

**THE YOUTH AND THE POTENTIAL FOR  
INVOLVEMENT IN ACTS OF TERRORISM: A CASE  
STUDY OF THE EASTLEIGH SUBURB IN NAIROBI,  
KENYA**

**BY**

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**UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY-  
AFRICA**

**SUMMER 2015**

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Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Executive Master's  
Degree in Organization Development (EMOD)**

**UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY-  
AFRICA**

**SUMMER 2015**

## **STUDENT'S DECLARATION**

I declare that this research project is my original work and has not been previously published or presented for the award of a degree in any university.

**Signed.**\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**\_\_\_\_\_

**Caroline Watheka (ID.No. 638149)**

This project report has been presented for examination with my approval as the appointed supervisor.

**Signed.**\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**\_\_\_\_\_

**Kenneth Omeje, PhD**

**Signed**\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**\_\_\_\_\_

**Dean, Chandaria School of Business**

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study investigated the youth's potential for involvement in acts of terrorism. These include the factors that influenced youth to join extremist groups in Kenya, especially the youth of Somalia ethnic origin in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi.

It explores the role of poverty, religion and marginalization in drawing the youth to engage in acts of extremism. The three objectives of the study are: investigate whether poverty drives youth to engage in extremism; investigate whether religion is a factor that compels the youth to engage in extremism; find out whether ethno cultural marginalization and discrimination push to extremism.

The research methodology that was employed was descriptive. The researcher interviewed 40 respondents that were segregated by gender. The respondents were identified through convenience sampling. Due to the sensitive nature of the research; the research utilized primary data collection. With the primary data collection, individual in depth interviews were utilized with an interview guide so as to prompt the respondents. The major findings of the research identified factors that helped contribute to the youth in Eastleigh engaging in violence and extremism. The findings were as a result of the in-depth interviews where the respondents helped the researcher identify poverty religion and ethno cultural marginalization and discrimination pushed towards extremism.

The research resulted in showing that poverty was a driver for the youth to engage in terrorist activities. The youth were pushed to join the outlawed groups as they felt that the engagements in the groups enabled them to provide for their families and themselves. Most youth are unemployed and desperate to make an income and hence felt the pressure to acquire quick money for their families and become bread winners since that was a family obligation that they could not ignore. The study also showed that while poverty pushes the youth to join the extremist behavior. They feel that those who are attracted to carrying out terrorist activities in the name of Islam do so because they have been misled by misinterpreted teachings of the Quran by radicalized and feel that they are justified in what they are doing as it is accepted by their faith. The youth felt that discrimination played a part in driving the youth to terrorism. At the same time those who had experience ethnic profiling and discrimination felt a sense of belonging as the extremist groups enabled them to identify with them and help feel as part of a group. They also felt

that being in these outlawed groups they were able to protect themselves from harassment that they received due to ethnicity.

The study conclusion was that poverty levels drove a high percentage of the youth to engage in extremism. It showed that lack of employment made the youth who were idle and lacked finances more susceptible to being recruited into extremist gangs in Eastleigh. The study brought out the fact that individuals who had not received proper indoctrination of Islam were more likely to join jihadist movements more enthusiastically due their lack of knowledge, the study also identified youth who spent most of their time in a radicalized religious environment or listening to radical preachers were also more prone to become followers of a jihadist movements. The study showed that the constant harassment by figures of authority (the police) made them more open to joining outlawed groups so as to get some sort of 'protection' from the police and avoid harassment.

The recommendation of the study included providing the government and community at the large providing youth funding and encouraging innovative ideas that they can pursue as entrepreneur's and linkages to grow their business as appeal of extremist groups. The youth could also be provided with linkages to grow their business ideas which will reduce the appeal of extremist groups. There is need for these youth to learn how to discuss issues in a constructive and non-violent way. This can be done through variety of programing where the youth are engaged in debates where they can learn how to constructively share ideas which at the base they may differ on but they begin to learn culture of tolerance with regards to people's opinions.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Problem

Terrorism is a problematic concept to define because of its many forms, objectives, uncertainty, relative fluidity, and the diversity of perpetrators. Terrorism can be defined in a general sense as use of forcefulness to achieve certain objectives. Essentially, terrorism is intimidation through violence (Mathewson and Steinberg, 2003, p. 59). Terrorism can also be defined from a legal, moral and behavioral standpoint (Ruby 2002, pp.11-12). Legally, terrorism is tantamount to infringement of established laws.

There are four major types of terrorism movements around the world: left-wing (leftist), right-wing (rightist), ethno-nationalist or separatist and religious or sacred (Cronin 2002, p. 39). For each of these terrorism forms has a distinctive style and manner of behavior that can offer insight into the possible indication of its violence and the patterns of its advancement. Presently, religious terrorism is executed by Al Qaeda and dictates the global stage although all four types of terrorism are can cause unutterable cruelty. Besides being currently dominant, religious terrorism can be especially dangerous because it is an all-encompassing struggle of good versus evil and can easily engulf all of humanity, especially when it is essentially perceived as a struggle between the good and the bad (Cronin 2002, p. 39).

The terrorism forms above have happened in the past. The first upsurge occurred through the crumbling of world empires in the 17th through 19th centuries. The second that followed was linked with decolonization in the mid-1900s, while the third form relates to the Soviet inspired leftist anti-Western terrorism in the 1950-1989 periods also known as the cold war period. The last and which is a religious movement is to revolution western neocolonial and capitalist economic systems that are perceived as wielding corrupt influences on Islamic religion and societies.

Africa is also affected by this crime of terrorism. According to Terrorism Risk Index for 2010-2011; the entire East Africa Community (EAC) faces the same terror risk level as Uganda, which is placed among the high risk countries in the world. In 2012, the African Union force backing Somalia Interim government was increased from 12,000 troops to

nearly 18,000. These included the Kenyan troops who entered Somalia in 2008, in pursuit of Alshabab militants. Thereafter, the troops were repeatedly threatened with revenge attacks in which the Kenyan government accuses the Islamic fighters as being behind the attacks. The latter have since unleashed various kidnappings on Kenyan soil and destabilized the border (Otiso, 2009).

Although Kenya has suffered all four forms of terrorism, according to Cronin (2002) says that, “the most devastating attacks have come from ethno-nationalistic and religious terrorism” (p.39). The appearance of these main forms of terrorism in Kenya has an explicit historical sequence.

Kenya is amongst one of the African countries to experience global terrorism to achieve certain objectives. The current occurrence of sacred terrorism in Kenya is most troublesome because its offenders who have no reservations of killing innocent civilians in the process of accomplishing their objectives. So far, Al-Qaeda religious terrorist groups have exposed Kenya to terrorist attacks in the last fourteen years including:- (1) the August 7, 1998 bombing of the US Embassy in Nairobi which leftover 200 people dead (2) the November 28, 2002 suicide bombing of the Israeli-owned Paradise Tourist Hotel in Mombasa, Kenya, where 15 people were killed 80 others were injured.

The coastal region of Kenya has eras of trading relations with the countries in South Asia and the West (Somerville, 2002). These trading relations in the West begun with the coming of the Portuguese in the late 1400s Were and Wilson (1996) and were intensified in the colonial and post-colonial era. Since Kenya’s independence, the country has allied itself with the Israel, European, United States and other western capitalist interest. This association with the west has led to favorable economic and technological support leading to the country’s development.

Kenya has a significant manifestation of western interest, investment, installation, diplomatic corps and the head office of international agencies such as the United Nations (Soke, 2003). Several western countries operate from Nairobi because of the countries relatively well developed infrastructure, financial system and the strong economy that assist such endeavors. Kenya is also known to have military relationship with some of the western countries such as, Germany, Italy, Britain, United States of America, France and Israel (Somerville 2002, Harman, 2002). Many of these western nations run de facto military bases in Kenya (Maina, 2004).The comparatively large western presence in

Kenya Kelly (2003) is the main attraction and target of anti-western terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda.

In addition, Kenya close ties to Israel may be a factor contributing to terrorism in Kenya (Maina, 2004; Harman, 2002). Israel is a country that Muslims around the world hate for its persecution of Palestinians. This relationship is a major trigger to foreign and Muslims countries who recurrently but futilely have been calling for the severance of the relationship (Ali, 2003). The strength of this ties was when Kenya's in June 1976 decided to offer Israel logistical support in its raid on Entebbe Airport to free Israeli hostages held by the Palestinian hijackers allied to then Ugandan president Idi Amin. (Kyemba, 1977 pp.56-172). As a result, later in 1980, vengeance in bombing of Israeli owned Norfolk Hotel in Nairobi, resulting to killing 15 people and wounding 8 people, mostly Kenyans (Harman, 2002). The Israel team was the first to arrive in Kenya during the 1998 terrorist attack; this is another demonstration of strong ties between the two countries. Granted that one of the Al-Qaeda major complains against the US is its support of the Israel at the price of Palestinians, it's not alarming that Kenyans long pro – Israel stance is seen by Al-Qaeda as evidence of Kenya's support of US policy in the Middle East. Regardless of its mutual relationship and cooperation, this makes Kenya a qualified Al-Qaeda target (Soke, 2003).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

There has been a range of research done on the effects of global terrorism and its impact on Kenya and how that has quickly spread. Kenya is a compelling target of global terrorism because of a combination of several factors such as, regional, historical, political, economic, geographic, socio-cultural and historical factors (Otiso, 2009). Adan (2005) for instance, did significant research to assess the government of Kenya response to combating transnational terrorism. The assessment was to validate current practice or suggest ways to refine current policy and explore alternative ways and means to combat transnational terrorism. Spalek (2011), on the other hand, researched on extremism among the youth and how community policing can assist in extremist curbing tendencies among the youth. The study was done in the USA city of Birmingham.

This research will try to illuminate the reasons behind the attraction to criminalize among the youth and more so in Eastleigh which has a unique composition of the Somali and Non Somali who are all apparently being recruited.

Some of the gaps with regard to the research above are that, there has been little research done on the youth and their link to acts of terrorism. What is the driving force for the youth in joining terrorist activities in the recent days? Has there been any link between extremism and Islamic religion? Are the youth encouraged by their religion (Islam) to become terrorists? To what extent does poverty induce Kenyan youth (especially those of Islamic religion) to engage in terrorist activities? Researches done so far in Kenya seem to be more general at the policy level and Kenya in general and how global terror is affecting Africa.

More donors and stakeholders are venturing into the area of extremism and trying to get solutions to the problems of the youth and how they can be prevented and pulled away from these crimes. This research is to provide a baseline on the underlying issues affecting youth and what entices the youth into terrorist activities.

Kenya Transition Initiative (KTI) which is a USAID funded program has been trying to work with the civil society in Eastleigh area in Nairobi to find solutions to the issue of extremism and radicalization. It would require such a study to create a baseline on the situation and provide guidance on what areas to concentrate on eradicating extremism and terror activities. KTI management would have better information to make decisions.

### **1.3 General Objective**

The general objective of the study is to investigate the factors that influence the youth of Eastleigh to join extremist groups in Kenya.

### **1.4 Specific Objectives**

1.4.1 To determine whether poverty drives the youth to engage in extremism.

1.4.2 To investigate whether religion is a factor that compels the youth to engage in extremism.

1.4.3 To find out whether ethno-cultural marginalization and discrimination push the youth to extremism.

## **1.5 Importance of the Study**

### **1.5.1 Kenya Transition Initiative (KTI)**

KTI is a USAID funded project by Office of Transition Initiative (OTI) office. The project is piloting a program in Kamkunji in relation to extremism among the youth. This area is relatively new and they require information to inform the program on the kind of activities to undertake with the youth in influencing and changing their ideologies about extremism and terrorism. This research helps to inform the management on strategies that they can use to reach out to the youth in their programming activities.

### **1.5.2 Ministry of Youth affairs**

The Ministry of Youth Affairs in the government of Kenya plays a major role in empowering the youth in Kenya. This research would be beneficial to them as it would inform them on the status of the youth and what policies and activities they would engage the youth in. There would be a better understanding of the youth issues in Eastleigh.

