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## The Nexus Between Prison's Aspect of Criminal Justice and Drivers of Youth Radicalization in Isiolo County, Kenya

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### ABSTRACT

The study investigated how Prisons Aspect of Criminal Justice System Influence Youth Radicalization in Isiolo County, Kenya. This study was premised on three theories: frustration-aggression, rational choice, and criminal justice. The study area was Isiolo County. Isiolo County, is located almost in the center of the country, 285 km north of Nairobi. Though Islam and Christianity are practiced in Isiolo County, the inhabitants are largely Muslim. The county is mostly arid with some semi-arid areas, economically poor and marginal. The study focused on Isiolo, Merit and Garbatulla sub-counties. Additionally, the study was underpinned by descriptive survey research design. The sample size was composed of 287 households, remandees and mainstream prisoners, key informants, youth returnees and radicalized and extremist youths. The sampling strategies used included simple random sampling, purposive sampling for key informants and snowballing for youth returnees and radicalized and extremist youths. Data was collected through questionnaires, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Quantitative data was analyzed through SPSS where descriptive and inferential statistics was generated while qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis with themes generated through verbatim triangulation. In line with specific objective one, the study concludes that demographic elements were critical in establishing the nexus between the criminal justice systems and youth radicalization. The study found that poverty, economic marginalization, religious fanaticism, and overcrowding of the prisons were major drivers for youth radicalization in Isiolo County. Overall, the study concludes that despite various efforts and strategies adopted by the government, both national and County, to militate against youth radicalization in Isiolo County, Prisons aspect of criminal justice system has continued to face multiple challenges that have stymied its efficacy. Thus, the situation has continued unabated, to the detriment of the greater population of Isiolo County. The study recommends that a criminal justice framework be put in place to address the endemic factors for specific objective one to address radicalization.

### INTRODUCTION

Globally, there are multitudinous cases that abound on criminal justice miscues that have fueled youth radicalization within the prisons. It is estimated that the number of people imprisoned for violent extremist and terrorist offenses is rising. These inmates could promote extremist ideas, and it is feared that radicalized inmates could commit acts of terrorism once released. In order to meet their human rights commitments, provide for their rehabilitation and reintegration, and ensure the safety and security of all of their inmates, the treatment of these inmates is a critical issue for prison authorities (Silke and Veldhuis, 2017).

The failure of the criminal justice system (CJS) to address negative socioeconomic factors like as corruption and lack of effective governance, resulting in youth unemployment, is a major contributor to youth radicalization (UNDP,2016). Disgruntled youngsters pay the price in countries like Yemen and Syria where the criminal justice system (CJS) is flawed and constructed to serve the elite. Since these countries' youth are thought to be less involved with democratic activities that promote rule of law, the incumbent regimes have ignored their misery and implemented jail systems skewed against them. As a result, overcoming intolerance is a difficult

task. Youth radicalization and CJS have a substantial association on views and experiences of injustice and systematic prejudice, according to UNDP (2016). High corruption levels fuel the perception of injustice. Radicalization is exacerbated by long periods of impunity for corruption.

The connection between violent extremism and criminality and jails has also been underlined. There is the potential for criminals to be influenced by the presence of criminals and terrorists in jails, where they can collaborate and exchange skills. Discharged criminals may also be vulnerable to recruiting because they face fewer options when re-entering society after serving their terms. However, the probability of violent extremism in prison environments is not necessarily directly related to criminality; rather, the general conditions, such as overcrowding, inadequate staffing, and perceived prejudice or inequity, have been proven to influence radicalization (Katajoki,2018).

Youth radicalization is one of the biggest global challenges that both the Global North and Global South are grappling with (Duffy, 2015). Governments allocate and re-allocate huge resources for criminal justice departments to prevent youth radicalization, although there has been every so often, lack of a conceptual

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foundation for understanding extremists and their acts of violence. It is at the policy level, for example, when decisions are made on how a state should respond to extremism, that this divide poses a severe difficulty. On the individual level, there are considerations to be made concerning whether or not an individual who advocates for extreme ideologies poses a substantial threat to a nation's personnel, assets, and interests (Shimko, 2015). In Africa, criminal justice system remains rather fragile. The practice of criminal justice in developed countries is dependent on the system put in place.

Contemporary settings of criminal justice infrastructure, particularly in Africa has been largely dependent on colonial legacy established at the onset of independence (Kemp, 2014). Further, intra-state conflicts, wars and coup d'états have had grave repercussions on criminal justice, annihilating the system put to strengthen the system itself. Political transformations, tyrannies, poor governance and unstable states have converged at conflictual state of destruction. The post-colonial regime tend to entrench colonial justice administration systems. Broken criminal justice systems have the potential to skew the result of cases in favor of the favored party. In conflict and justice studies in Africa, criminal justice remains a key issue, despite numerous governments tinkering with the criminal justice system. Legitimacy of the legal system in Africa is also essential for the rule of law and the efficiency of the criminal justice system that results from that (Kemp, 2014).

Prisons have been described as breeding grounds (ICSR, 2012) and incubators (Christmann, 2012) for the radicalization process in Africa when it comes to radical and violent movements (ICSR, 2012). Due to overpopulation and inadequate staffing, the jail environment is especially conducive to radicalization (ICSR, 2012; Mulcahy, Merrington, & Bell, 2013). For instance, there is evidence that Boko Haram has radicalized and recruited members within Nigerian jails. When released from jail, radicalized ex-offenders can have a profound effect on society (Wolf, 2013, p. 569). The release of prominent ultraconservatives and militants by Tunisia's former government was identified by Wolf (2013, p. 569) as one of the key contributors to the emergence of Salafist influence.

In Kenya, youth radicalization remains a huge security threat. Just like in many other countries youth extremism has resulted to not only loss of lives, physical injuries, psychological trauma but also rising instability and insecurity. Youth radicalization manifest itself through terrorism and violent acts. This has led to unprecedented levels of insecurity that has resulted to distraction of the country's economy specifically the tourism sector, which is among Kenya's top earner that accounts to 10 % of the GDP (Tubei, 2017). In the recent past, the Kenyan government had claimed that it was an innocent victim of the Somali terrorist war against the West. The jihadist fundamentalist group Al-Shabaab, which is composed of young men, has stated on multiple times that it will

target anybody who voted for the government that sent troops to Somalia following Kenya's military participation in October 2011 (Hellstein, 2016). In addition, young Kenyan nationals have recently plotted and carried out various attacks in Kenya. This is conclusive evidence that terrorist acts in Kenya are connected to its foreign and internal policy (Hellstein, 2016). Many factors have contributed to the radicalization and recruitment of Kenyan youth. Due to an increase in criminal and extremist activity in the area, recruitment has shifted and is now much more prevalent.

There has been an increase in the number of international human rights organizations and civil society organizations concerned about the vulnerability of young people as a target for extremist groups. Al-Shabaab recruiters frequently target teenagers and young men in marginalized regions, regardless of their religious affiliation, political status, or ethnicity. (Hellstein, 2016).

The majority of easy targets are young Kenyans with little or no prospect for education and work chances. Additionally, there have been reports of recruiting in the border regions of the country. It should be noted that girls and children from wealthy households have also been recruited, as in the 2015 Garissa terror episode, where a lawyer from the University of Nairobi and a Chief's son were among those who were killed. According to media accounts, the student joined Al Shabaab not for the money, but because he felt a deep sense of injustice against the marginalization of Kenyan Muslims, and because he wanted to do something about it (Piercey, 2016). This context-setting study aimed to examine how Kenyan prisons contribute to the radicalization of Kenyan teenagers within Isiolo County.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Radicalization, which can eventually lead to extremism, is a multifaceted phenomena, and studies reveal that the motivations of those who join extremist organizations differ widely depending on their social class (Nordic Africa Institute, 2016). A specified number of youths hailing from poor backgrounds are enticed with money and material reward, while others believe in the jihadist ideology. There are those who have completely lost trust in the dysfunctional politics while others just seek to explore and get a set of rules and norms to follow. Additionally, there are those that join because they cannot resist peer or family pressure. The messaging and promises by these organized groups are alluring, resulting to more and more young men and women to give in. However, recruitment easily happens where poverty, inequality, ethnic and religious tension, political marginalization and insecurity are the day's order (Hellstein, 2016).

There are several factors that contribute to the radicalization of young people, including those that are political, economic, historical, ideological, and religious in nature. Inequality, isolation, unemployment, intolerance, and alienation are all factors that lure young people to extremist ideology and radicalism around the world. The

complex and biased CJS in which prisons are placed contributes to the radicalization of young people. There is a growing trend of CJS becoming a part of unstable governments, heightened regional tensions, and budding democracies. Young people in society have become increasingly disturbed by the promotion of human rights and gender equality on the international stage. A power vacuum in Libya gave rise to a wide range of rebel youth groups, which in turn greatly destabilized the country and its neighboring countries (Huq *et al*, 2011).

