



**THE UNDERLYING DYNAMICS OF AL-SHABAAB's
RECRUITMENT OF MUSLIM YOUTH: A Case of
Mombasa County in Kenya**

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to my parents Binti Suleiman, Hassan Mohamed, my uncle Hanjari and my siblings Zena, Mariam, Mohamed, Saeed and Najma for all their support and inspiration.

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List of Acronyms

ACT!	Act Change Transform Kenya
AMISOM	African Union Mission to Somalia
ATPU	Anti-Terror Police Unit
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CVEN	Counter-Violent Extremism Network
CVEP	Counter Violent Extremism Program/Projects
DFIF	Department for International Development
GoK	Government of Kenya
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IED	Improvised Explosive Devices
IPK	Islamic Party of Kenya
ISSA	Institute of Strategic Security-South Africa
KDF	Kenya defence forces
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KNCHR	Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
MAYE	Manyatta Youth Entertainment
MEWA	Muslim Education Welfare Association
MRC	Mombasa Republican Council
MUHURI	Muslim for Human Rights
NAMLEF	National Muslim Leaders Forum
NCTC	National Counter Terrorism Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NSAC	National Security Advisory Committee of Kenya
NUKEM	National Union of Kenya Muslims
NYPD	New York Police Department
SID	Society for International Development (SID)
SUPKEM	Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America

Abstract

Most Kenyan Muslim youth serving in militant Al-Shabaab have been constructed as a threat to national security and stability in the security policing. As a result forceful government actions to counter radicalization and recruitment has been met with a reaction of violence in response. Little research has been done to try and understand why these youth make the choices they make. Within Mombasa Muslim youth have continued to live in deteriorating structural conditions that have left them disenfranchised and at the periphery of the society. In turn rather than acting docile, youth have resorted to exploit their networks and connections for inclusion in Al-Shabaab. This reaction in most cases has been violence in response to state violence thus making radicalization a cycle. Using the life story technique and participant observation to unpack the youth's experiences, this paper integrates social exclusion and social capital theories to analyse the structural challenges the youth face.

Relevance to Development Studies

This study brings to the fore front the impact of structural issues in radicalizing Youth. The study shows that radicalization in Kenya is a cycle that has been maintained by the international discourse of war on terror, a tense regional atmosphere and local debilitating conditions. Given the interest of so many actors to further conflict within Kenya, it is understandable that many youth join such movements like Al-Shabaab to counter exclusion. Research institutes in Kenya will benefit from it considering the existing dearth in knowledge about recruitment of Muslim Youth by Al-Shabaab.

Keywords

Radicalization, radicalized, recruitment, social exclusion, social capital

Chapter 1 Introduction

My research is about analysing the underlying dynamics of radicalization and recruitment of Muslim Youth into Al-Shabaab in Kenya and particularly Mombasa County. I will uncover this using my main research question which is what are the underlying social exclusionary processes challenging Muslim youth in the Mombasa context that could expose them to radicalization and recruitment into Al-Shabaab? In order to answer my research question, I unpacked my main question into two sub-questions: Under what social conditions has Muslim youth radicalization and recruitment into Al-Shabaab been maintained? And how do social networks influence youth radicalization and recruitment into Al-Shabaab? These sub-questions focussed on analysing: the social conditions the youth live in and their social capital and how they use it to gain inclusion into Al-Shabaab. I adopted the life story technique since my research focussed on the reflections of the youth about their life and also other methods such as working with texts and participant observation came in handy during my fieldwork.

In order to obtain a comprehensive and intense understanding of the subject I used the Social exclusion and Social capital theories to analyse my findings.

1.1 Research Problem

Radicalization and recruitment into terror groups is a global problem that governments and civil societies across the world are battling to understand. The emergence of Al-Shabaab has particularly posed a great threat to Kenya because of its widespread activities of radicalizing and recruiting of Muslim youth across the country. Al-Shabaab is alleged to have capitalized on perceived and or real experiences of marginalization to recruit its members (Gatimu 2014:7). The existing social, economic and political conditions have not been equally favourable coupled with the ongoing war in Somalia and its proximity to the Coast this issue has elicited concerns from the Government of Kenya (GoK) and the Society as a whole. Whereas the former has actively been engaged in deradicalizing the recruits/returnees the former has undertaken counter measures to draw the youth closer to their communities. Despite these efforts, more youth from Mombasa are still joining Al-Shabaab. While keeping in mind these two interrelated processes of radicalization and de-radicalization both taking place concurrently, this research intends to analyse and understand the social conditions in the area that perpetuate youth recruitment and radicalization into Al-Shabaab.

1.3 Study context

This study focusses on Mombasa County which is located at Coast Province of Kenya and it constitutes of Kisauni, Mvita, Likoni, Changanwe and Nyali constituencies. The study selected Mombasa County because it has witnessed a majority of the cases of youth joining Al-Shabaab (Oywa 2011).

Accordingly, some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) and the GoK have been actively implementing Counter Violent extremism (CVEP) projects, De-radicalization and Counter-radicalization respectively. Some of these NGO's are Muslim for Human Rights (MUHURI), HAKI Africa and Act Change Transform Kenya (ACT!) and Manyatta Youth Entertainment (MAYE).

The NGO's and GoK assume different approaches in dealing with this subject. Whereas the NGO's uses dialogues to engage the youth and communities in their programs which are more preventive oriented, the GoK has adopted a forceful approach to this subject and as a result these stakeholders have been in constant disagreement. This tension has left the youth in a dilemma. However, despite having conducted key-informant interviews with these stakeholders, my analysis will only focus on the youth's experiences due to the word limit of my paper.

1.2 Relevance and Justification

My research approached the subject of youth radicalization in Mombasa by drawing from the youth's experience. Besides the government and various stakeholders' intervention the problem of youth radicalization and recruitment still persists. My motivations for pursuing this research is first, terror attacks have become a frequent occurrence in Kenya and while research on radicalization and recruitment has been carried out by the Institute of Strategic Security (ISS) in South Africa and other authors, most of it has been inclined towards influencing policies or even developing programs for NGO's. However, my research will contribute more knowledge on this subject for academic purposes and has not been influenced in any manner by donor expectations.

Second, radicalization and recruitment in Mombasa is an issue that elicited a lot of concern. Given the recent return of more than 700 youths who served in Al-Shabaab and an unknown figures about those still in Somalia or working with Al-Shabaab (Mohammed 2015), there have been increasing concerns about this subject. Hence, this research will contribute to the existing literature on youth and radicalization in Kenya. Consequently, this research will enhance my personal knowledge and understanding of this subject and contribute to the ongoing debate in Kenya.

This study was conducted in Mombasa County which is largely a Muslim community. As a resident of the County am informed of the community's social practices hence, it was an added advantage on my part as a researcher.

1.3 Research Objectives

The research seeks to expand the body of knowledge on the subject of youth radicalization in Kenya. Given that this research will be conducted by a youth who has experience in working with youth in Mombasa and is aware of the challenges they suffer, I will delve into this subject by using social theory to analyse primary data. This research will rely on material generated through

direct life story sessions with the Muslim youth of Mombasa, thus, I believe that it will add to the ‘rare’ sociological knowledge about Kenyan youth and their recruitment to Al-Shabaab. This addition will be useful to researchers in Universities and research centres and also to other organisations including the media and local radios who are actively engaging Kenyan youth in this field.

1.4 Research Questions

What are the underlying social exclusionary processes challenging Muslim youth in the Mombasa context that could expose them to radicalization and recruitment into Al-Shabaab?

1.4.1 Sub-questions

Under what social conditions has Muslim youth radicalization and recruitment into Al-Shabaab been maintained?

How do social networks influence youth radicalization and recruitment into Al-Shabaab?

1.5 Conceptualizing Radicalization

Radicalization in Kenya has been used by policy makers to mainstream policies and also by the state security forces to institutionalize security practices with a claim of fostering national security. For instance the formation of the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) in 2004 as one of the main organs of the National Security Advisory Committee of Kenya (NSAC), adoption of the Security amendment act of 2014 and most recently the adoption of the controversial 2015 security bill (Daily Nation 2015). These measures have reinforced the narrative of radicalization and served as a mechanism to justify discriminative actions. Consequently, radicalization has also been associated with extremism, violence and terrorism hence, limiting its understanding within terrorism. As the New York Police Department ((NYPD) 2007) report (as cited in Kundnani 2012:18) defines radicalization as a 4 step process that involves

‘pre-radicalization’ which occurs before an individual is exposed to ‘jihadi-Salafi Islam’; ‘self-identification’ occurs when the individual begins to explore ‘Salafi Islam’ as a result of an identity crisis in this period they begin to identify with concurring peers and as a result get ‘indoctrinated’ which is the gradual increased embracement of extremist beliefs through group socialization that leads to absolute acceptance the ideology and finally they become ‘*jihadised*’ where they are willing to per take in the jihad narrative.

This conception confines the understanding of radicalization to Islam thus seconding the narrative of Islamic terrorism. This results into stereotyping and categorization of Muslims and Islam as terrorists. Additionally, it ignores the possibility of religious fanaticism within other religions. It’s also problematic

because it bypasses other aspects involved and only accounts for behavioural and attitude changes. Consequently, this claim can also be interpreted as Eurocentric because it mirrors the discourse of war on terror hence, this definition is informed by political interests of the United States of America (USA) (Schmid 2013:19). Thus reflecting power hierarchies in this discourse with the USA as the major actor and Kenya a close ally in Africa. Thus places Muslims and the Muslim world on the extreme end.

Another definition of radicalization that has been widely used was coined by Alexander. He defines radicalization as the process of accepting an extremist belief system that comprises the disposition to use/tolerate/enable the use of violence to achieve an objective that could be political, social or religious (Alexander 2010:42). This definition limits the understanding of radicalization to the use of violence and in this processes it ignores the non-violent form of radicalization (Bartlett and Miller 2012:3). It is also problematic as it tends to have a blurred distinction between radicalization and violent extremism.

Based on these shortcomings, I will adopt the definition of radicalization by Schmid (2011:678-679) who views it as the process of

political polarization where individuals or groups compromise the interests of political actors and divergent groups and proceeds to use confrontational means besides dialogue which could include: use of (non-violence) pressure and coercion, other forms of political violence, or act of violent extremism in form of terrorism and war crimes this process brings about rebel, ideological socialization, political mobilization and extremist positions outside political status quo.

This definition best suits my study given the dynamics of radicalization in Kenya which has been weaved in political, religious differences, social and economic development of the Muslim communities. It also captures the actors involved in the radicalization process that is both state and non-state and views radicalization as a gradual progressive process that occurs at different levels while keeping into account the aspect of religious ideology and identity in mobilizing. This will help unpack the interplay and uniqueness of radicalization in Kenya while bearing in mind that the concept is heavy and political because it has mostly been used by western governments and policy-makers to understand terrorism (Kundnani 2012:4). Due to these shortcomings, radicalization can be negatively perceived by the reader.

Important to note is that radicalization can only be understood comprehensively within a local contextual frame which will be reviewed in detail in Chapter three. Consequently, since de-radicalization is also a subject being used constantly in the Kenyan media and debates, I will briefly explain how this concept has been adopted by the Kenyan government.

