to join extreme groups such as *Al-Shabaab*¹²⁵. According to Bishop Kalunyu, the Secretary of Isiolo County Interfaith Council, children of school going age in Isiolo need protection against the manipulating schemes of terrorists who have extended their tentacles to all learning institutions. He argues that:

The number of the recruited young people has gone up since 2011 due to various reasons. First, most parents in Isiolo were not ready to acknowledge that *Al-Shabaab*

¹²¹ Anja, D.N (2008). "Studying violent radicalization in Europe. Part 2, The Potential Contribution of Social Movement Theory." DIIS Working Paper. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.

¹²² Oral interviews with Constable Ombati, Cheraf suburb Isiolo Town

¹²³ Amble J.C. & Meleagrou-Hitchens A (2014). Jihadist radicalization in East Africa: Two Case Studies. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 37, No. 6.

¹²⁴ Maskaliūnaitė A (2015). Exploring the theories of radicalization. *International Studies: Interdisciplinary Political and Cultural Journal (IS)* 17, No. 1 Pp. 9-26

¹²⁵ Lokoro A.L (2020).

had infiltrated into families until it was highlighted by Citizen Television. Second, the role of families, teachers and clerics as leaders of underground cells for recruitment and training of terrorists. Young men are promised beautiful virgins whereas young girls promised lucrative jobs and marriage to Al-Shabaab militants.¹²⁶

3.2 The Role of Society in Radicalization

The spiraling and twisted nature of radicalization in the 21st Century has forced scholars to interrogate the role and influence of parents and parenting on radicalization. Scholars are yet to unravel the silent, non-verbal yet strong and persistent influence of the family in radicalization, especially of women. With enormous literature on the role of parenting on radicalization, there is no clear answer to the question, “what is the role of parents in the spread of extremism ideologies?” According to Bakker, all answers to the role of parenting on radicalization are correct.¹²⁷ Research indicates that parental warmth, psychosocial support, good parent-child relationship combined with control produces a stable child who is able to withstand any influence.¹²⁸ Conversely, effective proper parental care, discipline and family value systems would help the child’s effective and positive moral development. Many scholars believe that through discipline, parents assist their families to nurture pro-social moral internalization.¹²⁹ On the other hand, lack of proper care and support, supervision and follow up, poor discipline systems, absent parenting and challenges within the family set-up would easily enhance the chances of young people harbouring deviant behaviour.¹³⁰ The question is, would the same account for radicalization in Isiolo county?

In the recent past, parents in Isiolo have in one way or the other played an influential role in their sons’ and daughters’ radicalisation. Parents have influenced them directly through their socialization, which includes beliefs and behaviors, and indirectly through their charm on one another and the various contexts in which they live. Thus, the parental role is more subtly defined

¹²⁶ Oral interview with Bishop Kalunyu, Secretary Isiolo Interfaith Council

¹²⁷ Bakker E (2006). Jihadi terrorists in Europe. *The Hague: Cliengendael*.

¹²⁸ Maccoby, E.E., & Martin, J.A. (1983). Socialization in the context of the family: Parent-child interaction. In P.H. Mussen & E.M. Hetherington (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 4, Socialization, personality, and social development* (pp. 1-103). New York: Wiley.

¹²⁹ Hoffman, M. L (2001). *Empathy and moral development: Implications for caring and justice*. Cambridge University Press.

¹³⁰ Hoeve M., et. al (2008). Trajectories of delinquency and parenting styles. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 36(2), pp. 223-235.

than direct parenting. For instance, whenever parents have an unresolved conflict, the quality of their interaction with their children suffers. Sheikh Akhmed indicates that such disconnect is being capitalized on by the members of *Al-Shabaab*, recruiting young people who feel offended by the parents and want to be away from their families.¹³¹ Bornstein et al note that if such disconnect and conflicts at home persist, they could result in parents being less available to their children. That is, they are more likely to miss out on the signals their children send because they are preoccupied with other matters, such as work. This will in return fortify the radicalization process¹³². Broken families in Isiolo county have been listed as most vulnerable to substance abuse and violent radicalization as an alternative solution to family problems.¹³³ Young girls from such families are easily radicalized in their search for families and father figures, and for others, it is a means of attracting the attention of their family, with older members of the group frequently filling the void left by the missing father.¹³⁴

A respondent named Grace of the Isiolo Gender Watch (IGW) alludes to this narrative. She notes that:

Arguably, any disconnect between parents and the youth especially due to family differences or divorce negatively affects the stability of children. As a result, the recruiters take an advantage of the instability, anger, hatred and vacuum existing to recruit them.¹³⁵

Negative socialization may also happen through the community oral traditions and literature where, in most cases, parents are the patriarchs and repositories of traditional histories and defenders of cultural mores. Through this, parents have transmitted the ideology of marginalization and prejudice that has directly influenced how they perceive the world especially in terms of religion, the role of government on their wellbeing, and their relationship with radical groups such as *Al-Shabaab*. Similarly, some radical parents often share the radical ideas of their parents.¹³⁶ For

¹³¹ Oral interview, Sheikh Akhmed Star of Hope Organization, Isiolo Town

¹³² Edwards, Liu C.W, & Bornstein M.H (2013). Handbook of parenting: Vol. 1. Children and parenting. Pp. 45-71.

¹³³ Coolsaet R (ed.) *Jihadi terrorism and the radicalisation challenge: European and American experiences*. Ashgate Publishing.

¹³⁴ Tore B, & Carlsson Y (2005). Early intervention with violent and racist youth groups. <https://www.ciaonet.org>.

¹³⁵ Oral interview with Grace, Isiolo Gender Watch (IGW)

¹³⁶ Republic of Kenya and Isiolo County Government, (2018). Isiolo County Action Plan on Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism (ICAP P/CVE)

instance a story is told across many ethnic groups professing Islam in Isiolo county about the need for heroic defense of one's religion and the attendant eternal rewards, including beautiful brides.¹³⁷

According to Asal, Fair and Shellman, the family plays a vital role in recruitment for jihad. Research shows that young people often join gangs and extremist groups due to the influence of close family members who are members of these groups.¹³⁸ Families in Isiolo have been breeding grounds for *Al-Shabaab*. Indeed, social affiliation has a vital role in the recruitment of both youths and women into *Al-Shabaab* in Isiolo.¹³⁹ Concerning the family recruiting most of its members, Bakker notes that a person is more likely to be recruited if a family member or friend has already joined a terrorist group. Giving an example of members who joined the jihadist movement, he argues that out of every sample of 242 jihadists in the Middle East, fifty persons were related through kinship¹⁴⁰.

3.3: Unemployment and Socioeconomic Marginalization as Factors in Radicalization

Although not specifically related to Isiolo county, this section looks at whether unemployment and socioeconomic marginalization exist there. Second, it examines whether the variables had any impact on how radicalization was affecting the local, national, and international levels. According to Odhiambo, poverty affected the radicalization of the residents of Isiolo county. It produced a supportive environment that encouraged young women and girls to join radical organizations, which ultimately subjected them to violence. By 2018, the growing number of Kenyan Muslims joining *Al-Shabaab* were young, poor, overzealous individuals who are exposed to extreme radicalization due to economic challenges¹⁴¹. Odhiambo's argument is supported by various narration by different respondents in my interviews. For instance, Bishop Kalunyu talks of contradicting situations young people find themselves in. On the one hand there was poverty, unemployment, and hopelessness while, on the other hand, there was the promise of great future, money, career and prosperity when one joins *Al-Shabaab*.¹⁴² Muriithi paints a picture of how lack

¹³⁷ Oral interviews with Abdiaziz Osman, Community Service worker, Checheles Village, Isiolo Town

¹³⁸ Asel V & Shellman S (2008). Consenting to a child's decision to join a jihad: Insights from a survey of militant families in Pakistan." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 31, No. 1.

¹³⁹ Oral interview with Grace, Isiolo Gender Watch (IGW)

¹⁴⁰ Bakker (2006).

¹⁴¹ Odhiambo, E. (2020). Domestic radicalization in Kenya. Research Gate, <https://www.researchgate.net>

¹⁴² Oral interview with Bishop Kalunyu, secretary Isiolo Interfaith Council

of employment, poor income from animal husbandry, poverty, and poor infrastructure have affected the economy of the people.¹⁴³ Similarly, Chrisp noted that poverty, limited access to education, unemployment and lack of alternative ways of livelihood as major push factors towards recent Kenyan youth and women joining violent extremism due to incentives offered by recruiters¹⁴⁴.

A report by IRIS revealed that residents of Isiolo county regard themselves as an economically marginalised category by the national government. Due to the economic downturn and extreme inequality caused by this, crime, violence, and radicalism are all increased.¹⁴⁵ According to Botha, underdevelopment is measured in terms of per capita income, access to healthcare and the level of education. Based on this model, Isiolo can then be viewed as one of the most underdeveloped areas in Kenya. In our interviews with Grace, the Field Officer of Isiolo Gender Watch, *Al-Shabaab* have used the narrative of poverty and the growing economic disparities, unmet government obligations, corruption, and the impression that the government is caving in to American demands are used as grievances to forward their radicalization agenda.¹⁴⁶ With a poverty prevalence index of 71.3% compared to a 45.9% national average, Isiolo county is underdeveloped and neglected. Isiolo county's Multi-dimensional Poverty Index is 0.25 percent, vs 0.23 percent countrywide.¹⁴⁷ Isiolo county's rural areas have the highest poverty levels due to the lack of markets for livestock and drought. Furthermore, land is owned communally, therefore, it is hard for one to use is as collateral to access financial services.¹⁴⁸ The few roads that are tarmacked are in poor condition. Of the total 31,326 households in Isiolo county, only 8% have access to electricity¹⁴⁹. The bulk of people reside in areas without access to adequate medical services; there are only two level-four hospitals and a doctor-patient ratio of 12 to 100,000.

¹⁴³ Oral interview with Muriithi Dennis, businessman Wabera Location, Isiolo County

¹⁴⁴ Chrisp (2020).

¹⁴⁵ IRIS. (2015). North-Eastern Kenya: A Prospective Analysis." Humanitarian Foresight Think Tank, Institut de Relations Internationales et Strategies, Paris. <https://www.iris-france.org>.

¹⁴⁶ Botha A (2014). Radicalisation in Kenya. Recruitment to al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council. *Institute for Security Studies Papers* 2014, no. 265. p.28.

¹⁴⁷ Khalid M (2014). *Human development report 2014: Sustaining human progress: Reducing vulnerabilities and building resilience*. United Nations Development Programme, New York, 2014. <https://hdr.undp.org/sites>.

¹⁴⁸ Kumsaa A & Kiriti-Nganga T.W (2016). Human Security Assessment in Kenya: The Case of Isiolo, Laikipia, Nandi and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties (Note 1)." *Rev. Eur. Stud.* 8 (2016): 156. <https://dx.dop>. P.156.

¹⁴⁹ Khalid (2014) Pp31-32.

both Garbatulla and Isiolo.¹⁵⁰ The distance to the nearest water source is on an average of five kilometers with most communities depending on water pans and few boreholes for domestic and livestock use.

The population of Isiolo county has a high proportion of youth. In 2012, the youth aged 14 years of younger constituted 44.4% of this population. Around 70% of the county's young are unemployed, which is likewise a high rate. About 80% of people who are not in a formal job pursue pastoral livelihoods. Some run modest, city-based companies. They struggle to obtain basic essentials including healthcare, shelter, and education.¹⁵¹ Ahmed Zainabu Twaha, a resident of Modagash slum notes that:

Life in Isiolo is not easy. We lack almost all basic needs that Kenyans in other parts of the country enjoy. We lose our children due to malnutrition and lack of enough health services; no jobs, lack clean water, and housing. Isiolo Town alone has over six slums; Modagash, Kena, Kanajey, Cheraf, Seremala, and Tapes. All these slums are recruitment cells for Al-Shabaab militants due to the high levels of poverty¹⁵².

This frustration has made many people seek alternatives by joining *Al-Shabaab*, which is believed to facilitate an adult-like status by giving them financial compensation.¹⁵³ Young people often use radicalization as a way to get their families' attention, with older group members typically filling the gap created by the absent father. The recent advent of large-scale development projects was meant to be potential solution brought new challenges and threats.¹⁵⁴ Although there haven't been any large terrorist incidents in Isiolo County, there is a serious issue with the recent radicalization of young people and women.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ KNBS Isiolo County (2015). County Statistical Abstract, Isiolo. Nairobi: Government Printers.