### **1.5.3 Institutions of Learning**

The research would assist Churches, Mosques, schools and colleges and other Institutions of learning. This would inform them on ways of handling the youth and the emphasis in their sermons / teachings in influencing their thoughts.

### **1.5.4 Academicians and Researchers**

This study will contribute to the body of knowledge on extremism and terrorism in Africa. After its completion academic researchers will hopefully have a base for further research on the youth and extremism.

In addition the research will be published as part of an article in a famous journal, website or newspaper where the beneficiary can read and get the findings of the research.

## **1.6 Scope of Study**

The geographical scope of the study fieldwork is Kamkunji division, specifically in the areas of Eastleigh, Majengo, Shauri Moyo and Juja .The population scope is mainly the youth from ages between 15 to 30 years of age, civil society representatives working in the division, Ministry of youth, and Muslim leaders. In terms of time scope, the research

will be conducted between January and March 2013. There is a possible lack of cooperation from the youth to provide information since it is a sensitive topic. They would be suspicious as to who is getting the information and they could be criminalized. How to minimize the risk is for the youth to remain anonymous when providing the information. There may be a language barrier among the Somali speaking respondents thus the need of translating the tools used, and employing Somali speaking data collectors for translation.

## **1.7 Definition of Terms**

### **1.7.1 Terrorism**

The definition based on this research paper is ‘to kill or injure opponents in ways specifically designed to cause fear and, thus, to disorganize the opposing society to a degree far out of proportion to the number of victims’ (Kenya National Counterterrorism Strategy, 2004).

### **1.7.2 Youth**

Under this study, we shall refer to the persons between the ages of 15 to 30 years. Extremism and radicalization recruits are young men and women between 10 and 16 years.

### **1.7.3. Islamic Radicalism**

This is defined as those people who believe that Islam is under threat and that they are sanctioned to defend Islam from that threat (Lim, 2005).

## **1.8 Chapter Summary**

This chapter addresses the general background and global wave of terrorism in different African countries, including Kenya. More importantly the chapter examines extremism in Kenya among the youth based on a case study of Kamkunji Division. The youth influenced to join ideologies that results in committing of crime. The chapter describes briefly the problem statement, objectives of the study, and the importance of the study, scope and definitions. The next chapter focuses on in-depth review of issues highlighted in chapter one.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The purpose of the study is to investigate the factors that influence extremism in Kenya among the youth of Eastleigh. The research will study three objectives poverty, religion and ethno-cultural marginalization and discrimination on extremism.

#### **2.2 The Effect of Poverty That Drives the Youth to Extremism**

##### **2.2.1 Defining Poverty**

Poverty in its most general sense is the lack of necessities. Basic food, shelter, medical care and safety are generally thought necessary based on shared values of human dignity. However, what is a necessity to one person is not uniformly a necessity to another. Needs may be relative to what is possible and are based on social definition and past experience (Sen, 1999).

Valentine (1968) says that “the essence of poverty is inequality. In slightly different words, the basic meaning of poverty is relative deprivation”. A social definition of poverty allows community flexibility in addressing pressing local concerns, while objective definitions allow tracking progress and comparing one area to another.

Some scholars define poverty based on their narrowness or breadth that is in terms of: whether they are confined to the material core; the nature of that material core; and whether they embrace also relational or symbolic factors associated with poverty. Nolan and Whelan (1996) are among those who argue for a definition towards the narrower end of the scale on the grounds that too broad a definition runs the danger of losing sight of the distinctive ‘the core notion of poverty’. They define poverty in terms of the inability to participate in society, but emphasize that what is distinctive is the ‘inability to participate owing to lack of resources’. This confines their definition ‘to those areas of life where consumption or participation is determined primarily by command over financial resources’ (Viet 1998).

### **2.2.2 Theories of Poverty and Terrorism**

The researchers seem to think there is a connection between impoverishment and terrorism. Some studies have shown there is no inconclusive agreement regarding the link between socioeconomic factors and terrorism. In past studies that use cross-national analysis to demonstrate the effects of macroeconomic indicators on terrorism have failed to show irrefutably that deprived or underdeveloped countries experience higher rates of terrorism, or yield more terrorist, than do average or high-income countries ( Krueger, 2007; Piazza, 2009). This has been found to be the true for regions within countries (Krueger, 2007; Piazza, 2011). Research done to individuals does not establish any link between low economic status and terrorism. A study done by Kreuger (2007) and Berrebi (2007) found that terrorists were neither poor nor have lower levels of education. According to Kreuger (2007) there is no link between poverty and terrorism. Sageman (2004) conducted an empirical study on the al-Qaeda network and concluded that the terrorists he studied were mostly from the middle class and not from impoverished backgrounds. With the few studies done, there is still no conclusive relationship economic and terrorism.

Nonetheless, Blomberg and Hess (2008a) established that developed countries are more likely to experience terrorist attacks than developing countries. Ross (1993) hypothetically substantiates this finding, stating that economically developed countries afford terrorists and bigger targets; there is a greater availability of lethal weapons, and high-tech technology and communication system to boost the effectiveness of their attacks. However other research done, manage to find pointers of poverty to be concurrently negative and positive predictors of terrorism. Using dyadic analysis of source and target countries, Blomberg and Hess (2008b), Li (2009), discover that increased income levels in countries reduce the probability that their citizens to launch terrorist attacks abroad, but those countries with higher incomes, and advanced levels of political democracy and economic openness, are more likely to be pursued by international terrorists. When combined, these studies indicate a more multifaceted relationship wherein economic underdevelopment incubates terrorist movements and motivates them to launch international attacks against developing countries because they feature power, development and free media that are likely to cover attacks Hoffman and McCormick, (2004), they are endowed with more many and worthwhile targets and they

are symbols of a non-egalitarian status quo and a focus for political hatreds (Crenshaw, 2007).

### **2.2.3 Poverty, Lack of Education and Terrorism**

Poverty is a scourge that the international aid community and industrialized countries should work to eradicate. What is less clear, however, is whether poverty and low education are a root cause of terrorism. After the 9/11 attacks, much of the political and media debate on terrorism has focused on prevention policies. This is hardly surprising after all; the notion that poverty generates terrorism is consistent with the results of the most exiting literature on the economics of conflicts.

In particular, the results in Alesina (1996) suggest that poor economic conditions increase the probability of political coups. Collier and Hoeffler (2009), show that, the economic variables are powerful predators of civil war while, political variables have low explanatory power. Miguel and Sergenti (2004) show that, for a sample of African countries, negative exogenous shocks in economic growth increases the likelihood of civil conflict. Because terrorism is a manifestation of political conflict, these results seems to indicate that poverty and adverse economic conditions may play an important role explaining terrorism although political variables have low explanatory power. However, recent empirical studies have challenged the view that poverty creates terrorism.

Based on U.S. States Department data on transnational terrorist attacks, Krueger and Laitin (2003) suggest that poverty may generate terrorism. In particular, the results in Krueger and Laitin (2003) suggest that, among the counties with similar levels of civil liberties, poor countries do not generate more terrorism than rich countries. Conversely among countries with similar levels of civil liberties, richer countries seem to be preferred targets of transnational terrorist attacks.

### **2.2.4 African Youth and Vulnerability to Terrorist Conscription**

Economic imbalance is one of the factors that contribute to terrorism. In their analysis of terrorism in Africa, Campbell and Flournoy (2001, pp. 255-256) acknowledge the roles marginalization and poverty play among the Muslims that invite sectarian and inter-ethnic strife, despair, and anti-Western resentment. They also note the emergence of Islamic agencies, funded by Saudi and other Persian Gulf states and individuals, which are addressing the social problems of Muslim communities while sowing seeds of discord

and anti-Western sentiment and recruiting and providing safe havens for terrorist organizations.

Pillar (2001, p.30) supports this view, noting that terrorism and terrorist groups “do not arise randomly and they are not distributed evenly around the globe”. He attributes the living standard and socioeconomic deprivation of some segments of society as the breeding stock for terrorists: “Terrorism is a risky, dangerous, and very disagreeable business” (ibid, p.31). Few people who have a reasonably good life will be inclined to become terrorists. Pillar (2001), believes cutting out roots can be useful. However, he acknowledges that if all root causes were somehow removed, there would always remain core of incorrigible, such as Bin Laden and his inner circle.

All the authors mentioned touch on the common factors that cause some sections of the Kenyan population to lean toward joining terrorist group’s poverty and widespread unemployment. Kenyans are especially vulnerable to indoctrination and terrorist recruitment in exchange for financial gain. Thus, economic deprivation enables terrorist groups to exploit and recruit foot soldiers from the poorest segment of the population.

This paper would investigate whether poverty and low education is a factor that is driving the youth to extremism behavior and therefore engaging terrorist activities within Kenya.

## **2.3 The Effects of Religion on the Youth Engagement in Extremism**

### **2.3.1 Definition of Religion**

One of the most influential figures in this social-scientific approach to religion is the anthropologist Clifford Geertz. In an essay titled “Religion as a Cultural System” (1965) he spelled out a definition of religion that many others have borrowed, adapted, and employed in studying religion. Geertz's definition gives us a starting place for understanding religion in this social scientific way. It suggests that every group and every individual may have a religion, even if no one in that group believes in a god or an afterlife or any of the more familiar trappings of organized religion. Every group has a religion because every group has some overall framework that all its members share in common, to make sense out of life and guide behavior. (<http://www.colorado.edu>).

### 2.3.2 New Terrorism Age

From the 1990s, scholars and observers of terrorism have been deeply alarmed with what Harvey Kushner has described to as, "the new terrorism" (Kushner, 1994). Kushner's inventing of the term "new terrorism" was arrived after the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993. Since then, much has been added to the literature about how terrorism has changed since the 1960s and 1970s. Most of this literature deals with the increase in religious-based terrorist groups since the end of the Cold War, the disappearance of most left-wing groups, the differences between new terrorism and old terrorism, and what this means for those concerned about terrorism (academics, policymakers, and the many innocents affected by the global reach of terrorism).

Kushner's (1998) work was among the first inputs written about the changing nature of terrorist threat. He attributed this change to the rise of Islamic revivalism after the toppling of the Shah of Iran in 1979 and to the rise of an Islamic revolutionary movement in the Middle East. In his 1998 work, Kushner describes the nature of the new terrorist threat and how it differed from the old and suggests that these new types of terrorists are less sophisticated than their predecessors and less organized than their secular counterparts, making them more difficult to spot and intercept. He states that the structure of the terrorist groups made older groups easier to fight, while today's organizations are less structured, not hierarchical, and cell-oriented, making counterterrorism that much more difficult. He maintains that they are nurtured by spiritual leaders, which may aid to explain the enormous increase in the use of suicide bombing as a main modus operandi today (Kushner, 1998, p. 17).

Laqueur (1999, 2001) also discusses this "new terrorism" and the part that religion is engaged in within these new terrorist groups. He explains how 20–30 years ago, global terrorism was predominantly secular in orientation and either left-wing, right-wing, or nationalist-extremist in nature, but that since then there has been a sharp increase in the number of radical religious movements that have had a significant impact on contemporary terrorism. Like Kushner, Laqueur too discusses the role of suicide missions in these organizations, adding that this is not a new phenomenon and that many groups in the past have engaged in such horrifying acts. He proposes that though many who use suicide terror strategies today are Islamic groups and other groups, such as the nationalist. In the wake of 9-11, Laqueur (2001, p.71) reiterates that, "terrorism has appeared in many

guises" and this "new terrorism" seems to just be the latest trend. He argues out how these groups were born among several radical religions and advises us not to blame anyone religion for the crimes committed by a minority.

Benjamin (2001) offers a succinct and detailed account of how these new terrorist groups differ from the old terrorist groups and examines the nature and attributes of these groups, their goals, capabilities, and modus operandi. The old groups sought incremental change in a manner that avoided massive bloodletting, but these new groups deliberately work to maximize their carnage in trying to achieve their aims. He argues that their aims are monumental, "seeking nothing less than a vast redistribution of global power and a geopolitical revolution that would end the hegemony of the United States and its Western allies" (Benjamin, 2001, p. 37). Benjamin argues that these groups utter their grievances in terms of religion and draw upon Koranic verses to rationalize their actions; they deem that their struggle is divinely authorized. He states that when groups base their actions in terms of a "metaphysical struggle," between good and evil, the usual reluctance to use brutality indiscriminately disappears.