De radicalization is a process that involves deserting extremist beliefs and accepting that violence should not be used to effect change (United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force 2008:5). This is the understanding that the GoK also uses and most especially because they believe that the recruits have undergone military training which could endanger security and

stability. As a result it is the only institution within the architect of the Nation-State of Kenya that has the capacity and mandate to demilitarize.

1.6 Methodology

The purpose of this research was to understand and reflect on the experiences of former Al-Shabaab recruits. Coming from a region where youth; neighbours, peers and schoolmates have gone missing, it has been a personal interest for me to understand the conditions under which they become who they are. Undertaking this research was very important on my part as a colleague of the Counter-Violent Extremism (CVEN) network Mombasa, I was already aware of the dominant constructions on radicalization and recruitment of youth. This opportunity helped me to hear the youth's stories from themselves as opposed to working with the dominant discourse.

1.6.1 Methods of data collection

I approached my study from a qualitative perspective by employing life history/narrative research which Suarez-Ortega (2013:191) describes as 'the process of reflecting on and reconstructing experience narrated by a person'. It was effective when conducting in-depth research in order to understand people's experiences, views and the value they place on them. Concurrently, Cole and Knowles (2001:11) argue that

... life history inquiry is about gaining insight into broader human condition by coming to know and understand the experiences of other humans. ... It is about understanding the relationship, the complex interaction, between life and context, self and place.

The life history was important for delving into the situation of the specific youth and relate it with the broader context of where they come from. Hursel 1992 asserts that the life history approach enables the researcher to reach vital information and social experiences from their participants (as cited in Suarez-Ortega 2013:191). Since most of the research on this topic mainly focuses on policy recommendation and evaluator research with this method I obtained first-hand detailed information through oral narrations from the youth. Based on this, I specifically employed the life story technique which was aided by an interview guide to focus on the specific issues of interest. The life story method is a form of in-depth narrative used to collect 'information on the subjective essence of one's life' with an aim of understanding the 'various roles played by an individual in the society' (Atkinson 1998:5).

I used the life story technique based on the reflections of the youth's earlier phases and when they were part of Al-Shabaab. 'It honours the voice of the socially excluded' to reflect on their knowledge and give meanings to their experiences in relation to issues affecting them (Suarez-Ortega 2013:190, Atkinson 1998:7). As for the researcher it gave me an opportunity to learn from my participants rather than depending on the discourses and

representations which have been developed by others. It was also an appropriate method for my research subject as it gave my participants the freedom to express those experiences that they felt were most important and comfortable to share.

Bertaux 1981 and Linde 1993 suggest that life stories are used in 'sociology to understand and define relationships and group interactions and memberships' (as cited in Atkinson 1998:9). When using this method I focused on two phases of the youth's life, the period before joining and the time they were part of Al-Shabaab. When I focused on the earlier period of their lives my interest was to know the environment in which the participants were born and brought up, their social class, social networks and finally, their economic, professional and educational background. The second phase of my research analysed the experiences the youth went through that made them decide to join Al-Shabaab. I was interested in knowing their social networks and strength of these networks and how the youths used them. I was also interested in knowing how their joining shaped relationship with their families and in what ways. Finally, I looked at how their living conditions changed upon being part of Al-Shabaab and what motivations, if any, they received when they were part of the group. This technique enabled me to capture experiences, relations and my participant's interaction with their families and the wider society. In addition, I also took field notes when collecting data so that I could note my observations, my biases and it helped me reflect on them during the entire process.

My target population for this study were Muslim youth aged 14 to 27. I was able to conduct 11 life story sessions with them. I selected this age bracket because: it's the schooling age according to the 8-4-4 education system of Kenya. It's also the age where children undergo social development phases. The 8-4-4 Education system is 'designed to provide eight years of primary education, four years of secondary education and four years of University', (Chalkboard Kenya Ltd 2012). In Kenya children start attending school at 6 years, hence, during the 14-27years they undergo three phases of transition in terms of education and also social development that is childhood, adolescence and young adulthood. They graduate from primary at 14years and transit to secondary school for 4 years. At approximately 18years they graduate from secondary/high school to join colleges for 4 years and attain skills for the labour market. Transition to each successive phase depends on performance and economic status of the family. If individuals do not meet the minimum grade required then their chances of transition to the next level become limited and can opt for Technical and Vocational Training institutions and craft centres if they can afford.

Poverty may also hinder transition, given that the counties incidences of poverty are as high as 34.8% more youth are forced to start job hunting quiet early (Wiesmann et al. 2014). There are also insufficient educational facilities in Mombasa which could also hinder transition. Moreover, during the social development phases they also experience physical and psychological changes. At this stage youth are also more exposed to secondary agents of socialization as they are in the process of internalizing new ideas and also broadening their social capital.

Consequently, during these transitions the family and society have their own expectations from the youth and in this process the youth run the possibility of being exposed to negative social capital. Additionally, in terms of religion, this research focussed on Muslim youth because Al-Shabaab has solely publicized itself as an Islamic group and employed Islamic ideologies in their propaganda and recruitment.

1.6.2 Other sources of data and analysis

I also participated in a radio program on 6th August 2015 aired by Radio Rahma. It was an interactive session facilitated by Jonathan Mwanzia (Program Host) whereas I and Lucas Fondo from Centre for Law and Research International Clarion were invited as participants. Callers participating in this program also shared on the duplex role played by women in radicalization and how parenting shapes decision making in a communal lifestyle environment. These themes gave me new insights to restructure my interview guide. I organized my guide into themes instead of questions and included the two new themes. As O'Leary (2010:195) asserts 'a flexible structure enables a researcher to shift in order to follow the natural flow of conversation and be able to pursue interesting tangents and unexpected data that emerges'. These changes and constant interaction with the youth enabled me to identify recurring themes during my fieldwork which helped develop more questions for my subsequent interviews.

1.7 Reflexivity and ethical dilemmas

Before embarking to the field I had an assumption that religion was the main radicalization factor. This was shaped by my review of media articles, government statements and journals on the subject of Islam and radicalization in Kenya. I dealt with this assumption by challenging it with various questions during the life stories.

This fieldwork was conducted between July and August of 2015 during which radicalization was a hot subject in the country. This is the same time that President Barrack Obama of the USA was visiting Kenya and security had been reinforced whereas, there were many administrative activities taking place in the NGO's and Civil Society Organizations (CSO's). Consequently, the opposing approaches by the CSO's and GoK engaging in CVEP has also incapacitated NGO's like MUHURI and HAKI by listing them amongst institutions under the "***List of terrorist Organizations***" under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (Republic of Kenya Gazette Notice 2326 2012) and later their deregistration (Human Rights Watch (HRW) 2015:13-14).

This has been accompanied by increased surveillance on the two organization and their staff and this affected my research because it delayed my access to the youth. I was able to overcome this challenge when I was

introduced to Mohamed Khamis the ACT! CVE coordinator who proposed that I could meet the youth involved through Manyatta Youth Entertainment (MAYE) which is a Community Based Organization (CBO) also implementing CVEP. Another challenge I encountered was time management. Sometimes I had to conduct my interviews in the evenings as this was the only time my participants were available because they mostly manoeuvred for jobs during the day. Therefore, I developed a flexible working schedule to accommodate these activities. Apart from that I also had to deal with high financial expectations from my participants who expected to receive incentives in return. In my case I made it clear and only offered transport as some of these interviews were conducted in informal settings and also away from the participant's home area.

My positionality as a female Muslim youth with a higher educational background and more so currently pursuing my studies in Europe I constantly reflected on the power differences in relation to the Male Muslim youth I was interviewing. This is because of the participant's prevalent assumptions of any Muslim woman and especially in this case exposed to western education. I was also aware I was embarking on a sensitive issue and more so reminding people of past experiences so I tried to reflect on these biases more often so that they would not translate into the dominant political narratives on radicalization. As such I listened more on their experiences and only probed in order to get more information from them as several participants remarked '*you are a Muslim you know these things*', I probed them in a friendly way to explain further. This often lightened the atmosphere and my participants became relaxed to share their thoughts. This indicated that participants will always assume and expect you as the researcher to know certain things of which risks credibility and objectivity of the responses they give. I overcame this by asking a follow-up questions, rephrasing the subject and summarizing when concluding our life story session.

Anonymity and confidentiality were assured before conducting the interviews. As a result, my participants were keen to conceal their identities for their safety, as a results this paper has adopted pseudo names to represent the youth. Additionally, in order not to expose myself and the youth to any harm or victimization, I only relied on field notes during the life story sessions for my own reference.

1.8 Structure of the paper

This paper is organized into five chapters. The first introductory chapter identified the research problem, introduced the research questions and the sub-questions, conceptualized the main term of this paper (radicalization), elaborated on the methodological underpinnings that were adopted for this research and the ethical dilemmas encountered in the field. The second chapter introduces to the readers the theoretical and analytical frameworks for this research. The third chapter reviews the literature from different authors and contextualizes the Al-Shabaab phenomenon in Kenya and situates Muslim youth in Kenya. The fourth chapter analyses the radicalization and recruitment of Muslim youth into Al-Shabaab using social exclusion and social capital

theories. Finally, the fifth chapter identifies the dilemmas and tensions in the conclusion and suggests possible room for future research.

Chapter 2 Theoretical and Analytical framework

2.1 Introduction

This section focuses on the selected theories for this study. It outlines social exclusion and social capital respectively by tracing its origins and delineating them appropriately. In the last section I introduce how I intend to use these two as my analytical framework for this study. I was able to integrate the two from reviewing several articles and also based on the findings of my research. Hence, I will clearly outline how I intend to use the theory of social exclusion as a lens through which the social conditions of the youth will be analysed. Consequently, I will also discuss how social capital will be employed to unpack social relations and social networks maintained by the youth.

2.2 Social Exclusion

Social exclusion is thought to have first originated in France before it was widely applied in the European Union context and outside. It has been cited in discussions relating to poverty, inequality, discrimination and deprived groups all which are thought to emanate from socioeconomic changes (Kabeer 2000:83, Ziyauddin and Kasi 2009:1). It has also been applied in application 'social policy analysis in developing countries' (Kabeer 2000:83). Since then, social exclusion and inclusion have been incorporated in many debates and policy discourses in the global south. Kenya has also used the language of inclusion in the Kenya Vision 2030 manual for the development process. It outlines the electoral and political processes, the health sector, education and training and in the economic sector as the areas where inclusion should be fostered (Government of the Republic of Kenya 2007:1-24).

Taking this into account, I have three reasons for selecting social exclusion. Firstly, both terms have been widely embedded in the development language of Kenya and precisely this phenomenon of radicalization. This language of inclusion of marginalized communities and groups through social policies and development initiatives have been proposed as a way to deal with extremism and radicalization. I also chose to use it as it will enable me to focus on the categories of people, problems they encounter and the processes involved concurrently. Lastly, I prefer social exclusion because it well articulates with my second framework of social capital and together they will enable me to unpack relations through social networks and see how disadvantages are produced through the active dynamics of social interaction.