Researchers studying the radicalization of young people have found that a poor socioeconomic background is a predictor of a person's propensity to commit violent extremist crimes (Akbarzadeh, 2014). Global strategic importance and a significant shipping route make the Greater HoA an important area. It's also a place where individuals of all ethnicities, religions, and nationalities come together to form a vibrant community (Ali, 2017). One of today's most significant dangers to peace, security, and prosperity is the increase of youth radicalization in the HoA. (Kessels *et al*, 2016). A number of factors, including the existence of transnational terrorists and other violent groups, contribute to the radicalization of young people in the region. A wide range of chronic problems, including underdevelopment, weak governance, and high unemployment, contribute to these security challenges. Terrorist groups may be able to take advantage of young people by promising them a better life in exchange for money (Fink *et al*, 2013). According to Kessels *et al*. (2016), this region has been severely impacted by destructive cross-border communal conflicts, frequently sparked by resource constraints resulting from rapid population development and permeable borders. Local authorities lose credibility and their ability to prevent violent radicalization is undermined when the military and other repressive measures used in response to security threats such as terrorism are too disproportionate (2015). Terrorist groups have been able to spread their message and recruit support because of the region's underdevelopment and fragility (Global Center on Cooperative Security), as well as a wide range of youth complaints (2015).

UNDP (2016) claimed that unemployment or poverty are not the main push factors ("underlying/root reasons") for violent radicalization, but that feelings of injustice, human-rights violations, social-political exclusion, pervasive corruption, or continuous mistreatment of some groups within jail confinements also contribute to violent radicalization. Radical movements and violence are more likely to take hold when all of these discrepancies come together in/for a certain group. As a result of the state's inability to deliver basic rights, services, and security, non-state actors are able to seize control of State sovereignty and territory. Violent extremism could thrive in countries where political transitions have failed and where law enforcement and human rights violations have been rampant (UNDP, 2016).

Inadequacies in the criminal justice system lead to

increased inequality and create a vacuum that permits non-state actors to take state tasks, such as the monopoly on violence (UNDP, 2016). Long-term political shifts can foster radicalization among young people by making use of the state's inability to manage, for example, human trafficking, the trafficking of weapons and drugs, and other illicit activities that might provide revenue for terrorist organizations. There is a power vacuum that non-state groups are trying to fill and maintain in countries including Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Mali, Somalia, and the Central African Republic due to limited governmental capability and decreasing security. Radical extremists and worldwide organized crime syndicates benefit from weak systems because they give a safe refuge and fertile ground for strengthening their relationships (UNDP, 2016). There is a lack of empirical and research evidence.

The social and psychological factors that contribute to inmate radicalization have received little empirical investigation. Study after study has focused on finding out what can contribute to radicalization, including overcrowding, gang dynamics, and charismatic extremist leaders. Despite their usefulness, these testimonies do not explain why some persons become radicalized while others do not when faced with the identical prison conditions. Individuals who may be at danger of radicalization due to social or psychological factors are best identified empirically, which necessitates studies aimed at separating the two. Once the institutional factors have been identified, people are subsequently manipulated and accompanied (socialized) into extreme and violent actions in Kenya.

In many cases, this is facilitated by personal or emotional causes such as solitude, a need to find an identity and self-respect, retaliation for previous ill-treatment by the authority, and a desire for an online audience. For example, one of the masterminds behind the 2014 Garissa University massacre, in which 147 students were slaughtered, was a former lawyer. Reports from the scene showed that the assailant had reportedly joined Al-Shabaab not because he was looking for financial gain, but because he felt a deep obligation to his 'brothers' in the group and was angry over the marginalization of Kenyan Muslims (Piercey, 2016). Young people who engage in acts of extreme violence generally do so out of a sense of belonging to a group that promotes a higher ideal, however erroneous that ideal may be. It is impossible to buy a sense of belonging, which is why extreme organizations depend on it so heavily when recruiting new members.

As a result, it is necessary to study and consider the fundamentals of the social fabric of States at risk from their citizens joining radicalized networks (UNDP, 2016). Those drawn to radicalization, according to Maclean, want to make a difference, see the world in black-and-white terms, and want to be on the right side of history for the right reasons (Maclean, 2013). The Tsarnaev brothers in the Boston bombing, on the other hand, used extreme

ideology to point the finger at society both domestically and internationally (Sageman, 18 2004). It was becoming increasingly difficult for them to sustain themselves and each other after their parents' divorce and the subsequent abandonment of the boys in America. Boston Marathon bombing was sparked by radical Islamist ideology that provided an outlet for their resentment at the United States, which had failed them (Stohl *et al.*, 2017). "Why him?" and "Why now?" are common responses to instances of radicalization that occur. Just how could eight IS recruits come from a small hamlet in Norway (Higgins, 2015), five of the seven Madrid train bombers came from a pre-university in Montreal (Perreux, 2015), and so on (Atran, 2010)? People who had close-knit social networks, such as neighborhood groups or soccer teams, may have had a group-action template from which they could participate in the heroic adventure together in another context (Atran, 2010).

Most participants in buddy groups are not drawn to extremism, though. The culprits are astonishingly average people, making it ineffective to point the finger at certain personality qualities or demographic characteristics (Post, 2005). Islamic extreme groups have been forming in Somalia for a long time (Muhula, 2007). It's not uncommon for these factors to play a part in a person's identity, community safety, clan affiliation, and the accompanying material rewards and security. Radicalization may not be caused by unmet social and economic needs alone (Ooko, 2014). Radicalization may begin, however, if social and economic requirements go unmet and there is severe social marginalization. Both in Kenya and Somalia, this has been a hot topic. But it does not mean that radical and terrorist organisations are the result of a chronic socioeconomic problem in a particular country or area (Ooko, 2014).

There have been attempts by academicians and security specialists to find a middle ground and settle on a typology to establish what drives people to accept extremist views that lead to terrorism, particularly young people (Ooko, 2014). There is no evidence that poverty and alienation are the root causes of mental illness. It's hardly surprising that the majority of radicalized American teenagers come from the margins of society. Some killers, such as those who carried out the Garissa University attack in Kenya, were found to be law students or medical students, though (Honwana, 2014). Doctors, medical researchers, and an engineer made up all eight of the suspected terrorists in the failed assaults on the airports of London and Glasgow in June 2007. (Ooko, 2014). Both of them were British citizens. Moreover, recent events have demonstrated that the wealthy middle and upper classes are home to a significant number of dangerous radicals. Globalization has helped spread terrorism across national borders, as the recent Westgate attack demonstrates, making it harder to tell the difference between local and transnational terrorism (Moghadam, 2017). Al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups like them will be viewed in a different light because of this. Understanding their strength,

organization, and control over the worldwide jihad network is one possible consequence of this (Agbibo, 2014). Another implication is that nations such as Kenya, Uganda, and Somalia, engaged in counterterrorism efforts, require aid in enhancing their intelligence capabilities to respond appropriately. Radicalization can only be countered if the underlying existential and intellectual conditions that it exploits are addressed.

## METHODOLOGY

This study was premised on three theories: frustration-aggression, rational choice, and criminal justice. The study area was Isiolo County. Isiolo County, is located almost in the center of the country, 285 km north of Nairobi. Its capital, Isiolo Town, lies along the main highways leading to Moyale, Ethiopia and Somalia. Though Islam and Christianity are practiced in Isiolo County, the inhabitants are largely Muslim. The county is mostly arid with some semi-arid areas, economically poor and marginal. The study focused on Isiolo, Merit and Garbatulla sub-counties. Additionally, the study was underpinned by descriptive survey research design.

The sample size was composed of 287 households, remandees and mainstream prisoners, key informants, youth returnees and radicalized and extremist youths. The sampling strategies used included simple random sampling, purposive sampling for key informants and snowballing for youth returnees and radicalized and extremist youths. Data was collected through questionnaires, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Quantitative data was analyzed through Social package for Social Science (SPSS) tool version 24 where descriptive and inferential statistics was generated while qualitative data was analysed using content analysis with themes generated through verbatim triangulation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Age of the respondents

The study sought to ascertain whether there is a relationship between age of the respondents and radicalization. Out of 287 respondents, 135 (47.04%) were between 16-25 years, 86 (29.97%) were between 26-35 years, 29 (10.10%) were between 36-45 years, 22 (7.66%) were between 45-50 years and 15 (5%) were above 51 years.

The results presented above are consistent with those found by Hutson *et al.* (2014). They claim that studies on radicalization consistently find that young men between the ages of 15 and 25 play a significant role in the offender role across all geographic and cultural contexts. Arrests made in Mauritania related to terrorism all involved young people between the ages of 16 and 24. According to the findings of Hutson *et al.* (2014), young men in the Middle East are more likely to be involved in terrorist acts or political violence than any other age group. The process of becoming radicalized is commonly associated with being a teenager in the literature on Islamic extremism. According to Silber and Bhatt (2011), the radicalization

process can be characterized in four phases: (1) pre-radicalization, (2) self-identifying, (3) indoctrination and (4) jihadization. In the first phase, people are living reasonably normal lives and have not been exposed to radical ideologies. Self-identification refers to individuals' introduction to and eventual endorsement of radical ideologies. For individuals between the ages of 15 and 35, the first two stages are times of radical idea and attitude formation. The third phase involves an increase in radical ideas and an acceptance of violence as a means to uphold them. At this ultimate phase, members of the terrorist cell or movement put nothing before the cause.