Bruce Hoffman (1998a, 1998b), notably one of the world's leading experts on terrorism, argues that religion is the most defining characteristic of terrorist groups today and is the cause of terrorism's recent increased lethality. He suggests that religion, as the "driving force" behind the increased lethality in contemporary modern terrorism, shatters some of our most basic beliefs and assumptions about terrorists. The once widely perceived notion that terrorists wanted more people watching and listening than dead, no longer seems to hold true. He further states that religiously inspired terrorists may be much more likely to entertain the notion of using weapons of mass destruction – chemical, biological, and nuclear. He contends that the world may be entering a period of increased bloodshed and violence.

Hoffman (1993, 1998a, 1998b) believes that the new religious groups differ from the secular groups in that they have radically different value systems, different mechanisms of legitimization and justification, different concepts of morality, and they adhere to a Manichean world view. For the religious terrorist, "violence is first and foremost a sacramental act or divine duty executed in direct response to some theological demand or imperative" (Hoffman, 1993, p.2). He reasons that terrorism assumes an inspirational dimension, which revitalizes political, moral, and practical constraints from its

practitioners, limitations that in the past seemed to affect other terrorists in target selection and lethality. Religious terrorists view indiscriminate violence not only as morally justified, but also as necessary to attain their goals. Secular terrorists generally consider such indiscriminate violence immoral and counterproductive. Religion as a legitimizing force for such violence "explains why clerical sanction is so important to religious terrorists and why religious figures are often required to 'bless' terrorist operations before they are executed" (Hoffman, 1998a, 1998b, p. 4).

Hoffman (1993, 1998a, 1998b) also argues that religious terrorists differ in their constituencies. Whereas secular terrorists aim to send a message to the general public or government, religious terrorists have no other constituency but themselves and their belief in a higher power. Thus, the restraints on secular groups, wishing to appeal for the support of a constituency, are not relevant to the religious terrorist. According to Hoffman, this leads to a sanctioning of almost limitless violence and goes far to explain the increased lethality of these groups today. In summary, the Hoffman thesis is that an increase Enders and Sandler (2000), utilizing the ITERATE databases, applied time series techniques to investigate the current threat posed by transnational terrorist incidents. The authors find that although the actual number of transnational incidents has declined dramatically during the post-Cold War period, in more recent years they find that, "each incident is almost 17 percentage points more likely to result in death or injuries" (Enders and Sandler, 2000, p. 329). They suggest that the growth of religious terrorism, marked by the watershed events of the Iranian Revolution in 1979, appear to account for the increase in the severity of these attacks. Their conclusion adds support to Hoffman's hypothesis.

Similarly, (Juergens, 2000) argues that all past religious traditions around the world have become involved in religiously stirred terrorism today. These individuals are not limited to Islamic suicide bombers in the Middle East, but also Jewish assassins in Israel, a terrorist Buddhist sect in Japan, radical Hindus and Sikhs in India, and also Christian militants in the United States. He points out that to comprehend the "new terrorism" we need first to understand the role of eschatology, and the role the idea of "cosmic war" plays in the worldviews of these individuals. Many of these groups view their tussle as a battle between good and evil, and in terms of a "cosmic war." The idea of a "cosmic struggle" of Manichean proportions is shared by many of today's "new breed" of terrorist and has dire consequences in terms of its lethality.

In a similar vein, White (2002) argues that mixing end of time theology with political beliefs is a prescription for violence with consequences that are indeed dramatic, or "cosmic" in proportion. Echoing Hoffman's arguments about the effects these worldviews have on lifting constraints on the means of terror, he points out that "on a cosmic battlefield, Armageddon's warriors need no further justification to bear arms. They fight for a holy cause, and all actions are justified" (White 2002, p. 54). He adds that for those in their final hours, there are no constraints. And the process of "demonization" and "dehumanization" of the enemy and equating another group with some sort of cosmic evil, makes the destruction of the enemy group much easier. In a religious war, one does not destroy human beings, rather one destroys evil.

Moreover to these observations about new terrorism and suicide attacks, several Middle East area scholars ascribe varying degrees of suicide terrorism to Islamic fundamentalism. Ghorayeb (2002, p. 127) observes that the elimination of injustice and humiliation are behind the centrality of martyrdom in Shi'a Islam. Israeli (2002) attributes the increase in the use of suicide attacks by Islamic religious terrorist groups to martyrdom, which is associated with high prestige and status within the society. Those who sacrifice themselves for a greater cause are also rewarded in heaven with forgiveness for their sins, proximity to God, eternal happiness, and virgins.

In his survey of 350 Palestinians living in refugee camps in Lebanon, Khashan (2003) concludes that support for suicide bombing is due to "Palestinian collective frustration, political Islam, and poverty." The findings of his research ascertain that support for suicide bombings is the outcome of a deep sense of "national humiliation" by the Palestinians leading Islamic groups (e.g., Hamas and Islamic Jihad) to carry out suicide bombing to force Israel to accept their demand for the creation of an independent Palestinian State. His study finds that political Islam does indeed play a crucial role in fomenting proneness to participation in suicide attacks, especially among refugee camp inhabitants, where dismal poverty coalesces with radical Islam.

The arguments of these different scholars combined contribute to Hoffman's view that increases in religiously inspired terrorism that accounts for the increased lethality of today's "new terrorism," other scholars differ with such arguments. Johnson (2001) for instance, does not fully agree with Hoffman and the other writers mentioned above. In his 2001 article, he found evidence to the contrary. Johnson suggests that there was indeed a

reduction in the number of terrorist incidents, which began during the 1980s. Yet, the 1990s saw a significant increase in the number of people injured because of these attacks. He argues, however, that religiously motivated groups have not supplanted other traditional separatist groups, but rather, during the 1990s, a proliferation of previously unknown groups (ethnic separatists and Marxists) has consistently dominated the top ten (Johnson, 2001, p. 901). This would refute Hoffman's thesis because if there has not been an increase in religiously inspired groups, then how could they be responsible for the increase in fatalities?

Jane's Intelligence Review says that the threat posed by suicide terrorism is spreading around the globe and is not only limited to religious groups (Jane's Intelligence Review, 2001, p. 1). For example, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) is widely recognized as one of the most lethal terrorist groups functioning today, and they are not religiously inspired. According to Yoram Schweitzer of the International Policy Institute of Counter-terrorism, between July 1987 and February 2000, LTTE, "has carried out 168 suicide terror attacks in Sri Lanka and India, leaving thousands of innocent bystanders dead or wounded" (Schweitzer, 2000, p. 3). Its suicide unit commonly referred to as "The Black Panthers" is comprised of both men and women and has left countless individuals, both high-ranking officials and civilians, dead. LTTE is not a religious group, but is nationalist in nature. Likewise, Schweitzer (2001) argues that the Kurdish PKK, a secular, secessionist-oriented group demanding Kurdish autonomy from Turkey, carried out 16 suicide attacks plus five that were foiled between 1996 and 1999. The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, a Palestinian nationalist group very active in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today, is yet another example. Although much of the daily suicide bombing taking place in Iraq since the U.S. invasion in 2003 is reportedly carried out by fundamentalist groups, one cannot rule out the possibility that secular groups opposed to the United States, including former Ba'athist supporters of the Saddam Hussein regime, are providing tactical and material support to the suicide bombers.

Ghadbian (2000) oppose that Islam the religion behind much of modern terrorism. He argues that Islam is neither violent nor pacifist. In his view, the oppressive political environment in the Middle East, the dictatorial leadership in most of the governments in the region, and their use of force, are behind violence and counter-violence by the alienated and the marginalized groups in the society. He also maintains that economic inequality and rising unemployment among the semi-educated and young people furnish a

fertile ground for extremist groups to recruit followers. In his study of the profiles of more than 50 suicide bombers, Merari (2004) concludes that suicide bombings “neither an Islamic phenomenon nor a religious phenomenon: religion is just one more element in the persuasion, but it is neither necessary nor sufficient.” Likewise, Scott (2004) does not believe that Muslims who support suicide attacks automatically abhor democratic norms and freedoms and Western culture, although many of them detest American policy in the Middle East. He maintains that the failure of Middle Eastern governments to guarantee basic civil liberties and political rights for their citizens explains to a large degree their support for suicide terrorism.

Based on the controversy in the existing literature, is it feasible then that religion may not essentially be the only connecting factor in terrorism's new lethality? Are there characteristics these groups share that may account for the increase in this observed phenomenon? Although notably not much research has been done in Kenya to determine the driving force of terrorism in Kenya, this research will shade more light what drives the youth in Kenya into terrorism. Is religion one of the driving forces?

## **2.4 Youth Marginalization and Engagement in Extremist Activities**

### **2.4.1 Definition of Marginalization**

Marshall (1994, p.304) defines marginalization as, “a process by which a group or individual is denied access to important positions and symbols of economic, religious, or political power within any society a marginal group may actually constitute a numerical majority and should perhaps be distinguished from a minority group, which may be small in numbers, but has access to political or economic power”.

### **2.4.2 Global Marginalization**

This study suggests that there is a relationship between socioeconomic features of countries and the occurrence of terrorist attacks: economic inequality against minority groups. Though the experience of minority group injustice has been identified as a factor that arouses and fuels terrorist campaigns in numerous qualitative studies of individual countries or individual terrorist movements (for example, Bradley, 2006; Ergil, 2000), it has largely been overlooked in the growing cross-national, time-queries quantitative literature investigating the root causes of terrorism.

Apart from control outcomes in studies focused on democratic rule (Eubank and Weinberg, 1994), political stability (Lai, 2007) and national demographic composition as prognosticators of terrorism (Wade and Reiter, 2007), a cross national empirical investigation of minority economic status as a cause of terrorism has not been analytically undertaken. This is unusual, given the excess study of cross-national empirical factors on the causes of terrorism since 2001 Young and Findley, (2011) and the importance afforded to the individual experience of ethnic, racial or class discrimination as a predictor of aggressive behavior and future violent crime within the sociology, social psychology, and criminology literatures (Dubois et al., 2002; McCord and Ensminger, 2002; Simons et al., 2006).

There is some theoretical rationalization to suspect that a fundamental link exists between marginalized economic discrimination and domestic terrorist activity within countries and qualitative case studies of Northern Ireland (O’Hearn, 1987) and Latin America (Cleary, 2000) and research in Western Europe (Klausen, 2005) recognize marginalized group experience of discrimination as a cause for minority community radicalization that is misused by extremist movements and terrorist organizations.

Terrorist organizations are crucial to the process for the reason that, similar to social movements or political organizations, they work as vehicles to form and to avenue minority group grievance into vicious action. In this way, they are vehicles of mobilization, overcoming mutual action barriers that impair the larger offended minority community from acting upon their dissatisfaction (Sandler, 2003). Discrimination also has an effect on the “target side” of the relationship. Countries with aggrieved minority populations can find their counter-terrorism efforts interfered with. Aggrieved communities are unlikely to be collaborate with state counter-terrorism officials, affording advantages to terrorist groups in their midst (Walsh and Piazza, 2010).

The correlation between discrimination and terrorism can also work the opposite way. Countries with minority groups that do not face dynamic economic discrimination, or where the issues of the minority discrimination are addressed through favorable policies that equalize the differences between minority and majority populations, validate that they can effectively assimilate minorities into mainstream life. Minority communities in non-discriminatory societies are unlikely to be radicalized or to be estranged from mainstream cultures, hence making the terrorist group mission less prevalent and no

terrorist group recruitments taking place. In the qualitative study of counter-terrorism responses in Northern Ireland, the Spanish Basque region, Italy against the Red Brigades, Uruguay against the Tupamaros, and Cyprus against EOKA, Hewitt (1984) recognizes the poor economic status of certain group's within the population, in its place of the overall economic climate, as a significant element in stimulating terrorist group enrollment and activities. In analyzing the effectiveness of counter-Terrorism tools, Hewitt acknowledges that active economic affirmative action for marginalized groups, for example education, health and housing subsidies in Northern Ireland, may reduce the threat of terrorism. Minority communities that are not distressed are further likely to cooperate with state counter-terrorism officials.