Social exclusion is the process where some segments of society are discriminated on basis of their 'age, caste, descent, disability, ethnic background, health status, migrant status, religion, sexual orientation, social status or where they live' Department for International Development (DFID 2005:3). Accordingly, social exclusion can involve partial or full exclusion 'from any or all systems which influence the socio-economic integration of

people into their society' (Commins 2004:68). This can be engulfed in the lack of access to resources and also the inability to exploit resources. It has been differentiated into: 'the economic/material' where people are 'denied access to paid or full-time employment' in the formal/informal sector, the 'isolation from relationships produced by social and spatial segregation' which hinder participation and representation and 'exclusionary policies and practices of the criminal justice system' which can impact on the security and justice of excluded groups/persons (Peace 2001:26-28). Additionally, Commins (2004:69-72) suggests including the cultural and political elements to the above categories. In that, at times cultural minority groups are disadvantage during decision making.

Kabeer (2000:84) proposes unpacking these exclusion problems by employing 'Nancy Fraser's analysis of the different forms of injustices' in order to understand the disadvantages challenging persons and groups. Szalai (2002:35) supports this by adding that it entails looking at social exclusion as a relational concept where disadvantages are born out of power hierarchies thus benefitting some actors at the expense of others. This results in producing and reproducing a 'basis for differentiation between categories of I/we and you/they' (Ziyauddin and Kasi 2009:9).

In this sense, exclusion cannot be understood without looking at inclusion. Most especially in the case of this research where there is a push and pull between the GoK and Al-Shabaab when it comes to Muslim youth. Hence, the youth are caught in between a sense of alienation or belonging and self-identification when comparing oneself to others. And in this process of defining oneself, the more specific and precise the identity is the more exclusive it becomes (Ziyauddin and Kasi 2009:9) in determining whom to associate and relate to. When approaching the society as the unit of analysis, exclusion becomes more profound and explicit when the in-group identities are more precise and closed hence, alienating those who don't belong. As a result, those in a deprived state could be left with limited options on how to improve their conditions and escape from poverty. Therefore, in order to understand these disadvantages, they need to be unpacked by looking into social interaction. Since, exclusion could be real and or symbolic.

This means understanding power relations in the society by looking at how different actors/groups interact and how power is distributed what it means to be included, what it takes for one to be included and who includes who and when?. And to understand this it means looking at the aspects that are considered before one is included/excluded in an in-group. Notwithstanding, both two processes are reinforced over time by people through social behaviour and institutions which normalizes these practices. As Kabeer (2000:94) argues certain forms of exclusion are not just manifested as new practices rather they are and can be rooted in the society's inherited patterns of discrimination. For instance state institutions tend to exclude groups when they consciously or unintentionally develop policies and laws that fail to address their needs, whereas in terms of behaviour it develops as social attitudes (DFID 2005:3). Social attitudes can thus encompass labelling, othering and or stereotyping framing and categorization of specific entities as an out-group.

Accordingly, DFID (2005:5) asserts that social exclusion ‘denies people the same rights and opportunities enjoyed by others in the society’. Commins (2004:69-72) elaborates this by outlining that these rights and opportunities could be manifested in the cultural, economic, geographical and political spheres. All of which have the ability to push groups to the margins of the society. Social exclusion therefore offers a broad approach of looking into these disadvantages, including poverty which has mostly been assumed to involve the lack of material assets.

2.3 Social Capital

The term social capital is believed to have been first cited between the 1950’s and 1970’s. Since then it has made contribution to a lot of literature in economics, education, and politics and most recently it has also been widely used in the discourse of development. This term has also influenced the emergence of other closely related terms such as human capital, economic capital, cultural capital, political capital and institutional capital.

Social capital has been defined in various closely related ways overtime. Accordingly, Esser (2008:22) attributes these distinctions to be as a consequence of ‘two theoretical perspectives of social embeddedness and the control of resources over social relationships’. The first theoretical underpinning equates some forms of capital to ‘private goods’ and these include economic, human and cultural whereas other forms of capital like institutional and political are more like ‘collective goods’ because their usage and production lies in the group and not individuals like the former (Esser 2008:23). The second theoretical perspective that Esser identifies is more inclined on the ‘uses of capital’ and it categorises them into ‘generalizable’ e.g. monetary wealth that is mutually interchangeable and ‘specific’ is when the value of capital is only worth in a precise social context.

In this sense, social capital constitutes the *network* and or of *relations* which are viewed as resources possessed by individuals at a given time and these relations are formed around shared *values* and *norms* embedded in the *social structure* and they aid in coordinating activities in order to attain the desired outcome (Putnam et al. 1994:169, Field 2003:1, Narayan 1999:6, Esser 2008:23). From this definition two peculiar aspects are noticeable, first is the fact that social capital looks into an individual as an actor in a particular context and the network of relations at his disposal. Second, Esser (2008:24) argues that this outlook also factors in the ‘performance of the entire network in its structure for all actors included’. Based on this analysis social capital could contribute towards collective action by enhancing flow of information to actors, use past initiatives achieved through collaboration as a motivation for future alliances (Putnam 1993a:173). Which brings us to the assumptions that Putnam (2000) identified to be relevant qualities of social capital: *bonding* where social networks act as reinforcing mechanisms to foster in-group identities thus ensuring that the group only has members with shared norms and values and

bridging applies where networks act as mechanism to bring together people from different backgrounds (as cited Unlu et al. 2014:231).

2.4 Analytical Framework

I intend to use the theory of social exclusion to analyse my data into the types of disadvantages that challenge/d the Muslim youth, and how these have reinforced existing conditions. As Kabeer (2000:84) claims ‘different forms of disadvantages give rise to different kinds of disadvantaged groups’. Consequently in order to understand these disadvantages I will use this concept to look into the institutional rules as this will enable me to understand the various mechanisms of how resources are allocated in such a way that certain groups end up benefitting while others do not. This takes me further to look into group dynamics which together with social capital will allow me to analyse spatial exclusion in Mombasa and also look at the social actors (in my case Muslim youth) their interaction and networks and how these can be the basis for the different patterns of exclusion/inclusion. Finally, this concept will help me to understand the social practises (for example attitudes, behaviours, frames and stereotypes) through which collective behaviour can generate inclusion or exclusion.

Looking at Kenyan context which is embedded in a communal lifestyle which is reinforced by a web of patron-client relations established along ethnic and class lines (KNBS and SID 2013:10-18). In such a society resource allocation and opportunities is mostly done on the basis of these relations which have at times included/enabled certain groups at the expense of marginalizing/excluding others thus proving to be a powerful resource in individual and social interactions. Whereas such relations and social networks can be beneficial on one hand, they can also have negative implications on the other. As Castiglione (2008:15) remarked ‘...it is sometimes difficult to imagine anything that is not affected by the way in which we either relate or depend on others’. Rosenfeld et al. (2001:294) also acknowledge the influence that social capital can have on individual’s decisions, actions, behaviours and views. Which in a bid to gain acceptance in an in-group and improve one’s self-esteem, networks and relations can reduce the possibility of engaging in violence among the youth. Consequently, Coleman (1994:304) also argues that these networks can equally exert negative influence and create harm. This is especially because they are mutually beneficial in the strengthening the bond between and among individuals and also institutions like the family, kinship or society through conforming to the shared norms and values thus fostering social order (Field 2003:7 ,21).

Social capital is a relational concept and it helped in understanding social relations and the role they play. This concept was used to evaluate the social networks that these youth have, how they engage with these relations, what they expect from such relations or what they gain from these relations, what role they per take in these social relations and whether these relations have an impact on the decisions they make and if so how.

Chapter 3 Situating the Al-Shabaab phenomena in Kenya

3.1 The historical account

Radicalization in Kenya can be traced to the 1970's with the return of young Muslim elites who had attended their Islamic education in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan (Thordsen 2009: 53, International Crisis Group 2012:5, Lind et al. 2015:19). Accordingly, Chande (2000:351) stresses that these young elites were acquainted with *Wahhabism*¹ during their studies and as such they embarked on a mission to disseminate similar ideas through madrassas. Contrary to the Islam practiced in Kenya, which (Moller 2006:3) defines as more syncretic (a mix of sunni, sufism and traditional religions). Some of them went Somalia to join the Islamic Courts Union (Lind et al. 2015:19) and mostly recently controversial preachers like Aboud Rogo and Makaburi who have used sermons to reach out to more youth to join the '*jihad*' in Somalia². As a result religious extremism has become with a distinctive feature of insecurity in Kenya.

Throughout the 1990's Wahhabism in Kenya evolved concurrently with the growth of Saudi Arabia United Arab Emirates, Libyan, Oman, Iraq, Kuwait and Iranian funded charities in the Muslim communities between the 1970's and 1980's (Oded 2000:113-114, Haynes 2005:1322, Lind et al. 2015:19). Due to the Saudi Arabia money from the oil boom, invested in scholarships for Kenyans to pursue Islamic studies in Saudi Arabia and other initiatives to financially support excluded Muslim communities at the Kenyan coast and North Eastern districts. Additionally, the formation of the Muslim World League in 1992 which was opposed to secular nationalism and communism (Haynes 2005:1329, Ousman 2004:68, Lind et al. 2015:19) also spearheaded the growth of Wahhabism which encouraged further the narrative of '*jihad*'.

Muslim communities of Kenya can be understood in three phases the precolonial, colonial and the post-independence period. As early as the 2nd century A.D Arab traders had started sailing to the East African Coast however, Islam was well established by the 15th century and this saw the growth of Muslim cities like Kilwa, Lamu, Malindi, Mombasa and Pate (Oded 2000:1-2). He also says that these cities were developed economically through slave trade but '*...Portuguese occupation put an end to the prosperity and caused destruction and misery all along the Coast as a result of frequent conflicts between the Christian Portuguese and the Muslim populations*' (Oded

¹ Farquhar (2015:705) defines '*Wahhabism as a tradition closely similar to salaf-al-salih that emphasizes on the purity and praxis of the beliefs, a distinctive understanding of tawhid, an emphasis on purging illegitimate innovations and a more strict approach to jurisprudence and interpretation of Jihad*'.

² This information is based on personal knowledge and experience because I stay in this particular region and have listened to the recorded versions of the sermons which are inarguably inciting and stereotyping towards Non-Muslims.

2000:2). These created tension between Muslim and non-Muslim communities at Coast which will also be observed in the progressive phases. Further development of the Kenyan Coast occurred in the 17th and 18th century when the Omani Sultan Sayid Sa'id moved his protectorate to Zanzibar from Muscat (Oded 2000:2).

Islam in Kenya is divided into Sunni-Shafi, Shi'a (Ithnasharia, Ismailia and Bohra), Ahmadiya and Sufism with a majority practising Sunni-Shafi (Oded 2000:15-19). Development at the Coast began to decline when the 'Coastal strip was annexed to the protectorate of Kenya by the British colonial authorities' (Oded 2000:4-5). The British claimed political control and in the process disrupted the social organization in the region. Several efforts of secession were made and are still being but to no avail. Such mobilization has elicited suspicion among the successive Christian leadership whose consequences persist to date. At the beginning of the British rule the Muslim elites largely enjoyed favours when Mombasa was still the administrative capital, however, this changed when it was moved to Nairobi (Thordsen 2009:28, Oded 2000:4).

This affected the Muslim population working within the British administration as the British favoured their up-country elites trained in secular education and well acquainted with the English language over them who only had Islamic education from *madrassa's* (Thordsen 2009:29). Their grievances were worsened by the missionary schools which only admitted them on condition of conversion (Thordsen 2009:29-30). Hence, Muslims had little command of clerical and civil service skills offered in these schools Malik Chaka (as cited in Dickson 2005:4). Thus, education could be viewed as one of the areas in which the Muslim community suffered exclusion which hindered them from getting formal employment thus affecting their livelihoods.