¹⁵¹ Kumasa and Kiriti Ng'ang'a. (2016). p. 33

¹⁵² Oral interview with Ahmed Zainabu Twaha, Modagash Isiolo Town

¹⁵³ Obuyi R. Z (2019). Role of women in countering violent extremism-the case of Kwale County, Kenya. *International Journal of Peace, Education and Development* 7, no. 2 Pp. 121-127.

¹⁵⁴ County Planning Office, Isiolo (2018)

¹⁵⁵ Kenya National Highways authority (2019). North Eastern Transport Improvement Project (NETIP), Environmental and Soil Management Framework (ESMF)

In a study by Botha, most of the combatants identify economic challenges as the main push factor for their recruitment and catalyst for joining terrorist groups such as *Al-Shabaab*. Many other academics concur with the statement that people join terrorist organisations because they pay well or offer financial incentives.¹⁵⁶ Similarly, most groups that support terror activities also provide basic services and assistance. This has, since 2011, lured many women especially in poverty-stricken homes. Furthermore, Piazza notes that inequality, poverty, and economic frustrations have led to alienation and frustration among women in Isiolo, which radical recruiters have exploited. For young people and women, economic concerns are a source of frustration, which exposes them to narratives that encourage them to express their resentments through violent extremism.¹⁵⁷

3.4 The Role of Social Media Platforms in Radicalization

The role of the internet, particularly social media, in radicalization is examined in this section. Although Isiolo county government has media and online platform as its sixth most important pillar of development, this platform has not adequately been utilized in scaling down radical propaganda.¹⁵⁸ Scholars have noticed the latest schemes of groups such as Al-Shabaab involve utilizing the media and online platforms for propaganda, threats, issue warnings, recruitment, incitement, and radicalization.¹⁵⁹ Aly describes the Internet as a critical channel in terrorists' diplomacy, constantly providing information and inspiration for Internet users to become radicalized. Extremist, radicalized family members and social groups use internet to exchange violent beliefs, doctrines and practices which reinforce terrorist ideologies.¹⁶⁰ The consumers of this information eventually start progressing from a passive or inactive listener to a believer into extreme or violent action based on a particular political, social, or ideological dogma.¹⁶¹

Similarly, the internet enables access to radicalization, well organized systematically and packaged, making it much easier to find conduit people and create networks among like-minded

¹⁵⁶ Amble, J. C. & Meleagrou-Hitchens A (2014). Jihadist radicalization in East Africa: Two case studies. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 37, No. 6 pp. 523-540.

¹⁵⁷ Piazza, J. A. (2013).p.343.

¹⁵⁸ Oral interview with Rukia Haji, Kewayan Isiolo Town

¹⁵⁹ Behr I, Reding A, Charlie E, & Gribbon L (2013). Radicalization in the Digital Era the Use of the Internet in 15 Cases of Terrorism and Extremism

¹⁶⁰ Maskaliūnaitė, A (2015).p.18.

¹⁶¹ Aly A (2010).p.56.

individuals across geographical boundaries. Therefore, the social media networking has not only rendered many innocent consumers at risk but, also lowered the level and threshold for engaging, allow embarrassing behavior since it may conceal users' identities. Although online networking creates the understanding among people of diverse cultures, it has been a powerful pathway for terrorists to promote their violent ideology. Teenagers, women and men who regularly consume online postings, videos and literatures have been systematically recruited, trained, and engaged in terror activities.¹⁶² Musa Rashid Kinyua, a supervisor with *Kazi kwa Vijana* and a youth leader at Bula Pesa Location noted that:

The internet has assisted many youths in my group with innovations, creative arts which have improved their income. However, two of our youth has been radicalized through the same platform, one was rescued with the assistance of the police, Interfaith Council and Isiolo Peace link.¹⁶³

Abdia of Isiolo Peace Link indicates that different platforms have been used by *Al-Shabaab* in Isiolo to attract youth and women supporters. They also use the net to look for prospective members who they recruit.¹⁶⁴

Al-Shabaab, like other extremist groups – *ISIS*, *Al Qaeda* and *Boko Haram* – have maximized the internet to disseminate their messages of terror. They also share coded manuals and procedures on home-made bomb making. Websites associated with extremists periodically pop up and mutate within short periods of time to escape detection by the authorities. Weismann claims that while the majority of their original contents are still present, in some cases the online way of address changes. Recruits, present and potential followers, the general public, and enemy reactions are the typical targets of extremist websites. These activities also encompass psychological manipulation,

¹⁶² Bergin A, Sulasti B. O, Angerer C, & Mohammed Y. N (2009). Countering Internet Radicalisation in Southeast Asia. A RSIS-ASPI Joint Report 2009—Issue. <https://www.pvtr.org>

¹⁶³ Oral interview with Musa Rashid, Youth Leader Bula Pesa, June 2021

¹⁶⁴ Oral interviews with Abdia, Isiolo Peace Link, June 2021

cheap propaganda, fundraising drives, data collection, planning, and coordination of actions and radicalization.¹⁶⁵

Al-Shabaab has since 2011 used internet platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp groups, Facebook, written texts, and video clips to propagate its ideology, to issue threats, to advertise its successful hits and to recruit followers. This terror group also uses these online media platforms to accuse Kenya of interfering with Somalia through the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), now the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). Neal Ungerleider notes that more than eleven radical groups and terrorist organizations, including *Al-Shabaab*, utilize the Internet to recruit and radicalize young men and women in different parts of the world.¹⁶⁶

3.5: Regional Challenges and Radicalization in Isiolo County

This section links the regional challenges to the radicalization of young people in Isiolo county. Patterns of violence in Kenya and well-schemed calculation of *Al-Shabaab's* recruitment of Kenyans of different ethnicities and religions, disrupts the binary of internal and external causes of radicalization¹⁶⁷. There has been perennial bouts of violence in neighbouring northern counties including Marsabit and Isiolo, as well as in Tana River, further south. These regions have been used as recruiting, training and radicalization bases and for planning attacks on Kenya's major towns such as Mombasa and Nairobi¹⁶⁸. Therefore, there is need to examine the external stresses and influence on radicalization lately witnessed in Isiolo county.

The emergence of extremism in Isiolo county is linked to the threat posed by *Al-Shabaab* to national and regional peace. Protracted warfare and subsequent breakdown of central authority in Somalia is seen as a significant destabilizing external stress in Isiolo county due to recent

¹⁶⁵ Maura C (2012). From al-Zarqawi to al-Awlaki: The Emergence and Development of an Online Radical Milieu," *CTX: Combating Terrorism Exchange* 2(4). pp. 12–14.

¹⁶⁶ Chilwa I (2015). Radicalist Discourse: A Study of the Stances of Nigeria's Boko Haram and Somalia's Al Shabaab on Twitter," *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, pp. 214–235.

¹⁶⁷ Lind et.l (2015).

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*

radicalization.¹⁶⁹ Mlula et. al. argue that the indirect effects of Al-Shabaab fighters in Somalia, with the help of external partners who have exploited that instability, has contributed to the rise of violent radicalization and extremism in Kenya.¹⁷⁰ *Al-Shabaab* has been more devastating in Kenya's northeast, where it also draws the majority of its Kenyan-born adherents.¹⁷¹

Radicalisation in Isiolo county started in 2011 as a revenge mission following what the *Al-Shabaab* termed as external aggression against the Islamic Emirate of Somalia by the invasion by the KDF.¹⁷² Despite the efforts by *Operation Linda Nchi* (operation protect the country), the official code name for KDF's operation, Kenya has since been rendered vulnerable to radicalization and a series of steady and more frequent *Al-Shabaab* attacks, especially between 2011 and 2018. For instance, the northeast region of Kenya has suffered the full wrath of the *Al-Shabaab* backlash and the corresponding state violence supposedly meant to tame the militants' threat¹⁷³.

Following Kenya's invasion, the then commander, Mohamed Kunow Dulyadeyn began to expand extremism operations in the North Eastern region targeting Mandera, Garissa, Wajir and Isiolo counties. *Al Shabaab* decided to create a dedicated arm within the outfit drawing militants recruited from Kenyans, Tanzanians and Ugandans under Jaysh Ayman military unit. It was tasked to carry out attacks in in those East African countries.¹⁷⁴ This approach was part of Al-Shabaab's latest reinvention of Kenya's Islamic counties¹⁷⁵. Al-Shabaab activities in Isiolo have become much more sophisticated in the recruitment, training and radicalizing of women to use as suicide bombers and intelligent officers in the other parts of the country and East Africa at large.¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁹ Bar J (2016). The problem of Islamic terrorism in Kenya in terms of regional security in East Africa." *Politeja-Pismo Wydziału Studiów Międzynarodowych i Politycznych Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego* 13, Pp. 147-164 , <https://www.jstor.org>

¹⁷⁰Ruszkiewicz M & Shirley M (2015). Causes for concern? The spread if militant Islam in east Africa." Thesis Monterey, California.

¹⁷¹ Morema F.M(2020) Violent extremism and terrorism in Africa- role of NGO in Nigereia and Kenya.PHD Diss .University of Nairobi. Accessed from www.jstor.org.

¹⁷² International Crisis Group (2012). The Kenyan Military Intervention in Somalia. Africa Report no. 184, www.africaportal.org.

¹⁷³ Ruszkiewicz M & Shirley (2015).

¹⁷⁴ Ngala, C (2016). Violent extremism and clan dynamics in Kenya.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid*.

¹⁷⁶ Lind J Mutahi P & Oosterom M (2015). *Tangled ties: Al-Shabaab and political volatility in Kenya*. No. IDS Evidence Report; 130.

Laura Johnson argues that *Al-Shabaab* had a roadmap for recruitment, radicalization and growing membership in Kenya, largely through the *Al-Hijra* groups. By 2011, there were between 200 to 500 Kenyan fighters, mostly Muslims, who had joined the *Al-Shabaab* campaign against AMISOM forces in Somalia.¹⁷⁷ In 2014, the Muslim Supreme Council warned that over 700 returnees who were fighting with *Al-Shabaab* had relocated to Isiolo county. Consequently, Anderson et. al. noted that by 2018, there were about 2000 Kenyan *Al-Shabaab* fighters, a quarter of *Al-Shabaab*'s estimated strength of 7000-9000 militants.¹⁷⁸

The phenomenon of ex-militants returning to Kenya from Somalia and other parts of the world has been the latest cause of radicalization in Isiolo county. Although some became disillusioned over the promised pay that never materialized, others did so out of fear following the outbreak of conflicts within *Al-Shabaab*'s ranks. A majority of the recruits returned with the intention of increasing the numbers through radicalization to expand the violent extremist attacks against Kenya¹⁷⁹ Isiolo High School, for instance, topped the list of institutions targeted for recruitment into extremism, with ten students abandoning school to join *Al-Shabaab* ranks.¹⁸⁰

3.6: Religion and Radicalization

The rapid and unusual attraction to *Al-Shabaab*'s philosophy by communities in Isiolo county can be attributed to the predominance of Islam in the region. The link strong between Muslims and extremism has resulted in their profiling and marginalization.¹⁸¹ The issue has been escalated and some Muslim clerics and madrasa instructors have resorted to radicalizing vulnerable groups in the society, such as women, by promoting false interpretation of the role of violence and religion.¹⁸² Similarly, some community leaders have been actively recruiting young girls and boys

¹⁷⁷ Laura C .J. Isiolo County Crime and Violence Rapid Assessment. World Bank Group, USIUA and KSG.

¹⁷⁸ Anderson D.M & McKnight J (2015). Kenya at war: Al-Shabaab and its enemies in Eastern Africa." *African Affairs* 114, no. 454, pp.1-27

¹⁷⁹ Burridge T (2014). Funding jihad: Al-Shabab cash lures in young Kenyans." *BBC News* (2014). BBC News <https://www.bbc.com/news>

¹⁸⁰ Nyagaka H.M Ombati N & Nika J (2020). The role of teachers in countering student radicalization into violence in kajiado county, Kenya. *International journal of science and research*. Publication, Vol.10, Issue 6.

¹⁸¹ Mwangi J.G (2018) Contributions of Community Based Approaches to Countering Youth Radicalization in Kenya's Mombasa and Nairobi Counties. PhD diss., U.S.I U-Africa.