The literature on qualitative counter-insurgency recognizes that nurturing a sense of conventional system legality in the face of insurgent efforts is significant in securing community cooperation with security efforts (Joes, 2004; Hashim, 2006).

Wade and Reiter (2007) view was that minority experience of economic discrimination might trigger domestic terrorism. Furthermore if economic discrimination against minorities precipitates domestic terrorism by heightening group infringements and motivating organization, then public policies crafted to enhance the effects of minority economic discrimination should decrease domestic terrorism. Hewitt (1984) provides qualitative data that indicates that this may be the case.

### **2.4.3 Marginalization in East Africa**

The paths toward radicalization among Muslim communities in East Africa vary, but some common themes emerge. Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab both successfully use the 'victimization narrative' to recruit and elicit support, manipulating perceptions of societal discrimination in countries like Kenya, where many Muslims express a sense of social, cultural, political, and economic exclusion from the rest of the country. Kenya's Muslim population is concentrated largely in Coast and Northeastern Provinces, and in certain Nairobi neighborhoods like Eastleigh. Social service delivery and infrastructure investments have been historically poor in these areas, in comparison with other parts of the country. Middle East-based Islamic charities reportedly provided important social services, including education and health care, before the government closed some of these enterprises as part of its response to the 1998 embassy bombings and the September 2001 World Trade Center attacks.

Boredom, idleness, and thrill-seeking impulses among youth may also be push factors for extremism, and, when combined with feelings of marginalization and frustrated expectations stemming from a lack of job opportunities in many East African countries, may make some Muslim youth more susceptible to recruitment by groups like Alshabaab. As one anthropologist argues, “today’s most violent terrorism is rooted in rootlessness and restlessness” (Scott, 2010).

This paper will research to find out whether marginalization may be a pulling factor to extremism as much has not been done in east Africa just speculations based on studies done elsewhere.

## **2.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has reviewed existing literature on this topic to understand what previous researchers have established and identify gaps that could be addressed by this study. Chapter three describes in detail how the study is designed, including methods and procedures used to carry out the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The chapter describes the methodology used to collect the data and its justification.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The research design used in this study was descriptive research. According to Robson (2002) descriptive research is defined as to portray an accurate profile of a person's events or situations. Based on the literature review explored there is a research done on what causes the youth to get engaged in acts of terrorism in the western countries and the Middle East. Although some of the factors may be similar, the political, economic, social, religious factors are different in Kenya.

The technique used was descriptive survey, the most suitable research design that's non-experimental. The term survey can be used to designate any research activity in which the investigator gathers data from a portion of a population for the purpose of examining the characteristics, opinions or intentions of that population (Couchman and Dawson 1995; Polit and Beck 2004). A descriptive design is selected because of its high degree of presentation and the ease in which a researcher could obtain the participants opinion (Polit and Beck, 2004).

A variable is a characteristic of phenomena that can be observed or measured. A dependent variable is defined as values that are influenced by one or more independent variables. An independent variable is a variable that influences the values of a dependent variable (Jill and Rogers, 2009). The independent variable in this research is effect of religion, poverty, politics and discrimination that influence the independent variable acts of terrorism.

#### **3.3 Population and Sampling**

##### **3.3.1. Population**

Population refers to the entire collection of a set of objects, people and events or a collection of all the items that we want to make generalizations or conclusions about. The

population is chosen because there are participants that deal with terrorism issues daily in their lives according to (Babbie, 2007). In this study, the population comprised of the youth who were between 15-30 years old in Kamkunji constituency. However, because of financial and logistical challenges such as time and security concerns associated with the current situation in Eastleigh with the recent terror attacks a limited number of respondents are engaged.

### **3.3.2 Population Distribution**

This study engaged 40 respondents targeting key youth leaders in Eastleigh mainly working with civil society in the area of empowering the youth. The study targeted 20 males and 20 females that is available and free to share information.

### **3.3.3 Sampling Design**

The study focused on non-probability sampling where little attempt is made to generate a representative sample (Cooper and Schindler 2011, p.167).

#### **3.3.3.1 Sampling Frame**

Sampling is defined as the process of selecting certain members from a group to represent the entire group. In most instances, the total population is so large that it is not possible to collect data from every individual person or entity. As a result, it is scientifically acceptable to draw a sample from the entire population, and generalize the findings of the research to that particular population as being representative of the whole population (Bless and Higson, 2000).

The sampling frame is a record of the population from which a sample can be drawn (Jill and Roger, 2005). The sample was drawn from Kamkunji Constituency targeting youth between 15-30 Years. It targeted any respondent that is readily available. The respondents were both male and female.

#### **3.3.3.2 Sampling Technique Methods**

The type of non-probability sampling used is convenience sampling where the researcher selects any readily available individuals as participants (Cooper and Schindler 2011, p.167). The target engaged both male and female equally to have a balanced view of opinions.

### **3.3.3.3 Sample size**

The sample size of this study was 40 respondents.

## **3.4 Data Collection Methods**

The study makes use of both primary and secondary data. Data is defined as known facts or things used as a basis for inference or reckoning. There are two types of data: Primary data which are generated from an original source, such as experiments, surveys, interviews or focus groups while secondary data are collected from an existing source such as publications, databases and internal records (Jill and Roger, 2009). The study made use of both primary and secondary data.

### **3.4.1 In-depth Interviews**

The tool used for collection of primary data was in-depth Interview. According to Cooper and Schindler (2011, p. 172), Individual depth interview is an interaction between an individual interviewer and a single participant .The interviews are administered to selected participants (interviewees) who are asked questions to find out what they do, think or feel. Verbal and visual prompts are required. The interview guide had semi structured questions some of the questions are prepared but the interviewer is able to add additional questions in order to obtain more detailed information about a particular answer to explore new but relevant issues raised from a particular answer. The interview guide had a set of eleven questions.

### **3.4.2 Secondary Data**

According to Cooper and Schindler (2011, p. 100), secondary data is the interpretation of primary data using text books, hand books, magazines and newspaper. This method is vital in supporting the primary data collected during interviews. All secondary data and information is sourced from academic and policy literature (especially, books and journals); and publications of governments, international organizations and civil societies.

## **3.5 Research Procedures**

It is essential to pilot test the interview guide. This is done to ensure the flow of questions and the structure of the questions. This is administered to colleagues in the office to run

test and edit as required. The number of interviews to be tested is estimated as 5 percent (2); this ensures a good base of response on the questions and confidence in the tool.

During the in-depth interview the researcher gives a brief summary on the purpose to the interviewee before the interviews commence. Assurance of the confidentiality and anonymity is captured in the letter and brief.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Given the qualitative nature of ethnographic data generated, the study applied an interpretivist method of analysis. This implies a descriptive discussion of the interview data by foremost trying to understand and contextualize the narrative from the perspective of the respondents. Consequently, existing relevant concepts and theories are applied in the discussion and presentation of data, but ultimately all the conclusions reached in the study are based on the researcher's informed reflections and judgment on the subject of inquiry.

### **3.7 Ethical Consideration for Human Subjects of Research**

Given the sensitive nature of the study, respondents notably the ones living in are scared because the Kenyan government declared that all the refugees will be returned to their country. This is because of the terror attacks in the area, hence there has been tension, especially among the Somali speaking. There has been suspicion and fear of being deported to their country. The study upholds the principles of informed consent, anonymity and interview ethics.

**Informed Consent:** The respondents are provided with a summary of the key aspects of the interview prior to the commencing of the interview. Use of fictional names is adopted and in no way would opinions of respondents be traceable to them.

**Anonymity:** Respondents are informed before the interview that they would remain anonymous and any information they give will be confidential and used only for the purpose of academic research.

Interview Ethics: The interviews are conducted in a pleasant relaxing atmosphere with sufficient privacy. As far as possible, the interviews were conducted in premises the respondents felt most comfortable.

### **3.8 Chapter Summary**

This chapter described in detail how the study is designed, including methods and procedures that are used to carry out the study. Chapter four describes the results and findings from the research.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4.0 RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

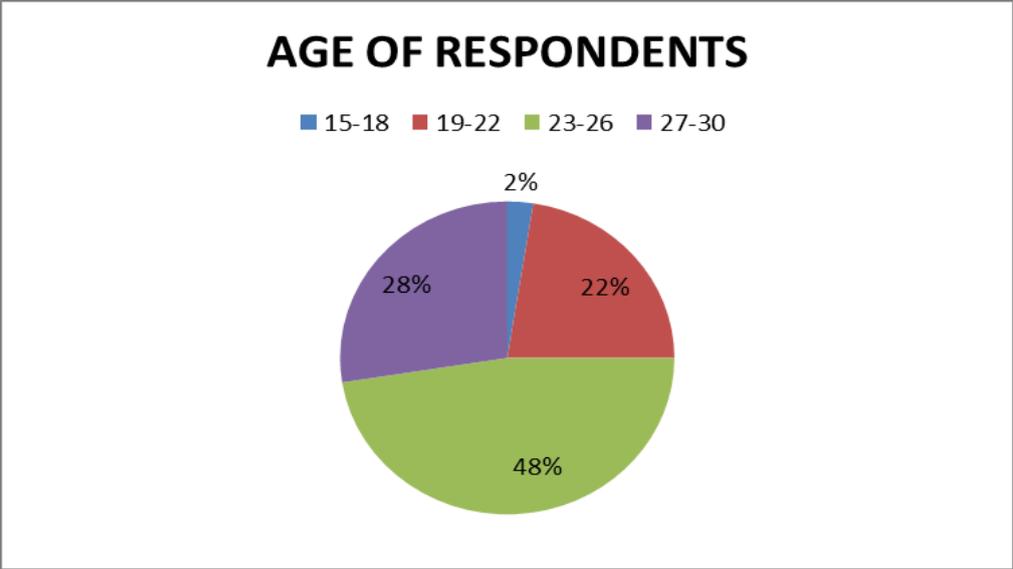
#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this section we present the findings of the study. This chapter aims at providing the data analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the questionnaire that were filled during the study. The findings are based on the research questions which include questions on respondents' perceptions of the role played by religion in recruitment or participation of youth in terrorism and also their perceptions on what drove the youth to engage in terrorist acts. This information is presented in tables and pie charts so as to enable comparative discussion and interpretation.

The data was collected during semi-structured interview; it represents the information collected from 40 participants who were aged between 15-30 years, living in the predominantly Somali suburb of Eastleigh in Nairobi.

#### **4.2 General Information**

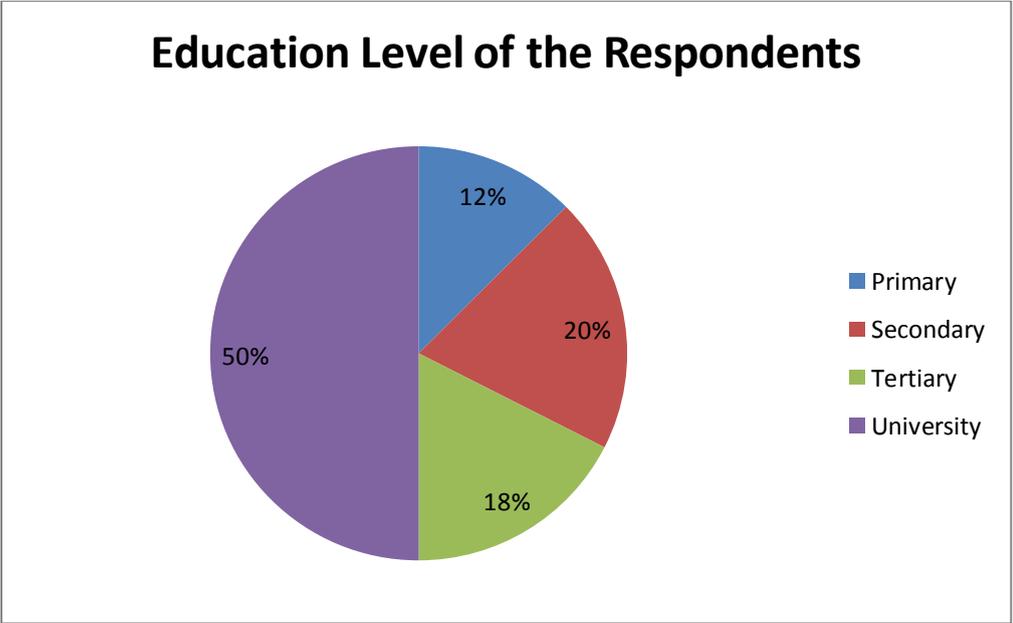
The fieldwork sample was composed of 40 participants segregated by gender: 30 male and 10 female participants. The social dynamics in the designated area of our sample population resulted in less female respondents than anticipated. This was primarily due to the fact that majority of them are not easily accessible as majority of them are primarily homemakers, while those who engage in businesses either due to language barrier or societal norms shied away from answering questions on the topic of research. The age segregation was youth who were aged between fifteen to thirty years as the represented the desired population sampling frame.