Similarly Kenya's first and second led regimes implemented policies that continued to favour the secular educated Christians over Muslims (Kresse 2009:S77). This partly accounts for the 1997 Likoni clashes that were directed against the upcountry communities by the native Digo ethnic group. Muslims from the Coast and North Eastern have constantly demonstrated and contested against these policies but were not tolerated by the regimes and as a result the government developed feelings of distrust towards them (Oded 2000:5). Leaving the Muslim population with minimal political power and less control over their own area. Further the 1st regime reinforced these exclusionary processes and divided Kenyans along religion and descent lines Kresse (2009:S77). These categorizations could have had adverse effects on the Coastal populations which adopted settlement on the basis of religion and ethnicity. These social divisions have led to the political tension which some scholars such as (Oded 2000:7) have identified as radical Islam or Islamic extremism. However, Nzodvu (2012:27) argues that naming such political mobilization as 'radical Islam' is misleading because it bypasses the campaign for political reforms and human rights that were occurring across the country.

Several initiatives have also been put up to represent the Muslims through forming organizations. For example: the Kadhis court (which attends to Islamic marriages, family issues and inheritance), the National Union of Kenya Muslims (NUKEM) in 1968, Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims (SUPKEM) in 1973 and others like the National Muslim Leaders Forum

(NAMLEF) formed in 2007 and Muslim Education Welfare Association (MEWA) (Thordsen 2009:49-50, Lind et al. 2015:13). They provided spaces for Muslims to participate in government processes. Whereas SUPKEM and the Kadhis court are still present because they are pro-government (Ndzovu 2012:28) NAMLEF which opposed the government did not last. These two latter organizations have constantly been accused by some Muslims to have failed to be politically impartial³. This can partly be attributed to the authoritarian regimes and also the presence of different Islamic denominations which could make collective representation difficult. Consequently, these initiatives could also have been formed to serve government's interests rather than genuinely integrating Muslims.

These critical voices were often raised by the young Muslim generation. This was achieved through the formation of the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) during the Moi regime which was declared illegitimate by the government on the context of 'prohibition of political parties based on religion' (Oded 2000:7). Even though, the party still mobilized around Islamic religious consciousness to advocate for democracy. However, when some of its members resorted to violence after legal processes were frustrated it was viewed as an 'Islamic extremist group or radical Muslim group' (Ndzovu 2012:39-43, Oded 2000:7).

The section that follows will elaborate further the role played by Saudi Arabian funded charities in Kenya, it will also bring the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) into perspective and the Al-Shabaab phenomenon in Kenya. This will help the reader to understand how specific claims made by several authors have shaped the subject of radicalization in Kenya.

3.1.1 Islamic funded charities and their role in radicalization

Islamic funded charities proliferated in Muslim communities after successive Kenyan regimes failed to provide for them. Saudi Arabia, Iran and Libya were the main actors and they mainly engaged in humanitarian assistance, development, Islamic preaching and publishing Islamic materials (Haynes 2005:1323).

Saudi Arabian started investing as early as the 1960's and in the 1970's it was at the forefront of setting-up the World Islamic league branch in Kenya, whereas, Libyan Islamic activities were prohibited in the 1980's on accounts of spreading Islamic extremism (Oded 2000:114-122). Dagne adds that these manipulate fragile government structures, ethnic and religious tension and poverty; for instance Al-Qaida used such charities to get into East Africa to recruit disillusioned Muslims (as cited in Haynes 2005:1322, Salih 2002:1-2). The presence of these initiatives also established a close link between Islamic communities in Kenya, East Africa and Arab donor countries thus increasing

³ Due to a different focus on my paper I will not be able to dwell deeply on the subject of Political organization of Muslims and Muslim-Christian relations in Kenya. However, more on this subject can be found at Kresse 20009 vol 15, Ndzovu 2012 vol 3 Issue 1, Oded 2000 and Mwakimako 2007 vol 27 issue 2 amongst others who have written extensively on this subject.

global Islamic awareness across continents which strengthens the narrative of the *Umma* (the community of Muslim believers).

In this regard radicalization and recruitment of youths into terror groups is a complex process at the individual and communal level.

3.2 Al-Shabaab's prominence and radicalization activities in Kenya

The emergence of Al-Shabaab or 'Harakat-al-Shabaab al-mujahidin' or 'the youth' a Somali based religio-political group and affiliate of Al-Qaida is connected to the Islamic Courts Union(ICU) of Somalia which was way preceded by 'Al-Itihad al-Islamiyah' in the 1980's (Ostebo 2012:2, Hansen 2013:34). While Wise (2011:2) views Al-Shabaab as a terrorist organization that has survived through taxation and extortion. It is also the only organization that succeeded in bringing law and order in Somalia through policing, judicial and decision making and providing welfare and other services (Hansen 2013:35) .Which the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and several United Nations (UN) led peace missions had failed to achieve. Because of this Al-Shabaab garnered the support of the Somali clan leadership and Somali populace in general.

Their legitimacy within Somalia was ascertained when retaliating against Ethiopian forces invasion of 2007 where they massively recruited youth in Somalia, Kenya and globally (Ayante 2010:6). Thus changing their agenda from local to global. Accordingly, this strategy allowed them to ally with Al-Qaida and increase the group's legitimacy in the global 'jihad' and also in attracting foreign support financially and also in form of man power (Wise 2011:4). This allowed them to surpass nationality differences using the narrative of '*jihad*'.

In Kenya the rise of Al-Shabaab in 2009 has closely been linked to increasing insecurity in (International Crisis Group 2012:10). This worsened after the 2011 invasion of Kenyan forces into Somalia which were later absorbed under the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM). Most often Al-Shabaab have justified their attacks in Kenya as revenge for the suffering and marginalization of their fellow Muslims in Kenya by the Kenyan government (Mwakimako and Willis 2014:14, Lind et al. 2015:4). There have been speculations that these attack go beyond a shared religious identity with Muslims in Kenya but has more to do with their displeasure of the Kenyan forces which hinders their control of Somalia. Since 2009 Al-Shabaab has launched large scale attacks in Kenya such as Westgate shopping mall attack in 2013, Mpeketoni attacks in 2014 and most recently Garissa University College attack in April 2015 (Amble, Meleagrou-Hitchens 2014:524, Aronson 2013:24, Obonyo 2015, Mohamed 2015).

These attacks have also been accompanied by an increase in the radicalization of youth and recruitment into the group (Amble, Meleagrou-Hitchens 2014:524). Al-Shabaab has capitalized on the complex dynamics of ethnicity, religion, poverty and nativism in their recruitment strategies. Furthermore, selective government's counter-terrorism strategies such as 'Operation Usalama watch' have constructed the Somali and Muslim identity as

a threat to Kenya's stability (Lind et al. 2014:33, Blanchard 2013:84). Practicing implicit discrimination and enacting it in security discourses is capable of further pushing Muslims and Somali's to the margins hence making them susceptible to Al-Shabaab's propaganda.

3.3 Tensions between Al-Shabaab and MRC's agenda

Secession cries from the Coastal strip of Kenya have long existed in the historical development of the country. The Coastal strip by ethnic composition comprises of the Mijikenda, the Arabs (pure Arab origin) and the Swahilis (mixed African and Arab) which all compete for recognition, superiority and political power. These political and ethnic divisions have impacted Muslim solidarity and further divided Muslims (Oded 2000:60). The colonial regime bypassed the Mijikenda even when they integrated the Muslim administration into the British one (Oded 2000:60). For instance, during land allocation by the British, Kubai as cited in Oded (2000:63) says 'they regarded African Muslims as people who had been "detrribalized" and hence did not give them lands in the regions of the tribes from which they had come'. These elicited consequences across generations and to a large extent account for the current squatter problem at the Coastal strip. Oded (2000:63) connotes the first attempt of separation to have occurred on the night of independence when the Coastal people opted for separation from Kenya and to merge with Zanzibar through the Mwambao United Front⁴.

These continuous efforts of secession are closely assumed to have resulted into the 1997 '*majimbo*' (devolution) clashes in the Coast Province. Branch (2011:200-233) views these clashes as connected to claims of marginalization of the native communities by non-natives in terms of land ownership, economic opportunities and natural resources. Consequently, naming violence maybe difficult. There have also been unascertained claims that it was a plot by the Muslims to rid of their upcountry Christian colleagues who have dominated their region. Moller (2006:18) claims that in these clashes some militia men wore uniforms that had both Islamic religious symbols and held traditional practices both 'believed to ensure protection'. He further emphasizes that attributing this incidence was not purely Islamic motivated violence "...because it was perpetrated on behalf of a Christian regime and partly against Muslims" (Moller 2006:18).

Willis and Gona (2012:48) cite that a lot of tension and feelings of secession were witnessed again after the 2007 general elections. Dissatisfaction of the political leadership of Kenya was voiced by the emergence of the MRC in 2005⁵ which became prominent between 2010 and 2011 (Willis and Gona 2012:48, Prestholdt 2014:270). It became an important element in the political outfit of the Kenyan coast constantly citing multiple, longstanding grievances

⁴ Mwambao United Front was a political movement that championed the secession of the Coastal Strip in the early 1960's A detailed account of this can be accessed at Oded 2000 on 'Islam and Politics in Kenya', Kresse 2009 and Moller 2006.

⁵ More information on the Mombasa Republican Council can be accessed at Jeremy Prestholdt 2014 vol 55 issue 2, *Lauren Ploch Blanchard* 2013 vol 6 issue 1 Publication No. R42967

and articulating them to the challenges experienced in the region. MRC's agenda could be limited to conspiracy theories necessary to get public support in order to justify their quest for secession from Kenya. However, Willis and Gona (2012:48) suggest that MRC can also be viewed as complex and '...interlacing of 1960's and 1990's autochthony discourses in ways more inclusive of diverse coastal racial, ethnic, and religious groups while maintaining a profoundly anti-up-country stance.'

The concurrent developments of Al-Shabaab and MRC in the Coastal region has led to many individuals labelling both groups 'violent extremists' elements'. They both use similar tactics in their recruitment of youth by weaving together local grievances and external stresses. Though there is little evidence indicating they work in unison it still remains an unascertained claim.

3.4 A dilemma between Kenya's defence and Al-Shabaab's offense

The 2011 Kenya defence forces (KDF) invasion of Somalia widely referred to as 'Operation Linda Nchi' was launched on 16th October 2011. This initiative will shape our understanding of the relations between Kenya and Somalia and further between Kenya and its Somali populace (both Somali refugees and Kenyan-Somali nationals). This operation had both political and economic prospects of 'securing the coastal region in order to establish Lamu as a development port' (Anderson and Mcknight 2014:7). Having set the political and economic context of the invasion, let's now turn to some evidence that point to Al-Shabaab increased activities in Kenya since KDF's invasion.

Anderson and Mcknight (2014:15) trace Al-Shabaab's attacks in Kenya to have occurred the first few days after the invasion, and this involved 'the use of grenades and Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) blasts in Garissa, police posts and checkpoints in Mandera and also within Daadab Refugee Camp'. Not long after, these incidences increased. There have been about 80 Al-Shabaab led attacks in Kenya (Anderson and McKnight 2014:15). These attacks have been blamed on the Muslims and othering and labelling of Somali's and Muslim in general has increased among the public. The state security forces have also been reluctant to dispute these labels through their security practices.

