I. Articles

Radicalisation to Terrorism in Kenya and Uganda: a Political Socialisation Perspective

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Abstract

Africa is increasingly being classified as the new battleground against terrorism. Yet, despite this renewed interest, countries on the continent have been experiencing manifestations of this threat already for several decades. Similar to most countries in the Middle East, Asia, Latin America and Europe, countries on the African continent focus on addressing the symptoms and not the cause of terrorism. In addressing the manifestations of terrorism, countries directly affected by acts of terrorism predominantly adopted a security-centric approach in an attempt to bring an end to the violence. Although this might be effective in the short term, in the majority of cases, a security-centric approach has proven to be ineffective and often even counterproductive. Realising this, several scholars—and, since 2006, also the United Nations in its Global Counterterrorism Strategy—have called for addressing the underlying reasons, or conditions conducive to terrorism. Despite this positive shift in focus, governments on the African continent continue to refer to outdated lessons learned from other countries, mostly on other continents, when formulating their own counter-terrorism (CT) strategy. Learning from the experiences of others is necessary, yet foreign CT lessons often tend to be broad and general and, as a result, ineffective. Policy makers and practitioners tend to fall into the trap of framing counter strategies on what are assumed to be the underlying driving factors instead of actually conducting empirical research into the 'real reasons'. It is from this premise that interviews were conducted with 285 individuals and family members associated with al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) in Kenya and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda in an attempt to find empirical evidence to support or discard what are perceived to be the root causes of recruitment into these four militant organisations. The resulting doctoral dissertation has as its most important lesson: countering and preventing terrorism should start with looking at the 'who' in addition to asking 'why'.

This article is a summary of the main research findings capturing the personal backgrounds of respondents representing the four organisations. Specific reference will be made to early childhood, the school and friends as socialisation agents in establishing ethnic and religious identity. The analysis concludes by describing the influence of these factors on radicalisation associated with external—most notably, economic, educational and political—circumstances in identifying the most critical factor driving radicalisation.

Keywords: Terrorism, Root Causes, Africa, Radicalization, Kenya, Uganda Lord's Resistance Army, Allied Democratic Forces, Al-Shabaab, Mombasa Republican Council

Introduction

When exploring why young people turn to political violence, researchers have for many years emphasised the importance of external circumstances that provide the conditions conducive to terrorism. Although these are important, my own personal experience led me to the realisation that much more should be taken into consideration. During field research in 2003 that included discussions with victims of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and the Salafist Group for Combat and Preaching (GSPC) – the forerunners of al-Qaʿeda in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) – an Algerian mother approached me and asked why one of her sons

had joined the GIA while the other became a police officer. That was the moment it dawned on me that most scholars tend to oversimplify processes of radicalisation and recruitment by focussing exclusively on the external environment, without acknowledging the role the individual plays in this process. Why do young people, when confronted with the same circumstances, growing up in the same household, decide on two very different career paths in their lives?

Understanding radicalisation and recruitment from a political science perspective without including political psychology is clearly insufficient. I was definitely not the first researcher to be confronted with the reasons why and how individuals decide on a particular political position and participate in either legitimate or illegitimate political activities. While a number of factors play a role in the radicalisation process, political socialisation provides important insights into an individual's increasing involvement in radical causes. John Horgan and Max Taylor best described the nexus between socialisation and radicalisation: "What we know of actual terrorists suggests that there is rarely a conscious decision made to become a terrorist. Most involvement in terrorism results from gradual exposure and socialisation towards extreme behaviour."[1] Peter Neumann probably provided the least complex description when he explained that the term 'radicalisation' referred loosely to "what goes on before the bomb goes off."[2]

Radicalisation, however, involves both external circumstances – referring to domestic and international circumstances, as presented in the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy – and internal, or personal, factors. The latter also relate to the interpretation of the external environment and can be influenced by psychological considerations that refer directly to political socialisation. In addition to a number of studies that concentrate on broad contributing factors or external circumstances, there is a need to go one step further to understand the internal dynamics leading to individuals taking that final decision to commit an act of terror, or to become involved in an organisation and/or operation that will resort to such a tactic.