**Figure 1: Age of Respondents**

**Source: From the fieldwork in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi, March 2013.**

The level of education for the majority of the respondents was up to tertiary level with a high percentage been enrolled in university. The respondents have been exposed to formal education causing them to have a strong disposition on current issues that pertain to them. The incorporation of this sample population ensured that they provided critical feedback on the topic of research from an informed perspective.



**Figure 2: Education Level of Respondents**

**Source: From the fieldwork in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi, March 2013.**

### **4.3 The Effects of Poverty on the Youth Extremist Activities**

#### **4.3.1 Money as Driver of Terrorism**

The factors analyzed are consistent with the objectives mentioned in chapter one. From the sample population 28 out of 40 (70 percent) thought that the economic status of the youth was a major influencer for youth to join terrorism. They argued that this was further worsened by the fact that there was lack of formal employment and legitimate sources of income, which in turn fueled the need for youth to look for means in which they could make quick and easy money. Some of the sample responses were:

“The youth use pen and knowledge to seek for job opportunities; if they are denied they take the gun and create chaos”.<sup>1</sup>

“Some youths join because of economic hardship they face with their families so as to get their financial problems fixed and so they join extremist”.<sup>2</sup>

Muhsin (2011) who interviewed a group of youth in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi revealed that the youth joining Al-shabaab were paid in range of \$50-\$150 monthly, depending on the work, and yet they required little effort.

“All one had to do was carry around a gun and patrol the streets,” explained a participant. “It was an easy job compared to other jobs, such as construction work. Therefore, for some of these youths, a significant reason for joining al-Shabaab was because it enabled them to provide for themselves and their families”.<sup>3</sup>

Although personal poverty is not a reason for joining violent extremism, the cases of these youth shows that the effects of poverty, such as idleness and low self-esteem, cannot be ignored. The fact that many Somali youth are unemployed and rely on relatives

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<sup>1</sup>Interview with a student Nairobi University conducted in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi on 26 March, 2013. The interview was conducted by a fourth year Somali youth at Catholic University in Nairobi, Kenya.

<sup>2</sup>Interview with a youth leader conducted in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi on 22 March, 2013. The interview was conducted by a fourth year Somali youth at Catholic University in Nairobi, Kenya.

<sup>3</sup>Interview with an ex Al-Shabaab youth conducted in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi on 22 March, 2013. The interview was conducted by a fourth year Somali youth at Catholic University in Nairobi, Kenya.

for sustenance, either in Somalia or in the diaspora, dampens their self-worth such that when an opportunity to fend for oneself arises, they are quick to take advantage (Muhsin, 2011).

The youth identified those who were prone to engaging in terrorist activities to be not only poor but idle with a sense of hopelessness. This hopelessness and the lack of avenues in which to engage constructively made them susceptible to being recruited into violent and extremist behavior.

Out of the respondents interviewed, 23 per cent feel strongly that Islamic ideologies play a key role in pulling the youth into engaging in terrorism. Their responses indicate that the misinterpretation of the concept of Jihad is still prevalent in Eastleigh with the war in Somalia from where majority of the youth identify with being primarily associated with the Jihad ideology. They feel that the misinterpretation of the Islamic ideologies coupled with poverty has resulted in many more youth being prone to recruitment into extremist groups.

Of the respondents 57 percent that think economic reasons were the main noting that misinterpreted ideologies and wrong perception of religion gave weight to the quick decision to participate in such activities.

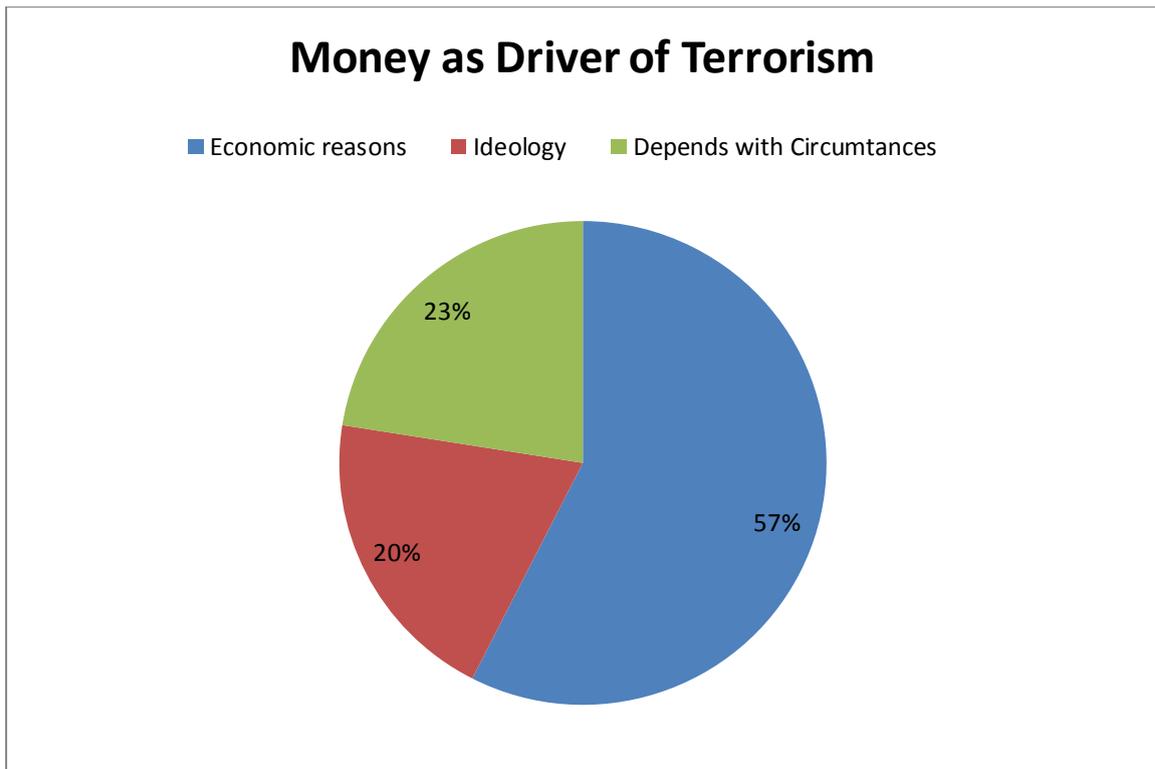
“Majorities of the youth are not for quick riches gained from killing; however they are confused with misinterpreted ideologies by the perpetrators”.<sup>4</sup>

“About 80 percent of the youth are not for wealth however, they are confused with misinterpreted ideologies. The low income youth join for money to raise their standards of living”.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Interview with a business man conducted in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi on 24 March, 2013. The interview was conducted by a fourth year Somali youth at Catholic University in Nairobi, Kenya.

<sup>5</sup>Interview with a primary school teacher conducted in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi on 22 March, 2013. The interview was conducted by a fourth year Somali youth at Catholic University in Nairobi, Kenya.



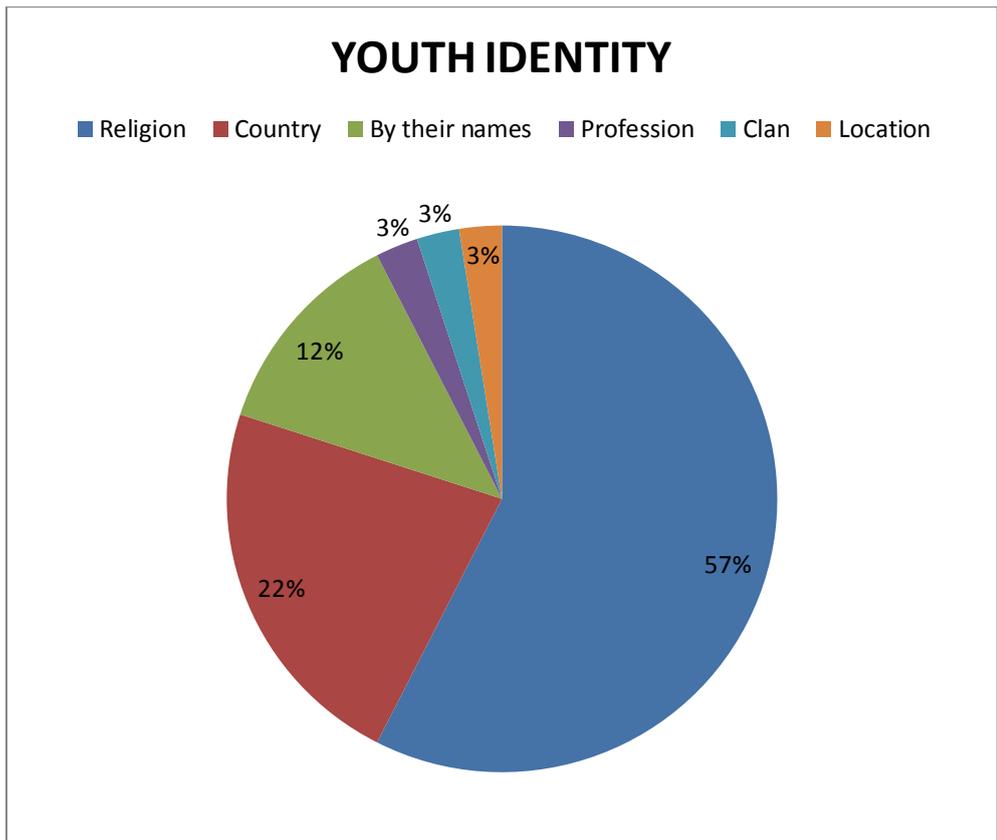
**Figure 3: Money as a Driver of Terrorism**

**Source: From the fieldwork in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi, March 2013.**

#### **4.4. The Effect of Religion on the Youth Engagement in Extremist Activities**

##### **4.4.1 Youth Identification**

During the fieldwork, 57 percent of the respondents identified themselves primarily by religion. This could be attributed to the fact that the majority of the Eastleigh residents are predominantly Muslim and highly value religion. The second method that the youth use to identify themselves is Nationality. Some respondents value their country of origin, Somalia and have held on to the Somali culture where they trace their roots of origin. Profession, clan and location remain the least mentioned.



**Figure 4: Youth Identity**

**Source: From the Fieldwork in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi, March 2013.**

Prior research has documented that as children age; they begin to develop a more concrete, cognitive conception of their religious identity (Elkind, 1964; Johnston, 2001). The participants in this study reported that as they matured, they began to view religion not as an unquestionable, ascribed characteristic, but as a chosen identity. When the students told stories regarding their identity development, they frequently mentioned various factors that led to them primarily identifying themselves by religion.