During the push and pull between KDF and the Al-Shabaab, the Anti-Terror Police Unit of Kenya is alleged to have carried out assassinations of controversial Muslim clerics like Aboud rogo and Makaburi (Anderson and McKnight 2014:18-19, HRW 2014). These were accompanied by widespread demonstrations and protests in Mombasa and other coastal towns, some of which turned violent and caused injuries and damage to property (Jenje and Bocha 2012). This has caused religious tension and unrest in Mombasa thus threatening peaceful coexistence. Additionally, they have given Al-Shabaab a better claim for recruitment and incitement of Muslim youth. For instance in 2012 where Sheikh Ahmed Iman Ali the head of Al-Hijra⁶, Al-Shabaab's Kenya

⁶ According to the Nairobi based Al-Shabaab affiliate group and formerly known as the Nairobi Muslim Youth Centre.

operations released a video urging all Muslims across Kenya to ‘raise your sword against the enemy that is closest to you’⁷.

Studies on Al-Shabaab have also established that the group has directly employed a wide use of modern technology to reach out to recruits. Apart from that the group has equally employed the use of mosques in Kenya to propagate its ideology. The Pumwani Riyadhha Mosque in Nairobi, the Sakina mosque in Mombasa and Musa Mosque (currently known as Masjid Shuhada’) are a few that have been linked to the recruitment and radicalization of youth for Al-Shabaab. Consequently, Al-Hijra as the key stakeholder in Kenya has served as an instrumental option for Al-Shabaab to wage its war inside, this organization long established the foundations of radicalization (Anderson and McKnight 2014:20).

3.5 Situating Muslim youth in Kenya

3.5.1 Demographic Trend and Characteristics of Mombasa

The United Nations Populations Fund ranks Africa with the highest population of youth in the world. A majority are from Sub-Saharan Africa comprising approximately 1 billion⁸ of whom 40% are unemployed and live in extreme poverty conditions. Cincotta (2005:25) defines this difference as a ‘youth bulge’ where by the population of young people (15-29 years and under) are more than the working population and as a result if they are not absorbed into the system there is a likelihood of a ‘demographic crisis or bomb’⁹. Urdal (2012:1) ascertains that ‘young males are often the main protagonists of criminal as well as political violence’. This assumption creates a direct link between masculinity and militarism. Urdal (2012:1) further elaborates his claim by citing some of the countries in the middle east where several incidences of political strifes and ‘international terrorists networks’ have been witnessed concurrently with the youth buldge.

At the National level, the 2009 Kenya population census recorded youth aged between (14-27years) to comprise 28% of the total population which is approximately 11,000,000 whereas it was about 8,000,000 in 1999, Mombasa County alone had a population of 523,183 in 2009 of which 32% were between the ages of 14-27years. This indicates that the age bracket of 14-27 years is growing at an annual rate of 8.2% and is approximately projected to be 15,000,000 or more by 2019. The census report concluded that Kenya’s population growth rate is relatively high visa a viz the available resources (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2010:26).

⁷ UN, Monitoring Group 2012 Annex 3.1

⁸ Central Africa has 125.7 million, 318.8 million in East Africa, 209.4 in North Africa and 296.6 million in West Africa.

3.5.2 The youth in question?

Studies in radicalization have been centred on three narratives. The first places emphasis on cultural and psychological conditions hence named ‘a culturalist perspective’, (Kundnani 2012:8, Hornqvist, Flyghed 2012:324-327). It focusses on religious values and individual’s identity. The second approach focuses on religious ideologies as a factor of radicalization thus referred to as ‘radicalization as a theological process’ (Kundnani 2012:11). It stresses on indoctrination and thus bypasses other clues present before indoctrination. Whereas the third views ‘radicalization as a theological-psychological disposition’, combining theology, emotions, identity and group dynamics (Kundnani 2012:13-14). These three narratives are problematic because they analyse processes as single entities.

Closely linked to radicalization is the role played by recruited youth. Most especially Muslim youth have become the centre of attention when addressing the subject of radicalization. They have been portrayed as either victims or perpetrators of violence. However, there is no singular/linear explanation because different actors engage in violence for different reasons. Studies by Hornqvist and Flyghed (2012:325) established that male youth in impoverished conditions are at high risk of recruitment. Thus reinforcing the narrative of youth as victims.

On the contrary, Honwana (2006:68) disagrees and instead looks at youth participation in violence as a way of exercising their agency. This fails to take into account social conditions which at times do not offer choices to pick from. In this sense, it will be interesting to look at Muslim youth in Kenya, analyse their structural conditions and available opportunities in relation to their decision to join Al-Shabaab.

Chapter 4 Complexities of exclusion and inclusion of Muslim youth

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains an analysis of the findings based on the reflections of Muslim youth. This section will look at the social conditions of Muslim youth in Mombasa County based on the understanding of social exclusion and social capital discussed in chapter 2. Based on the responses, I aim to analyse the different dimensions of social exclusion they have encountered in their social environment and how they have manipulated their networks and relations for inclusion in Al-Shabaab as a way of dealing with their exclusion. The analysis has been organized into subheadings to give a vivid account of the processes involved and show how they overlap.

4.2 The spatial exclusion dimension in Mombasa

Inequalities in regions can be a reflection of exclusion which could be based on class, gender or other local specific factors such as tribe or ethnicity. Branch (2011:110) notes that throughout Kenya's history the benefits of economic growth have been distributed unevenly across regions, class lines and ethnicity which are characteristic of Kenyan political economy. At the same time, social norms, behaviors and practices that encourage discrimination and barricade access to resources have also reinforced inequality.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Abuu a 25 year old who was recruited into Al-Shabaab and MRC by his friend between 2011 and 2013 and later left in 2014 after intervention by his parents. He only completed primary school and did not proceed to secondary because his parents could not afford. He started doing menial jobs at the age of 15years. Currently he is employed in a retail food store as an attendant and spends most of his day there. He narrated that *"...Most youths including myself are jobless. People from upcountry come here and get jobs ... we don't even get menial jobs when we ask they say we do not have good education but how can we get that education if we don't even have enough schools for everyone? When you speak about these injustices they call you Al-Shabaab or MRC just because you're saying the truth. That is why I joined both groups because I was hopeful that when they take over this area I could at least get a job"*. Whereas, it was difficult for a Muslim youth like Abuu to be employed, most youth from the upcountry region seemed to have secured employment in Mombasa. This could be an indication of favoritism in hiring practices and as a result this discrimination has culminated feelings of marginalization. For Muslim Youth like Abuu, Al-Shabaab exists as an outlet that presents a promising future.

In terms of education Mombasa County continues to lag behind. Statistical data also reveals that 65% of the population in Mombasa only had primary education or none at all (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2010:26). Adam Smith attributes these high rates to inaccessibility of basic education to

all people and also the poor quality of basic education⁹ which has resulted into a gap between the skills possessed by the youth and those required in the labour market. Additionally, the county government accounted for these high rates as caused by low levels of transition whereby around 70-80% of youth in Mombasa do not transit beyond the primary level (Mwita 2014). This could be due to financial reasons and others because of cultural attitudes, feelings of marginalization and victimization¹⁰. In this regard, Youth unemployment in the region has been worsened by two aspects. Firstly, poverty in the sense that corruption has been normalized¹¹ to an extent that it undermines and excludes those who cannot afford to offer bribes.

Ado a 27year old Youth from Mombasa echoes these claims of injustices in the employment sector. These frustrations on one hand and promises of prospective incentives from Al-Shaabab on the other hand is what motivated him. He joined through a friend who was already a member. The only jobs he used to do which he claims to still engage in are mostly menial jobs and these also don't come along every day. These conditions and the lack of action from the government made him as a Muslim youth feel like he was less of a Kenyan. He shared that “...many young people like me are jobless simply because we did not have money to offer bribes for us to be employed... All these make people feel unwanted and discriminated in the society and it pushes them to join groups like Al-Shabaab for revenge.” Economic alienation seems to be a major challenge that has incapacitated the younger generation. With no means of livelihood many youth resent the government for having poor hiring mechanisms which only benefit the rich while the poor continue to languish in poverty.

IRIN (2015) conquer with the issue of corruption by explaining that corruption in Kenya is deeply embedded in the state systems and structures, most especially the employment process where prof Anderson ascertains that “Hiring in Kenya is very corrupt: you get a job if you pay, you don't get a job if you don't”. This has directly led to high unemployment of 42.3% among youth which is way higher than the national average in Kenya which stands at 21% (Haslam n.d.). When many youth are laid out, it can lead to frustration and most especially when they are graduates. This has increased the poverty levels of Mombasa despite a decline at the national level which in turn has increased the dependency rates of Mombasa to 34.8% (Mwita 2014).

Consequently, the networks possessed by individuals equally played a major role in facilitating youth absorption in the labour market. As a result the participants in this study attributed their unemployment status to the lack of these networks and money. Unemployment resulted into less productivity and increasing frustrations. As KNHCR (n.d.) narrate that most unemployed young

⁹Creating employment opportunities for young people in Mombasa
<http://www.adamsmithinternational.com/explore-our-work/east-africa/kenya/mombasa-county-youth-employment-programme> Accessed 11th October 2015.

¹⁰ Creating employment opportunities for young people in Mombasa
<http://www.adamsmithinternational.com/explore-our-work/east-africa/kenya/mombasa-county-youth-employment-programme> accessed 11th October 2015.

¹¹ Ibid

people in Mvita, Kisauni, Majengo and Likoni ‘spend their time in makeshifts “frustration squares” which as a result exposes them to manipulation for quick and easy money and draws them into criminal activities. Likewise, Ongera (2015) reports in his article that Aboud Rogo had taken advantage of youth in such states and recruited them Al-Shabaab. Further, another economic dimension of exclusion which is widespread in Mombasa is the land disposition factor.

In summary, inequality in Kenya is historically rooted. It had been further reinforced by the administrative boundaries that were shaped by ethnic and other social lines such as religion (Berg-Schlosser 1985:102, KNBS and SID 2013:10-18). As a result settlement patterns in most administrative provinces in Kenya are ethnically homogenous thus increase the probability of regional discrimination. Willis and Gona (2012:48) reiterate that ethnicity is a distinctive feature in Kenya that has been manipulated for ‘political entrepreneurship, political mobilization and claim-making’. Due to this, resource allocation has also been carried out along these lines and as a result, areas like Mombasa with minimal political influence despite having many natural resources are largely underdeveloped. Another example is squatter relocation. Despite the presence of many squatters in Mombasa, successive government have mostly relocated the Kikuyu to established settlement schemes, as for educational institutions they are mostly concentrated in the central and Rift Valley provinces while areas like Mombasa or the entire Coast province, were only able to have one fully fledged university in 2013 (Branch 2011:89-120, Wahito 2013). In this sense, the inability to obtain education produces disadvantages of not being able to secure employment which increases poverty because of high dependency rates. At the same time all these are accentuated by bad practises of corruption and favouritism especially in the access to assets such as land.