Before getting into the role political socialisation plays in understanding radicalisation and recruitment, the majority of research has (until recently) almost exclusively focused on the radicalisation process on both internal (personal) and external (environmental) circumstances as these can be found among young people in the Middle East and Europe. In addition to this limited geographical focus, the majority of publications have dealt particularly with Islamist extremist organisations that resorted to terrorism as a tactic. Consequently, authorities on the African continent generally refer to initiatives implemented in the Middle East and Europe to counter radicalisation in order to inform their own counter strategies. More recently, a specific need has been identified to understand radicalisation from a political socialisation perspective in such a manner that it can also assist policy makers and practitioners in their counterterrorism (CT) and countering violent extremism (CVE) initiatives.

Defining Socialisation and Radicalisation

Historically, political socialisation as a theory served as a bridge between psychology (the individual) and the person's political behaviour after borrowing from anthropology, psychology and sociology. More important, political socialisation differentiates between the different agents, or role-players, involved in moulding a person to become a 'political animal'–a term first introduced by Aristotle.

According to Dawson and Prewitt, socialisation referred to: "… the process by which children, born with an enormous potential for different types of behaviour, come to adopt the specific standards of their own society… [Therefore] political socialization is the developmental process through which the citizen matures politically. The citizen acquires a complex set of beliefs, feelings and information which help him comprehend, evaluate and relate to the political world around him. His political views are a part of his more

general social views … related to his religious, economic and cultural views".[3] Providing a more practical description, Dowse and Hughes explained that this process came down to: "… what the individual learns, when it is learned, how it is learned, and the personal consequences of this process."[4]

Socialisation and, per implication, political socialisation, is interpreted as a lifelong process through which a person develops a unique frame of reference that guides individual choices. An individual's frame of reference can be defined as the 'glasses' through which he/she sees or perceives the world around him or her. This frame of reference also includes a person's views on politics and religion, developed through a similar process as his/her views on a specific political party or ideology. Ultimately, the political self is made, not born, to include "feelings of nationalism, patriotism, or tribal loyalty; identification with particular partisan factions or groups; attitudes and evaluations of specific political issues and personalities; knowledge regarding political structures and procedures; and a self-image of rights, responsibilities, and position in the political world."[5]

Lewis Froman (1961) proposed three variables that influenced the process of political socialisation: the environment (agents of socialisation), personality and politically relevant behaviour.[6]

Conditions Conducive to Terrorism and Radicalisation

Before creating the impression that external circumstances do not play an equally important role in the radicalisation process, it is important to recognise that for radicalisation to occur the individual still needs to make sense of external circumstances he/she is confronted with. The forming of perceptions is an interwoven process, influenced by the individual's background (personality) and identity; it cannot be separated from external circumstances. In other words, every person forms mental images of the world, which are needed to provide an understanding of the world around him or her. From these 'images', stereotypes emerge that will impact on how individuals interact or react to the 'other'.

The difficulty with this process is that perceptions are being formed of the 'other' that is based on insufficient information, dis-information and often also a lack of education. Not only will both sides – us and them – drift apart, but the potential for conflict increases. Martha Crenshaw noted that: "The actions of terrorists are based on a subjective interpretation of the world rather than objective reality. Perceptions of the political and social environment are filtered through beliefs and attitudes that reflect experiences and memories."[7] Religion and ethnicity are powerful influences on the formation of a person's identity. In addition to the role these play as facilitators of social cohesion, an organisation – such as a religious organisation – in itself can become central to a person's identity.

Returning to external circumstances (which are being interpreted by the individual), the United Nations, in its Global Counterterrorism Strategy (2006), identified what it termed 'conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism'. These circumstances included, but were not limited to, prolonged unresolved conflicts; the dehumanisation of victims of terrorism; the absence of rule of law and violations of human rights; ethnic, national and religious discrimination; political exclusion; socioeconomic marginalisation; and lack of good governance.[8]

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The following discussion summarises some of the findings of the author's recent dissertation, *Radicalisation to Commit Terrorism from a Political Socialisation Perspective in Kenya and Uganda*. This research found support for the notion that political socialisation is a continuous process, where early lessons influence

a person's predispositions. Insights framed by several well-known theories, starting with the symbolic interaction school of thought on political socialisation, explain that the individual is a product of a socialisation process. Additionally, the thesis profited from the cognitive, or developmental, school of thought, in particular Jean Piaget's and Lawrence Kohlberg's explanation that political socialisation occurs in stages. For this reason, the study did not take as its starting point the moment when a person joined a militant organization. Rather, it also focused on early childhood, school, friends, and the formation of ethnic and religious identity of the militants. One of the central questions that this study addressed was the role economic circumstances play in conflict, reflecting the class struggle theory of Karl Marx.