¹⁸² Oral interview with Constable Ombati, OCS Cherif suburb Isiolo Town

into *Al-Shabaab*.¹⁸³ Some recruiters who pose as clerics have used their charisma to convince many young people in Isiolo to join *Al-Shabaab*.¹⁸⁴ During our interview, Bouwaya of the Isiolo General Hospital pointed out the increasing role of religion and religious leaders in radicalization:

There are many cases where religious leaders here in Isiolo have been reported even by civilians for spreading false religious message which is misleading many youths. For example, the myth of seventy-two virgin girls has made many young men to refuse even to marry and join jihad for such rewards.¹⁸⁵

Similarly, Rukia Haji brings into context another category of people who work closely with what she terms as rogue clergymen to convince youths to join terror groups. She argues that Isiolo county has lately been infiltrated by many radicalized personalities, mainly from Somali. This normalizes radicalization as a lifestyle.¹⁸⁶

According to Ken Mankhaus, religious discourse is quite significant in propagation of violent extremism in Kenya. Mankhaus notes that common practices of Islam among Somalis have been used as a tool for radicalization. *Al-Shabaab* has created a wider audience among Kenyan Somalia by circulating deceptive narratives of Somali interests being exploited by the Kenya government and the western allies. Therefore, the relationship between Kenyan government and Somalia is interpreted by *Al-shabaab*.¹⁸⁷ For instance, the Masjid Musa Mosque in Kenya has been identified as a site for a recruitment site for violent extremism. In February 2014, the mosque was raided by the police on claims that it was supporting radicalization. Similarly, the police raided Sakina Mosque and recovered a pistol, eight grenades and a flag linked to *Al-Shabaab*. The police claimed that some mosques in Kenya were being used as recruitment and training ground for young men and women seeking to join *Al-Shabaab*.¹⁸⁸ According to Mwangi Githigaro, many vulnerable

¹⁸³ Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies (2016-2020). Conflict Assessment Report, Danida Peace, Security and Stability, Programme Kenya 2016-2020

¹⁸⁴ Oral interview with Abdia, Isiolo Peace Link

¹⁸⁵ Oral interview with Bouwaya G, Health Officer, Isiolo General Hospital

¹⁸⁶ Oral interview with Rukia Haji, Accountant Isiolo County Government

¹⁸⁷ Menkhaus K (2015). Conflict Assessment: Northern Kenya and Somaliland. Available at SSRN 2589109.

¹⁸⁸ Mogire E & Mktutu K.A (2011). Counter-terrorism in Kenya. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 29, no. 4 pp. 473-491

youths in Islam dominated regions of Kenya who joined *Al-Shabaab* were approached by religious leaders. These clerics used the Quran to manipulate vulnerable and impressionable young men and women¹⁸⁹.

3.7: Government Agencies Versus the Population

This section addresses the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU), a government security organization created particularly to combat terrorism in the nation, and how some communities perceived its activities as being violent or citizen-profiling. The ATPU is a wing within the DCI. In response to the attacks on the American embassy in Nairobi in 1998 and an Israeli-owned hotel in Mombasa in 2002, the ATPU was established in 2003. The ATPU was mainly assigned to investigate and mitigate any terrorism-related threats and cases in the country. Their main work was to identify, prevent or disrupt and detect all terror activities in the country. They were also to develop profiles of all suspected terrorists and to keep an up-to-date database system. The vital information was to be shared among all stakeholders and to sensitize the public on terrorism.¹⁹⁰ However, despite their job prescription, the ATPU has been accused by various human rights organisations for arbitrary arrests and mistreatment of terror suspects in detention.¹⁹¹ Bishop Kalunyu, Secretary Isiolo Interfaith and County Coordinator of NCCCK Commission notes that:

Since the first case of radicalization was recorded in Isiolo, there have been increased cases of police brutality and mistreatment of the civilians. The ATPU has been intimidating and harassing innocent people labeling them terrorists. This made their relation with people to be poor, affecting the flow of critical terror information to the police.¹⁹²

The security personnel in-charge do not execute their mandate within the confines of law. They harass people and sometimes brutalize and extort money from the citizens, mainly Muslims. This has contributed to persistent radicalization in Isiolo county. The police have angered many Muslim residents whose extremist recruiters' prey on such frustration to draw more people to their

¹⁸⁹ Mwangi J.G (2018).

¹⁹⁰ Omurwa O.V (2020). Implications of International Terrorism on the Art of Equipping Anti-Terrorism Police Unit in Kenya. A Case of Mombasa County.

¹⁹¹ Kazungu C. (2014). UN to help Kenya Fight Terrorism says, Ban Ki-Moon. *Daily Nation Saturday*.

¹⁹² Oral interview, Bishop Kalunyu secretary Isiolo Interfaith Council, Isiolo Town

causes¹⁹³. For instance, in 2014, a form three boy in Isiolo High School joined the *Al-Shabaab* as a result of police brutality. The police raided their home and flogged his father for being a friend to a man who had crossed over to Somali.¹⁹⁴ In 2015, members of the Interfaith Council solved six cases involving police brutality.¹⁹⁵ Amina Rashid, a member of Seremala Slum Women Empowerment Association said:

We women in slums get a lot of information concerning radicalization. However, we cannot share with the police since they are animals, they are involved in the disappearance of our innocent children and husbands.¹⁹⁶

The statement was echoed by Abdullahi Bashir, a young man at Bula Pesa Village in Isiolo town who noted that:

The police dealing with terror crimes behave like terror themselves. They do not investigate the information given to them before taking action. Nowadays they are used by women to punish their men. For example, four cases were recorded where women accused their husbands for involvement in terror activities as way of punishing them¹⁹⁷.

The rampant assassination of clerics also provided more incentive for radicalization. This undercover strategy by agents suspected to belong to secret state security units often works against the counter-radicalization initiatives by eroding the level of trust between the state agencies and the Muslim communities. This has also broadened the narrative that state agencies are anti-Muslim, further fueling their perceived alienation and discrimination¹⁹⁸.

In 2012, for instance, the ATPU were associated with the killing of twenty-one Muslim activists and clerics linked to the *Al-Hijra*, an *Al-Shabaab* affiliate in Kenya. However, the ATPU denied

¹⁹³ CHRIST 2020.

¹⁹⁴ Oral interviews with Ephintus Njagi, Businessman Wabera Isiolo

¹⁹⁵ Oral interview with Sofa, Isiolo Town

¹⁹⁶ Oral interview with Amina Rashid, Seremala Slum Women Empowerment Association, Isiolo Town

¹⁹⁷ Interview with Abdullahi Bashir, a young man at Bula Pesa Village in Isiolo town

¹⁹⁸ Henderson M, & McKnight J (2014).

the accusation, claiming that the clerics were killed by *Al-Shabaab* for being moderate.¹⁹⁹ The disproportionate extra-legal detention and disappearance of Muslim suspects in the hands of security agencies has been singled out as a motivation factor for many young people to join extremist groups for self-defense and revenge. The residents argue that despite the passing of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) in 2012, which provided the humane procedures for handling terror suspects, these legal provisions were not followed by security agents.²⁰⁰

3.8: Conclusion

Radicalization in Isiolo county has been considerably spiraling and spreading at various levels within the community. Schools, villages, homes, offices, public gathering as well as the internet have been the key platforms and avenues for radicalization. This is why this chapter investigated the reasons for radicalization in the county. The inquiry was guided by the following questions: what were the causes of the emergence and rise in radicalization in Isiolo county? Do women play any role in radicalization in Isiolo County?

The chapter began by looking at the rationale and variations of radicalisation. I established that within the radicalization debates, there exist multiple competing explanations detailing how individuals are radicalized. This is because different initiations and action mechanisms operate in different ways for varied people at different points in time and perhaps in different contexts.

Some notable push factors were noted: one was the role of parents in radicalization. We noticed that parents play both direct and indirect roles in influencing their children into radicalization. The second was socio-economic marginalization and unemployment: poverty was reported to create enabling environments for young girls and women to join radical groups that eventually turn around and subject them to extreme sexual-based violence.

¹⁹⁹ Mwakimako H, & Willis J (2014). Islam, politics and violence on Kenyan Coast.” Nairobi: French Institute in East Africa.

²⁰⁰ Odhiambo, E. O et.1 (2012). Kenya's pre-emptive and preventive incursion against Al-Shabaab in the light of international law. *Journal of Defense Resources Management* 3, No.1 p. 27.

On the other hand, online discourse was found to be a major cause of individual and group radicalization. Several studies and research done in communication and social security established that *Al-Shabaab*, for instance, utilizes the Internet for propaganda, threats, intimidation and radicalization. External stressors such as religion, the overbearing presence of the ATPU and the stereotyping of the Somali ethnic community - created an enabling environment for the recruitment and radicalization of young people in Isiolo county. These young recruits into radicalisation include women, whose role in (de)radicalisation will be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

VICTIMS OR PERPETRATORS? ROLE OF ISIOLO WOMEN IN DERADICALIZATION

4.0 Introduction

The role of women in radicalisation and deradicalisation in the 21st Century is complex and diverse. They are no longer passive and helpless victims and survivors of violent extremism. In examining the role played by women in the wider field of terrorism, two questions are vital guides: are women mere victims of radicalization? Or do they play more active frontline roles as members of terror groups?

The myth of women being perpetual victims obscures the nuance of their true roles in deradicalization. Since women are not homogeneous, their roles in any radical group vary. This work, therefore, explored the gender differentiation and the myth that women are victims of extremism. Secondly, the chapter examined women's roles in radicalization and terrorism. Thirdly, the chapter interrogated the roles of women's non-governmental organizations, women and mothers in counter-terrorism, combating violent extremism, and deradicalisation.

4.1: Gender Differentiation and Women as Victims of Extremism

Similar to how men and women play diverse roles in violent extremist groups, there are gender differences in the reasons people join these organisations. The push factors that encourage girls and women to join or take part in radical organisations are somewhat akin to the ones that motivate men. These include socio-political issues, religious and ideological beliefs and loss of a loved one²⁰¹. These academics emphasise that context affects how women become radicalised as well as why they join violent extremist organisations (VEOs). Women's decisions to join violent groups, then, "have been and will continue to be varied and contextually relevant." This emphasizes the necessity for a detailed understanding of the many roles played by women in violent extremist

²⁰¹ Fink et al, (2013).

organizations, as well as the settings in which these roles are played out and the motivations behind them.²⁰²

Women's participation in violent extremism and terrorism, according to Fink et al., is a response to gender inequality and discrimination, violence, and the denial of rights and opportunities in society.²⁰³ Although not all facts raised by scholars such as Fink et. al. can be proven in Isiolo, there are elements of gender-based inequalities as a push factor for radicalization of some women in Isiolo county. Bishop Kalunyu, the NCKK Isiolo county Coordinator, noted that before 2011, women in Isiolo were living in denial. They were being harassed by their husbands, parents or relatives who were either supporters of *Al-Shabaab* or affiliated groups. But they feared to openly speak about it. Some were exposed to sexual violence and exploitation as deliberate warfare tactics to pass message to local leaders.²⁰⁴ Most women remained under this bondage until NCKK, through Radio Citizen encouraged them to open up, discuss and expose the violations committed by *Al-Shabaab* militants. These violations included coercing women into sex slaves or marrying extremists as brides and using women to acquire sensitive information from security officers. School going girls were particularly vulnerable to such violent coercion due to their higher level of illiteracy, poverty and lack of alternative source of livelihood.²⁰⁵ Mohamed Ali said that:

If there is a group that is currently in danger in Isiolo, it is women. Young girls in high schools, colleges and even married women are forced into radicalization by their peers, boyfriends, family members, and husbands.²⁰⁶

Therefore, we cannot rule out that there are women in Isiolo who sincerely support terror groups and their activities. Idris and Abdul-Aziz argue that the reasons women advance for supporting or joining terrorist groups are largely similar to the reasons driving men, but they are not entirely as victims. Women also join terrorist groups as a result of grievances about sociopolitical conditions of well-being, fanatical commitment to religious or ideological beliefs, grief over the loss of a

²⁰² McFarland (2018).

²⁰³ Fink et al.

²⁰⁴ Oral Interview with Bishop Kalunyu, NCKK Isiolo County, June 2021

²⁰⁵ Oral interview with Mohamed Ali, businessman Isiolo County

²⁰⁶ Oral interview with Mohamed Ali, Isiolo Couty, June 2021

loved one, and ethnic stereotyping.²⁰⁷ According to Sheikh Abdul Rahim Musa, a member of Inter-Faith Council in Isiolo county, women's involvement in radicalization or violent extremism is a channel of breaking out of their traditional roles, which, for many decades, have confined them to domestic chores, with a far lower social status than that of men in the society.²⁰⁸

The radical groups are well aware of the constraints and limitations faced by women in traditional societies: consequently, they have used this weak link to recruit women into their groups.²⁰⁹ Through social media platforms, modern extremist groups are actively enlisting desperate women. Other women join Islamist groups due to the purported amorous and unrealistic lives of extremists and the prestige of being a mujahidin's spouse, widow or mother.²¹⁰

4.2: Female Roles in Terrorist Groups

Throughout history, women have increasingly played an active role in terrorism. Spencer argues that women's participation in terrorist activities is crucial because they can coordinate a variety of tasks, such as creating the next generation of militants, managing logistics, enlisting new recruits, serving as political representatives, and leading operations and acting as militants.