4.4 The land question

Mombasa inhabitants have in the past encountered so many challenges related to land ownership. The land issue at the coast is a huge problem that the Daily Nation Newspaper constantly refer to as the ‘Ticking time bomb’ (Beja 2012). Accordingly, he claims that Mombasa County on its own accounts for approximately, 51,621 heads of registered squatters (2012). Whereas, Kamau 2009 illustrates the magnitude of the land problem that the Coast Province

...bears the dubious distinction of having the largest number of squatters in Kenya – an anomaly that started in the colonial period, but which was deepened by the Kenyatta government (1st regime after independence). The land grabbing by the elite after independence disinherited millions of Coast residents, planting seeds of discord in the province (as cited in Syagga n.d:15).

Regardless of these discrepancies the fact still remains that there are land injustices which have not received keen attention from policy makers. Hamisi who is 26years old was both a member of Al-Shabaab and MRC. He was introduced into Al-Shabaab network by his elder brother. This was in 2011 a year after he had graduated from high school. He arrived at such a decision

because of peer influence however, he also narrated land disposition as the main issue that influenced his decision. He shared that, "...*There are a lot of injustices in this area like land issues. We were born here live here but we are squatters, people come from up-country and take our land and even have title deeds for it, for us we have no papers to prove it's our land even when we have been staying here our whole life...*". Land disposition and squatter menace in Mombasa is a problem that precedes the precolonial times. With many people being dispossessed off their land, poverty levels and unemployment has also risen thus disadvantaging generations across generations.

Omari, Hamisi's elder brother feels disappointed as he recalls how he accompanied his father countless times to the land offices to no avail. He joined Al-Shabaab and MRC through some key community leaders, for him MRC offered a promising leadership for the region whereas Al-Shabaab provided a means for the Coastal people to get their land back. He was member of both groups for 4 years and only withdrew after countless efforts by his community who provided young men like himself with entrepreneurship skills and micro-credit loans to start up small initiatives. Omar narrates that "*there is a big problem on land ownership. And it is affecting me as a youth if my father cannot get a title deed for his land, it means we cannot use that land. We have been living like squatters in our own land. The government does not help us, as a matter of fact they help upcountry people...most of them who have land here have deeds for them but no one helps us*". Accordingly, both Omar and Hamisi have felt the consequences of land disposition directly from their father's inability to register his land they've been incapable of utilizing it.

Land is a source of primary survival opportunities in the absence of a welfare system. It facilitates most socioeconomic, political, environmental and cultural activities. Based on this, land in post-independence Kenya has been at the core of politics, it has been used as the main resource to reinforce patron-client relations that have served as a basis for political alliances (Opondo 2013). For instance the Ndung'u report (as cited in Opondo 2013) substantiate these claims by citing how elites and politicians have abused their offices to acquire public and private land. For instance President Moi is an example of such, he "misused his powers and allocated land arbitrarily and with favoritism to persons close to him and even took away private land and gave it to his loyalties"(Opondo 2013). In this regard, land injustices have been sustained and accentuated across generations by corruption and favoritism. Kamau 2009 narrates that in Mombasa during the 1970's when Eliud Mahihu was the Provincial Commissioner for the Coast Province he used his powers 'to allocate beach plots along the Indian Ocean Coast mostly to powerful individuals outside the province' (as cited in Syagga n.d:14). Musa (Hamisi's and Omar's step brother) also acknowledged the land problem by sharing that "...*getting a title deed for your own land is so difficult because of corruption...the government knows all this but they do nothing because they benefit from the corruption and bribes*".

These grievances expressed by the youth are largely caused by the inadequate proper systems and mechanisms to address the land disposition in Mombasa. Land being a source of livelihood and the failure to access it can cripple societies socioeconomically. Kameri-Mbote and Kindiki (2008:172) argue that this could prepare a basis for conflict and act as a mobilization factor for armed elements and groups. Especially when such grievances

intersect with high rates of youth unemployment, lack of informal employment opportunities, poverty and lack of proper mechanisms to conduct checks and balances could motivate youth's participation in violence. Hilker and Fraser (2009:16) second this claim by citing the grievance model which suggests that, youth participation in violence 'serves as a rational means to address grievances'. Besides the existence of these grievances in the region, serious clashes have only been witnessed in the recent decade. Hilker and Fraser (2009:17) argue that inequalities and exclusion provide a conducive environment for grievances but may not directly lead to violence as there needs to be other trigger factors. In which case Al-Shabaab and MRC have both triggered violence in the region.

In the recent time, Al-Shabaab used land grievances to mobilize for support and incite people in Mombasa and other Coastal towns like Tana River and Lamu. Lind et al. (2015:21) shared that after Al-Shabaab carried out attacks in Gamba and Hindi, they placed up a board with the message

MRC munalala (MRC is sleeping), Waislamu Ardizenu (Muslims, it's your land) Sina nyakuliwa (Your land is being taken away) Amkeni mupigane (Wake up and fight), you invade Muslim county and you want to stay in peace Kick Christians out Coast.

Consequently, in response to these attacks the GoK resorted to use force as a collective means to counter-insurgency and terrorism in Kenya, has pushed the Muslim community further to the periphery. Some youth have even claimed that such mistreatment was directed to them because they were Muslims. On this regard, I will analyze how the nexus of religion and gender has exacerbated the exclusion of Muslim youth in Mombasa in relation to the actions of the ATPU and other state security organs.

4.5 The religious and gender nexus

Religion is one of the markers of identity of the Muslim community of Mombasa. It has also intersected with gender and produced new forms of exclusion. Whereas the primarily economic forms of disadvantages affecting the integration of the Muslim youth were identified to be education, unemployment and poverty, religion and gender are more culturally oriented but their consequences cut across. According to Fraser's (1997) conceptual spectrum, there also exists primarily cultural injustices which emanate from 'social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication'. In this sense, dominant cultures in a region may tend to inform the governing laws. In this research, culture is used to denote 'a shared communication system; similarities in physical and social environment, common beliefs, values, traditions, and world view; and similarities in lifestyles, attitudes, and behaviour' (Freeman 2004:74). In Mombasa the male Muslim youth who participated in this study shared that they did not feel accommodated in the wider society a majority of whom were non-Muslims. As a result, they were more comfortable spending time and even staying in neighbourhoods populated by fellow Muslims. According to some of the youth, this discrimination started from the state system, most especially the criminal justice and security system, and trickled down to the community level.

Issa a 27 year old male who was born and raised in Mombasa comes from a single parent background and his father is long deceased. He completed primary school and did not proceed due to financial constraints. He started engaging in jobs such as garbage collection and gardening so that he could assist his mother in raising his younger siblings. He decided to join Al-Shabaab after encountering several mistreatment from the police and his community. These experiences made him feel he had been discriminated and punished for other people's mistakes because he was a Muslim. Hence, his friend who was already a member introduced him to the Al-Shabaab network in 2012. However, he later left in 2014 citing the unexplained disappearance of his friend and also that his mother was not happy with his decision and had suffered depression. Upon reflection, he abandoned his pursuit and returned home to lead a quiet life, taking care of his ailing mother and also his younger siblings. He now spends most of his mornings working as a porter at the market. During our interview, Issa narrated his experience with the police that *"...I was once arrested in 2010 I think and the police officers kept on calling me names like terrorist, Osama and Al-Shabaab...I felt so mistreated...it reached a point I was so angry and decide instead of being accused all the time why not join Al-Shabaab then. For me at least they were fighting for Muslims and they were people who understood all the suffering we went through as Muslims...the police don't care as long as you're a young Muslim man you're a terrorist"*.

Issa also shared another experience of discrimination he encountered in his own community that *"...after the 2002 bombing of the hotel our neighbours started treating Muslims differently. They would call me "Osama" when I passed or even say bad things about Islam"*. When the 2002 incidence occurred, Issa was a 14 year old boy however, he noticed the changes that occurred in their neighbourhood. Facing a backlash from both the system and his own community was not easy for him. It made him feel that all Muslims were responsible for the attack or in support of it. Further, the categorization of Muslims as a single entity and perpetrators of violence motivated his decision to join Al-Shabaab which can be understood as some form of rebellion on his part.

In this sense, the discrimination based on religious affiliation generates cultural exclusion which fosters prejudices against the Muslim community. These prejudices and suspicions towards Muslims became a common occurrence in Kenya after the 1998 bombings where even the former president Moi remarked on a television network that 'the perpetrators of the bomb would not have done the deed if they were Christians' (Omanga 2012:25). Generally this affected Muslim-state relations and further made the Muslim populace feel that they were being collectively punished as a homogenous group for the actions of a few. This statement also undermined the religion of Islam and Muslims in general by devaluing their belief system, thus further pushing them to the margins of a society. At the same time discrimination also has the ability to build social attitudes which in this case can disadvantage Muslim males especially in aspects like employment. In my research I also observed that the religious exclusion of Muslim youth is further reinforced by their gender. As a result when discriminated the youth dealt with the consequences of exclusion in the political economy and culture wise too. Fraser (1997:19) refers to such forms of collectivities as 'bivalent collectivities'

and they are capable of inflicting ‘socioeconomic maldistribution and cultural misrecognition’.

The HRW (2015:35) in their *‘insult to injury’* report also ascertain that after attacks by Al-Shabaab in Lamu and Tana River the security officers often conducted searches in Mosques and singled out Muslim men and boys in villages while constantly ‘accusing them of being Al-Shabaab and beat them while they shouted ‘Terrorists! Terrorists!’’. The police force and the Anti-Terror Police Unit (ATPU) have conducted biased arrests and crackdowns in Muslim neighbourhoods, which have resulted into xenophobia and construction of the Muslim identity as the ‘other’ (Botha 2014:915, Howell and Lind 2010:284). In another research, conducted by HRW (2015:37) an interviewee recalled some of the abuses that were meted out against Muslims by the security forces who said “they asked us why Muslims like killing Christians and threatened us with unspecified consequences for killing Christians”. This accounts for the construction of the ‘self’ which in this case is represented by the Christian identity. Hall (1997:225) refers to this ‘binary form of representation of others’ as stereotyping.

As noted, stereotyping only focusses on specific attributes to create the ‘others’ identity. In these interviews many Youth felt they were singled out during arrests because of their religious identity (Islam). Religious profiling in Kenya became a common practise after the 1998 bombings of the US embassy in Nairobi, in 2001 approximately 50 businessmen in Mombasa were arrested over claims of being Al-Qaida associates, later in January 2010 around 300 Muslim youth were also arrested in Eastleigh and charged with being in the country illegally (Omanga 2012:17), operation Usalama watch was also launched in April 2014 in Eastleigh and led to the detention of around 650 residents (Anderson and McKnight 2014:21), Kenyan security agencies have also been accused of killing around 21 Muslim clerics since 2012¹² and the enforced disappearances of alleged terror suspects¹³. Consequently, such actions and spaces have mostly occurred in areas dominated by Muslims. This targeting the cultural and material space occupied by Muslims which is referred to as spatial practice (Omanga 2012:35). This kind of practice has helped in producing and reproducing cultural based exclusion which has served as a motivation for the youth to join Al-Shabaab.