### Gender of the Respondents

The research looked at how different gender affected the likelihood of young people becoming radicalized. The majority of radicalized individuals were men, comprising 50.52 percent of the entire sample. Only 48.49% of the respondents were female. Figure 4.2 shows the outcomes. Female terrorists are typically uncommon, as the vast majority of individuals that engage in terrorist attacks are typically male (Morgan, 2001:11-12). Female terrorists and radicalized women have been noted to take up traditionally male roles, such as engineering, truck driving, working in construction, or teaching in madrasas. Seventy-one percent of individuals in a UNDP (2017) study on the causes of extremism in African states indicated that they were motivated to become radicalized as a result of state abuse of law or human rights. While incidents of violence and marital strife were present, the study found that the women interviewed had common complaints (UNDP, 2017). The following narratives from one of the female respondents who averred that:

In Form 2, I hung out primarily with drug-using, miraa-chewing male buddies (Khat). To some extent, I looked up to my drug-using father and aspired to follow in his footsteps. As a result, I became involved with and eventually married one of these drug-using men. The interview took place on July 25, 2021 at Eldera, Isiolo County.

Even after the respondent's parents divorced, she continued to look up to her father. As a result of her association with similarly-inclined acquaintances, she engaged in criminal activity that landed her in prison on terrorist charges. As a result, the responder based her identity on the qualities she ascribed to her father, which she considered to be those of a deviant. However, she argued that this weakness was actually a source of strength because it allowed her to identify with and learn from those who were similarly 'strong' to her father. Another female respondent aged 43 years narrated as follows:

Since my childhood, I have wanted to be a madrasa teacher but due to Muslim bias against female Muslims I faced a lot of challenges. In my attempt to study a degree in Islamic studies, I was discontinued since I was the only woman in class. However, I persisted and attained my degree in Islamic studies. I have the passion to pursue

my master's degree in Islamic studies despite restrictions on women. With a degree I managed to teach madrasa, earning the title of *ustadh*. (Interview conducted, 16th July, 2021, Sericho, Isiolo county).

The respondent viewed herself from the strength of masculinity by engaging in masculine tasks. She strived to do the extraordinary to accomplish the masculine roles as attached to the Islamic faith. Her masculine behavior therefore translated into her individual perception as being equal to men and as strong as men by virtue of performing socially viewed masculine tasks. Arising from her individual meaning of herself, she therefore excelled in the extraordinary roles of teaching madrasa and attaining university education in Islamic studies. Her understanding of the roles she performed, thereafter found her associated with radicalization of the youth (via the madrasa classes she was teaching) which led to her imprisonment on terrorism related charges.

Another respondent aged 33 years, narrated how his life was influenced as a result of being a male in the family:

When I was 3 years old, my mom passed away. In addition to my paternal grandmother and uncles, who helped raise me, my upbringing was facilitated by my father's status as Imam and his two wives. I always wanted to be an Imam because I was a son and was expected to follow in my father's footsteps. I've made it a goal of mine to learn as much as I can about Islam and the Koran. We spoke with them on the 31st of July, 2021, at Kinna, Isiolo County.

Respondent valued the traditional male assumption that he would take on his father's social role as Imam. He accomplished this by the conventional route, by devoting himself to the study of Islam. Accordingly, the respondent always saw himself as a natural successor to his father's position as a Muslim preacher.

Respondents' accounts corroborate the Islamic belief that women should be subservient and caretakers of men and children. However, masculinity is viewed through the lens of strength, aggressiveness, and domination, all of which are attractive to those looking to join a radical group for recruitment purposes. Derry (2008) proposed the concept of maternal ethics, which is questioned by feminists, as practiced by women in their roles as mothers and peacemakers (Moore, 2008:283). Women's involvement in terrorism has been seen as culturally unusual because of their traditionally supportive roles in families, in contrast to those of men.

Women are less likely to become terrorists because of the widespread cultural belief in Kenya that fighting is a man's job. Women who join violent extremism, the survey found, often struggle for gender equality by assuming traditionally male responsibilities. Women, as they have done in other traditionally male-dominated fields, are stepping up to fill leadership roles in terrorist organizations.

This trend is likely to accelerate the trend of women becoming terrorists. Some radicalized individuals may use this conception of masculinity as justification for terrorist acts.

### **Whether Prison aspects of criminal justice system relate to youth radicalization**

This research aimed to find potential connections between prison conditions and radicalization in young people. Based on the findings, it is clear that elements of the prison system are significantly associated with radicalization among young people. Of the 287,233 responses, 81.18% found a substantial correlation between the criminal justice system and juvenile radicalization, while 18.82% found no correlation at all.

The education gap in “Sub-Saharan” Africa is five years, while in North Africa and the Middle East it is three. While many studies find similar results, others do not. When asked about the demographics of suicide bombers, Gill said that there is no apparent profile. Offender education levels range from the very unskilled to the highly educated. Also not making an obvious connection between the terrorists’ profile and college education is a study compiled by the British House of Commons in the wake of the July 2005 bombings in London. Furthering violent extremist goals through jail radicalization is another important factor at the heart of the VE Action Plan.

There are two main causes for this: first, the conditions inside prisons might operate to produce or inflame existing hatred; and second, the fact that jails provide a unique setting within which individuals can promote radical and violent ideas (Speckhard, Shajkovci, & Esngul 2017). Human rights compliance by the detaining State is emphasized by the fact that “harsh treatment in detention facilities can play a disconcertingly powerful role in the recruitment of a large number of individuals who have joined violent extremist groups and terrorist organizations” (General Assembly report A/70/674, para. 31). Prisoners may turn to violent extremist groups for help and safety if they experience bad prison circumstances, ill-treatment, institutional corruption, or criminal activity while incarcerated. Better measures are urgently needed to be put in place to avoid or at least decrease the promotion of violent extremist ideas (General Assembly report A/70/674, para. 31), and this is in addition to more effectively addressing such situations. There may be synergies between the causes of violent extremism and the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, implementing such measures would help in meeting the criteria of the SDGs and would also lessen the “push” factors of people prone to engaging in violent actions. While SDG 16 does not address prisoner treatment directly, it does attempt to reduce all forms of violence and improve the rule of law.

As the Belgium Action Plan against Radicalization in Prisons observed:

Without a doubt, the most potent weapon in the fight against radicalization in jails is a humane detention policy that respects the fundamental rights of inmates and focuses relentlessly on rehabilitation and reintegration. Consequently, a detention sentence or measure must be carried out in settings that honor human dignity, allow

the detainee to maintain or increase their sense of self-respect, and inspire them to take personal and social responsibility. (Belgium Federal Public Service-Justice, 2015, pp. 4, 6)

To ascertain if prison conditions had contributed to the rise in crime in Kenya, the actual operation of the prisons was being closely examined. Criminologists were nearly unanimous in their belief that jails were not effective places for offender rehabilitation. After serving their time in prison, inmates return to the outside world to work. Unfortunately, ex-convicts discover that the tools and methods they learned while incarcerated are now antiquated, and that their talents are mostly useless in today’s high-tech workforce. What’s more, they have extremely unsuitable work habits. No one in the jail system has the expertise to teach inmates the trades that would give them an edge in the labor market once they are released. Other than the obvious physical and mental tolls, the monotony and emptiness of prison life may be devastating. Rather than considering the requirements of the inmates, prison routines are devised to make prison administration’s lives easier (inmates). Odegi Awuondo (1994) argues that the state is dependent on the prison system and the criminal industry because of the cheap labor that inmates supply.

### **Driving factors for youth radicalization in Isiolo County**

#### **Poverty as a driving factor for youth radicalization**

The study sought to determine if economic hardship was a contributing factor to radicalization among Isiolo County’s young people. Out of a total of 287 respondents, 201 (70.03%) said that poverty was a major factor in young people becoming radicalized. In addition, 51 people (17.77%) cited poverty as a major role, 20 (6.799%) cited poverty as a motivating element in some way, 10 (3.84%) cited poverty as a minor influence, and 5 (1.742%) cited poverty as never being a motivating factor. Researchers have found that when people in a society experience socioeconomic disparity, they often feel frustrated and angry because they are unable to attain the same levels of success enjoyed by others. This leads to sectarian strife inside specific regions, which in turn increases the threat of terrorism in such places (Newman, 2006). Unemployment’s effect on social inequality is another contributor to widespread public discontent (Laqueur 2014). There is an association between terrorism and human development, as measured by the Human Development Index, which considers per capita income, life expectancy, and education (Schmid, 2005).