My religion is the most outstanding element that I identify myself with, because I follow strictly the principles of Islamic teachings. I draw all my behavior from the Islamic doctrines like respect, no harm and good etiquette.<sup>6</sup>

Becoming more introspective and aware of values, goals, and beliefs is a normal part of human development (Erikson, 1963). Some of the interviewees believed it was "only

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<sup>6</sup>Interview with a social worker conducted in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi on 24 March, 2013. The interview was conducted by a fourth year Somali youth at Catholic University in Nairobi, Kenya.

natural" that as they matured, they would begin to contemplate more important life questions and their religious backgrounds, and hence re-examine that aspect of their identities. The importance of religion in the identity of many Muslims, which has become clear since the 1990's is likely to influence their experiences of and responses to, policing practices and counter terrorism policies (O'Beirne, 2004). Religion becomes a more salient and important marker of identity in response to experiences of discrimination (Ballard, 1996). Experiences of the state repression and perceptions that Muslims are being treated as a suspected community and targeted by police because of the religion may increase intra group solidarity and identification with the religious identity. This could be a cause for concern among policy makers, given that some use Muslim identity as a way to challenge the possibility of integration and create an identity and values (Wiktorowicz, 2005).

#### **4.4.2 Islam as a Justification for Violence**

With regard to most world religions that are monotheistic, Islam does not explicitly support or require illegitimate violence. The Quran does not advocate or condone terrorism. To enhance their credibility and justify their atrocities, terrorists connect their acts of violence with Islam by totally ignoring the extensive limits that the Quran and the Islamic tradition place on the use of violence and its rejection of terrorism. As with other faiths, a radical fringe distorts and misinterprets mainstream and normative Islamic doctrines and laws. From the fieldwork majority of the respondents thought Islam was linked to terrorist violence. 80 percent of the respondents however are Muslim. The 20 percent non-Muslim are of the opinion that Islam promotes terrorism.

"Islam means peace and it promotes living in peaceful co-existence .... Those people who promote violence in the name of Islam are not real Muslims because they are not following the actual teachings of the Islamic religion. Such people should be punished and their acts condemned".<sup>7</sup>

Throughout the Quran Muslims are urged to be merciful and just. However, Islam does give guidelines to Muslims for defending their families and themselves, as well as their religion and community from aggression. The earliest Quran verses dealing with the right to engage in a "defensive" struggle were revealed shortly after Muhammed and his

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<sup>7</sup>Interview with a student of Nairobi University conducted in Eastleigh, suburb of Nairobi on 26 March, 2013. The interview was conducted by a fourth year Somali Youth at Catholic university in Nairobi, Kenya.

followers escaped persecution in Mecca by immigrating to Medina. At a time when they were forced to fight for their lives, Muhammad was told: "Leave is given to those who fight because they were wronged--surely God is able to help them who were expelled from their homes wrongfully for saying, 'Our Lord is God'"<sup>8</sup> (22:39-40). One of the youth responses clarifying that Islam is a non-violent religion said:

“It is not justifiable. Islam is a religion of peace and system of balance in every aspect of life. It is the mother of human rights because Islam does not allow at any point violent activities. Unlike Christianity (the crusaders in Jerusalem who massacred 100,000 Muslims in one day) and finally when the Muslims conquered Jerusalem they allowed the Christians to live peacefully”.<sup>9</sup>

The role of religion is especially magnified in the identity of youth for whom clan politics has resulted in violence and marginalization in their community. When the respondents who are of ethnic Somali origin were asked whether they were Somali or Muslim first, a great majority of the respondents answered they were Muslim first. This does not necessarily indicate religious zealotry, but rather the intertwined nature of religion and nationality in their sense of identity. More importantly, it echoes (Schwartz, 2006a) argument that terrorism represents a confluence of cultural, social, and personal identity. It particularly underlines the role of a cultural identity strongly rooted in collectivism prioritizing the group over oneself—in accepting terrorism. In this case, collectivism is evinced by the youth’s willingness to sacrifice their ambitions, relationships, and lives (what generally constitute a personal identity) for the sake of religion or country.

#### **4.4.3 Islamic Extremist Groups and Instrumental Use of Religion for Violence**

The general themes of Al Qaida propaganda are portrayed in the context of conflict and oppression of Islam vs. non-Islam, in effect good versus the evil without this context the justification for violence is lessened. Al Qaida media statements frequently cite a broad range of incidents in support of their themes and assist in radicalization (Azzam, 2007), but it is the core themes that are lasting while specific anecdotal evidence is transient. Even the enemy identified by al Qaida is fluid, with Americans, Jews, Muslims and non-Muslims all having been alternately labeled the enemy (Hoffman 2006). The core

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<sup>8</sup> Quran verse 22:39-40.

<sup>9</sup>Interview with a social worker conducted in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi on 24 March, 2013. The interview was conducted by a fourth year Somali Youth at Catholic University in Nairobi, Kenya.

conflict of jihadist Islam verses non-Islam is extended by the jihadist worldview that requires the denunciation of those who do not hold their worldview and the rejection of all forms of government except for strictly interpreted Islamic law (Akerboom, 2009) , requirements that ensure that negotiations cannot occur and act as a spoiler strategy (Kydd and Walter, 2006). From the fieldwork, it is clear that the 40 respondents do not share the views of the extremist group and their killing of innocent civilians for personal interests which in most cases it is political triggered.

“The extremist groups are under false impression ideology that they are only the right people and violence is the only way, to make people accept their ideology”.<sup>10</sup>

While religion is not the sole motivating factor in Islamic terrorism, it is the only stable factor justifying violence given the large number of disparate factors identified by terrorists (Hudson 1999). Research has shown that in Islamic terrorism, multiple factors often serve as an entrance point for radicalization, a way to open potential recruits to the replacement of their personal belief system with the radical jihadist worldview (Beutel 2009). Given the primary importance of religious theory in the jihadist worldview, the aspect of religious justification for violence needs to be addressed in order to succeed in reducing the effectiveness of jihadist radicalization methods.

## **4.5 Youth Marginalization and Extremist Activities**

### **4.5.1 The Youth Have a Voice**

The Youths are major actors in the conflict, constituting the bulk of the participants in militias and criminal gangs, including Al-Shabaab according to a Somalia Human Development Report (UNDP 2012). The lost opportunities, unclear identity and a growing sense of marginalization among youth in an environment of state collapse, violent conflict and economic decline provide fertile ground for youth radicalization (UNDP 2012).

Majority of Somali youth are victims of marginalization and exclusion in the communities that they have moved to. These youths lack access to education and employment with those attending formal schools attending those that indoctrinate them

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<sup>10</sup>Interview with researcher conducted in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi on 25 March, 2013. The interview was conducted by a fourth year Somali youth at Catholic University in Nairobi, Kenya.

into Islamic fundamentalism (UNDP, 2012). During the fieldwork, the ethnic Somali youth expressed that their voices are not heard in their community. The data indicates 47 percent of the respondents feel that they are not given an audience by stakeholders in the community. While 45 percent feel that the status had changed and the youth are being listened to more. The youth feel that they are slowly getting engaged in the decision making process and are participating more in the outcome of those decisions.

“The youth are viewed as future leader’s defenders of their nation and people energetic and productive. I believe their voices are not heard. What leaders are saying is mere lip service and they are minimally heard”.<sup>11</sup>

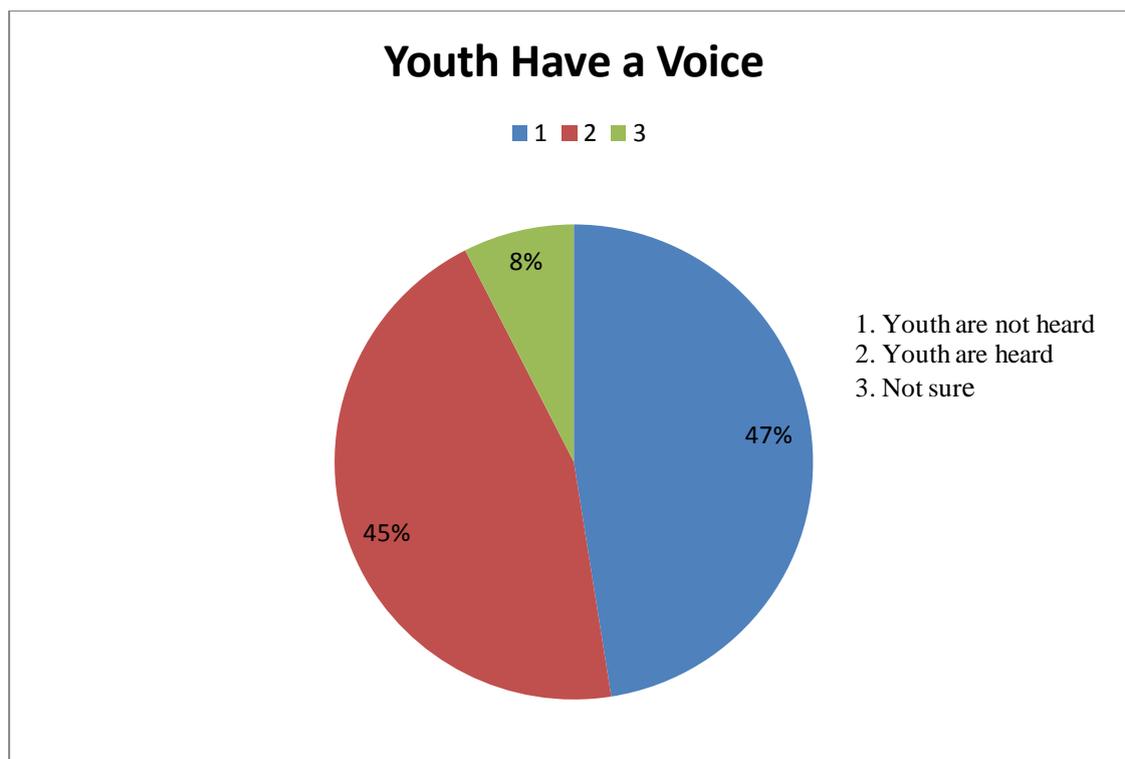
“The youth are viewed as the integral part of the community. They are viewed positively; they are seen as the future leaders who can transform the community. Somehow they are heard, but their expectations are not met by their so called leaders”.<sup>12</sup>

A 2009 landmark study on youth vulnerability and exclusion in West Africa by the Conflict, Security and Development Group (CSDG) found that “youth exclusion and vulnerability do not lead to violent outcomes where mediating institutions channel youth energies into collaborative and productive activities” (Ismail and Olonisakin 2009). Unfortunately, such mediating institutions are lacking in many parts of Africa and an environment of exclusion prevails. The study further argues that “traditional structural impediments continue to limit the participation of youth in politics, inhibit their representation in local and national decision-making processes, and encourage their resort to unorthodox means of influence, including political violence, rebellion and thuggery” (Ismail and Olonisakin 2009 ). While in many ways the lives of young people are more complex and challenging than ever, in most countries they are also more varied, full of opportunity, and more secure than in the past. In general, modern youth spends longer preparing for adulthood than their parents. However, the transition to adulthood is also laden with risks and challenges (Ismail and Olonisakin 2009).

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with a youth conducted in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi on 22 March, 2013. This interview was conducted by a fourth year Somali youth at Catholic University in Nairobi, Kenya.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with a student conducted in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi on 22 March, 2013. The interview was conducted by a fourth year Somali youth at Catholic University in Nairobi, Kenya.



**Figure 5: Youth Have a Voice**

**Source: From the fieldwork in the Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi, March 2013**

#### **4.5.2 Muslim Youth Proneness to Terrorist Recruitment**

Previous research suggests that counter-terrorism policies and practices may create a well of sympathy and silence among sections of society, especially if they increase repression, or stigmatize and alienate these groups (Silke, 2005). Studies show that Al Qaida and organizations closely linked to violent extremism operating in Western Europe use discrimination and the social and political marginalization of Muslims as part of their narrative for recruiting people to violence (Wiktorowicz, 2005). The United Kingdom’s experience in Northern Ireland provides significant evidence of the potential ways in which counter-terrorism measures can be counter-productive (Campbell and Connelly, 2008; Hillyard, 2005).

During the research it was noted that majority of the respondent were inclined to believe that Muslims who were well grounded in the tenets of Islam are difficult to manipulate. These respondents felt that the lack of knowledge on Islamic principles make the youth gullible and easily manipulated.