Since 2011, terror groups have exploited gender stereotypes of women as peaceful or non-violent people to their advantage. For example, women are perceived as more likely to evade detection during terrorist attacks and suicide bombings in crowded places²¹¹. Surprisingly, women are major contributors to the strength and capabilities of terror groups like Al-Shabaab, BOKO Haram, and ISIS. In the group's proto-state construction, female operatives are becoming increasingly powerful. Their responsibilities include suitability as terrorist wives to giving birth to the next generation of jihadists; advancing terrorist ideologies through recruitment of new members, and

²⁰⁷ Idris I. & Abdelaziz, A. (2017). Women and countering violent extremism. GSDRC Helpdesk Report 1408. GSDRC, University of Birmingham. <https://gsdrc.org/publications/>

²⁰⁸ Oral interview with Sheikh Abdul Rahim Musa, Isiolo county, June 2021

²⁰⁹ OSCE (2019). Understanding the role of gender in preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that leads to terrorism: good practices for law enforcement. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. <https://www.osce.org>

²¹⁰ Stern O.M (2019). The Invisible Women of al-Shabaab: Understanding the role of women in, and their influence on sons, husbands and brothers in, the processes of joining Al-Shabaab.

²¹¹ Ndungu I (2017) pp 8-9.

indoctrination of converts or abductees; and maintaining law and order within the network of women.²¹²

Spencer's argument is supported by constable Ombati, an OCS in Isiolo Town, who notes that although some women from Isiolo who joined *Al-Shabaab* have been victimized, most of them have taken key roles including being given the title of *Al-Shabaab* brides, recruitment, fundraisers and logistics managers.²¹³ According to Okello David, a business man with Guru Enterprises at Tulluroba, the two most important and most valued roles played by women are marriage to militants so as to give birth to future militants and serving as suicide bombers.²¹⁴ But Abdiaziz Osman contradicts this narrative of lucrative roles of women in militant groups such as *Al-Shabaab*. He notes that:

Women who have played major roles in *Al-Shabaab* such as suicide bombing and intelligence gathering, still end up being mistreated like any other women. Those who have tried to escape end up being tracked and killed.²¹⁵

According to Marie Saltman and Ross Frenett, women are often the most successful recruiters of other women to join these organizations, creating a cognitive opening and relationship with recruits²¹⁶. Their role as recruiters is profound as they have the ability to penetrate grassroots networks and filter volunteers; recruit new members through families, kinship networks and peer relations.²¹⁷ Furthermore, Ndung'u argues that women play the role of sympathizers with violent extremist, with some choosing to be jihadist brides as in the case of Boko Haram. They gather intelligent information on the whereabouts of the security checks and plans on behalf of their male counterparts²¹⁸. In other towns like Isiolo, they control sex trafficking business that not only gather intelligence but also supply Kenyan women as coerced sexual partners to *Al-Shabaab*.²¹⁹ Two

²¹² Amanda S (2016). *The hidden face of terrorism: An Analysis of the women in Islamic State*.

²¹³ Oral interview with constable Ombati, Isiolo County

²¹⁴ Oral interview with Okello David, businessman Isiolo Town

²¹⁵ Oral interview with Abdiaziz Osman, Isiolo Town

²¹⁶ Marie E.S & Frenett (2016).

²¹⁷ Hoyle, C. B (2015). *Becoming Mulan? Female Western Migrants to ISIS*. London: Institute for Strategic Dialogue.

²¹⁸ Ndungu (2017).

²¹⁹ Oral interview with N.W. M. public servant Kambi ya Juu, Isiolo County

women, one a fugitive in Kenya and the other in Somalia, have been on police wanted terrorists' list. Two women were also arrested in Isiolo county on allegations being the leaders of an Al-Shabaab fundraising ring operating in America, Kenya, the Netherlands, and Somalia, among other countries.²²⁰

Previously, it was thought that women were primarily recruited by *Al-Shabaab* for subordinate roles such as cooking, cleaning and as brides for the militants. However, this narrative has since changed as more women in extremist ranks have increasingly taken up active combat, attack planning, coordination, and execution. According to Chachalia et. al., *Al-Shabaab* has been employing female suicide bombers in recent months because they are less likely to be detected at security checkpoints and are perceived to attract more media attention to the movement.²²¹ For instance, a suicide bomb attack which claimed Mr. Abdishakar Sheikh Hassan, the Minister for Interior of Somalia in June 2011, was carried out by his own niece. Similar attacks have also targeted Kenya, for example, in August 2010 when 333 people died, in April 2012 when six people were killed instantly, and in 2015 when more than twenty-eight people died.²²²

The involvement of Violet Kemunto, a wife to Ali Salim, well known as Farouk the mastermind of the DusitD2 Hotel complex attack in January 2019, is also clear indication on how Kenyan women are directly involved in the planning and execution of terror attacks. Kemunto housed the attackers and immediately fled to Somalia, whereas Miriam Abdi, her crime-mate, who played a vital role of delivering the deadly weapons, is still at large²²³. Similarly, in September 2016, three women, Tamin Yaub, Maimuna Abdirahim, and Ramla Abdirahim, entered a Police Station in Mombasa while dressed in hijabs and proceeded to the occurrences desk. One of them brandished a dagger at a police officer, while the other two attempted to set fire to the police station with petrol bombs. One of the three was a member of the Islamic State, which claimed responsibility for the attack later that day.

²²⁰ AMISOM(2015). Conference on the role of women in countering extremism ends in Djibouti, December 2015, <https://amisom-au.org>.

²²¹ Chachalia R.C, Salifu & Ndung'u (2015). The dynamics of youth radicalization in Africa: reviewing the current evidence, Institute for Security Studies ISS Paper 296.

²²² Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism (2016). Suicide attack database (19th April 2016 release), https://cpostdata.uchicago.edu/search_new.php.

²²³ Katarine P & Donnelly P.

4.3: Women Working with Security Officers for a Terror-Free Isiolo

Against the backdrop of horrific bombings in Kenya perpetrated by Al Shabaab, Kenya came under diplomatic campaign to declare war on terror²²⁴In response to diplomatic and domestic pressure, the government of Kenya developed new regulations for mitigation of terror. However, the regime encountered widespread opposition from civil society groups who claimed the new policy violated citizens' human rights. They argued primarily for the protection of terror suspects' rights and the fair treatment of 'suspects' communities.²²⁵ One unexpected consequent of this effort against terrorism has been the decline in donor funding for civil society as priority shifted away from good governance and human rights to aligning with the government's agenda on terrorism²²⁶.

The government of Kenya established a number of new policies and structures outside the legal framework. The legislation included a slew of provisions aimed at enhancing the role of intelligence gathering, surveillance and policing of suspected people. The proposed Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Money Laundering Bill, the draught Suppression of Terrorism (SOT) Bill from 2003, and the creation of the ATPU in 2002 were all introduced. NSIS, or National Security and Intelligence Services, was founded in 2005.²²⁷ In addition, the Joint Anti-Terrorism Task Force (JATTF), the National Security Advisory Committee, and the National Counter-Terrorism Center were established in 2003, 2004, and 2005, respectively.²²⁸

However, Kenya's anti-terrorism structures were introduced in a legal vacuum. They were not founded on legal backing. Various human rights and religious groups such as AMANI Forum, Kenya Human Rights Commission and inter-Religious Council of Kenya, maintained that there was no legal basis for the drafting of the controversial anti-terrorism bills. Therefore, efforts by the government to legalize the ATPU Bill in 2002 and SOT in 2003 failed due to the pressure from

²²⁴ Lind J & Howell J. (2010).p.54.

²²⁵ Amnesty International (2005) 'Kenya: The Impact of "Anti-terrorism" Operations on Human Rights. March 23. <https://asiapacific.amnesty.org>

²²⁶ Lind J & Howell J (2010). pp. 3-4.

²²⁷Harmony Project (2007) 'Al Qa'id as Misadventures in the Horn of Africa'. West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center

²²⁸ Lind J & Howell J (2010). Pp 7-8.

these groups with help of the members of the Parliamentary Committee on Justice and Constitutional affairs.²²⁹

In response to UN Resolution 1373 of 2001, the Kenyan Attorney General released the Proceeds of Crime and the Anti-Money Laundering Act in 2008 to assist efforts to restrict the use of commercial remittances and charities that fuel terrorism.²³⁰ A financial reporting centre that will compile, disseminate, and share information with investigating authorities was proposed in the bill.²³¹ According to the Parliamentary House Committee, the Bill had twenty-two clauses of the Suppression of Terrorism Bill (SOT) incorporated word by word.²³² However, due to the heavy opposition mobilized by the civil society and Muslim groups, the government used alternative policies and mechanisms. These included the heightened checks on NGOs and closer scrutiny and inspection of the NGOs providing relief assistance in refugee camps in Northern parts of Kenya such as the Crescent of Hope and Al-Ibrahim, which were closed and some of their senior staff interrogated and deported²³³.

Even though some organisations were permitted to reregister, the police and the provincial government constantly monitored and obstructed them in their operational regions. These were the Sudi Al Haramain Foundation, Young Muslim association and the Northern Aid.²³⁴ Socially, the perception and treatment of Muslims in Kenya have been affected by these anti-terrorism measures and practices. The madrassa and mosques, for instance, have been labelled and constructed as sites for radicalization and extremism²³⁵. Additionally, they have faced constant content assessments, greater regulatory oversight through central registration and monetary charitable flows through the mosque and the withdrawal of the central registration of mosques by

²²⁹ KNCHR(2003) Suppression of Terrorism Bill, 2003. Critique by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights. Nairobi: Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (mimeo)

²³⁰ Howell J & Lind J (2009).

²³¹ East African Standard (2008). AG Publishes Anti-Money Laundering Laws', East African Standard (Nairobi) 25 April.

²³² Muslim Human Rights Forum (2008) Civil Society Responses to Counterterrorism Measures in Kenya'. Special Brief (September). Nairobi: Muslim Human Rights Forum.

²³³ Lind J (2009).

²³⁴ Mazrui A.A (2003) Terrorism and the Global Image of Islam, Power, Passion and Petroleum'. Public lecture, National Museum, Nairobi (23 July).

²³⁵ Lind J. (2010).

the government. These policies have repeatedly intimidated both local and foreign philanthropists willing to assist madrassas and mosques.²³⁶

Kenya's approach to terrorism and stemming domestic radicalization by terror groups remains fixated on law enforcement measures²³⁷. This is evident through raids and harassment of citizens in Isiolo. Residents of Isiolo have had concerns on surveillance, crackdown, arrest and interrogation of terror suspects with numerous reports of the use of force and torture.²³⁸ These include secret deportation of terror suspects to other foreign countries such as Ethiopia, America's Guantanamo Bay, and Somalia.²³⁹ In Tulluroba and Bull-Pesa, for instance, three young men suspected to be *Al-Shabaab* recruiters mysteriously disappeared from their homes in 2013. This followed their recording of a statement with the local police over their involvement in what the police termed as radical religious activities.²⁴⁰

However, despite the various counter-terrorism approaches by the government, minimal success has been attained; instead, there is increased mistrust between government authorities and the perceived targeted communities.²⁴¹ Such concerns prompted Hehema Abdullah, the Chairlady of Bulla-Pesa Women Support Group, with the help of Isiolo Gender Watch, to initiate activities such as open days, games and sports competitions between the security officers and the local youths during school holidays. During the open days, the police get to have an opportunity to speak with the public on their mandate as security officers, educate the people on the importance of reporting insecurity incidences as well as ending the fear that existed between the security officers and the people of Isiolo.²⁴² According to Grace, a Gender Watch Field Officer, such programmes have for the last two years improved the relationship between the security and the citizens in Isiolo county.²⁴³

²³⁶ East African Standard (2008). 'AG Publishes Anti-Money Laundering Laws', East African Standard (Nairobi) 25 April.

²³⁷ Melisa Finn et al. (2016).

²³⁸ Amnesty International (2005). Kenya: The Impact of Anti-terrorism. Operations on Human Rights. March 23. <https://asiapacific.amnesty.org>.

²³⁹ Daily Nation (2007) 'FamilyWants Suspect Returned from Guantanamo', Daily Nation (Nairobi) 29 March

²⁴⁰ Oral interview with Fatuma Nur, Cheraf Slums, Isiolo County, June 2021

²⁴¹ Murema F.M (2020).p.76.