Multiple scholars have asserted a causal link between extreme poverty and terrorist acts (see Schmid 1983; Harmon 2000; Hasisi and Pedahzur 2000; Krueger and Maleckova 2002). This is because many people feel disenfranchised since they believe the government’s priorities are at odds with those of the average citizen. Because of this, many people turn to extreme measures, such as terrorism, in an effort to ensure their own

existence. In the right combination, these factors can create a recruiting hotspot for terrorist groups. Many of those who answered the survey noted that financial difficulties were a factor in their radicalization. One male respondent, aged 24, who was born in a different country, disclosed that he was born into extreme poverty and attempted to make ends meet by participating in a number of activities, some of which were illegal and required him to travel extensively inside and outside of his country. He narrates:

In the place where I was born, there has always been political unrest. As a result of our financial struggles, I was never able to complete my formal education. I attempted to visit my uncle in Nairobi, Kenya several times, but never managed to stay with him. In the end, I went with my mom to Nairobi so she could sell some items, and that's when I was taken in by authorities and thrown in jail for terrorism. (Interview conducted, 15th August, 2021, Merti, Isiolo County).

Further, another Respondent said

My mother was a single parent, and my father refused to have anything to do with me, so I spent much of my youth on my own. Due to my mother's and paternal grandfather's passing, I was disowned by my uncles. I went to stay with one of my maternal uncles in Eastleigh, Nairobi, where he worked as a security guard, but I soon found the place intolerable. Previously, I had a job selling water, but the low pay often forced me to steal from my boss. For various reasons, I had to leave my Eastleigh apartment and move to a friend's place in Bifra, Nairobi. The Jihadists lured me into their trap by convincing me to leave Bifra Estate and go to Somalia via Isiolo for a high-paying employment. The interview took place on August 30th, 2021, at Malka Gala in Merti-Isiolo.

After his mother died, the respondent claims his close family disowned him and he lived a solitary existence. He attempted to connect with others for emotional support and friendship but fell into the hands of radicals instead. Similarly, one respondent having been affected by poverty narrates:

I had to leave school after the primary level because of financial difficulties, so I moved to Mombasa and started looking for work. I worked as a housekeeper for a few families and as a waitress at a few different Mombasa eateries. And then I got married and we opened a restaurant, and I got arrested and accused with terrorism. (Interview conducted, 15th August, 2021, BulaPesa, Isiolo County).

One Key Informant (chief) said

During my research of the countermeasures taken on behalf of radicalized individuals, I discovered that households where no one was gainfully employed or had a source of income were particularly vulnerable to recruitment efforts on behalf of radical groups. There is still communication between recruits and their family members, suggesting that in some homes where one sibling has been recruited, other siblings or close relatives are also recruited. (Interview conducted, 10th August,

2021, Waso Isiolo Sub-County).

Several of the participants in this study reported coming from economically disadvantaged homes. They detailed their lives of drudgery and struggle to make ends meet. They are arrested, arraigned in court, and sent to prison because their loved ones participated in radicalization programs and joined extremist groups. It gets more challenging to be incarcerated, and their condition can spread to other inmates. Some of them stated they had to travel far from home in order to find work that would allow them to support themselves and their families. This finding demonstrates that low income is a significant factor in radicalisation. The majority of individuals (especially young people) leave their homes in search of better economic possibilities in other countries in an effort to fight poverty. Some people on the lookout for work ran into extremists who radicalized and recruited them to join a terrorist group. Male respondents in their thirties and early twenties who were each promised a teaching position in Kismayu and a lucrative position in Somalia ultimately found themselves recruited into VE. Thus, the topic of poverty is addressed within the framework of work, as the two are inextricably linked. However, it's a conundrum why some people living in abject poverty choose to join terrorist groups while others in the same situation choose not to. The old cliché that "terrorists are formed not born" (see Silke, 1998:51-59) may actually be correct.

What this shows, based on what has been covered here and in the prior parts, is that both psychological and societal variables contribute to the formation of a terrorist. It has been theorized from a variety of sociological perspectives what motivates certain people to engage in or abandon radicalization.

Many incarcerated people have experienced social exclusion both before and after their incarceration, as was hinted at in the work of the UK government's Social Exclusion Unit (2016). (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). Extremism can only thrive in a climate where basic governmental social duty for the wellbeing of the people is ignored, as stated by Benazir Bhutto (2014). Terrorism and religious fanaticism are fed by the despair brought on by political despotism and social pessimism. This study shows that time spent behind bars and subsequent recidivism can provide fertile ground for the recruitment and radicalization of new terrorists, so it stands to reason that social exclusion and terrorism are linked. Many variables, not simply financial status, contribute to social exclusion.

One respondent stated that the repercussions of poverty, such as increased vulnerability to radicalization, are indisputable. If you're out of work, you might spend more time at the mosque or online, where you could be exposed to extremist ideology and convinced to join a terrorist group. Similar to how one is more likely to interact with Islamist groups if they reside in a low-income, high-immigrant area, Interview with one of the key informants August 10th 2021 at Bula Pesa, Isiolo

County). Discrimination, marginalization, unemployment, insufficient education, training, and skill sets, substandard living environments, high crime rates, broken families, substance abuse, and other factors can all contribute to a person's sense of social exclusion (Schneider, 2015). While it's true that any one of these could lead to isolation, the real problems occur when two or more of these elements combine to form a vicious cycle. According to research by the Social Exclusion Unit in 2002, an individual's personal difficulties may contribute to their social isolation. However, it may also have a prenatal origin. There is still a substantial impact on a person's life prospects if they are born into poverty or to parents with poor levels of education or employment experience. In light of the many causes of marginalization, it is clear that Kenya has a serious social exclusion problem. To start, there is widespread poverty in the country, which compounds existing problems. A lack of resources, such as money and time, can lead to poverty. In contrast to countries like the United States and Europe, Kenya has less social systems in place to aid those in marginalized situations. This suggests once again the importance of a comprehensive strategy to counter terrorism. It's important to recognize the link between a person's socioeconomic status and his or her likelihood of experiencing social exclusion, which can then lead to criminal behavior.

#### Low levels of education

The purpose of the study was to determine whether low levels of schooling contributed to the radicalization of youngsters in Isiolo County. The study revealed that among 287 respondents, 199 (69.34%) indicated that lack of education was an extreme aspect that contributed to the radicalization of adolescents.

In addition, 67 (23.34%) respondents stated that low levels of education were a major factor, 14 (4.484%) stated that low levels of education were a factor in some way, 3 (1.04%) stated that low levels of education were hardly a factor, and 4 (1.3%) stated that low levels of education were never a factor.

Extremism and radicalization among young people are linked to widespread illiteracy. Participants in all six states cited widespread illiteracy as a major role in the rise of fundamentalism among the younger generation. Out of a total of sixteen criteria, illiteracy was rated as the second most problematic in the state of Gombe. In the state of Yobe, it was likewise rated highly, in second place. In Borno state, it scored lower, at #4 out of 16 causes of teenage extremism and violence. Seventy-five percent said it was crucial in Kano. Ignorance and poverty make it harder for the illiterate to question the claims made by extremist groups. Though it is clear that those without formal education do not make the bombs used by Boko Haram, arrest data suggests that the "real armies of suicide bombers and terrorists' foot soldiers" are drawn from such "disadvantaged, stranded populations,"

highlighting the ways in which poverty, lack of education, and indoctrination contribute to terrorism.

#### Religious Fanatism

The study sought to examine whether religious fanaticism was a driving factor for youth radicalization in Isiolo County. The study found out that, out of 287 respondents, 167 (58.19%) indicated that religious fanaticism was an extreme factor and contributed to youth radicalization. Besides, 71 (24.74%) stated that religious fanaticism was a great factor, 29 (10.10%) reasoned that religious fanaticism somehow was a driving factor while 10 (3.484%) stated that religious fanaticism was hardly a factor and 10 (3.484%) reasoned that religious fanaticism was never a driving factor.

In view of the foregoing results, one the key informants averred that:

Terrorism is an integral part of Islam, and Islam itself is a form of terrorism. These Somali Muslims are deeply rooted in Isiolo's radicalization issue. The preaching of violence is cloaked in well-established religious language. In Isiolo County, where radicalization is occurring at present, Islamist ideology is intrinsic to the problem. Scholars and clergy trained in Islamic ideas are at the forefront of this movement. (Interview with Key Informant, 17th August 2021 .Isiolo Central sub-County). Scholars have first argued that radical ideologies are assumed to precede violent actions when studying radicalization (Borum 2011, 9). Therefore, I agree with Neumann (2013, 874) who believes that the research of the reasons of cognitive radicalization should not be seen as irrelevant to the study of behavioral radicalization, and I will not draw a link between radical views and violent behavior. Second, some scholars have noted that the study of radicalization typically focuses on only one side of a conflict (e.g., Schmid 2013, 18-19).