However, pluralist theory contributed the most to this study through the focus it places on asking a series of questions: (a) who (b) learns what (c) from whom (d) under what circumstances and (e) with what effects? Through these questions, the effect of external (macro) factors on the individual throw a new light on the debate regarding the relative weight of 'push' and 'pull' factors in the radicalisation process.

Three of the four organisations referred to in this study base their ideology on religion, both Christianity with reference to the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and Islam with reference to the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, commonly referred to as al-Shabaab or 'The Youth'. However, ethnicity is an equally important factor in the radicalisation process, leading to the inclusion of the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) as a multi-religious organisation driven by regional secession (not based on one single religious or ethnic cause) from the rest of Kenya. In order to understand the 'who', 'why' and 'how' individuals were radicalised, 285 interviews were conducted with members of these four organisations and the families of al-Shabaab members who had been killed or incarcerated, or who had disappeared in Kenya.

Contrary to most other studies on the root causes or conditions conducive to terrorism, this study instead focused exclusively on the immediate period before and after radicalisation. In interviews with current and former members of the ADF, LRA, al-Shabaab and MRC, respondents were asked a series of questions going back as far as their early family life in assessing whether a link exists between a person's early childhood development–when identity—and perception-formation occurs—and later susceptibility to radicalisation.

While a political socialisation perspective might not be a new theoretical framework for analysing the making of militants and terrorists, such an explanation of participation in terrorist organisations in East Africa is new. The dissertation was the first study that used biographic profiles of individuals associated with terrorism in Kenya and Uganda in an attempt to understand susceptibility to extremism and radicalisation.

Although a basic understanding of relevant conditions provides insight into radicalisation processes, it is important to realise that a combination of factors is often present and that this combination will differ from person to person. Furthermore, not all people confronted with the same set of circumstances will be radicalised, and not all of those radicalised will eventually commit acts of terrorism. Central to this process is the role individual characteristics play in linking the world to that individual's interpretation of the external environment and the outcome of the political socialisation process in the form of identity formation and subsequent radicalisation.

Political Socialisation Agents and Radicalisation

Although personality itself plays a critical role in how an individual interprets the world – which was one theme of the larger dissertation study – the present article will not focus on findings related to personality types. Instead, here the focus will be on the role primary (family, friends, school) and secondary socialisation agents (e.g. media) play in the radicalisation process.

The **family** plays an essential role (whether positive or negative) throughout any person's life, but especially in the period between infancy and the moment a child reaches school-going age. The family is deemed to be the first step in the transmission of fundamental values. Considering the extensive influence of family in political socialisation, a number of questions were asked to test family impact on the respondents interviewed, in order to determine whether the family indeed played a major role in the radicalisation process. Starting with the socialisation process, the bond (or lack thereof) between parent and child plays an extremely important role in developing a person's self-esteem and identity. In other words, if there is not a strong bond between parent and child in early life, the chances that a person will carry over certain positive values and lessons to later life will be limited. Simple questions, such as whether the respondent's parents were aware of their decision to join the organisation, or whether their parents supported this decision, served to explore this level of trust. For example, only 6% of ADF and 11% of al-Shabaab respondents informed their parents of their decision to join the organisation. These figures was higher among MRC (24%) and LRA (26%) respondents, who said that they had informed their parents about their joining the organisation. When asked if their parents supported this decision, 3% of ADF, 21% of al-Shabaab, 24% of LRA and 59% of MRC respondents answered in the affirmative. One possible explanation for these differences relates to the history of these organisations and what they represent. Joining a banned group, such as al-Shabaab and the ADF, brought its own risks and might explain why parents were not informed. In contrast, following a parent's footsteps to take over the mantle in fighting for the rights of especially an ethnic or geography-based group, might explain a person's willingness to inform parents of his/her decision with members of the LRA and MRC. Families tend to establish the foundation in transferring political antagonisms, loyalties and viewpoints from one generation to another. In order to assess the extent of parents' active political involvement, respondents were asked whether their parents discussed politics with them when they were growing up. The parents of respondents in Uganda were considerably less politically active than those in Kenya: less than half (41% of ADF and 44% of LRA parents) discussed politics with their children. In contrast, 68% of al-Shabaab and 78% of MRC parents discussed politics with their children. Based on such findings, one can assume that primary political socialisation through parents – as an agent – was greater in Kenya than Uganda.