²⁴² Oral interview with, Hehema Abdullah, Isiolo County, June 2021

²⁴³ Oral interview with Grace, Gender Watch, Isiolo County, June 2021

4.4: The Role of Women in De-Radicalization

In Africa, women have for decades been de-associated with radicalism. There has been a perception that they are peaceful and law abiding, even though extremism disproportionately affects them. For instance, economic impact on women following the recruitment and radicalization of the male relatives has had the resultant effect of drawing affected women into radicalization. Fatuma Nur and her two friends narrated to us their ordeal since their husbands crossed to Somali for greener pastures. Left behind with families to take care of and they were without jobs, led them into begging. Police harassment and threats to tell where their husbands went has also been part of their lives.²⁴⁴ Men are the main breadwinners in most families. Therefore, their loss brings with it imminent socio-economic hardship on the household, particularly in those led by a single male breadwinner.²⁴⁵

Women do not have one particular agency in countering violent extremism, but tend to apply various approaches, which they discharge individually as mothers and wives or as peace-builders under the *Nyumba Kumi* initiative or through community-based organizations²⁴⁶. As members of a community-based organisation in Wabera Ward, women have advocated for policies to be passed in the Isiolo County Assembly for allocation of enough funds to counter extremism through public awareness campaigns and social outreach programs.²⁴⁷

Women have been crucial in outreach and awareness-raising, training and capacity building, and promoting engagement between women and other significant players at the community level, according to Chowdhury et al.²⁴⁸ This is seen in Isiolo through many efforts made by both individual women and women groups as narrated by Madam Abdia of Isiolo Peace Link:

Peace Link with women groups have mobilized women towards fighting radicalization our county through awareness workshops in schools, colleges markets,

²⁴⁴ Oral interview with Fatuma Nur, Cheraf Slums, Isiolo County, June 2021

²⁴⁵ Mariam S (2016). Afghan Women and Countering Violent Extremism: What are their roles, challenges and opportunities in CVE? In a Man's World? Exploring the Roles of Women in Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism.

²⁴⁶ *ibid.*

²⁴⁷ Oral interview with Asad Mohamed, Aspirant Wabera ward, Isiolo Town

²⁴⁸ Mariam S (2016).p.63.

churches. Women have contributed their money to cater for victims of terror and reuniting to the society.²⁴⁹

Hadija Abdi, a cashier in Isiolo county Government and stays in Kambi Gaba in the outskirts of Isiolo town added that:

I have seen women fighting for youths in Isiolo. In 2016, women of faith protested against the laxity of police towards drugs and substance abuse which was a mechanism used by terror groups to recruit youths. They also called for establishment of youth centers on every sub-county hospital to deal with rising cases of drugs.²⁵⁰

Additionally, women-led CSOs served as a link between conventional networks like mosques, religious institutions, and other spiritual and cultural hubs. This has two advantageous effects: First, the networks for peace and social cohesion were essential for fostering social harmony among different ethnic groups, disseminating anti-extremist messaging, mediating conflicts, and establishing peace.²⁵¹ Elsewhere, women play a leading role as security officials and CSOs actors. Inspector Ombati told us how vital the role of women have been towards peace building and rooting out radical groups in Isiolo county:

Women are the mothers to the young people targeted by the groups such as Al-Shabaab. They help in identifying and rooting out cells. Through their grassroots networks, they have helped the security organs to trace terror groups, convinced young girls to decamp from Al-Shabaab and re-integrating them to the society.²⁵²

4.4.1: The Role of Women in NGOs in Isiolo

The prevalence of radicalisation and recruitment into extremism in Isiolo county has compelled NGOs such as Women of Faith, Isiolo Mothers for Peace, Peace Link and Star of Hope to step up their efforts of deradicalisation. These NGOs have expanded their mandate to include countering

²⁴⁹ Interviews with Abdi, Isiolo Peace Link

²⁵⁰ Oral interview Hadija Abdi, a cashier in Government

²⁵¹ Republic of Kenya (2018-2020). Isiolo County Action Plan on Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism

²⁵² Interview with Inspector Ombati, OCS, Isiolo Police Station

violent extremism under the more comprehensive framework of promoting peace and security.²⁵³ The Gender Watch women have played an important role in educating men, women, young adults, professionals and religious leaders in Isiolo against joining the ranks of violent extremists. Gender Watch has used various platforms not only to prevent radicalization but also to encourage women to use social media to attract ‘sisters’ and ‘brothers’ to support the deradicalisation effort. Through their local networks, Gender Watch women have developed an effective opposing narrative that debunks the misleading propaganda of false hope and hatred used by violent extremists. These are the ideas that extremists use to justify violence and draw in more men and women in the county.²⁵⁴ Secondly, Gender Watch also sensitizes various households on the importance of changing from cultural and religious practices that encourage radicalization in Isiolo.²⁵⁵

Gender Watch runs psycho-social clinics for women who lost their children, husbands or relatives to *Al-Shabaab*. These clinics provide a platform for the victims and parents of victims to share their dramatic experience during the loss of their family members. This is done with the help of hired specialists who engage them in lessons that would enhance their quick recovery or help them live with hope of seeing their loved one.²⁵⁶

Another organization, Peace-Link, took a different approach in the war against radicalization in Isiolo county. Realizing the changing dynamics on current target groups by the *Al-Shabaab*, which shifted from semi-skilled to excellent professions, Peace-Link decided to come up with Isiolo Religious and Professional Forum. Religious leaders were used by Peace-Link to clearly explain and clarify the principle tenets of Islam and its role in radicalization. The concern came in the wake of distortion of Koran by agents of *Al-Shabaab* to win over ignorant youth.²⁵⁷ Additionally, this forum has helped in winning back the trust of Isiolo residents *vis a vis* the representatives of the national government and security officers. Peace-Link has held many joint forums and dialogues on the discrimination faced by Isiolo residents while seeking crucial documents such as national identity cards and passports²⁵⁸

²⁵³ Oral interview with Sheikh Ahmed, founder Star of Hope, Isiolo County

²⁵⁴ Oral interview with, Grace Gender Watch field officer, Isiolo County, June 2021

²⁵⁵ Ibid

²⁵⁶ Oral interview with, Rehema Abdullah, Isiolo County, June 2021

²⁵⁷ Oral interview with Bishop Kalunyu, Secretary Isiolo County Interfaith Council, June 2021

²⁵⁸ Oral interview with Asad Mohamed, Aspirant Wabera ward, Isiolo Town

4.4.2: *The Role of Mothers of the Victims in Counter-Terrorism*

Women play a crucial role in ensuring a peaceful future for their communities. Their sense of care, especially to their young ones, is inseparably linked to the value chain of human life and posterity. Women have an intrinsic desire for a peaceful society and world²⁵⁹. Mothers' roles in Isiolo have become crucially essential especially in early warnings and preventing young people from joining radical groups. This is evident among mothers in Kiwanjani, Bulla-Pesa and Tulluroba suburbs of Isiolo Town, who work with local administration to curb radicalization. In our interview, Chief Kathunkumi of Kiwanjani location indicated that:

Mothers in Kiwanjani have been of great importance in protecting their young ones, making our work easier. Mothers have been reporting any unusual behavior especially in their boys. This has helped us rescuing children in Isiolo from joining Al-Shabaab.²⁶⁰

However, there are obstacles that women must overcome, particularly in patriarchal environments such as among the Cushitic people. Along with that, there is also what Dufour-Genneson and Mayesha Alam refer to as the under-appreciated role of women in terrorism.²⁶¹ This is especially true given the limited and fragmented research about their roles in deradicalization that is currently available. The chief's sentiments, however, were echoed by Gikunda, the Deputy Principal of Isiolo Boys Secondary School. Gikunda argued that being a disciplinarian for a school such as Isiolo Boys, he can attest how mothers have been of great help in nurturing their children:

Many mothers have been coming to our offices with concerns on the changes in their children. For example, one of our parents told me that she fears that her boy might have joined a wrong group. When we followed up, the boy admitted that he has been under duress from some people to join *Al-Shabaab*.²⁶²

²⁵⁹ Fazli, Johnson and Cooke, "Understanding and Countering Violent Extremism in Afghanistan,"

²⁶⁰ Oral interview with the chief Kiwanjani Location, Isiolo Town

²⁶¹ Dufour-Genneson S., & Alam, M. (2014). Women and countering violent extremism. *A publication of the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace & Security*. p.1. accessed on 7th June 2022 from <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Women-and-Countering-Violent-Extremism.pdf>

²⁶² Oral interview with Gikunda, then the Deputy Principal of Isiolo Boys Secondary School

In relation to the above revelation, Ndung'u and Shadung agree with the deputy principal's remarks by arguing that women's role as mothers, wives, caregivers, partners and sisters put them in a position as first people to detect and influence extremists in the making and behaviors in their families and community. Because they are viewed as non-polarizing within families and communities, women hold a special place in early warning and reaction. This may help young people's self-esteem and social cohesiveness develop.²⁶³

Globalisation of extremism through online platforms has become a serious challenge to the concerted deradicalisation efforts by women and other actors. In a comparative analysis, for example, Nosiri and Ibekwe argue that the use of information and communication technology by *Boko Haram* in Nigeria has facilitated the group to establish effective links with other terrorist organizations worldwide. This helped them to not only get information for their consumption, but also acquired weapons for their terrorisms activities.²⁶⁴ Similarly, this has been a challenge in Kenya where youths have been recruited into Al Shabaab and other radical groups through online platforms, making the process of deradicalization a challenge to the women and other agencies.²⁶⁵

Additionally, the voices of mothers are important in the wider spectrum of counter-terrorism. Their testimonies are key 'emotional weapons' in countering the narrative used by terror groups to lure young energetic and ambitious girls and women into terror groups.²⁶⁶ Isiolo mothers have employed mothers' voices to counter the narratives used by extremists to challenge the roots of extremist ideologies. In Isiolo county, mothers' voices have been employed by the ATPU, religious leaders and government officials to express the level of emotional distress children cause their mothers when they suddenly disappear and join *Al-Shabaab*. This has gradually helped in countering the narrative of radicalization.

²⁶³ Ndungu I. M Shading, can a gendered approach improve response to violent extremism? Institute for security studies.

²⁶⁴ Nosiri U. D., & Ibekwe, E. O. (2017). Globalization: A Challenge to Counter-Terrorism In Nigeria. *Duñ De: Calabar Journal of the Humanities*, p.175. accessed on 10th June 2022 from <https://books.google.co.ke/books?hl=en&lr=&id=7V4IDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA175&dq=challenges+of+women+in+countering+terrorism&ots>

²⁶⁵ Kenya News Agency (May 30, 2019) Terror Groups Adopt social media to Recruit Youths. Accessed on 11th June 2022 from <https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/terror-groups-adopt-social-media-to-recruit-youths/>

²⁶⁶ Oral interview with Musa Aideen, a doctor (psychologist), Isiolo General Hospital

Thirdly, the Isiolo Pastoralist Women is a group of mothers who decided to join hands with the local authorities in not only countering radicalization of their boys and girls, but also in promoting peace and security. Their initiative started in 2015 when they learned that some *Al-Shabaab* recruiters pose like herders only to take advantage of innocent boys and school children. The group has been championing public awareness on the secretive methods adopted by extremist recruiters. Their work reinforces that of Isiolo Peace-Link and Isiolo Gender Watch in creating awareness in both primary and high schools in Isiolo, and assisting in rehabilitation and reintegration of the victims of terrorism and disengaged extremists.

4.5: Conclusion

Waging a successful counterterrorism campaign requires an enabling community with well-defined roles by women. In the 21st Century, successful deradicalisation efforts are likely to be realised in societies where women's strengths as mothers, care givers, advisers, and early warning detectors are recognised and actively leveraged. Families, communities and nations have the challenge of freeing women from the cultural shackles if such institutions hope to fully benefit from women's invaluable input. This is an important aspect of deradicalisation that has been largely missing in research. This chapter, therefore, focused on the role of women in deradicalization.