The radicalization of both Christian and Muslim young adults was the focus of this research. Support for resorting to violence to attain a religious or political goal is correlated with the degree to which an individual has become religiously radicalized at that time. Our description is consistent with others offered by academics and government organizations, all of which highlight the importance of justifying violence in order to attain goals as a key component of radicalization (Crossett and Spitaletta 2010; McCauley and Moskalenko 2008; Wilner and Dubouloz 2010).

There are three contexts in which the word "religious fanaticism" is employed. First, it's a descriptive term: in the context of our research, religious extremism refers to hostile views and actions toward people of different faiths. Second, the word alludes to the beginning of the justification for violence. Decisions to target members of another group are typically based on specific, established, and sometimes "fringe" interpretations of religious doctrine, or on the basis of defending one's own religious community, as is the case in the Kenyan context and many others (Juergensmeyer 2003; Wiktorowicz 2005).

Many people attribute the proliferation or belief of extremist interpretations of any religion in large part to religious fervor, and many atheists and agnostics share this view. According to earlier studies, Islamic fundamentalism is linked to extremism in Kenya, thus the situation there is not dissimilar. Indoctrination of Muslim youth, as seen in many regions of the world, into the view that the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other parts of the Middle East are part of a global campaign against Islam and the necessity of 'Jihad' against this effort. However, when examining Islamic extremism, it is essential to keep in mind the words of William Chittick. He emphasized that;

"If we realize that jihad does not mean 'holy war' but 'struggle' then the struggle can take place on three levels: against a visible enemy, against the devil or against self or (nafs) ego" (Chittick, 2001).

This confusion over Jihad's goals has provided fertile ground for extremist preachers to mislead their congregations. Kenya is not immune to the spread of these false interpretations, which have contributed to a rise in extremism there. Aboud Rogo, a notorious Muslim priest who recently passed away, was an effective propagandist. In one of his many speeches, he expertly manipulates and justifies the necessity to wage violence by quoting from the Quran and hadiths.

The Quran quotes that;

It is possible to despise something that is beneficial for you and to appreciate something that is detrimental for you; this is why Jihad has been ordained for you even though it is distasteful to you. To put it bluntly, Allah knows everything and you don't. (Al-Bagarah, 217).

Religious affiliation is another facet of society that must be taken into account. There has been a dramatic increase in religious extremism, bloodshed, and global reach associated with modern terrorism (Martin 2010). The term "religious terrorism" refers to acts of political violence inspired by the firm conviction that a supernatural being has approved, and in some cases commanded, the terrorist acts in question for the sake of advancing the faith (Martin 2010). Those who engage in religious terrorism do so with the hope of being rewarded for their deeds in the hereafter (Martin 2010). There is no one faith free from extremism. The most widespread form of religiously inspired terrorism nowadays is associated with the Islamic extremist movement (Martin, 2010).

Overall, religious terrorism has been on the rise, becoming one of the leading causes of terrorism around the world. Since religion may play a factor in the frequency of terrorist acts, it becomes prudent to investigate the country's major religion. To put it simply, religious terrorism is any act of political violence that stems from a firm conviction that an extraterrestrial authority has approved of, or even authorized, the use of violent means to advance a religious cause (Martin, 2010). Extremism is not unique to any one faith; rather, it permeates virtually all of them, as adherents of each hold firm to the conviction that extraordinary events are

imminent.

The Al Shabaab, a group of Muslim extremists, has been responsible for several terrorist incidents in Kenya. Consequently, some extremist groups within Islam recruit new members by encouraging them to adopt their extreme views. Those who engage in religious terrorism often feel justified in their actions, and even rewarded for them, in the hereafter (Martin 2010). Participants in the interviews claimed to be devout Muslims at the time they became involved in radicalism (or converted after recruitment into radicalization). According to their accounts, Islam significantly impacted their worldview.

One respondent narrated that:

We were told that our conflict was a holy war in accordance with the Koran when we were in the camp. I've dedicated myself to this cause for the sake of gaining enlightenment. While incarcerated, I read the Koran and realized that our group had been misinformed about Jihad. Jihad, I realized, is a fight against evil on an individual level and not against other people. It dawned on me that we had been duped into thinking this conflict was righteous. (Interview conducted with Nyumba Kumi Ambassador, 30th August, 2021 Magado Isiolo County). The respondent argues that the radicalizers used his naiveté regarding the Koran and Islam in order to recruit him. A realization that he had been led astray and the Koran misconstrued to lead him into extremism came to him while he was behind bars, he said.

A second respondent, who admits he was never a practicing Muslim, describes his introduction to Islam:

My family and I moved into our grandfather's empty house after leaving the apartment where I spent my early years. I was unable to maintain my social network in my new environment and consequently spent much of my time alone. During that period, I read my father's collection of Islamic literature and learned a lot about who I am as a person. When I was exposed to Islamic preaching, I had a new understanding of Islam that differed from my initial impressions. Is that the same thing as becoming a radical? (Interview conducted, 31st July, 2021, Isiolo County).

This respondent's social network was obviously disrupted by the move. He turned to the Islamic books he'd found in his father's home as a last resort. He claims this led him to become a radical. His interpretation of the Koran shifted, and he became a radical as a result.

Another respondent, previous to being linked with radicalization, similarly spent a great deal of time studying Islamic law and the Koran. In his lived experience, he narrates:

I was eager to follow in my father's footsteps and become a madrasa instructor and imam. Before returning to the country, I studied Islamic law, the Koran, and Hadith in numerous Middle Eastern countries, despite having earned a diploma in aviation. Upon my return, I began preaching to the masses and mediating disputes between rival clans. After a while, I found work, during which time I was accused of being a violent extremist. (Interview conducted with key informant on 1st August, 2021 Merti

Isiolo County).

Respondents' accounts corroborate findings that extremist recruiters used the Koran to instill a hardened ideology in their targets. Some of the responders went on to pursue Islamic studies in the country or the Middle East, and then began actively preaching Islam. Religious belief was found to be a significant contextual component in relation to terrorism. The results suggest that most of the convicted terrorists who were interviewed were devout Muslims. One of them was the lone convert after being recruited by Al Shabaab. According to the survey's respondents, the majority hold the view that Jihad is the primary motivator of violent extremism. This could affect their sense of identity in relation to terrorist ideology. Many varieties of religious terrorism exist, as was previously indicated; nonetheless, Islamic extremism is by far the most prevalent (Martin 2010). Killing a human being, however, is viewed as a sin on par with "unbelief" in Islam (Gulen, 2004:1). As Islamic values define a religion and a way of life, divergence from the doctrine is a major cause for alarm when it comes to the Islamization of terrorism (Rahman, 1996). A Muslim religious leader (Key Informant) stated that certain extreme Muslim clerics are misusing Islam to radicalize their followers. He said:

Unfortunately, radicals have twisted the meaning of jihad to serve their own agenda. The Quran has been twisted in order to recruit followers for violent extremist groups. Most radicals have read the Koran and are familiar with Islamic law, so they know they are giving their followers bad information. They are intentionally sowing confusion to provoke people to violence. (Interview conducted, 31st July, 2021 at Malka, Gal, Isiolo County).

Due to his experience preaching to inmates, our confidential source has learned that several convicted terrorists have misunderstood passages of the Koran. Another Key informant (Christian cleric) argues:

One of the main reasons I preach the gospel in prisons is to provide rehabilitative services to the inmates. As a result, we have frequent and in-depth conversations with our Muslim colleagues on the lessons we've learned in the course of our work. Islam, as far as I can tell, is a religion that aims to provide for the spiritual requirements of its adherents, differing from Christianity only in its view of marriage and its role as a legal institution to control human conduct. I must admit that even Christianity has its radicals; some preachers forbid their congregations to seek medical attention or enroll their children in school. (Interview conducted, 31st July, 2021 Mado Isiolo County).

The respondent has had conversations with Muslim clerics, with whom they preach in jails, and has come to the conclusion that misinterpretation is frequent even in Christianity, where radical preachers mislead their followers for personal gain. While another Key Informant, (Judicial officer) said:

Religion has often been used as a tool of social unrest throughout human history. However, there are both

moderates and radicals within every religion. Some Islamic radicals twist the meanings of Jihad and Hadith to advance their own agendas. Unconfirmed claims made in the Hadith have been utilized by radical clergy to justify violence, making it the most misunderstood element of Islam. Those who have become radicalized and whom I have spoken with all appear to have been exposed to a same distorting narrative.

Those who read the Koran critically see they were duped into waging a needless war, and they defect. Consequently, members of the group are expected to think similarly rather than critically analyzing their differences of opinion. They have leaders who are on the lookout for dissenters within the organization so they may destroy them before they spread their poison. (Interview conducted, 18th August, 2021 Isiolo Town.)

Every member interviewed had converted to Islam, with the exception of one who converted immediately after joining an extremist group. It was discovered that their erroneous interpretation of the Koran rested on two main tenets: (a) fighting for Jihad, and (b) regaining an Islamic empire that would be independent of western influences. As a result of being exposed to the appropriate teaching, the vast majority of respondents said they learned important truths about the Koran while they were incarcerated.