In assessing the relationship between an absent parent and joining a terrorist organisation, the results of this study regarding an absent father figure were very similar to those that J. Post had found in his study of 250 West German terrorists (from the Red Army Faction and the 2 June Movement). In that particular study, 25% had lost one or both parents by age 14, while 79% did not have a positive family relationship – in fact, 33% had a particularly hostile relationship with their fathers. [9] Many respondents among the ADF (44%), LRA (38%), al-Shabaab (18%) and MRC (31%) had grown up without a father figure. However, the majority of respondents who joined these organisations did grow up with a father figure present. This is not to say that experiencing abandonment or a lack of belonging will not contribute to make a young person susceptible to seek another father figure, or enhance the need to belong to a group to experience acceptance and a feeling of belonging. What is important to realise is that these feelings can be experienced even in situations where both parents are present.

At a certain age, the school and peers take over from parents as the primary political socialisation agent. Although parents still play a role, depending on the young person's relationship with his or her parents, going to **school** introduces a completely new environment. Through interaction with other groups – most notably religious and ethnic or tribal groups – the person will develop new or enforce existing perceptions of the 'other'. For this particular reason respondents were asked whether they had contact with 'others' (particular attention was paid to whether ethnicity or religion was the core of the group the person joined), and whether they had friends from the 'other' side while growing up. When asked whether they had contact with people from other religious backgrounds, 100% of MRC, 97% of ADF, 88% of al-Shabaab and 88% of

LRA respondents answered in the affirmative. Some 100% of MRC, 97% of ADF, 96 of al-Shabaab and 85% of LRA respondents said that they had had contact with other ethnic groups. Considering that the majority of respondents attended public school, having contact is, however, very different from having friends from other ethnic or religious groups, especially when the 'other' is later categorised as the enemy. For example, although 88% of al-Shabaab and 97% of ADF respondents had contact with other religions, al-Shabaab respondents in particular indicated that only a small minority formed close friendships with Christians. The latter example speaks to the development of subgroups based on racial, religious, ethnic and social class, as presented by Dawson and Prewitt.[10] Through such subgroups, students establish their own school segregation system that prevents members of their respective group from having meaningful contacts with others. Through these subgroups and subsequent limited interaction, the positive influences of attending a mixed school are lost.

Segregation at school occurred naturally, presenting a very unique trend, as 27% of ADF respondents attended Christian schools while being Muslim, while 30% of ADF and 25% of al-Shabaab respondents attended Islamic schools. Similarly, attending school with other ethnic groups in the coastal region of Kenya or northern Uganda did not imply that respondents were in close contact with ethnic groups they classified as the enemy. Rather, the presence of minority ethnic groups tended to confirm the 'us' against 'them' paradigm. In other words, the political socialisation process continued and although respondents might have had contact with 'others,' these group images had most probably been built on perceptions of the 'other' that were already established by their parents.

Friends, another primary socialisation agent, played a central role throughout the study in introducing respondents to the organisation, being informed of their (i.e. the respondents') decision to join, or even joining the organisation with the respondents. Friends introduced 66% of MRC, 38% of al-Shabaab, 35% of ADF and 31% of LRA respondents to the organisation. Although the last three organisations reflected a percentage below 50%, it is important to note that friends still represented the biggest single role-player in terms of being informed of the respondent's decision to join. No fewer than 34% of al-Shabaab, 33% of MRC, 21% of LRA and 15% of ADF respondents informed a friend of his/her decision to join the organisation. Again, friends made up a very important group: 82% of MRC, 71% of al-Shabaab, 58% of ADF and 40% of LRA respondents joined their respective organisations with friends. In contrast, only 25% of LRA, 15% of ADF, 7% of MRC and 6% of al-Shabaab respondents joined their respective organisations with family members.

Respondents also indicated that they recruited other friends to the organisation: 60% of MRC, 54% of al-Shabaab, 23% of ADF and 12% of LRA did so while 36% of MRC, 13% of al-Shabaab, 11% of ADF and 0% of LRA respondents recruited other family members. As a result, friends made up one of the most important political socialisation agents of this study, followed by religious leaders, in the case of al-Shabaab.

Secondary socialisation agents are equally important in the political socialisation process. Specific reference was made to the **media**, which can serve as a 'front' to indoctrinate and radicalise susceptible individuals. Evidence of this was seen particularly in the dedicated communication strategy employed by both al-Shabaab and the MRC. They were using Internet-based channels such as blogs, Twitter and video and/or audio recordings to reach and indoctrinate potential and existing members. Considering the time spent and the relevancy of messages, susceptible individuals changed their opinions to mirror those of the orator. The study found an inability and oversight of governments to use the media to build national unity and identity following independence. Instead, it was found that the media was often used as a platform to transmit divides, especially during elections, and to harness political support based on religious and/or ethnic division.