The chapter examined whether women are mere victims of radicalization and violent extremism, and whether they were perpetrators of extremist acts. A variety of theories and myths on gender roles were explored. The chapter narrowed down on gender differentiation and revealed that women were not only victims of violent extremism but they were themselves militant terrorists. The chapter delved into the strategies used by various actors to counter terrorism and radicalisation in Isiolo county. It reviewed Kenya's legal framework that guides its anti-terrorism interventions, observing that there were gaps that allowed the state agencies to violate the rights of profiled Somali community, individuals and the Muslim religion in general. Finally, this chapter analysed the critical role played by of women in NGOs, as professions, and as mothers in counter-terrorism. It revealed that women had unique and successful approaches to deradicalisation largely build around their soft skills as mothers and care givers and whose advice their radicalised sons and daughters were more inclined to listen and heed to. This analysis then offers a suitable link with

the next chapter in which I am analysing the impact of radicalisation and deradicalisation efforts in Isiolo county.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE IMPACT OF RADICALIZATION AND DERADICALIZATION EFFORTS IN ISOLO COUNTY

5.0: Introduction

In the last decade, Kenya has endured uncountable terror activities that have caused serious economic, political and security implications on the country. The Westgate attack, the massacre in Garissa University, the Dusit 2 siege, the catalogue of IED strikes in the northern frontier, and the killing of non-Muslims in Wajir, Garissa and Lamu counties, have combined to heighten fear in the country. Consequently, the Somali community and Muslims in general, have increasingly found themselves being profiled as Al Shabaab sympathizers or agents. In this mix, security agencies have taken advantage of the prevailing situation to operate beyond the law when combating extremists. Therefore, in this chapter, I have discussed the impact of radicalization in Isiolo county.

5.1: Abductions and Disappearances of School children, Youth and Women

Abductions and disappearance of women, children and youth in East Africa have become commonplace since *Al-Shabaab* began conducting its violent activities with support from its global links.²⁶⁷ The abductees, especially from Kenya's Isiolo County, have been reportedly traced to *Al-Qaeda* terror cells which are increasingly laying emphasis on a pan-Islamist global Jihad network. Whereas *Al-Shabaab* operates within East Africa, *Al-Qaeda's* cells are global and consider themselves as the mother of all Jihadists or Islamist extremists.²⁶⁸ Although many scholars argue that radicalization into terror groups has been mainly influenced by issues around the lives of the person, including personality, socio-cultural and economic needs, religious concepts and narratives, temporal and eternal rewards, political frustration and peer-influence - the abduction of women who are involved in de-radicalization efforts has recently been the most preferred way of dealing with anti-jihadism in Isiolo Kenya.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁷ United Nations (2010). Assistance Mission in Somalia

²⁶⁸ Finn M, Momani B, Opatowski M & Opondo M (2016). *Journal for Radicalization*. Youth Evaluation of CVE/PVE programming in Kenyan context.

²⁶⁹ Lokoro D.L (2020),p.86.

Bishop Kalunyu indicates that many young people have been disappearing from Isiolo only to be reported killed while trying to escape from *Al-Shabaab* camps. He gives an example of a young man he had known for a very long time in Isiolo who later became the bomber of DusitD2 Hotel in Westlands in 2019.²⁷⁰ Kalunyu's argument was amplified by these words of a senior security officer who requested concealment of his identity:

Although many parents in Isiolo county are living in denial, the cases of disappearance of both young and influential, well-educated personalities, is on the rise. Women, for instance, have been reported to be serving as *Al-Shabaab* brides and sex slaves in Somalia.²⁷¹

The concept of abduction, especially of women fighting to protect their sons from radicalization in the region, has been perfected in the wake of planting many underground cells and deployment of many trained tutors and spies to perpetually recruit and indoctrinate members. The philosophy of cell recruitment was based on a terror group planting an agent or operative within the community to recruit, entice or abduct and indoctrinate them.²⁷² This is how Martin Githii, a retired teacher puts it:

Often, the intelligence wing of *Al-Shabaab*, *Amniyat*, monitored homes and schools for a potential disenfranchised victim. They have managed to disappear with young girls, especially in secondary schools and colleges. With our heads of institutions fearing for their lives, they would not want to openly talk about such matters.²⁷³

The *Amniyats* are also deployed to track members of organizations fighting radicalization. Mothers, community women groups and women in *Nyumba Kumi*, have been on the lookout,

²⁷⁰ Oral Interview with Bishop Kalunyu, Secretary Isiolo Interfaith Council

²⁷¹ Oral interview with security officer, Isiolo County

²⁷² Morema F.M (2002).p.34.

²⁷³ Oral interview with Martin Githii, a retired primary teacher, Isiolo Town

sensitizing their children, schools and community members on the action to take whenever they see suspicious men and women in their locality.²⁷⁴

According to Abdia from Isiolo Peace Link:

We have organized for sensitization workshops in schools, colleges, market centers and in villages with higher rates of radicalization such as Tullu Roba. We have held our meetings in almost all seven slums around Isiolo Town to enlighten people on the tricks of these terror groups.²⁷⁵

According to Lomojo, locations where the cells are planted in Isiolo are renowned for their notoriety and criminal activities. The places are so unsafe that even some dangerous, seasoned and hardened criminals fear operating there. They are so hostile even to security officers who are termed as outsiders. This has been a serious challenge on women's deradicalisation initiative whenever a person is abducted. The anti-outsider hostility seen in such radicalisation hotspots appears to be designed to keep the operations of the terror cells top-secret and hidden from the public. The recovery of the abducted victims from these cells has always involved high-level mediations between elders who are required to pay a ransom before the abductees were released²⁷⁶.

After the return of six young men and two girls from the neighboring Bullapesa, Cheraf, and Modagashe, *Al-Shabaab* changed their recruitment stratagem to evade the security officers. They now pose like herdsmen to recruit boys.²⁷⁷ However, women carrying on with their daily chores noticed the presence of unfamiliar faces with strange characters monitoring youths mainly from school, colleges: they notified the authorities. Not long before, three youths looking after their

²⁷⁴ Oral interview, Adan Galgalo, National Cohesion and Integration Officer, Isiolo Town, May 2021

²⁷⁵ Oral interview with Abdia, Isiolo Peace Link.

²⁷⁶ Lomojo (2020).

²⁷⁷ Oral interview with Yumme Waqou, civil servant, Isiolo County

livestock had suddenly disappeared.²⁷⁸ Only one escaped the trap to tell the story of abductions as an approach to Islamic radicalization.²⁷⁹

Similarly, on the Somalia-Kenya border, young Kenyan girls have been abducted from school, public places, and their homes.²⁸⁰ A high percentage of youths are also tricked and maligned by lead operatives deployed to recruit youths into cells from where the abductions occur as a pre-radicalization stage. The study also learned that women were often abducted by extremists and classified as abductions through the power of love. Although abduction of women by *Al-Shabaab* under the pretext of the power of love is more prevalent in counties bordering Somalia, it is not as rampant and ruthless as in parts of Somalia itself. Amiwa Abdi, an elderly lady from the Somali community and also a *Nyumba Kumi* elder in Kiwanjani area, said this:

The young boys and girls of today in Isiolo have managed to overcome religious barriers that existed between Islam and Christianity on marriage. Today many non-Muslim girls are being married by Muslim men and live well. However, *Al-Shabaab* recruiters are now taking advantage of these interfaith unions. They pose like suitors who later convince their wives to relocate to Somali.²⁸¹

Orly Stern says that in Somalia, *Al-Shabaab* abducts women and forces them into marriage as a form of punishment. Women, especially those who do not want their sons to join *Al-Shabaab*, have been taken by *Al-Shabaab* as a form of punishment. Women and daughters of military officers, government officials, and relatives who work against radicalization have often been kidnapped and given to *Al-Shabaab* militants under whom they have to endure brutal repression and threats.²⁸²

²⁷⁸ Sama G.S (2019). Assessment of the dynamics of resource-based conflict on human security in Kenya: A case study of Isiolo county. Master's Degree in International Studies at the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies (IDIS), University of Nairobi.

²⁷⁹ Oral interview, Adan Galgalo, National Cohesion and Integration officer, Isiolo Town, May 2021

²⁸⁰ Human Rights Watch (2012.)No Place for Children: Child Recruitment, Forced Marriage, and Attacks on Schools in Somalia, www.hrw.org/report/2012/02/20/no-placechildren.

²⁸¹ Oral interview with Amiwa Abdi, Nyumba Kumi elder at Kiwanjani area, Isiolo Town

²⁸² Stern, O(2020).p.37.

5.2: Mental and Psychological Impact of Radicalization

Although Jihad means “to strive against passions and desires,” it has been used wrongly, misinterpreted and misapplied by the so-called religious extremists or jihadists to win the souls of desperate women in Isiolo²⁸³. Sheikh Akhmed notes that judging from the eight abductees (six young men and two girls) rescued from *Al-Shabaab* in Isiolo, the indoctrination processes have mental and psychological impact on the newly recruited men, women and young girls. This almost irrevocably alters their mental processes.²⁸⁴ In that case, the beliefs, feelings and attitudes of these women are changed and formed up for joining and serving the interests of terror groups.²⁸⁵ According to Lomojo, the indoctrination processes target the hearts and minds of the recruits influencing them through confusing their minds till, they willingly ‘accept’ to join Al-Shabaab²⁸⁶. Sheikh also noted that:

The recruiters have mastered the art of *fikra potovu*, meaning misleading ideology, to lure young people to radicalization. This includes religious and political narratives that displace them from the truth. Lately, it is reported that the new recruits are also drugged and incited against their families.

Underground tutors use distorted teachings of the Quran to achieve a dangerous goal for women and youth. Young people and women in Isiolo were convinced that when one dies fighting for the right course or Allah, she will go directly to heaven. They were also promised material incentives such as money, jobs, cars, prosperity.²⁸⁷ Such promises lead to what the Goal System Theory calls the expression of goal commitment and focal point where the victim sacrifices everything to achieve the ultimate goal. This is the main target of extremists²⁸⁸. The wrong understanding and interpretation of texts in the holy book, especially on Jihad, is also responsible for many youth's mental and psychological problems. The victims are brainwashed by reading and reciting extreme Quran verses – cramming verses to a certain level. Prolonged reading of the Quran changes the

²⁸³ Leede S (2018). Women in Jihad, Historical Perspective.

²⁸⁴ Oral interview with Sheikh Akhmed, Star of Hope Organization, Isiolo county

²⁸⁵ Haubfleisch L.R & Korolkova, M. N (2017). Radicalisation and violent extremism - focus on women: how women become radicalized and how to empower them to prevent radicalization. EU parliament.

²⁸⁶ Lokoro L.D (2020). p241.

²⁸⁷ Rink A & Sharma K (2018). The determinants of religious radicalization, evidence from Kenya." Berlin Journal of Conflict resolution, 62b.

²⁸⁸ Kruglanski, (2013).

mind. These very powerful verses and concepts on war, Satan, rain, women, seventy-two virgins, paradise, luxurious Jannah, that is, Janah Tul-Fardos, the highest paradise, alters the mind and leads to the rejection of earthly cares²⁸⁹.

The kind of training that recruited young men and women were subjected to included military or combat training, intelligence gathering, weaponry and how to handle guns, grenades, and attack tactics. Others are trainings on strict terrorism ideology. Therefore, the training process overlapped with the indoctrination processes whereby recruiters sought to alter the minds of youths from an orthodox worldview to a terrorist mindset. Further training also involved acquiring psychomotor skills to be used in combat. As the former was ideological, the latter was combat-based training.²⁹⁰

The main teachings are also anchored on revenge against perceived injustices as a revisionist approach to the concept of war and as opposed to struggling for piety in the path of Mumin. Victims start showing intolerance and antisocial characters which expresses strong sentiments against other religions, hyper-religious seclusion, reading and memorizing texts for long periods, even locking up oneself in a room. The extreme exclusivism is based on the claims that their religion was the only one from God - the rest have been defiled themselves.²⁹¹

Similarly, Abdi Guyo, a member of the Interfaith Council, asserts that the literal interpretation of sacred texts, online addiction to violent literature, reading and following social sites that are dedicated to radical literature and application of texts out of context and creating own spaces based on biased knowledge of texts, is another common trend exhibited by victims of radicalization.²⁹² Additionally, they show extreme piety and spend more time reading the Quran alone, inquisitive about violent terror groups, prompting discussions on terrorism, and violent extremist organization.²⁹³

²⁸⁹ Lokoro (2020). p274.

²⁹⁰ Aldrich First Steps Towards Hearts and Minds? USAID's Countering Violent Extremism Policies in Africa.

²⁹¹ Bortha A (2018).p.46.

²⁹² Oral interview with Abdi Guyo, a member of Isiolo Interfaith Council

²⁹³ Kimamo J & Juma S (2019). Jamii Bila Balaa. Baseline Report Strengthening the Role of Families and Community Influencers to Prevent Recruitment into Violent Extremism Groups in Garissa and Tana River Counties, Kenya.