“Most of the Muslim youths are not well informed on the teachings of Islam; so they are easily confused under the pretext of jihad or holy war”.<sup>13</sup>

“Muslim youths are more prone to those people who are branded as terrorists. These Muslims have more contacts or exposure to terrorism than any youth of other faiths”.<sup>14</sup>

Another group of interviewees disagreed and were of the opinion that those were just allegations and there was no proof of such happenings.

“The Muslim youth is more conversant with the religion and what it teaches unlike other youths”.<sup>15</sup>

More recently, the concern that the youth are increasingly being radicalized and manipulated by terrorist organizations was expressed in the U.S. Department of States.

Radicalization of immigrant populations, youth and alienated minorities in Europe, the Middle East and Africa continued. But it became increasingly clear that radicalization to violent extremism does not occur by accident, or because such populations are innately prone to extremism. Rather, we saw increasing evidence of terrorists and extremists manipulating the grievances of alienated youth or immigrant populations, and then cynically exploiting those grievances to subvert legitimate authority and create unrest. We also note a “self-radicalization” process of youth reaching out to extremists in order to become involved in the broader AQ fight. Such efforts to manipulate grievances represent a “conveyor belt” through which terrorists seek to convert alienated or aggrieved populations, by stages, to increasingly radicalized and extremist viewpoints, turning them into sympathizers, supporters, and ultimately, in some cases, members of terrorist networks.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Interview with a teacher conducted in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi on 27 March, 2013. The interview was conducted by a fourth year Somali youth at Catholic university in Nairobi, Kenya.

<sup>14</sup>Interview with a business man conducted in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi on 25 March, 2013. The interview was conducted by a fourth year Somali youth at Catholic university in Nairobi, Kenya.

<sup>15</sup>Interview with a business man conducted in Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi on 27 March, 2013. The interview was conducted by a fourth year Somali youth at Catholic university in Nairobi, Kenya.

<sup>16</sup>U.S. Department of States 2007 Country Report on Terrorism released in April 2008.

The Department of State indicates “radicalization to violent extremism does not occur by accident” and there is “increasing evidence of terrorists and extremists manipulating the grievances of alienated youth.” Additionally, they point to the trend of a “self-radicalization process of youth reaching out to extremists,” whereby the young person’s use the Internet to acquaint themselves to the terrorist groups’ ideologies. In addition to understanding how terrorist groups recruit and utilize youth, a better understanding of how youth are radicalized is needed.

#### **4.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has presented and discussed the fieldwork ethnographic data. Data presented and discussion has been significantly enriched with the use of pie charts. The next chapter presents a discussion of the research findings and major recommendations.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5.0 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a discussion on the findings of the study and the interpretation and conclusion based on the findings presented in the preceding chapter. Having analyzed and interpreted the data obtained from this study, it's important to relate the various aspects that were covered.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate the factors that potentially influences some of the youth to join extremist groups in Kenya, especially the youth of Somali ethnic origin in the Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi.

The objectives of the study are: determine whether poverty drives youth to engage in extremism; investigate whether religion is a factor that compels the youth to engage in extremism; find out whether ethno-cultural marginalization and discrimination push the youth to extremism.

The research methodology that was employed was descriptive. The researcher interviewed 40 respondents that were segregated by gender. The respondents were identified through convenience sampling. Due to the sensitive nature of the research, the research utilized both secondary and primary data collection methods. With the primary data collection, individual in depth interviews were utilized with an interview guide so as to prompt the respondents. While with the secondary data collection was done from expert literature written on the topic of research.

The major findings of the research identified factors that helped contribute to the youth in Eastleigh engaging in violence and extremism. The findings were as a result of the in-depth interviews where the respondents helped the researcher identify how poverty, religion and ethno-cultural marginalization and discrimination pushed the youth towards extremism. The research resulted in showing that poverty and ethno-cultural marginalization and discrimination pushed the youth to join the outlawed groups as they

felt that their engagements in the groups enabled them to provide for their families and themselves. At the same time, those who had experienced ethnic profiling and discrimination felt a sense of belonging as the extremist groups enabled them to identify with them and help them feel as part of a group. They also felt that by being in these outlawed groups they were able to protect themselves from harassment that they received due to their ethnicity. The study also has shown that while poverty and marginalization /discrimination push the youth to join the extremist groups, religion plays a key role in attracting the youth to engage in extremist behavior. They feel that those who are attracted to carrying out terrorist activities in the name of Islam do so because they have been misled by misinterpreted teachings of the Quran by radicalized preachers and feel that they are justified in what they are doing as it is accepted by their faith. The study has also shown that when it comes to religion those who engage in terrorists acts are those who have not been ingrained in Islam and are majorly new converts who have not spent adequate time learning the basic tenets of Islam and are easily influenced by radicalized preachers who prey on their zeal to prove their faith.

### **5.3 Discussions**

#### **5.3.1: Research Objective One**

The first objective was to determine whether poverty drives the youth to engage in extremism. The research narrowed down to lack of employment, lack of a stable source of income and level of education as major influences of poverty in the location of study. The research was descriptive and it employed focus group discussion method as well as the questionnaire method. The questionnaire was shared with the respondents. The findings were analyzed by way of tabulation and presented in the form of charts for the purpose of interpretation.

According to Muhsin (2011), Money is a factor that terrorist organizations operating in Kenya use to appeal to recruits. Despite being a business hub, Eastleigh is still like many developing business cities, such as London which even with economic opportunities, still remains poor. With the youth population in Eastleigh estimated at 60 percent unemployment rates especially in the ethnic Somali group is quite high. The appeal of extremism and violence due to lack of finances has made the youth in Eastleigh

susceptible to radicalization with factors such as unemployment, poverty and marginalization driving the youth to join the outlawed extremist movements.

According to La Gade (2007), terrorists have capitalized on poverty to gain access to communities that give them cover to plan and execute their illegal acts. Although Kenya is the most economically developed country in the East Africa region, the uneven distribution of wealth is most pronounced in Muslim settlements (Northern Kenya and Coastal Kenya). Respondent in the study noted that the lack of formal employment especially among the ethnic Somali youth was tied to poverty. Without formal employment, the youth feel frustrated and dissatisfied with their lives and are easy targets for recruitment. In addition to this, the respondents noted that youth who were from poor families with weak familial ties were easily influenced by financial incentives making them the most vulnerable to being recruited by violent extremist. With poverty as a major catalyst of engagement in extremism for youth in Eastleigh, majority of these youth feel hopeless and find a sense of purpose in joining extremist groups.

Majority of the respondents also noted that the environment around them was hostile to their economic development which further made their engagement in outlawed groups more appealing. The respondents also felt that since majority of ethnic Somali youth in Eastleigh lacked proper legal documentation their access to formal financial partnership was also limited leaving many with the option of engaging in illegal activities so as to be able to access funding for any of their legitimate businesses. Not only has this lack of proper identification been a major deterrent for the youth to engage in income generating activities that can elevate their economic status, the language barrier between youth who are ethnic Somali and the youth who are ethnic Kenyan Somali has only made the situation worse as the ethnic Somali youth cannot communicate effectively with youth groups or local organization that can provide them with financial support or employment opportunities resulting in lack of access to financing and financial information from which they would be beneficiaries .

According to Davis (2007), poverty creates a breeding ground for alienation and radicalization therefore providing to potential recruits to the cause of terrorist groups. Majority of the youth interviewed, cited that poverty tended to make them feel alienated from the rest of the population lacking a sense of identity as they could not express who they were effectively due to feelings of inadequacy. They also noted that these feelings

drove many others to join extremist groups so as to get a sense of belonging as well as to be able to provide for their families and maintain a status quo in the society. The respondents also felt that despite unemployment and poverty being a major factor of radicalization, it is not always true that youth who are ready to join such groups are from disadvantaged background with some of those who are in leadership position in the extremist group being from the middle class. These youth who join do so, so as to get attention and recognition from their peers.

According to Rabasa (2007), there is a pervasive organized criminal activity along the Southeast African corridor ranging from drug trafficking to identity theft. About 61percent of the respondents interviewed, felt that the lack of a stable source of income, due to Eastleigh being a transitional point for majority of the youth who were of Somali descent contributed to the ease in which they were recruited into extremist groups. About 35percent stated that while getting a source of employment was hard, maintaining the job/business was harder as there was constant pressure to engage in organized crime with the business as a front or to change their identity so as to have a higher chance of success due to falsifying documentations so as to get new citizenship. The respondents also noted that despite the formal financial sector in Eastleigh creating innovative financial products that were compliant with Sharia as well as tailored for these youth, many of the youth due to their hesitance to engage in activities that would sustain their business providing stable sources of income, these youth lacked access to the necessary information on where and how to seek support to not only implement their business ideas but to also sustain them. The respondents further noted that while the Kenyan Government and other stakeholders in Eastleigh had a variety of services to ensure the sustainability of the youth's business there was still poor linkage between the youth and the organizations that would facilitate their engagement in positive and legal forms of livelihood provision.

According to Peimani (2009), rampant poverty, low living standards, widespread corruption and extensive human right abuses makes extremist ideologies plausible among dissatisfied youth. Their highly polarized societies are socially fragile being divided between two extremes: wealth accumulated by those who had constant sources of income and the low income population who had limited sources to opportunities for stable income. More than 70 percent of the respondent interviewed felt that the youth engaging in extremist groups felt desperate as they had no other source of income and thought that their engagement in the illegal groups would be a surety that their families or they

themselves would not lack a source of income or money to provide for their basic needs. While more than 50 percent felt that if the youth were assured of a daily income from their engagements be it their self-employment work or from the formal sector they would be less susceptible to extremist ideologies as it would be less appealing to them. In addition to this they felt that if the youth who were at risk to join extremist groups were provided with information on how to engage with financial institutions or how to develop their talents they would shun away from joining extremist groups and focus more on positive forms of livelihoods such as self-employment.

With more than 60 percent of the respondent being in tertiary institutions, majority of them cited that those who were easily radicalized were youth whose level of education was not past primary level as they were easier to teach religious teachings that had been misinterpreted. They also noted that individuals who had attended schooling outside the Islamic schools were more tolerant of other people's views and were open to interactive engagement with individuals who did not primarily share their faith while those that had only gone to school through the Islamic system such as the Madrassas were prone to be more intolerant of views that deferred with their religious outlook in life. They also noted that education in Eastleigh was a preserve of the rich as only the rich could take their children to private schools enabling them to interact with diverse individuals while families that were not economically stable could only afford the Madrassa and a local school that did not allow the children to interact with people from a different community. They felt that this in the end shaped the outlook of an individual.

### **5.3.2 Research Objective Two**

The second objective was to investigate whether religion was a factor to compel the youth to engage in extremism. The research narrowed down to how the youth identify themselves as well as what they thought justified jihad. 57 percent of the respondents primarily identified themselves by religion showing the researcher the importance that they placed on their faith. The respondents felt that those individuals who primarily identified themselves only by religion could either be easily recruited since they ascribed their religion an unquestionable characteristic or they could be not easily recruited since they had widely read on their religion and matured and recognized its questionable nature.

The respondents also felt that individuals who based their identity on religion were prone to spend majority of their time in meditation and listening to religious teaching, they were

also most likely not to be tolerant of individuals who were not of the same religion and try to convert who they thought was on the wrong path and would feel that Jihad could be a way of recruiting believers to the same faith. While other stated that those who primarily identified themselves by religion would strive to follow the core principles of the religion which would most probably advocate for tolerance and leaving in peace with each other.

The youth felt that there was rampant misinterpretation of the concept of Jihad. More than 60 percent of the respondent indicated that they felt that misinterpretations of Islamic religious teachings posed a high risk to the community. They felt that even though the number of Jihadist preachers reduced the few that were left were quite extreme in their call for Jihad and could influence youth who were impressionable to carry out extremist activities thinking that what they do is allocable in Islam.