Becoming a radical often involves a **role model** whom a new member can look up to in teaching him or her how to act. This person plays an important role in instilling the values that the group represents and to think and act for the collective, thereby serving as another political socialisation agent. Religious scholars and other leaders played an important role in the 'collective conditioning' or indoctrination process of new members. For example, 34% of al-Shabaab and 29% of ADF respondents were introduced to the respective organisations through a religious figure. In addition, 26% of al-Shabaab respondents informed a religious leader of their decision to join the organisation. This was the second biggest group, after a friend, to be informed of respondents' decision to join the organisation among al-Shabaab respondents. This brings us to other active role players who introduced respondents to the mentioned organisations. As detailed earlier, 66% of MRC, 38% of al-Shabaab, 35% of ADF and 31% of LRA respondents were introduced by a friend, while a relative introduced 27% of LRA, 19% of ADF, 7% of MRC and 3% of al-Shabaab respondents. Additionally, the group itself approached 11% of the recruits of the LRA, 7% of both the ADF and MRC and 4% of al-Shabaab respondents. It is important to note that 31% of LRA, 21% of al-Shabaab, 20% of MRC and 5% of ADF respondents joined these organisations on their own and without the introduction of an intermediary.

Identity and Radicalisation

The study further shed light on the role an absent national identity feeling plays in increasing the prominence of sub-national identities – based on religion and/or ethnic principles – which can be transferred from one generation to the next. This is in line with the theory presented by Robert LeVine, who found in 1963 that during the independence processes in many African countries, people were more loyal to local tribes and local government units than to the newly established nation states.[11] Since 1963, neither Kenya nor Uganda has been able to establish an inclusive national identity – beyond the brief moments of patriotism when the national team wins a football match. Although the majority of African scholars place the blame on colonialism, the inability of such countries to establish a national identity after half a century of independence reflects rather poorly on the post-colonial leadership.

Instead of building a new political culture, leaders sporadically drew on their own ethnic or religious identity, encouraging a new cycle of identity-based politics, either by ethnic or religious association. It should, therefore, not come as a surprise that the core of the ADF, LRA, MRC and al-Shabaab are still relying on ethnic and religious identity. Consequently, al-Shabaab and ADF respondents identified with their religious identity, whereas MRC and LRA respondents identified with their ethnic and geographic identity. However, joining these respective organisations was not only a means for the respondents to express their social identity, but also served as a vehicle to fight for their respective in-groups. To assess this particular aspect two inter-related factors need to be present: firstly, religious or ethnic identity needs to be important, and secondly, there needs to be a perceived threat to this identity.

Starting with the importance of religion to al-Shabaab and ADF respondents, 59% of al-Shabaab and 56% of ADF categorised their religion (Islam) as most important, followed by 37% of al-Shabaab and 30% of ADF respondents who classified it as very important, while the remaining 14% of ADF and 4% of al-Shabaab respondents still indicated that their religion was important. Although all four organisations included respondents who had converted from one religion to another, the impact of conversion was analysed more closely in organisations such as the ADF and al-Shabaab, where religious identity was paramount. Although evidence exists – especially amongst al-Shabaab respondents – that individuals who were converted and radicalised by radical religious leaders were more vulnerable, only 9% of al-Shabaab respondents interviewed had converted before joining.

It is, however, important to note that the period between converting and joining differs considerably, as only 42% of this group converted to Islam up to a year before joining al-Shabaab. In other words, the majority (58%) had converted up to six years before joining the organisation. Those who had converted within a year before joining were most likely converted by a radical religious scholar. This indicates that reaching the same conclusion for the majority of respondents who converted is problematic. The conversion rate amongst ADF respondents was higher, with 22% of respondents interviewed having converted before joining the organisation. Among these respondents, 50% had converted within the year before joining, with some even indicating that they had converted and joined at the same time. Political socialisation – even among those who had converted over a longer period – changed through the individual's interaction with others whom he or she did not have close associations with. Whether this change in political socialisation agent had an impact on the radicalisation process, can be seen more accurately in those cases where conversion and radicalisation happened simultaneously or one soon followed the other, as with many ADF respondents.