Abrupt behavioral changes are another significant psychological effect of radicalisation. Doosje et. al. argue that both individual and group experiences of deprivation predict the radical belief system. This has been observed in Isiolo, where radicalized students, family members, and community members frequently abandon old friends, family, and social circles. Doosje's assertions vindicate Gikunda's earlier observations, confirming that isolationism is widespread among newly enlisted *Al-Shabaab* members. This is coupled with rebellion against school rules and norms. Gikunda reported that some students even tell their teachers, *hata uniue sitafanya mambo ambayo sitaki* (even if you kill me, I won't do that).²⁹⁴

5.3: Women and Community-Oriented Approaches to Counter-terrorism

Women such as Amina Rashid, Rukia, and Grace of Gender Watch in Isiolo have ingeniously penetrated community associations and groups and used them as tools for countering radicalization and violent extremism. According to Basia Spalek, developing community-based approaches, in which national counter radicalism measures are followed through grassroots and cooperative initiatives that are customized to local setup, typically increases effectiveness. This behavior mirrors an increasing acceptance that the communities are key stakeholders and partners in countering radicalisation.

The community centered strategies which focus on cooperation of both men and women from the society involved plays a vital role towards maximizing the support for policies put in place. This further neutralizes all negative impacts caused by differences as a result of gender, religion, political divide, and ethnicity. In return, the community centered approach will greatly contribute to decision-making processes. The working together of various stakeholders such as security personnel, and grassroots representatives has greatly facilitated the success of community-oriented approaches. As a result, trust is established and nurtured in the community. According to Rama Galgalo, a resident of Isiolo County's Tull-Roba Location, since the Government began partnering with local groups to combat radicalization, trust between communities and public authorities has grown significantly, allowing authorities to freely obtain vital information that has resulted in the interception of numerous youths crossing to Somalia.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁴ Oral interview with Mr. Gikunda, Deputy Principal Isiolo Boys Secondary School

²⁹⁵ Oral interview, Adan Galgalo, National Cohesion and Integration Officer, Isiolo Town, May 2021

Women groups such as Isiolo Pastoralist Women and Bulla-Pesa Women Support Group acknowledged that since 2011, they have been involved in some government-led initiatives such as the development of policies and strategies for ending the narrative of terrorism. They noted that the initiatives have been fairly successful since women who happen to be the mothers of the targeted sons and daughters have freely given out information to assist in the resilience of the general community against the traps of *Al-Shabaab*.²⁹⁶ This was echoed by a cohesion and integration officer in Isiolo, who noted that the change of tack by county and national government to focus on community safety rather than state security, has in the last half a decade given good returns. Women organizations such as Isiolo Gender Watch and the Brail have been consulted on police operations and close surveillance strategies by the multiagency security teams.²⁹⁷

According to Lomojo, the building of trust between security organs, women's groups and men, has enabled the authorities to trace the infiltration routes of aliens and foreigners who have found their way to Isiolo county. These aliens been assimilated into the accommodative society and have taken advantage of this hospitality to radicalize the vulnerable youths of Isiolo²⁹⁸. According to Adan Wario, the assimilation of foreigners into the community occurred through ethnic and clan considerations. Since the Kenyan Somalis in Isiolo and the Somalis from Somalia share physical, religious and linguistic characteristics, radical recruiters are not easily identified, save with the help of local community members.²⁹⁹ Such assimilation cannot be always equated with radicalization, but provides a conveyor belt for those with ulterior motives to stealthily access the youths in the county³⁰⁰.

Furthermore, it was this partnership with the community that enabled the anti-terror police unit to discover the role of Isiolo as a transit route that connects terrorists from Somalia to major towns such as Nairobi and Mombasa.³⁰¹ From Isiolo, a terrorist would link to towns like Maua, Marsabit,

²⁹⁶ Oral interview, Adan Wario, retired high school teacher, Isiolo Town, May 2021

²⁹⁷ Isiolo Peace Link, (2018)

²⁹⁸ Lokoro (2020).

²⁹⁹ Oral interview, Adan Wario, retired high school teacher, Isiolo Town, May 2021

³⁰⁰ Lokoro (2020).

³⁰¹ Petrich K. & Donnelly, P. (2019). Worth many sins: Al-Shabaab's shifting relationship with Kenyan women. *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 30, Nos. 6-7. <https://static1.squarespace.com>

Garbatulla, Moyale, Garissa, among others, as they proceed to Nairobi and other destinations. Vehicles transporting Miraa have been used to ferry people with questionable characteristics to Nairobi. Police roadblocks were evaded by colluding with drivers who pretended to stop over in suspicious centers to allow suspected recruiters or foreigners to go through back routes (*panya* routes) to eschew police checks³⁰².

5.4: Women and the Risk of Radicalisation

Isiolo Pastoralist Women have been engaging individuals considered at great risk of transiting into radicalization, even though the work of identifying such vulnerable people has been extremely sensitive and challenging. These women have, therefore, resorted to using their peer networks to reach out to these vulnerable individuals³⁰³ Similar to how women have recognized men and women, girls and boys, who are alienated and marginalized and prone to such recruiting, direct family members, relatives, instructors, and women have done the same. During the interview with the Chairlady of Isiolo Mothers for Peace, she noted that for the last four years they have been able to assist many youths through awareness campaigns on the dangers caused by radicalization.³⁰⁴ They have also carried out sensitization and supported first-line actors led by men in their efforts to understand and nature boy child who has been of late the main target for recruitment into Al-Shabaab ranks. Stop-and-search procedures, closed-circuit television monitoring, and even the use of covert surveillance techniques by the police can help improve cooperation between the police and the community in Isiolo's fight against terrorism when regular men and women from the community are sufficiently consulted. Peace-Link women have also been at the forefront to call upon the national and the county governments to protect individuals who have returned from Somalia after failed promises by *Al-Shabaab* from discrimination. They support ending all types of discrimination as the United Nations Human Rights Committee has defined it. This means that women and any other person in Isiolo will not be treated in a way that may imply exclusion based on status, color, race, religion, social origin as well as membership in a minority group.³⁰⁵

³⁰² Lokoro (2020). Pp 298-291.

³⁰³ Isiolo Peace Link (2018)

³⁰⁴ Oral interview with Halima Salim, chairlady Isiolo Mothers for Peace

³⁰⁵ UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 18: Non-Discrimination, 1989

The OSCE has echoed the call by Isiolo Pastoralist Women and Peace-Link for equal treatment of victims of radicalization and *Al-Shabaab* recruitment. Non-discrimination, according to the OSCE, is crucial when preventing and countering terrorism.³⁰⁶ Isiolo women groups have severally organized for an audience with national government representatives such as chiefs and district officers on the issue of discriminatory treatment by state authorities. They noted that Isiolo residents have listed police brutality and arbitrary arrests by ATPU as one of the reasons why most young people are not free to give vital information on *Al-Shabaab* recruitment and training.³⁰⁷ This particular concern has also been raised not only by women against terrorism in Isiolo but also by several human rights groups in Kenya especially those operating among the Muslim dominated parts of the country. They argue that policing in such regions has been discriminatory and designed to profile certain ethnic communities.³⁰⁸

5.5: Women Reaching out for their Sons in *Al-Shabaab* Ranks

In a patriarchal society where men are in control, it is very difficult to nature and bring out the important role women can play³⁰⁹. In Muslim dominated communities, women's roles are strictly specified and enforced according to the Quran whose custodian are men.³¹⁰ A section of Isiolo women who are members of civil society groups and organizations such as Peace-Link and Inter-Faith Council, have raised themselves above the father-dominated society to realize that a community cannot progress without the help of women. These women are now part of decision-making people within their localities.³¹¹ Some participate in women's organizations and ad hoc local social development committees at the village and county levels.³¹² Women still don't contribute much and aren't as visible on these forums. Women respondents told us that, compared to previous years, currently, they were more involved and courageous to take part in community meetings where they influence other members to take more robust action in the fight against radicalization. Hidya Abdi argues that:

³⁰⁶ OSCE (2003).

³⁰⁷ Isiolo Peace Link (2018)

³⁰⁸ Horgan J., & Braddock, K. (2010). Rehabilitating the terrorists? Challenges in assessing the effectiveness of de-radicalization programs. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 22(2), 267-291

³⁰⁹ Sultana A (2011). Patriarchy and women's subordination: A Theory Analysis, Department of Political Science, University of Thaka.

³¹⁰ Women and Al-Shabab: Between False Empowerment and Terror, Anne-Yolande Bilala, August 13, 2012.

³¹¹ Oral interview with Mohamed Boru, Teacher St. Kizito Checheles Village, Isiolo county

³¹² CIDP (2018).

Women in Isiolo have for the last one decade played a major role in advocating for the return of the people who have joined terror groups such as *Al-Shabaab*. They have also called for the county government to create rehabilitation with psychosocial support facilities the returnees.³¹³

Similarly, in locations such as Tulluroba, active members of groups such as Brail, Bulla-Pesa Women Support Group are part of community-level decision-making forums, where they openly discuss de-radicalization and plan beneficial practical stakeholder engagements on deradicalisation in places such as sports centers, prisons and detention centers, schools, churches and mosques. During these stakeholder engagements, they sensitize people against the emerging problem of radicalization in their county.³¹⁴ Female led community groups, such as the Tulluroba Community Women Development created in 2013 to assist men, women, and young people disembarking from conflict and extremism now exist in almost all villages in the sub-county. The county now employs them in a variety of development initiatives, such as enhancing local communities' capacity to design, plan, manage, and keep track of their own social development programmes.³¹⁵

They have influenced the County Government of Isiolo to start programs for treatment and handling of disengaged combatants, rehabilitation support centers and start training teams to facilitate and support those who are willing to move out of the embattled *Al-Shabaab* terror group but are unable due to their safety.³¹⁶ Although still under progress, these women have proposed areas to locate the rehabilitation centers for easier access of the victims. They are requesting that the county government create a defector's programme and package it in a way that will draw in and persuade Isiolo residents who are already *Al-Shabaab* members to leave the organisation in the hopes of ultimately weakening the group and fostering peace. The Isiolo County Action Strategy on Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism states that this plan should also

³¹³ Oral interview with Hiday Abdi, Isiolo County

³¹⁴ Oral interview with David Okello, Isiolo County

³¹⁵ Isiolo Peace Link (2018)

³¹⁶ Republic of Kenya and Isiolo County Government, "Isiolo County Action Plan on Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism (ICAP P/CVE) 2018 – 2022."

determine the level of personal surrender required by *Al-Shabaab* defectors in order for them to be exempt from prosecution, receive rehabilitation, and be reintegrated back into society.³¹⁷

Women groups such as Bulla-Pesa Women Support Group and Isiolo Pastoralists Women and mothers of the victims of radicalization and extremists who have joined *Al-Shabaab* also have an underground group whose name was hidden for security purposes. This clandestine deradicalisation group had adopted similar propaganda used by *Al-Shabaab*, and flicked it to disengage their radicalised children. During the interviews, it emerged that they are even using women friends within *Al-Shabaab* territory, to pass discrete messages to their sons.³¹⁸ They contended that though the region controlled by *Al-Shabaab* is seen as an air-tight and a safe-haven, they are using alternative tactics to liberate their family members. They have also used social media platforms to deconstruct the *Al-Shabaab* narrative and propaganda.³¹⁹ Through these social media accounts, they sensitise the youth on how extremist recruiters twist the holy message in the Quran to achieve evil objectives.

5.6: Conclusion

Responses to radicalization and violent extremism have over the recent decades been predominantly military-oriented, often male-dominated, patriarchal endeavor. However, the activities of the terror outfits show that women are affected by their roles as both victims and perpetrators. For instance, terrorist groups such as *Boko Haram* and *Al-Shabaab* have attacked girls' schools and educators, held women hostages for ransom, forced marriages and also recruited women into their ranks. This reality calls for the involvement of women in counter terrorism strategies.

Therefore, this chapter focused on three areas. First, the general impact of radicalization in Isiolo county and other parts of the Kenya. The study noted that radicalisation resulted in the abduction and disappearance of women, children and youths in the region, courtesy of *Al-Shabaab* militants. This area further looked at the mental and psychological impact of radicalization to the people of

³¹⁷ Isiolo Peace Link (2018)

³¹⁸ Oral interview with Chief Kiwanjani Location, outskirts of Isiolo Town

³¹⁹ Oral interview, Adan Wario, retired high school teacher, Isiolo town, May 2021.

Isiolo county. Secondly, the chapter examined the impact of women's efforts on countering radicalization in Isiolo county besides scrutinizing the efforts made by women to reach out to their sons in *Al-Shabaab* ranks. In this chapter, I interrogated how women used various community-oriented approaches to counter terrorism; the roles they played in engaging with individuals drawn to violent extremism and radicalization; and, finally, how women manage to keep their sons and daughters from violent radicalization in Isiolo county.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.0: Summary of the Findings and Conclusion

In the 21st Century history, the task of deradicalization and countering terrorism has largely been seen as the preserve of security agencies and military units. These agencies have utilized mainly the hard power mechanisms such as intelligence, law enforcement, surgical strikes by Special Forces and large scale military operations. The evolution and quick transformation undertaken by terrorists raise the need for the design and implementation of appropriate policies aimed at prevention rather than suppression of terrorism, even though some of these strategies have been useful in the disruption and suppression of terrorism and terror threats around the world. Ongoing *Al-Shabaab's* evolution in East Africa has compelled Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya to reevaluate their anti-terrorist efforts. Everyone agrees that the military option, which was endorsed by the United Nations, the African Union, and the East African Community, has not been sufficient in dealing with the threat posed by the terrorists.