¹² “Gunned Down in Mombasa – The Clerics That Have Died,” IRIN, July 28, 2014, Accessed 23rd October 2015 <http://www.irinnews.org/report/100412/gunned-down-in-mombasa-the-clerics-that-have-died>

¹³ “Kenya: Killings, Disappearances by the Anti-Terror Police”, Human Rights Watch news release, August 18, 2014, Accessed 23rd October 2015 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/08/18/kenya-killings-disappearances-anti-terror-police>.

4.7 Complex dynamics of radicalization and recruitment agents and processes

Social capital plays a critical role in understanding positive outcomes for children, youths, and families (Ferguson 2006) by enhancing resilience but it can also be a motivation for negative decisions. This section will facilitate our understanding of youth's decision to joining Al-Shabaab by looking at how they used their social capital to gain inclusion into Al-Shabaab.

In this regard, emphasis is placed on both the structural conditions and social relationship which can impact individual's behaviour. This capital is formed and expanded in the process of socialization in the family, school and community. Most recently the advancement in technology has also come in as a much better and faster way of expanding networks and building relations across. Free social media sites like Facebook, twitter and WhatsApp among others have helped in strengthening networking across. During my fieldwork I observed that most of the youth I interviewed had a social support system of some kind. These networks were based on family, friendship or communal networks and were important in providing a sense of belonging and identity. They also facilitated sharing information and regulated behaviour. In order to understand these networks, I will analyse how individual participation in Al-Shabaab was partly determined by their social networks. This research revealed that most Muslim youth who were affiliated with Al-Shabaab had networks that were connected to the group. This analysis will also focus on the network-level characteristics possessed by an individual, the quantity and quality of these social networks and their strengths in order to understand the importance of social connections.

4.7.1 Friendship and peer networks

Friendship or peer relations were observed to play a huge role in the youth's life. These are the people the youth spent formal and informal time with for instance in school and also other socializing places. During these interactions, peers relations are established and reinforced and they can provide an opportunity for the youth to adopt behaviour from their peers which (Unlu et al. 2014:233, McDoom 2014:871) views as social/peer influence which can be positive or negative. Sears and levy 2003 as cited in Botha (2014:909) suggest that 'between puberty and early adulthood a person is vulnerable and open to outside influence, because they are becoming increasingly aware of the social-political world around them and concurrently are establishing their identity and political "self" '. In this instance, it is very common for youth to feel alienated especially when others do not share their sentiments. As a result, they will hang out with those who share their ideas and even emulate them in order to gain approval and acceptance into the group.

During this research I learnt that peer networks were very influential in shaping youth decision making. As was the case of Shee a 23 year old youth who comes from a polygamous background. Given the tensions between his

father and his two wives he always found the company of friends more appealing. As a result he was recruited by his close friend when he was still in high school in 2011. He narrates that “...I rarely used to spend time with my family, I chose to stay away from them to avoid problems and disrespect. I spent more time with my friends because we have similar ideas... my friends were members of MRC and one was also in Al-Shabaab...I joined Al-Shbaab through him...besides the injustices, I wanted to be with my friends, I did not want to feel like a traitor. You know when everyone is doing something and you're the only one not doing it... ”. Shee's friends had a strong impact on his behaviour and also his decisions and this could be because these networks offered a strong sense of security, solidarity and also trust. It allowed him to confide more in his peers than his family especially because there was tension at home.

Another Youth Issa also shared that he has a very close relationship with his friends. Even though his case was different because his mother was a single parent and she was forced to work long hours as a house help to provide for her children, he therefore spent more time with his friends. Especially after feeling discriminated and not wanted by his community. Issa said that “...When I was not in school I used to spend my time with friends. We have our garden (*maskani*) where we go to and spend time chatting mostly...my friends were there for me when my community were calling me names...they never abandoned me...”. In both cases peers come out as a strong force of moral support. As a result, the youth's decision to join Al-Shabaab was partly a product of peer influence. By giving in to their peers they gained approval and inclusion into Al-Shabaab.

Various scholars that have written on the subject of radicalization also agree that peers have had a great influence in guiding respondents to join Al-Shabaab (Botha 2014:915, Amble, Meleagrou-Hitchens 2014:530). In Botha's research on youth radicalization in Mombasa, she notes that young people are more active and likely to be influenced into terrorist organizations during their teens and young adulthood. She further elaborates that in her research 38% out of the 79% of youth in Mombasa who has joined Al-Shabaab were introduced by their friends (Botha 2014:900). Accordingly, Coleman 1961 as cited in Unlu et al. (2014:234) explains this as the ‘anti-intellectual ability of young people that makes them more likely to pay attention to disapproval from friends than their parents’.

Consequently, I also observed that most of these youth had friends with whom they shared similar lifestyle, neighbourhood, ethnicity and religion. Having these ties alone was not a determinant of involvement, rather it appeared to be connected by the strength of these ties. Granovetter's 1973 perspective on ties suggests that the strength of ties is determined by the time spent together, the emotional attachment, mutual confiding, and reciprocity (as cited in McDoom 2014:871). In this regard, peer networks were more influential because they were much stronger and their strength was vital in the recruitment process. Another source of social support that wielded equal power were family networks.

4.7.2 Family capital

Under this category I will address kinship networks and parent-child relations which also offered strong support system to the youth. Some of the youth interacted more with their siblings than their parents. Hamisi and Musa are a good example of siblings who joined the Al-Shabaab network through their elder brother Omar. This kinship interaction is partly what influenced their decision. McDoom (2014:871) suggests that kinship influence is much stronger because it is enhanced by 'love or affection'. Accordingly, Coffe and Geys (2007:124) also suggest that it's bonding social capital and it's influential because it involves 'trust and reciprocity in a closed network thus helping in the process of coping on a daily basis'. He further argues that, since collective action in most instances is violent and anti-social, 'the emotional power of kinship bonds could exert a particularly strong influence and overcome prosocial, peaceful norms that may otherwise govern individual behavior' (McDoom 2014:879). In this sense, the two interacted with their brother more often, because they come from a polygamous and an extended family set-up, their deal with a lot of tension. However, based on their narrations, as siblings they have managed to maintain strong ties.

During an interview with Musa in a small shed where he spends most of his day as a tout, he narrated that "*I spend a lot of time with my family. We get along well even if we have small problems but we are still family and that is important*". Family relations in this sense, act as a good source of hope, encouragement, coping and motivation for him. Regardless that they fall out some times, for Musa misunderstandings are normal and he believes that should not create a gap in their kinship relations. Whereas, Hamisi narrated that "*...I joined through my brother. After attending a few of their meetings and seeing most people in my community were members I was motivated to become part of them*". On this same issue, Musa added that "*I joined this group through my friends and also my brother. These are the people I used to spend a lot of my time with and we would always be discussing about how our society is discriminated and how the government does not to do anything about it...*". In both cases, Hamisi and Musa had a very strong relationship with their elder brother. Apart from the affection they could have been looking up to him as a role model. Concurrently, friends also provided an encouraging environment most especially the information they used to share in these networks.

Family and kin relations have in many research in social psychology been identified as predictors of violent behaviour. Gorman-Smith et al. (1996:116) support this using McCord's argument by saying that such behaviour is influenced by poor parental monitoring and could be more severe in the incidence of 'lack of maternal affection'. Ferguson (2006) adds that in the family the children receive "resources and energy to build their human capital and sustain their wellbeing". Hence, the absence of parental control and support affects the quality of parent-child relationship and limits social interactions which affects socialization. The emphasis being placed on both parental processes and family processes where the former focuses on parental behaviour towards the child while the latter pays more attention to the emotional support and organization among the family members (Gorman-Smith et al. 1996:117). Likewise, when analysing peer networks, Shee's

experience in his family relayed that, there was a disconnect between parent-child interaction and as a result he found comfort in his friends. This could be an indication that he did not receive enough emotional support from his parents and consequently, his parents paid less attention to the type of friends and communication Shee had with his peers.

Carbonaro (1998:298) views less parental interaction as problematic because adolescence and young adulthood is a crucial time when individuals are internalizing norms. Hence, limited social interaction with their parents could hinder the acquisition of values and norms deemed important by the society. This was echoed by Mr. Masika when he called in during a radio program and explained that “...*Most youth have joined Al-Shabaab because as parents we have failed in raising them up. We paid less attention to whom the children associates with and where they spend their time...this generation is different from ours in many ways but still as parents we have to be in control in our homes...*” (6/08/2015). Mr. Masika acknowledges the devastating trend of poor parenting in Mombasa which to him is another factor that has perpetuated youth radicalization and recruitment into Al-Shabaab. This is because parents spend less time interacting with their children and as a result fail to take notice of the changes taking place and even monitor the people they interact with.

4.7.3 Community capital

Omar on the other hand, narrated his own account of how he joined Al-Shabaab which was largely influenced by community networks. This indicates that youth were able to bridge their own social networks to the larger community thus, generating their own social capital apart from their kinship and family. This could be because they felt trusted and accepted thus developing a positive attitude towards those around them and even expand their interactions and networks further. Living in a community setting can have advantages and disadvantages. It can expose youth to connect to more adult role models outside their homes thus ‘bridging social capital’. Botha (2014:915) in her research on political socialization and radicalization in Mombasa also suggests that ‘although the initial building blocks are established during childhood, other socialization agents guided respondents to al-Shabaab’. This aspect was evident in Omar’s experience.

As he welcomed me into his small hut, he proceeded outside to wash his hands and explained later that he was at the backyard weeding for his vegetables. Once he was done he offered me a cup of water and sat on a small stool in preparation for the interview. There were few semi-permanent and incomplete houses in the compound which he explained that they belonged to his extended family. For Omar such a setting does not provide a chance for making decisions individually but, he still enjoys it. He says that “...*I like staying close to my family because as a son when we wed we stay in the same compound with our family in order to take care of them. Because of this am very close with my sisters and brothers... lot of problems but I still try to have a good relationship with my sisters and brothers... When I joined some of my community supported me because they thought it was the right thing to do and also because there were community leaders in support of Al-*

Shabaab...to make our future better and stop harassment and discrimination from the security officers and government...". This shows that Omar largely depended on his community and even looked up to them for approval and guidance with his decision of joining Al-Shabaab because they all shared a sense of collective grievances and discrimination. With this Omar developed an attitude towards the government and non-Muslims and to counter rejection he used his community networks to gain inclusion into Al-Shabaab.

Individuals like Omar that had an extensive social network also developed high interpersonal trust. This is because of the bridging social capital which comes with 'diversity and inclusiveness in memberships' (Knack 2003:344) which is reinforced through 'cross-cutting ties'. However, these can also yield negative externalities such as stereotypes. From the example of Omar's community, it was revealed that the Muslims as an in-group also constructed stereotypes about non-Muslims. Research on social psychology of intergroup interactions suggests that because in-groups share salient characteristics they foster a 'bias through which cooperation, trust, and affection are most easily developed for other members of this in-group' Marshall and Stolle 2004 (as cited in Coffe and Geys 2007:125).

Great emphasis is placed on the shared identity which as a result enhances hostility and prejudices towards the out-group which in turn fosters distrust. As Modi a 25 year old participant who was an active supporter of Aboud Rogo narrated "*I liked it there because I was doing it for a good course. I wanted the oppression to stop and Al-Shabaab seemed the only people that saw there was injustice. These groups build people's faith there is that sense of being part of a group where you're understood...*". For instance, Al-Shabaab and the Muslim community proved to have very strong internal connections which reinforced bonding social capital. Nonetheless, it does not benefit the wider community which does not share their identity thus affecting bridging social capital. As a result strong in-group social relations among the Muslims developed an 'us versus them' way of looking at their grievances, they mostly saw non-Muslims as a group that has been benefiting from their marginalization. As a result they preferred to be associated with those that are familiar and understand their claims.