Beyond determining that religion is important to al-Shabaab and ADF respondents, their threat perception also needed to be analysed: 97% of al-Shabaab and 77% of ADF respondents considered their religion to be under threat. Regarding the type of threat, 60% of al-Shabaab and 35% of ADF respondents classified it as a physical threat, whereas 46% of ADF and 34% of al-Shabaab respondents categorised it as an ideological threat. The remaining 19% of ADF and 6% of al-Shabaab respondents considered the threat to be both physical and ideological.

However, if there is a threat, there must be an enemy to complete the 'us' and 'them' equation, or, to put it differently, to establish in- and out-groups. Respondents were asked to indicate who was behind this threat. In response to this question, 58% of ADF and 49% of al-Shabaab respondents identified their respective governments, while 20% of ADF and 18% of al-Shabaab respondents indicated that the enemy was external. Some 24% of al-Shabaab and 11% of ADF respondents identified another religion (Christianity) as being behind the threat, while 11% of ADF and 9% of al-Shabaab considered this threat to be a combination of their government and other countries or religions.

In terms of the importance of ethnicity, 23% of LRA and 18% of MRC respondents classified their ethnicity as most important, 69% of LRA and 68% of al-Shabaab respondents categorised it as very important, while the remaining 13% of al-Shabaab and 8% LRA respondents considered ethnicity as important. It is, however, worth noting that – in contrast to religious classifications – neither MRC nor LRA respondents represented a single ethnic group. Instead, they represented and referred to a number of ethnic groups within a specific geographic area. Similar to the ADF and al-Shabaab, the Kenyan government (with respect to the MRC) and Ugandan government (the LRA) were identified as the primary enemy, followed by specific ethnic groups. In contrast to the findings on religion, the MRC and LRA did not refer to an external enemy.

From this, it would appear that social identity based on religion and ethnicity had been transformed into an organisational identity. In other words, the respective organisations purported to represent the interest of the religious and ethnic identity groups. Members of all four groups consist of individuals who were drawn to other members of an in-group (based on religious or ethnic affiliation) that stood together against an out-group. Although the in-group was based on religious or ethnic affiliation, the majority of respondents referred to the organisation when asked to identify 'us': 84% of both MRC and LRA respondents, 68% of al-Shabaab and 59% of ADF respondents. Additionally, a further 36% of ADF and 32% of al-Shabaab respondents also referred to their religion. With reference to their ethnic group, 14% of MRC combined organisational members with ethnicity, while a further 4% of LRA and 2% of MRC respondents categorised 'us' as members of their ethnic group, and/or people from their geographic area.

When asked to identify 'them,' answers varied from references to government to other religious to ethnic groups and other countries. For 92% of LRA, 79% of ADF, 52% of MRC and 30% of al-Shabaab respondents, their respective governments were classified as 'them'. For 67% of al-Shabaab and 16% of ADF respondents, 'they' were identified as other religious groups, while only 5% of ADF and 3% of al-Shabaab respondents referred to other countries. With reference to ethnicity, 43% of MRC and 4% of LRA respondents referred to other ethnic groups as 'them'. Despite these different answers, 'they' was used to refer to the strongest manifestation of 'the enemy' in the mind of each respondent.

For all respondents, social identity was paramount in influencing the person's drive to join a particular organisation. In both the ADF and al-Shabaab, religion – in this case Islam – was central to the identity of each respondent. In contrast, MRC and LRA respondents referred to minority ethnic groups marginalised by those in power.

For in- and out-groups to be in conflict with each other, a real or at least perceived threat needs to exist, as explained earlier. Due to political marginalisation or economically caused, relative deprivation, political power and access to resources served as the capital that in- and out-groups competed for. The individual must also attach meaning to the particular situation for him or her to respond (through the group). The study further confirmed that smaller groups, whether religious or ethnic, established stronger in-group identification, experiencing the need to protect themselves against larger out-groups. For example, Islam is the minority religion in both Kenya and Uganda, while it serves as the social identity marker for both al-Shabaab and the ADF. Although the MRC and LRA are multi-ethnic in their composition, both groups attract members from smaller ethnic groups in very specific geographic locations where others present a threat. In all four groups, the government, through its security forces, represented the 'other' who was behind the threat. This study also confirms the observation made by Hector Avalos that religious conflicts are seldom only about religion. Instead, it is often about national territory, political leadership and other matters, framed within a religious context. [12]

Emotions – anger, contempt, guilt, fear, hatred and revenge or vengeance – emerged through the interviews as another component needed in the radicalisation process. Respondents were asked whether anything had happened that influenced their decision to get involved or join the organisation. Based on the answers given, a large number of respondents referred to instances of injustice against members of their in- group, based on religious and ethnic identity. This supports the finding of Martha Crenshaw, who identified vengeance as the most central emotion common to both individuals and groups in driving them to acts of terrorism.[13] This refers in particular to the desire to avenge not oneself but others, directed at those held responsible for injustices.