The radicalization and recruitment of young people towards Muslim extremism have been blamed for Kenya's homegrown terrorism (Botha, 2014; International Crisis Group Briefing, 2014). Islamic extremism (practiced in Mosques for adults and madrassas or Muslim schools for children) contributes to religious and social conservatism and intolerance, therefore serving as predecessors to homegrown terrorism, as mentioned in a 2014 International Crisis Group Briefing backed up by primary and secondary sources. A number of Islamic clerics called for a ban on television while other Muslims went door-to-door banning alcohol and tobacco sales and enforcing strict clothing codes (International Crisis Group Briefing, 2014).

Again in the North Eastern Province, Muslim clerics in Mandera town closed public movie halls on the grounds that they were corrupting the minds of young people (International Crisis Group Briefing, 2014). Sheikh Ahmed Iman Ali, who established the Muslim Youth Center in Pumwani, Nairobi, in 2011, attracted a considerable jihadist following and was subsequently called the head and coordinator of al-Shabaab in Kenya (International Crisis Group Briefing, 2014; Lind *et al.*, 2015; Patterson, 2015).

Botha (2014) argued that al-extremist Shabaab's understanding of Islam came from outside the country, making it impossible for Kenya to stop the group's growth. Al-Shabaab is a terrorist organization with ties to al-Qaeda that is widely recognized to employ religion in furthering its aims, therefore this point of view is vital. But mosques acted as distribution depots for jihadi materials and recruitment hubs to lead adolescents to

Lamu and Kiunga, where they were further indoctrinated, with national identity cards and birth certificates being confiscated and burnt (International Crisis Group briefing, 2014). In support of the narrative of Islamic extremism, Botha (2014) found that 87% of respondents said religion (Islam) was a factor in their decision to join. There was the highest emphasis placed on this aspect.

A number of research questions are raised by this story, nevertheless. This is due to the fact that on December 7, 2012, a terrorist attack was carried out in a mosque shortly after Friday prayers, marking the first time this type of incident had been carried out in Kenya since 2011. Several Muslims were killed and several more were injured when a grenade was tossed into a mosque and exploded. A member of parliament for the area, himself a Muslim and a Somali, was at the mosque praying when the attack happened, and he was gravely hurt (Counterterrorism Center List of Terror Attacks, 2014). Even with this context in mind, there is still a lack of information regarding the causes of Muslim murders.

### **Economic Marginalization**

The study sought to examine whether economic marginalization was a driving factor for youth radicalization in Isiolo County. The study found out that, out of 287 respondents, 181 (63.07%) indicated that economic marginalization was an extreme factor and contributed to youth radicalization. Besides, 67 (23.34%) stated that economic marginalization was a great factor, 20 (6.97%) reasoned that economic marginalization somehow was a driving factor while 9 (3.14%) stated that economic marginalization was hardly a factor and 10 (3.484%) reasoned that economic marginalization was never a driving factor.

While adolescent extremism may be exacerbated by a lack of economic opportunity, the underlying cause of this is unequal development. It is clear that the lack of development in the most radicalized communities renders them more susceptible to radicalization. Inequitable distribution of a country's resources, including its ability to provide for its citizens' basic needs, results from uneven development. It's a common misconception, for instance, that rural communities have less access to public amenities than their metropolitan counterparts. It stands to reason that more resources would be available to wealthy neighborhoods compared to disadvantaged ones. On the Fund for Peace's 2012 Failed State Index, Kenya's uneven development ranked at 8.2 (where 10 indicates complete chaos and 1 indicates complete calm) (Fundforpeace, 2012). North Eastern Province, however, bears the brunt of this inequality's enduring stridency (NEP). Because of the region's arid climate and rugged topography, it has long been overlooked by both the federal government and local administration. The increase in extremism and violent acts has only made problems worse.

Regarding the educational sector, since the increase in extremist attacks, primary and secondary school kids have not gotten adequate quality instruction due to a lack of

qualified teachers. Teachers who stayed in the classrooms have taken on significantly more work; a teacher who formerly taught fewer than 10 lessons per week must now instruct 30. (Osman, 2015). After teachers in Mandera decided to walk off the job, the student-teacher ratio increased from 1:60 to 1:120, affecting an additional 91,000 kids (Osman, 2015). Undoubtedly, these educational gaps provide fertile ground for radicalization, causing young people to fall into the clutches of extremists who embrace them with open arms.

### **Political Discrimination**

The study sought to examine whether political discrimination was a driving factor for youth radicalization in Isiolo County. The study found out that, out of 287 respondents, 102 (35.54%) indicated that political discrimination was an extreme factor and contributed to youth radicalization. Besides, 77 (26.83%) stated that political discrimination was a great factor, 59 (20.56%) reasoned that political discrimination somehow was a driving factor while 37 (12.69%) stated that political discrimination was hardly a factor and 10 (4.181%) reasoned that political discrimination was never a driving factor.

Some Muslim adolescents in East African countries may be more receptive to recruitment by groups like Alshabaab because of their boredom, laziness, and thrill-seeking urges, which, when paired with emotions of marginalization and unmet expectations, arise from a lack of job prospects. According to one anthropologist, "today's most brutal terrorism is founded in rootlessness and restlessness" (Scott, 2010).

This research provides support for the hypothesis that economic inequality against minority groups is a causal factor linking the prevalence of terrorist incidents across countries. Although numerous qualitative studies of individual countries or individual terrorist movements have identified the experience of minority group injustice as a factor that arouses and fuels terrorist campaigns (for example, Bradley, 2006; Ergil, 2000), this factor has been largely overlooked in the growing cross-national, time-queries quantitative literature investigating the root causes of terrorism.

There has not been an analytically conducted cross-national empirical research of minority economic status as a cause of terrorism, except as a control result in studies focusing on democratic rule (Eubank and Weinberg, 1994), political stability (Lai, 2007), and national demographic makeup as prognosticators of terrorism (Wade and Reiter, 2007). Given the abundance of cross-national empirical studies on the causes of terrorism since 2001 (Young and Findley, 2011) and the weight accorded to the individual experience of ethnic, racial, or class discrimination as a predictor of aggressive behavior and future violent crime in sociology, social psychology, and criminology literatures, this is atypical (Dubois *et al.*, 2002; McCord and Ensminger, 2002; Simons *et al.*, 2006). Several pieces of research, including case studies from

Northern Ireland (O'Hearn, 1987), Latin America (Cleary, 2000), and Western Europe (Klausen, 2005), acknowledge that the experience of discrimination among marginalized groups is a cause of minority community radicalization that is abused by extremist movements and terrorist organizations play a significant role in this process because, like social movements and political parties, they give voice to the grievances of marginalized groups and channel them into violent action. Thus, they serve as mobilization vehicles, breaking down the mutual action barriers that prevent the greater outraged minority population from taking collective action to address their grievances (Sandler, 2003). One might also feel the effects of discrimination from the "target side" of a relationship. On the grounds that the Bajunis (a mostly Muslim group) had sided with the Somali shifita militia, he said the former president had dispatched security officers to remove locals from 12 communities (Ndurya, 2012). For this and other reasons, Muslims in Kenya have felt historically discriminated against by the country's leadership. Since Kenyan-Somalis, the public face of Islam in Kenya, have been raised with 'anger' against these consecutive administrations, it is simple for young Somali Muslims to join extremist groups in the name of 'defending' their faith and avenging atrocities.

In view of the foregoing one of the key informants argued that:

People who feel politically excluded are more likely to become religious extremists. Young people of all ethnic backgrounds in Kenya will be at risk of being duped by al-Shabaab recruiters as long as the country's internal politics remain polarized, corrupt, unequal, and powerless. Once again, young people have learned not to put much stock in the assurances politicians provide to their votes since they are rarely kept. (Interview with key informant at Bula PESA, 2nd August, 2021).

Our young people who have not earned normal formal education are easy targets for radicalization by the al-shabaab, as indicated in an interview with the chairperson of the Nyumba Kumi, a retired teacher. According to what I've learned, "while it's clear that illiterates don't make the explosives, most of the true terrorist attackers are drawn from the illiterate, underprivileged, and stranded adolescent population." (Interview with key informant at Bula PESA, 2nd August, 2021).

However, one of the divisional police commanders had quite a contrary view,

Disentangling radicalization among youth from low education and economic status is important. And neither should joblessness. Whatever the case may be, there are a great number of young people who, whether they have gone to school or not, have not chosen a life of crime to support themselves. In the same way that we would punish any other criminal act, radicalization must be treated as a serious crime. Legal doctrine nowhere permits a claim of financial hardship as an excuse for criminal behavior. (Interview with key informant at Malkadaka, August, 2021).