Community networks also exerted positive influence for Omar by motivating his withdrawal from Al-Shabaab. He shares that "*...they later discouraged my decision. But they still invited me on many activities where these things would be discussed... my community helped me*". Such tensions are most likely to strain relationships, however for Omar his community did not give up on him and would regularly invite him for community activities where matters of radicalization and youth would be discussed and even counselling offered. He sees all these as efforts that were intended to help him, even though, it was challenging they eventually succeeded. In this regard, interacting with individuals in an out-group proved to be an asset more than those in an in-group for Omar. Accordingly, Marshall and Stolle (2004:130) add that 'social interaction among individuals from dissimilar groups and the forging of common cooperative experiences, fosters an identity that helps to both diminish in-group bias and to develop inclusion of former out-group members'.

4.8 Exclusion and Inclusion: Broadening the scope of understanding Muslim Youth

UN 2004 Studies on conflict and security have in the recent times focused on youth with many assumptions that developing countries experiencing a youth bulge coupled with high rates of unemployment, low levels of education and lack of political participation have a high probability of experiencing violence (as cited in Hilker and Fraser 2009:3). Urdal 2004 notes this as 'some form of youth factor in the generation or perpetuation of violence' (as cited in Hilker and Fraser 2009:3). Similarly, Murshed and Tad 2009 suggests that prolonged feelings of injustices by specific social groups can manifest themselves as collective grievances which if not addressed may translate into violence. As we have seen from the few interviewed Muslim youth in Mombasa, discrimination and marginalization economically has developed high expectations among the youth generation (as cited in Hilker and Fraser 2009:3). As these have remained unfulfilled, the potential for collective violence as a form of rebelliousness has also increased. Accordingly, the probability for collective violence is widely felt when the concentration and scope of deprivation is great.

Deprivation or exclusion in Mombasa is widely felt to the extent that the region is characteristically termed as underdeveloped. This is because of high unemployment and underemployment rates, inequality in income distribution, high population growth rate and dependency ratio, lack of capital and informal sector opportunities and low levels of technological developments. All these exert pressure on economic resources such as land and because many families experience land disposition, many Muslim youth have been left without a source of livelihood. This has in turn delays their transition to adulthood resulting to increased discontent and disillusionment. Accordingly, Salehi-Isfahani and Dhillon (2008:6) suggest that this occurs because of 'rigid institutions and social norms that mediate transitions from school to work and family formation – interconnected markets such as education, labor, housing and marriage'. Hence, amongst the participants only 2 were married, the delay could indicate that the lack of livelihoods can delay marriage because of issues of affordability to housing and also maintenance of the family. As a result exclusion has also hindered Muslim youth from pursuing other opportunities that could improve their lives.

Muslims and particularly youth in this context have been left with minimal or no political voice which Hilker and Fraser (2009:4) suggest is because of the 'rigid, conservative power structures, patronage networks and intergenerational hierarchies' which excludes them from decision-making. This has been worsened by poor governance, corruption and low levels of legitimacy of the regime following the 2012 controversial presidential elections. As a result during the interviews Muslim youth cited a loss of faith in the government and especially given their experience with the security officers and justice system.

One of our participants shared his experience with the security forces. Salo (26years old) who has a higher diploma in business studies also worked as

a cyber attendant previously. He joined Al-Shabaab through his friend who was already in Somalia and was also encouraged after witnessing the harassment of his uncle on allegations of being a terror suspect. His Uncle is alleged to have disappeared mysteriously since 2010. Several efforts to find him have failed whereas the police have shunned their claims. Sitting under a tree he shared with me his experience regarding the incident “...*They started accusing my uncle at first, they would take him for questioning and even torture him, after some time he disappeared and we have not heard from him again...we reported but they just dismissed us, my family kept on going to the station to ask for progress but after a year they got tired because we did not receive any helpful information. I have also been arrested once when I was coming from watching a football match. After seeing my identity card they called me Al-Shabaab... I was not happy of the way the security officers mistreated me, my uncle and other Muslims. Joining Al-Shabaab made me feel I was doing something for my community, it made me see the possibilities of making things better...am still not happy because very little has changed*”. Despite having left Al-Shabaab he still not happy with how things are still being conducted in Kenya. He now works in Saudi Arabia as an attendant in an electronic shop and only comes home every July when he is on leave. But he still feels the country has a long way to go to make things right with its population if they want to end radicalization.

In turn, the youth dealt with their disillusionment and dissatisfaction by manipulating their networks and connections to join Al-Shabaab. For Hilker and Fraser (2009:4) this decision should be understood as an ‘opportunity for youth to have a voice, lead and make an impact’ despite that this may not be the acceptable way of channelling grievances. For instance, all the interviews conducted during this research revealed that these Muslim youth already had a brother, neighbour, community member or friend who was connected to the Al-Shabaab network prior to their joining. I argue that it is the specific individual in their networks (McDoom 2014:877) and the type of relationship they wielded with the participants that determined their recruitment and inclusion into Al-Shabaab. Hence, supporting McDoom’s (2014:877) argument that ‘the more participants, as opposed to nonparticipants, in their social network, the more likely the person was to participate in the violence’.

In this regard, the size of an individual network and strength of relations weaved together by structural conditions all reinforce each other in such a way that they inhibited individuals from making decisions independently. Where youth had multiple networks connected to Al-Shabaab, they were prone to manipulate them for inclusion while, a shared religious identity provided them with a needed characteristic for inclusion.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

The study has provided significant evidence for the need to shift from common assumptions of establishing causal relationships to understanding radicalization, to analysing it as involving complex processes at the structural and individual level. Using social exclusion I have argued that successive state regimes have failed to address structural issues in Mombasa and most Muslim communities in Kenya. As a result it has left these communities feeling discriminated and neglected in their own country. Branch (2011:17) identified land, jobs and public funding for development initiatives as the most explicit issues. However, I also noted poor policies and inadequate accountability mechanisms have normalized corruption and favouritism. This leaves little democratic space for the poor and minority groups to state their claims. As a result these social groups turn to violence as a means to effect social change.

I also observed that feelings of exclusion and alienation have socially fragmented the society among the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. Kabeer (2000:86) argues that many countries in Africa after independence reflect divided societies, where there are segments considered 'citizens', these have access to resources, decent jobs and wages and work in the main and formal sections of the economy, whereas others are viewed more as 'subjects' and they occupy the relegated regions characterized by 'informal livelihood strategies and inadequate government provisioning'. This compartmentalization is to a large extent a duplication of the pre-colonial and colonial hierarchies (Berg-Schlusser 1985:96). Which the latter were informed by race, whereas the current fragmentation is shaped by ethnicity, class, religion and race too thus determining the allocation of positions with political power, economic and development resources.

Beyond the borders there are also other external actors who have been manipulating the discord of the Muslims to their advantage. Accordingly, Al-Shabaab strategies can be understood using Collier's and Hoeffler (2004:565) '*greed and grievance model*'. Where frustrated Kenyan Muslim youth fit in their agenda by providing available '*man power*' for the militant group to exercise their control of Somali over the long run and even get possibilities for expansion. Whereas other international actors with interests in the war on terror and have equally internationalized the economic, social and political alienation of Muslim communities in Kenya.

The main argument being echoed is that approaches dealing with radicalization and recruitment of youths into terror groups and criminal gangs in Kenya should take into consideration these overlapping dynamics.

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Appendices:

Life snapshots

Ado a 27year old Youth from Mombasa narrates how he encountered several injustices in the employment sector. These frustrations on one hand and promises of prospective incentives from Al-Shaabab on the other hand is what motivated him. He joined through a friend who was already a member of Al-Shabaab. He was engaged in menial jobs mostly like collecting garbage, cleaning yards and trimming bushes for payment. Even these jobs he claims do not come by every day. He currently works as a tout on part time and also does menial jobs to meet his needs.

Abuu a 25 year old who was recruited into Al-Shabaab and MRC by his close friend who was also his neighbor. He served in Al-Shabaab between 2011 and 2013 and later left in 2014 after intervention by his parents. Upon realizing Abuu's choices had deviated from his age mates, they took him for traditional counselling. Which did not help much and that is when they decided to send him to Tanzania to go and stay with relatives for a while. He stayed there for a while before coming back into the country. He only completed primary school and did not proceed to secondary because his parents could not afford. He started doing menial jobs at the age of 15years. Currently he is employed in a retail food store as an attendant and spends most of his day there

Osman is a young man who joined Al-Shabaab between 2012 and 2014. He came back to his community in Mombasa after withdrawing from the group. Many thought the time he was missing he was working in Saudi Arabia however, this was not the case. He graduated from high school and immediately started job searching. He reiterates that it was not easy to get employment and being a young man with needs he always looked out for opportunities. It is during this period he was introduced into Al-Shabaab through a friend, with a lot of promises of incentives and change in leadership. Upon failure of Al-Shabaab to honour its agreement, Osman withdrew and returned home. He is currently involved in subsistence farming in their small yard and also volunteers in a CBO.

Hamisi who is 26years old was both a member of Al-Shabaab and MRC. He was introduced into Al-Shabaab network by his elder brother. This was in 2011 a year after he had graduated from high school. He arrived at such a decision because of peer influence however, he also narrated land disposition as the main issue that influenced his decision.

Omari, Hamisi's elder brother feels disappointed as he recalls how he accompanied his father countless times to the land offices to no avail. He joined Al-Shabaab and MRC through some key community leaders, for him MRC offered a promising leadership for the region whereas Al-Shabaab provided a means for the Coastal people to get their land back. He was member of both groups for 4 years and only withdrew after countless efforts by his community who provided young men like himself with entrepreneurship skills and micro-credit loans to start up small initiatives.

Issa a 27 year old male who was born and raised in Mombasa comes from a single parent background and his father is long deceased. He completed primary school and did not proceed due to financial constraints. He started engaging in jobs such as garbage collection and gardening so that he could assist his mother in raising his younger siblings. He decided to join Al-Shabaab after encountering several mistreatment from the police and his community. These experiences made him feel he had been discriminated and punished for other people's mistakes because he was a Muslim. Hence, his friend who was already a member introduced him to the Al-Shabaab network in 2012. However, he later left in 2014 citing the unexplained disappearance of his friend and also that his mother was not happy with his decision and had suffered depression. Upon reflection, he abandoned his pursuit and returned home to lead a quiet life, taking care of his ailing mother and also his younger siblings.

As was the case of Shee a 23 year old youth who comes from a polygamous background. Given the tensions between his father and his two wives he always found the company of friends more appealing. As a result he was recruited by his close friend when he was still in high school in 2011.

Salo (26years old) who has a higher diploma in business studies also worked as a cyber attendant previously. He joined Al-Shabaab through his friend who was already in Somalia and was also encouraged after witnessing the harassment of his uncle on allegations of being a terror suspect. His Uncle is alleged to have disappeared mysteriously since 2010. Several efforts to find him have failed whereas the police have shunned their claims.