The six emotions named above are all driven by subjective perceptions and interpretations of instances of injustice or discrimination. These injustices were predominantly based on political circumstances, associated with the way in which security agents dealt with a particular situation that involved members of the in-group. This supports a finding of Horgan, who noted that individual experiences of victimisation from security forces were of key importance.[14]

When assessing the role of **frustration** in joining and being a member of the organisations, discussed throughout the study, respondents were asked to rate their frustration levels at the time of joining. Some 88% of LRA, 49% of ADF, 48% of al-Shabaab and 33% of MRC respondents rated their frustration between 8 and 10 (the highest tier); 54% of MRC, 48% of al-Shabaab, 19% of ADF and 12% of LRA respondents rated their frustration levels between 5 and 7 (second tier); while only 32% of ADF, 13% of MRC and 4% of al-Shabaab respondents placed their frustration between 1 and 4 (the lowest tier). Frustration cannot exist in isolation;

a reason is required. Two of the most prominent reasons – threats to religion and ethnicity – were already referred to above. Respondents were also asked to specifically identify the reason for joining the organisation. Firstly, referring to religion, 87% of al-Shabaab and 54% of ADF respondents referred only to threats to their religion as the main reason for joining. An additional 6% of al-Shabaab and 2% of ADF respondents referred to a combination of religious and economic reasons, and a further 6% of ADF respondents referred to a combination of religious and political motives. Secondly, with reference to ethnicity, 25% of MRC and 19% of LRA respondents referred only to perceived threats against their ethnic group. It is important to remember that although a further 58% of LRA respondents gave personal reasons, the majority of these personal reasons could be categorised as ethnic in nature. Additionally, 14% of MRC respondents referred to a combination of ethnic and economic reasons, and a further 2% of MRC respondents referred to a combination of religious and political reasons. The remaining two reasons were political and economic.

Religious scholars and other leaders played an important role in the 'collective conditioning' or indoctrination process of its members. For example, 34% of al-Shabaab and 29% of ADF respondents were introduced to the respective organisations through a religious figure. Additionally, 26% of al-Shabaab respondents had informed a religious leader of their decision to join the organisation. This was the second biggest group, after the friend category, when it came to letting others know about their decision to join the organisation among al-Shabaab respondents. It is, however, important to note that 31% of LRA, 21% of al-Shabaab, 20% of MRC and 5% of ADF respondents joined these organisations on their own and without the introduction of another role player.

External Circumstances and Radicalisation

Considering the interplay between friendship and personality type, McIntyre and Platania found that young people with insecure identities, driven by idealism, were particularly vulnerable to adherence to an ideology and/or participation in an ideological group.[15] The **age** of most respondents confirmed the vulnerability of adolescents and young adults and the risk of groupthink among friends: 40% of LRA, 19% of ADF, 17% of al-Shabaab and 7% of MRC respondents joined between the ages of 15 and 19; 45% of MRC, 35% of al-Shabaab, 24% of ADF and 20% of LRA respondents joined between the ages of 20 and 24; 28% of ADF, 25% of MRC, 21% of al-Shabaab and 12% of LRA respondents joined between the ages of 25 and 29; 20% of al-Shabaab, 15% of ADF, 14% of MRC and 12% of LRA respondents joined between 30 and 34 years of age; 8% of LRA, and 2% of MRC and 1% of ADF and al-Shabaab respectively joined between 35 and 39 years of age. The most vulnerable period identified in this study was between 20 and 34. Despite similarities, it is also clear that each organisation had a unique age profile. The most dramatic of these is the LRA, which presented a younger profile, with 40% joining between the ages 15-19 while the MRC manifested a somewhat older profile: none of its respondents represented the 10–14 age group, and only 7% fell in the 15–19 age group.

Radicalisation is a gradual process – which makes it very difficult to define exactly when it occurs. When respondents were asked to provide the duration of time between first introduction and actually joining the organisation, members of all groups interviewed – with the exception of al-Shabaab – referred to an overall period of more than six months between first introduction and actually joining the organisation.