80 percent of the respondents felt that if youth were in a constant radicalized religious environment they would be more open to joining extremist groups as their environment will have played a key role in influencing their decision. The respondents felt that youth were more prone to engage in terrorist like activities if they felt that those around them would understand their reasons for doing certain acts of terror. While majority of the youth felt that with the current heightened awareness on pro-extremist activities, the appeal by charismatic preachers to engage in extremist like behavior by the youth had dwindled with the most charismatic pro-jihad preachers going underground due to the aggressive monitoring of their activities by the Kenyan police. The youth feel that the preachers who are pro-Jihad in Eastleigh have also changed their strategies in a response to the security crackdowns. Despite this 40 percent of the respondents still felt that preachers did not have much influence on the youth as their peers had with majority noting that, peers are the ones that recruit each other to the illegal gangs while they trained each other before finally going to the pro-jihad preachers for instructions or linkages with Al-Shabaab.

Some 60 percent of the respondents who practiced Islam also noted that hero worship of violent and extremist individuals had significantly reduced with the killing of Osama Bin Laden and Sheik Aboud Rogo in Mombasa. Even with that they are quick to note that radical individuals in the present time that have a global appeal such as Osama are few and majority of youth who are engaged in radicalized activities look towards history for

people to emulate. The youth also felt that the lack of effective and organized mosque structures in Eastleigh played a huge role in the susceptibility of youth as there was no active monitoring of the teachings at the mosques. 65 percent of the respondents stated that while the mosques organization was yet to be at par with other places, the increase in terrorist attacks in the area had led to some of the mosques getting better organized at attempts of vetting speakers who were unknown to the community.

With technology in place now, the respondents also pointed out those preachers were not only found in the local mosques but majority of the youth accessed preaching and teachings from the internet. While there are pro and cons of that, it was noted by the respondents that there was a high possibility of radicalized preachers posting their messages online and those messages have been accessed by youth in Eastleigh. The youth felt that continual interaction with the online radicalized preacher would not only alienate the youth but would greatly contribute to their engagement in extremist activities.

### **5.3.3 Research Objective Three**

The third objective of this study was to find out whether ethno-cultural marginalization or discrimination pushes the youth to extremism. Majority of the respondent felt that youth who were of Somali descent were more prone to police harassment. They felt that this has led to majority of youth even those who are ethnic Somali-Kenyan to get frustrated by the way they are mistreated by authorities. The respondents feel that they are treated with disrespect in spite of having committed no crime. The respondents further note that the police due to cultural profiling, have developed habitual corrupt practices of demanding bribes from them, this has worsened the feeling that the youth of Somali descent, have towards the police and in turn has resulted in a lack of identity by the youth of Somali origin pushing them towards extremist groups so as to get retribution.

In Kenya, there has been a spurt of terrorist attacks in public spaces; this has resulted in majority of ethnic Somalis experiencing racial profiling due to association of the attacks with members of their community. About 80 percent of the respondents, who are of Somali descent, feel as though Somali youth continue to face discrimination when they want to access public spaces get legal documentation as they are required to go through longer procedures of vetting than non-ethnic Somali individuals in the country. This in turn had resulted in delay in securing jobs or opportunities that may be available and has also impacted their ability to travel outside the Country. With these frustrations, the

youth are easily deceived by terrorist groups that they can be provided for with documentation that will enable them to travel where the terrorist group deems fit , majority of these youth want to travel abroad (USA, Canada and European Countries) and the leaders of the terrorist organizations are privy to this information, once the youth has begun to confide in them of where they would love to travel the terrorist organization then inform them that they can arrange for that to happen and the youth who prior to the situation would not have joined a terrorist organizations joins it and is trained to carry out acts of terror in those foreign lands.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to investigate the factors that influence youth to join extremist groups in Kenya, in particular the youth of ethnic Somali origin living in Eastleigh. The following are the concluding findings based on the research objectives.

### **5.4.1 Conclusion on Research Objective One**

The study shows that poverty levels drove a high percentage of youth to engage in extremism. It showed that lack of employment made youth who were idle and lacked finances more susceptible to being recruited into extremist gangs in Eastleigh. It also showed that youth who had not attained either secondary or tertiary level of education were more prone to join extremist groups as they felt that they had a lower likelihood of engaging in a profitable livelihood activity and opted to join the extremist groups as a way not only to get finances but to also gain respect from their peers who prior to joining the group may have disrespected them due to their level of education. The study also shows that youth who did not have a steady income were more prone to join extremist groups as they saw it as a means of stability or as a way to provide for their families which prior to that were not sure about the constituency of that provision.

### **5.4.2 Conclusion on Research Objective Two**

The research undertaken shows how religion influenced youth to engage in extremism. The study brought out the fact that individuals who had not received proper indoctrination of Islam were more likely to join a jihadist movement more enthusiastically due their lack of knowledge, the study also identified youth who spent most of their time in a radicalized religious environment or listening to radical preachers were also more prone

to become followers of a jihadist movement. The study also shows that there was a high possibility that radicalized preachers flourished in Eastleigh because Mosques and religious teaching were not keenly monitored creating a loophole for radicalized preachers to pass on their Jihadist message to the congregants. The study also demonstrates us that the youth also sought preachers on the internet and could easily access a radicalized preacher and become converted to an extremist.

### **5.4.3 Conclusion on Research Objective Three**

The topic of study brought out how ethno-cultural marginalization and discrimination pushed the youth towards extremism. The study showed that the constant harassment by figures of authority (the police) made them more open to joining outlawed groups so as to get some sort of “protection” from the police and avoid harassment. The research also showed how youth who were discriminated due to their ethnic background opted to join extremist groups as a source of retribution.

## **5.5. Recommendations**

In order for the youth in Eastleigh to be sufficiently resilient to withstand recruitment from or attraction to violent extremism, the youth need to develop a positive sense of identity and increased self-confidence. This has to be done through an integrated approach that includes increasing their ability to deal with things that drive them towards extremism or those that make extremism attractive to them. It can be done through moderation and a non-violent approach. Below are my recommendations:

### **5.5.1 Recommendations for Improvement**

#### **5.5.1.1 Recommendations with Regard to Objective One**

The study noted that the youth in Eastleigh had limited work and income opportunities and majority of them solely relied on their relatives in other countries or in the diaspora for financial support or were prone to take up low paying jobs to supplement their income, this made these youths vulnerable to influence through the financial incentives offered by extremist groups. Stakeholders in the area could provide the youth who have innovative ideas with startup funding for those who were micro-entrepreneurs with viable business plans. The youth could also be provided with linkages that would enable them to grow their business ideas which will reduce the appeal of extremist groups.

### **5.5.1.2 Recommendations with Regard to Objective Two**

Capacitating the youth for peace-building, moderation and non-violence: The youth in Eastleigh interact more freely than those who are in Somalia due to their lack of identity because they do not value clan or religion very much. As a result, the youth in Eastleigh at times, can turn violent when disagreeing on a minute matters. There is need for these youth to learn how to discuss issues in a constructive and non-violent way. This can be done through a variety of programming where the youth are engaged in debates where they can learn how to constructively share ideas which at the base they may differ on but they begin to learn the culture of tolerance with regards to people's opinions. The youth may also be encouraged to engage in peace building initiatives where non-ethnic Somali youth and ethnic Somali youth interact and learn from each other so as to break from stereotypes. This instruction will facilitate the youth to learn how to effectively critique their beliefs without feeling the need to act out when an individual doesn't conform to what they deem right.

With involving the youth in peace building and non-combative methods of conflict resolution there is still a crucial need to empower the youth to discuss pertinent issues amongst themselves in a constructive and non-violent way. There is need to empower moderate spiritual leaders to disseminate messages of moderation, non-violence and peace to counter extremist rhetoric and ideology by working towards engaging the mosques in Eastleigh in a formal structure of organizing their sermons so as the youth listen to the same message. The creation of these platforms through which religious leaders can discuss with the youth on sensitive may influence the youth to shun extremist ideologies.

### **5.5.1.3 Recommendation for Research Objective Three**

Engagement in Cultural and Recreational Activities: Despite the Eastleigh populations of youth being more than 60 percent, recreational activities or centers are quite rare in the locality, limiting the number of positive recreational activities the youth can engage in. There is also a large disparity between the number of cultural activities in the area and the diversity of communities in Eastleigh. To ensure that the youth in Eastleigh interact, there should be at least a cultural activity twice a year that brings the youth together and they learn from each other. There should also be recreational activities such as football and

basketball matches where the youth are able to engage in competitive sports enabling them to build rapport with each other. These activities can ensure that the youth learn to be tolerant of each other.

Engagement with Government representatives: There should be opportunities where the youth in Eastleigh engage with police officers so as to change their mentality with regards to law enforcement. This will go a long way in ensuring the youth feel a sense of belonging and are not alienated.

Incorporation of counseling and mentoring centers: Due to the discrimination ethnic Somalis face in Kenya, as well as dealing with the trauma of being in a war, majority of these youths are traumatized and need professional counseling to rehabilitate them back to the community. While some of the youth have good entrepreneurial skills, they lack the proper guidance on how to actualize these skills. If a role model and mentorship program can be set up, the youth will begin to feel a sense of hope reducing their chances of being recruited into extremist groups.

Merging of youth organizations to form an umbrella youth network: The youth in Eastleigh have a rich set of skills of which they do not integrate in joint initiatives to achieve prosperity in their endeavors. There are many groups in Eastleigh that are segmented yet when they come together they could have a far reaching impact. There is need to form an umbrella network that will merge youth groups in Eastleigh together to achieve a common goal, by doing so, the youth in Eastleigh will interact with each other and address the feeling of alienation especially if the umbrella organization has equal representation from both the ethnic Somali and non-ethnic Somali youth groups.

With this in place, majority of the youth will most likely turn away from violence as a means of dealing with conflict as they will have better access to peaceful messaging and interaction with the Government of Kenya and feel confident enough to interact with each other and the community on pertinent issues in a non-violent way.

### **5.5.2 Recommendation for Further Studies**

The researcher gathered data on what attracted youth to join extremist movements, however, with the information collected there is still need for further studies and research to be done in the area of influencers for youth engagement in extremism.

Studies still need to be done to fully comprehend the process of radicalization and recruitment of youth to participate in violence. If these studies are done, it will be easier for organizations that want to carry out programming targeted at these youth, to design their programs addressing the gaps that other programs have missed when working with the youth in Eastleigh. This would enable these organizations to focus on the challenges of extremist radicalization among youth in Eastleigh.

There is also a need for a study to be carried out to identify which organizations and programs were being run in Eastleigh that were addressing some of the factors that were drawing the youth to join the outlawed groups. The lessons that they had learned while implementing their programs would be invaluable in shaping future programs in the area.

Once these studies are completed, they could be consolidated and given to non-governmental organizations and the government to possibly help them come up with strategies that can address the extremist appeal to the youth in Eastleigh and further mitigating their radicalization.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

#### **Pre Introduction**

1. Spend some time introducing yourself to the participants, and ask the interviewee to introduce them to do the same.
2. Give assurance to the participant of the private nature and confidentiality of the interview due to its sensitivity.
3. Give a brief overview of the purpose of the interview. Stressing that it is an academic research to inform the academic community on the issue at hand
4. Give a chance to the interviewee to ask any question that they may have
5. Begin interview questions and follow a systematic manner and probe where necessary.

#### **Interview Questions**

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself and what role you are playing as a youth in your community?
2. How optimistic are you about your ability to work toward/achieving a better future?
3. How are youth viewed by leaders within the community? Do you think the youth is heard by the community?
4. What do you know about terrorism and the allegation of the government and the media that the youth are recruited to carry out terrorist acts?
5. Do you think your answer on how the youth are perceived has any connection with them getting involved in terrorist acts? Explain your answer.
6. As a youth what is the one single most important way that you prefer to identify yourself? For example; religion, country etc? Kindly explain your answer.
7. Some people have used Islam as a justification for violence. What do you think about those that promote violence in the name of Islam?
8. What do you think about the extremist groups who justify violent activities based on Islamic? Are they correct?
9. Do you think that Muslim youth are more prone to getting involved in terrorist activities than any other groups?
10. Do the youth join extremism activities for money?
11. Why do you think the grenade attacks have become common in Eastleigh?