Among the most important claims made by scholars in this line of inquiry is that political discrimination causes religious radicalism and perpetuates marginalization. When looking at the causes of radicalization in Saudi Arabia, Hegghammer (2006, 43-44) finds that "some tribes experience political marginalization that makes them prone to Islamist radicalism." Pargeter (2009, p. 1036-38) contends that politically marginalized towns in Morocco are more likely to function as breeding grounds and recruiting streams for Islamist extremists than are nonpolitically marginalized towns. Lombardi, Eman, and Chin's (2014, 14-16) qualitative accounts imply that political outsiders' lack of trust in law enforcement and government officials may lead to further radicalization. In reference to Kenya, a similar case is made. Eastleigh's Somali community, like the coast's Muslim majority, has voiced frustration at being under-represented in politics. Muslims in Kenya have complained that they have been discriminated against politically, and that this is being justified under the guise of the worldwide war on terrorism (Rosenau 2005, 9). Al-Shabaab-affiliated radical religious clerics have used political marginalization as a rallying cry for violence against Christians in their propaganda campaign (Botha 2014a, 905).

#### **Lack of Employment**

The study sought to examine whether lack of employment was a driving factor for youth radicalization in Isiolo County. The study found out that, out of 287 respondents, 233 indicated that lack of employment was an extreme factor and contributed to youth radicalization. Besides, 20 stated that lack of employment was a great factor, 20 reasoned that lack of employment somehow was a driving factor while 6 stated that lack of employment was hardly a factor and 6 reasoned that lack of employment was never a driving factor. The results are illustrated in figure 4.10.

Given the strong correlation between reoffending and terrorist activity, it is crucial to investigate methods of improving the reintegration rate of former inmates. Reentry into society after incarceration is fraught with difficulties that might serve as triggers for the offender to reoffend (Loza, 2007). Educational illiteracy, a lack of vocation employment skills, a lack of interpersonal skills, and a prior criminal background were cited as the most logical explanations for the comparatively high recidivism rate among released prisoners.

In particular, past research consistently found that 89 percent of those arrested had never worked before their first arrest and 98 percent had never worked before their second (Rossman & Roman 2003; Vacca 2004).

It was expected that the ex-convicts would be "unemployed" upon their release from prison because of their lack of training and experience (Miller & Drake, 2006). Karimi (2011) argued that a former inmate's ability to acquire gainful employment is crucial to his or her ability to successfully reintegrate into society. While applying for jobs, many formerly incarcerated people

face rejection, as reported by The Star Newspaper in 2016. Job-seeking ex-offenders and those who have been fortunate enough to find employment after release from jail have faced “unfair” discrimination and unwarranted mistrust in the workplace. Both the corporate and public sectors are plagued by widespread prejudice and distrust (The Star Newspaper, 2016). In the same article, Kenya National Commission for Human Rights chief executive officer Patricia Nyaundi argued that widespread public education campaigns are necessary to convince the general public that ex-offenders have paid for their crimes and deserve second chances and assistance in rebuilding their lives. She states;-

“Punishment that is intended to be retributive, such as imprisonment, is what we mean. Most ex-convicts have absolutely nothing when they leave jail and must rely on the kindness of strangers to help them start over. They will revert to old habits when they no longer have access to that assistance,” (Patricia Nyaundi, The Star Newspaper, 2016).

In a country where the youth unemployment rate is as high as 70%, finding work is already difficult for any young person in Kenya. The countywide unemployment rate is 40%. (Otieno, 2015). Without a certificate of good behavior, a formerly incarcerated individual has even less of a chance of being hired, and society’s stigmatization of former inmates further adds to the difficulty. Those lucky enough to find work often do so in low-paying, low-skilled positions (Nafisika, 2014). As a result of not being able to provide for themselves and their families, they are more prone to returning to criminal behavior and are more easily radicalized in such an environment. As Nasser (2011) points out, high unemployment rates necessitate a detailed examination of the link between joblessness and incarceration.

Socioeconomic conditions within the country — in this case, unemployment rates — may contribute to a system in which offenders are imprisoned, serve their jail sentences, and reoffend shortly after their release. Without gainful employment, formerly incarcerated individuals have up to a fivefold greater risk of committing new crimes (Kenya Prisons Service, 2014). This means that prison rehabilitation programs should focus on helping ex-convicts find gainful jobs upon their release. For example, prisons may offer classes for inmates, provide vocational training, or help inmates earn credentials while they are incarcerated (Kundnani, 2009).

### Poor Parenting

The study sought to examine whether poor parenting was a driving factor for youth radicalization in Isiolo County. The study found out that, out of 287 respondents, 51 (17.77%) indicated that poor parenting was an extreme factor and contributed to youth radicalization. Besides, 117 (40.77%) stated that poor parenting was a great factor, 88 (30.66%) reasoned that poor parenting somehow was a driving factor while 11 (3.83%) stated that poor parenting was hardly a factor and 20 (6.97%)

reasoned that poor parenting was never a driving factor. The results are illustrated in figure 4.11.

The above is consistent with a number of academic investigations. The problem of young people becoming radicalized in Northern Nigeria is exacerbated by the growing number of children who lack proper parental supervision. Children who don’t have adults looking out for them are more vulnerable to exploitation. Millions of children of school age across the states in Nigeria, especially in the north, are not enrolled in school, contributing to the country’s already high illiteracy rate and making it easier for extremist groups to exploit. There are more and more homeless kids in the north of Nigeria because of the widespread poverty there. Respondents to questionnaires and participants in focus groups in both states with high levels of violence and states with low levels of violence agreed that children from low-income homes or those who were not raised by their biological parents, such as children from broken homes, abandoned and orphaned children, and children who are in the custody of relatives or others, are more likely to be involved in criminal activity.

### Search for Self-Identification

The study sought to examine whether search for self-identification was a driving factor for youth radicalization in Isiolo County. The study found out that, out of 287 respondents, 113 (39.37%) indicated that self-identification was an extreme factor and contributed to youth radicalization. Besides, 75 (26.13%) stated that self-identification was a great factor, 50 (17.42%) reasoned that self-identification somehow was a driving factor while 4 (1.39%) stated that search for self-identification was hardly a factor and 45 (15.68%) reasoned that self-identification was never a driving factor. The results are illustrated in figure 4.12.

In line with this, Simi, Bubolz, & Hardman (2013); Weine & Ahmed (2012), and NIJ-funded initiatives have highlighted the importance of identity processes in the radicalization to terrorism process (Jensen, 2015; Smith *et al.*, 2016). Those who have struggled with their own sense of who they are, whether as a result of moving to a new country, entering a new developmental phase (such as adolescence), or anything else, are seen as more vulnerable to the concepts and acts connected with terrorism. The University of Arkansas group (Smith *et al.*, 2016) took this a step further by investigating how terrorist identities are formed, and they discovered some evidence that suggests individuals are more likely to engage in terrorist acts when these identities are both important to them and permeate many facets of their daily lives. Because of this, it’s possible that initiatives designed to counter or intervene in radicalization should focus on helping people recognize and embrace their multiple identities outside of their radical one.

### Breakdown of Social Values

The study sought to examine whether breakdown of

social values was a driving factor for youth radicalization in Isiolo County. The study found out that, out of 287 respondents, 101 (39.15%) indicated that breakdown of social values was an extreme factor and contributed to youth radicalization. Besides, 87 (30.31%) stated that breakdown of social values was a great factor, 61 (21.25%) reasoned that breakdown of social values somehow was a driving factor while 20 (6.9%) stated that breakdown of social values was hardly a factor and 18 (6.72%) reasoned that breakdown of social values was never a driving factor. The results are illustrated in figure 4.13.

### Historical Injustices

The study sought to examine whether historical injustices was a driving factor for youth radicalization in Isiolo County. The study found out that, out of 287 respondents, 111 (38.68%) indicated that historical injustices was an extreme factor and contributed to youth radicalization. Besides, 68 (19.86%) stated that historical injustices was a great factor, 67 (27.18%) reasoned that historical injustices somehow was a driving factor while 21 (7.311%) stated that historical injustices was hardly a factor and 20 (6.96%) reasoned that historical injustices was never a driving factor.

### Overcrowding in Prisons

The study sought to examine whether overcrowding in prisons was a driving factor for youth radicalization in Isiolo County. The study found out that, out of 287 respondents, 187 (65.16%) indicated that overcrowding in prisons was an extreme factor and contributed to youth radicalization. Besides, 50 (17.42%) stated that overcrowding in prisons was a great factor, 20 (6.96%) reasoned that overcrowding in prisons somehow was a driving factor while 18 (6.272%) stated that overcrowding in prisons was hardly a factor and 12 (4.181%) reasoned that overcrowding in prisons was never a driving factor. Previous results are consistent with those of other academic papers like (Robinson 2018). Extreme prison overcrowding in the United States over the past two decades has fueled a rise in cases involving inmates' legal rights. By 1992, state prison populations had already outgrown their facilities.