The threat posed by *Al-Shabaab* is more complex and diffuse, especially in Kenya: it takes the shape of small start-up terror cells or the ‘lone wolf’ suicide bombers or highly organised single-mission task forces dispatched from Somalia. Similarly, the paths to extremism have, since 2011, been more varied than ever before. Radicalization has eaten into the fabric of our society. It is not quite easy to foretell the next individual who might be radicalised. The hitherto impervious patriarchal structure within the ranks of the militants is increasingly fraying at the edges and beginning to admit vulnerable women, youth and school boys and girls into extremism. Therefore, as we enhance our understanding of contemporary patterns of radicalization and violent extremism, terror prevention initiatives need to be broadened and more new strategies and tactics adopted.

The status of women as victims, survivors, and actors of radicalization, violent extremism, and terrorism is the subject of increased inquiry. Conversely, little research has been conducted into their role as agents of deradicalisation. For example, women are said to be playing direct and indirect roles in perpetrating terror-related violence, as recruiters, as couriers, as spies, as suicide

bombers, as mothers of future terrorists, as care givers to the militants and as shelters for violent extremists. There is a dearth of scholarly work on the role of women as active agents in deradicalization in Isiolo county. Filling of this noticeable gap is the main concern of this study. This study, which looked at women's efforts and involvement in deradicalization and the prevention of violent extremism in Isiolo County from 2011 to 2018, tried to critically assess their efforts and roles.

This time period was chosen because it is defined by an increase in severe terror acts in Kenya and a commensurate increase in the recruitment of young Kenyans into violent extremism. It also happens to coincide with the entry of the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) into Somalia to battle *Al Shabaab*.

What are the causes of radicalization in Isiolo County was the first important issue the study set out to address. The question led me to examine the causes of radicalization frequently reported in Isiolo county. The second question was, what roles do women play in the de-radicalization efforts in Isiolo county? In responding to this question, I had to collect data that could help me to understand the contribution of women in Isiolo county to the deradicalization efforts. And the last one was, what is the impact of women's de-radicalization efforts in Isiolo county? In my opinion, women were crucial to the deradicalization activities in the county of Isiolo.

Three goals served as the foundation for the research: to identify the factors that led to radicalization in Isiolo County; to define the role of women in counter-radicalization initiatives in Isiolo County; and to evaluate the contribution of women to counter-radicalization initiatives in Isiolo County. The results of this study will help Kenya's national government, the County Government of Isiolo, and non-state actors evaluate and enhance their strategies for combating violent extremism and radicalization. This research will also add more insights to the already existing literature on gendered responses to radicalization and violent extremism.

The Social Identity Theory and the Rational Choice Theory of Radicalization served as the study's guiding theories. The Rational Choice Theory helped us to examine the religious, personal, and social incentives that predispose individuals to radicalization. The Social Identity Theory helped me to analyse the innate desire to belong to a social group (*Al Shabaab*) among the vulnerable young women and men.

The study tested three hypotheses: The first one was that radicalization in Isiolo county is caused by religious factors. The second one was that women play a key role in deradicalization efforts in Isiolo county. The last one was that women's efforts have led to the success of deradicalization efforts in Isiolo county. The study evaluated the contribution of women to deradicalization activities in Isiolo county using a descriptive research methodology. I processed the primary data I had collected from the field by classifying it, critically analysing it, and interpreting it using the guiding theories and literature review from secondary data. The study also utilized two sampling techniques: purposive sampling and stratified sampling, which identified the respondents who provided the primary data. Open-ended questions that were arranged thematically to gather the essential data from the respondents served as a guide for the interviews. Additionally, I used my own observations and eyewitness experiences. With the respondents' consent, the in-person interviews were taped and subsequently transcribed.

The second chapter of this study documented the history of radicalization in East Africa, Kenya and Isiolo county. The chapter began by a conceptual framework on the ideological process involving socialization of an individual into radicalization and violent extremism. It also examined the terrorist recruitment and mobilization networks. I noted that *Al-Shabaab* and the associate terror groups had extremely complex and intricate networks which lured Isiolo men, women, young people and the school going children to join their ranks. It further revealed that there was a marked rise in extremism in the East African between 2011 and 2018. The chapter concluded by exposing the clandestine manner in which the radical clerics, Imams, Mujtahid, peers, foreigners and some parents, have played in the escalation of the radicalization in Isiolo county. It noted how mosques, schools, public offices, playgrounds, and social gathering are the current venues of initiation into radical groups in Isiolo county.

In line with the first objective of the study, the third chapter sought to identify the factors that have led to radicalization in Isiolo county. The chapter began by analyzing the rationale and variations of becoming radicalized, where many different schools of thought converged on poverty, socio-economic marginalization, and high unemployment; especially among youth and other vulnerable groups in the society as one of the major causes of radicalization in the county. The role of

parenting as a cause of radicalization was also recognised. The chapter established that though not directly influenced, Muslim parents played a crucial role in introducing their sons to radicalism.

Online discourse is another cause of radicalization in Isiolo. The Internet has been used by members of radical groups for propaganda, threats, issue warnings, recruitment, incitement, and radicalization. Similarly, high handedness of the ATPU and the stereotyping of Somalis and Muslims as well as external stressors such as sending KDF to Somalia, played a big role in *Al-Shabaab* revenge attacks and radicalization drive.

In answering the research question of what is the role of women in de-radicalization efforts in Isiolo county and Kenya at large, this chapter focused on whether women were mere victims of violent extremism or whether they had active roles in the radicalization and deradicalization. The study established that women were not necessarily confined to the obscure domestic gender roles defined for them by patriarchy. Their place in the realm of radicalisation and terrorism was rather complex. As victims, some women have been forced into sex slavery by *Al-Shabaab* militants.

In chapter five, I examined the general impact of radicalization on the people of Isiolo. One effect of radicalisation was the unresolved abduction and disappearance of women, men and youth. Reverting back to the victims of radicalization, the study noted that those people who went through radicalization had mental and psychological challenges. The indoctrination processes leave long-lasting mental and psychological impact on the newly recruited men, women and young girls.

The chapter also examined the impact of women's efforts in deradicalization in Isiolo county. It focused on various strategies used by women and community-oriented approaches to counterterrorism, including reaching out to the radicalised individuals. Women in Isiolo county have been engaging individuals considered at great risk of radicalization into violent extremism: they assist them to disengage from extremism. They have also reached out to their sons in *Al-Shabaab* ranks. Women groups, mothers of the victims of radicalization and mothers of extremists who have joined *Al-Shabaab*, also have an underground group whose name was withheld for security purposes. The group adopted similar propaganda used by *Al-Shabaab* to lure their families into their ranks to take back their children. During the interviews, it emerged that they are even

using women within the territory controlled by *Al-Shabaab*, to pass confidential deradicalisation messages to their sons who are serving with the Al-Shabaab militants.

In conclusion, the study makes several recommendations. First, it recognises the crucial role of women as care givers, educators and mothers, and this can be leveraged in the fight against radicalization. This study, therefore, recommends that government empowers women through training and formation of civilian community early warning systems to generate vital information to assist in counter-radicalization. Second, it notes that the radical transformation in terror activities calls for radical counter-terror strategies. Terrorists are increasingly investing in online recruitment of vulnerable youths, and to disseminate bomb-making techniques for lone wolf terrorists. This calls for innovative policy frameworks and counter-terrorism approaches that take into account the evolving nature of the online strategies used by extremists. The study also recommends more research on the online platforms as sites for (de)radicalisation.

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Oral Interviews

Oral interview Hadija Abdi, a cashier in Isiolo County Government

Oral interview with Abdi Guyo, a member of Isiolo Interfaith Council

Oral interview with Abdia, Isiolo Peace Link

Oral interview with Abdia, Isiolo Peace Link.

Oral interview with Abdiaziz Osman, Isiolo Town

Oral interview with Ahmed Zainabu Twaha, Modagash Isiolo Town

Oral interview with Amina Rashid, Seremala Slum Women Empowerment Association, Isiolo Town

Oral interview with Amiwa Abdi, Nyumba Kumi elder at Kiwanjani area, Isiolo Town

Oral interview with Amiwa Abdi, *nyumba kumi* elder Kiwanjani Isiolo Town

Oral interview with Asad Mohamed, Aspirant Wabera ward, Isiolo Town

Oral interview with Asad Mohamed, Aspirant Wabera ward, Isiolo Town

Oral Interview with Bishop Kalunyu, NCKK Isiolo County, June 2021

Oral interview with Bishop Kalunyu, Secretary Isiolo County Interfaith Council, June 2021

Oral interview with Bishop Kalunyu, Secretary Isiolo Interfaith Council

Oral interview with Bishop Kalunyu, secretary Isiolo Interfaith Council

Oral Interview with Bishop Kalunyu, Secretary Isiolo Interfaith Council

Oral interview with Bouwaya G, Health Officer, Isiolo General Hospital

Oral interview with Chief Kiwanjani Location, outskirts of Isiolo Town

Oral interview with constable Ombati, Isiolo County

Oral interview with Constable Ombati, OCS Cheraf suburb Isiolo Town

Oral interview with David Okello, Isiolo County

Oral interview with Fatuma Nur, Cheraf Slums, Isiolo County, June 2021

Oral interview with Fatuma Nur, Cheraf Slums, Isiolo County, June 2021

Oral interview with Gikunda, deputy principal Isiolo Boys Secondary School

Oral interview with Grace, Gender Watch, Isiolo County, June 2021

Oral interview with Grace, Isiolo Gender Watch (IGW)

Oral interview with Grace, Isiolo Gender Watch (IGW)

Oral interview with Halima Salim, chairlady Isiolo Mothers for Peace

Oral interview with Hiday Abdi, Isiolo County

Oral interview with Martin Githii, a retired primary teacher, Isiolo Town

Oral interview with Mohamed Ali, businessman Isiolo County

Oral interview with Mohamed Ali, Isiolo County, June 2021

Oral interview with Mr. Gikunda, Deputy Principal Isiolo Boys Secondary School

Oral interview with Muriithi Dennis, businessman Wabera Location, Isiolo County

Oral interview with Musa Aideen, a doctor (psychologist), Isiolo General Hospital

Oral interview with Musa Rashid, Youth Leader Bula Pesa, June 2021

Oral interview with N.W.M, public servant Kambi ya Juu, Isiolo County

Oral interview with Okello David, businessman Isiolo Town

Oral interview with Rukia Haji, Accountant Isiolo County Government

Oral interview with Rukia Haji, Kewayan Isiolo Town

Oral interview with security officer, Isiolo County

Oral interview with Sheikh Abdul Rahim Musa, Isiolo county, June 2021

Oral interview with Sheikh Ahmed, founder Star of Hope, Isiolo County

Oral Interview with Sheikh Akhmed, Star of Hope Organization Isiolo County

Oral interview with Sheikh Akhmed, Star of Hope Organization, Isiolo County

Oral interview with Sofa, Isiolo Town

Oral interview with the chief Kiwanjani Location, Isiolo Town

Oral interview with Yumme Waqou, civil servant, Isiolo County

Oral interview with, Grace Gender Watch field officer, Isiolo County, June 2021

Oral interview with, Hehema Abdullah, Isiolo County, June 2021

Oral interview with, Rehema Abdullah, Isiolo County, June 2021

Oral interview, Adan Galgalo, National Cohesion and Integration Officer, Isiolo Town, May 2021

Oral interview, Adan Galgalo, National Cohesion and Integration officer, Isiolo Town, May 2021

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Oral interview, Adan Wario, retired high school teacher, Isiolo Town, May 2021

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Oral interview, Sheikh Akhmed Star of Hope Organization, Isiolo Town

Oral interviews with Abdia, Isiolo Peace Link, June 2021

Oral interviews with Abdiaziz Osman, Community Service worker, Checheles Village, Isiolo
Town

Oral interviews with Constable Ombati, Cheraf suburb Isiolo Town

Oral interviews with Ephintus Njagi, Businessman Wabera Isiolo

Oral interviews with Mohammed Boru, Teacher St. Kizito, Checheles Village, Isiolo.