In every region, strains were about to burst. According to the American Civil Liberties Union's National Prison Project, forty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands were ordered by a court to decrease their prison numbers as of January 1, 1992. (National Prison Project, Corrections Digest, 1992). It was the intervention of the courts, say Sechrest and Collins (1989), that led to the replacement of the old-style jail in America with a new generation jail that has separate cells and self-contained units. Since inmates can now freely engage with both staff and inmates, a method known as direct supervision, the prison environment has become less stressful.

Robison (2018) explains in his paper a variety of factors that contribute to overcrowding in prisons and teenage

radicalization.

Respondents generally felt that recruiting efforts may benefit from the media highlighting the benefits of working in corrections facilities. Respondents also felt that, given their widespread readership, the media plays a crucial role in raising awareness about the dangers of prison overpopulation. No books were identified that dealt with this topic. Not Enough Beds The third common thread gleaned from the interviews was the insufficient number of sleeping quarters. Ten administration members and sixteen ex-inmates agreed that the shortage of beds in correctional facilities poses a threat to inmates' safety and security.

According to ex-inmates and former administration, "it can cause serious problem in the housing dorms, mainly inmate frustration due to lack of space," and "I have witnessed the effect of overcrowding as I have seen, with my own eyes, of inmates sleeping on the floor," which can have a significant impact on security. Another ex-inmate echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the problems caused by a lack of space: "Even animals require space, and when personal space is taken away, one becomes territorial; when one gets territorial, he fights to the death to defend his space." Respondents generally agreed that identifying the root causes of overcrowding would pave the way for the construction of larger correctional institutions with greater bed space or the exploration of alternatives to government-operated correctional facilities, such as prison privatization. The problem of inadequate sleeping quarters is a common issue in the existing literature (Mitchelson, 2014).

Unsafe environments emerged as the fourth major subject discussed in the interviews. 17 administration staff members and 18 ex-inmates were persuaded that dangerous circumstances within correctional institutions significantly affect the safety and security of the employees and inmates. Overcrowding, according to many respondents, "causes unhealthy conditions in the jails." As a second respondent put it, "the jail is terribly congested. It's risky and cruel to do so. It's against federal law for anyone to sleep on the floor. Furthermore, as mentioned by one respondent, "it is a problem because when facilities are overcrowded, it can become a safety risk and a health code or fire code violation." Respondents generally agreed that addressing the root causes of overcrowding in correctional facilities would make them better places to work and live for both staff and inmates by reducing "environmental difficulties, such as staph infections, rapes, and gang problems." There is coherence between the literature and the issue of "unsafe situations" (Davis, 2004).

The Buildings Are Old. Older buildings appeared as the fifth overarching issue from the interviews. There was a decline in confidence in the safety and security of older correctional facilities among 13 administrative staff members and 12 ex-inmates. For the reason that "older buildings cannot handle such enormous numbers of convicts," this is the case. Additionally, "most institutions

are not designed to handle overcrowded jails and prisons. The ratio of guards to inmates is improved. Participants in the interviews felt that more resources could be provided to construct new, technologically advanced correctional institutions if the causes of overcrowding were identified. The focus on older buildings is in line with the existing literature (Misenas, 2010).

Criminal activity was also a coded subject. Fourteen administrators and seven ex-inmates agreed that criminal activity affects prison safety and security. A respondent to the interview stated, “officers will feel safer and there will be less crime” if the overcrowding issue was resolved. As one respondent put it, “inmates are often mistreated and malnourished when jails are overcrowded.” Another respondent said that “the lack of labor or work possibilities leads to inmate laziness, often supporting the maxim that idleness breeds discontent and disruptive behavior.” It makes jail life more dangerous and unpleasant for prisoners.

Interviewees generally believed that a reduction in in-prison violence would result from identifying and addressing the root causes of overcrowding. Another respondent opined that if convicts could “serve their time peacefully and in peace,” there would be less fighting. The research supports the idea that violence is on the rise (Worrall & Morris, 2012). Stress. Stress was the eighth topic that emerged from the interviews. Twelve administration members and sixteen ex-inmates believed that stress directly impacted inmate safety and security. Example: “it creates a tense environment and it contributes to jail misconduct and jail fights,” as said by a former inmate on the topic of overcrowding. Respondents agreed that reducing stress levels would reduce violent actions by both staff and inmates if the causes of overcrowding were identified.

A respondent to an interview stated, “When you lessen overcrowding, you relieve stress; then everything is open, you don’t feel so robbed of something as little as space.” Alternatively, F8 could argue that “lowering overcrowding will ease stress on both the staff and inmates,” which, in turn, would make for a safer facility. Thematic emphasis is in line with the existing literature (Haney, 2006). Personnel Shortage. Inadequate staffing was the eighth overarching theme that emerged from the interviews. A survey of ex-inmates and ex-administrative workers found that 88% believe inmates outnumbering staff is a dangerous condition. According to another source, “there are not enough skilled staff members in these overcrowded facilities to handle the quantity of detainees.” In addition, “the ratio of correctional officers to inmates is not appropriately matched. It’s always possible that convicts could seize control of a prison and unleash chaos.

Additionally, “if there are more convicts than the staff, then the individuals may try to physically overwhelm the personnel; it is difficult to keep order, and the safety of the employees is compromised as well.” Respondents believed that the issue of the staff being outnumbered might be reduced by recruiting additional officers and

making the custodial environment safer if the causes of overcrowding were identified. Staffing shortages are a common issue in the available literature (Worrall & Morris, 2012). Peril was the tenth overarching concept that surfaced. 19 administrative staff members and 17 former convicts were persuaded that overcrowding compromises the safety and security of the custodial environment, making it hazardous for both employees and inmates.

For instance, one of the administrative staff respondents rightly pointed out the dangerous situations that may be created due to overcrowding by stating that: As a result, officers may be put in a dangerous position if some of the extra convicts are not kept in cells. For the same reason, detainees should not be left alone or confined to unoccupied areas like the floor or holding cells. (18th August 2021, Isiolo town Isiolo County)

Respondents believed that a safer and more secure correctional facility might be achieved by identifying and addressing the root causes of overcrowding. I think it’s an issue because of the safety of the correction officers and the airborne infections that can be transferred,” said one reply. It’s not healthy mentally or emotionally. “it has put the safety of employees and inmates in jeopardy a hostile and dirty atmosphere,” claimed another reply. Throughout the canon, threats have been a recurring theme (Pratt & Franklin, 2006).

**Whether prisons’ procedural formalities are friendly towards radicalized youths in Isiolo County**

The study also sought to examine whether prisons’ procedural formalities are friendly towards radicalized youths in Isiolo County. The study found out that, out of 287 total respondents, 51 (17.8%) affirmed that prisons’ procedural formalities were friendly towards radicalized youths. On the contrary, the study found out that, 236 (82.2%) reasoned that that had not happened- the procedural formalities were not friendly to the youths. The results are illustrated in table 1

**Table 1:** Whether prisons’ procedural formalities are friendly towards radicalized youths in Isiolo County

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	51	17.8	17.8	17.8
	No	236	82.2	82.2	100.0
	Total	287	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2021

**Whether prisons contribute to homegrown radicalization among youths in Isiolo County**

This study also endeavored to ascertain whether prisons contribute to homegrown radicalization among youths in Isiolo County. The study found out that, 167 (58.2%) of the total respondents indicated that prisons contribute to homegrown radicalization of the youths. Besides, 61 (21.3%) agreed to the inquiry, 31 (10.8%) disagreed to the inquiry, 28 (9.8%) strongly refuted the claims that prisons contribute to radicalization among the youths. The results are illustrated in table 2

**Table 2:** Whether prisons’ procedural formalities are friendly towards radicalized youths in Isiolo Country

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	167	58.2	58.2	58.2
	Agree	61	21.3	21.3	79.4
	Disagree	31	10.8	10.8	90.2
	Strongly disagree	28	9.8	9.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>287</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: Field Data, 2021

**CONCLUSION**

This chapter discusses the findings on objective one, the nexus between prison’s aspects of criminal justice and drivers of youth radicalization in Isiolo County, Kenya. In line with the objective, the study concludes that demographic elements were critical in establishing the nexus between the criminal justice systems and youth radicalization. Quintessentially, the study found out that poverty, economic marginalization, religious fanaticism as well as overcrowding of the prisons were major drivers for youth radicalization in Isiolo County. The next chapter presents findings on the existing strategies for preventing and countering youth radicalization through prisons aspect of criminal justice

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

In accordance with the first specific objective, the study suggests establishing a criminal justice framework to address the endemic causes that have persisted to impede counter-radicalization operations in Isiolo County. Moreover, policy changes addressing the wellbeing of youths in Isiolo County are crucial. In Isiolo County, provisions should be made for the social, economic, and political equality of all Isiolo youngsters. This may encompass the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities, as well as the civic engagement of all Isiolo youngsters, regardless of their ethnicity, age, religion, gender, or socioeconomic standing. These steps will aid in addressing social and economic marginalization and unemployment, both of which have been identified as significant contributors to individuals’ decisions to engage in radicalization and other terrorist connections.

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