One of the more widespread allegations – that **poverty** is a cause of terrorism – was disproven by this study. Without denying that poor economic circumstances can make a person more susceptible to recruitment, it must be noted that only a small minority – 13% of ADF, 12% of MRC and 4% of al-Shabaab respondents – specifically referred to dire economic circumstances as a reason why they joined the organisation. As mentioned above, a further 6% of al-Shabaab and 2% of ADF respondents referred to a combination of

religious and economic reasons, while an additional 14% of MRC respondents referred to a combination of ethnic and economic reasons.

Respondents who mentioned economic circumstances specifically referred to situations where increased economic disparities occur within identifiable ethnic, religious and geographic groups. Members of the MRC in Kenya were most prominent in referring to disparities between the economic circumstances of coastal people and those in other parts of the country, but they also referred to discrimination experienced in comparison to outsiders living in 'their' region. This is an example of how relative deprivation can become a political issue and the resulting frustration a driving factor for radicalisation. Therefore, monitoring socio-economic trends in preventing radicalisation will be especially useful where there are economic disparities within identifiable ethnic, religious and geographic groups. Indicators that will be particularly useful are rates of population growth, degree of access to public service, uneven development, urbanisation and uneven unemployment and education opportunities – especially if these are linked to religious, ethnic or other relevant categories. These factors are likely to contribute not only to social conflict but also to a community's vulnerability to radicalisation.

Education is one of the most important factors to be taken into consideration in preventing future radicalisation. Although the role of schools was already mentioned as a socialisation agent, education is the only way through which better career opportunities and upward social mobility can be achieved – countering perceptions of relative deprivation. The higher someone's level of education, the more likely that person will participate in conventional politics. When a person is better informed and has a better understanding of his/her role within the political process, he or she has the ability to express political opinions and has a greater stake in the political process. It was found that the inability of respondents to stay in school and enhance their level of education was one of the most central factors that made them susceptible or vulnerable to later radicalisation. The majority of respondents – 79% of LRA, 67% of MRC, 66% of ADF and 47% of al-Shabaab – only had a primary school education, whereas 45% of al-Shabaab, 26% of ADF, 24% of MRC and 21% of LRA respondents had reached secondary school.

At the other end of the spectrum, a very small minority of respondents – only 9% of MRC and 8% of al-Shabaab – indicated that they had received tertiary education. Not having sufficient education severely limited employment opportunities beyond low-paying, unskilled jobs. Those who studied further were predominantly drawn to religious studies, especially Islamic studies. What is particularly interesting is that students were not required to finish school before becoming an imam or a religious teacher – some respondents only had a primary school education. In other words, madrasas and the more secular schooling system run on two very different criteria. The consequences are far reaching, as it correlates directly to the quality of education received by individuals who only attend religious schools, especially madrasas. Without questioning a person's ability to be a good follower of his or her particular religion, it must be debated how someone – placed in a position of authority – can guide others without the ability to understand disciplines other than theology. This is particularly significant when it happens at a time in a young person's life when he or she should develop an ability to think critically. This is not to question the place for religious education; however, instructors should also have the necessary credentials to teach students about other disciplines.

The findings above support those of Berrebi, who explained that when education was religious it might encourage radical thought while only marginally increasing productive opportunities in the labour market. [16] Consequently, although such individuals might consider themselves as educated, they might not be able to do much with the education they received. This again contributes to perceptions of relative deprivation and supports the frustration-aggression hypothesis. Educated individuals are less likely to refer to violence to correct real or perceived injustices (which cause frustration) since education enhances self-confidence and

assertiveness. In other words, better education and encouraging young people to stay in school is the best strategy against relative deprivation, but then everyone ought to have the same opportunities, and career advancement and social mobility should be based on merit – not on any other criteria.

Conclusion

Preventing and combating terrorism should start with understanding what drives an individual to resort to terrorism, taking into consideration the reality that not all people experience the same external circumstances – not even people growing up in the same household. In order to understand radicalisation, this study asked the question to what extent political socialisation explains the participation of individuals in terrorist organisations in Kenya and Uganda. Is there a difference in the applicable factors between the divergent ideological frameworks of the Allied Democratic Forces and the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, and al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council in Kenya?

This study found that political socialisation—starting with the family, and expanded through peers, school, media, and earlier political experiences, and ending with the terrorist group—played a distinctive role in each of the four organisations. In addition to the differences, which create a distinctive profile for each organisation, the study also noted remarkable similarities, starting with personality types, position in the family and education (or the lack thereof). With this in mind, how can law enforcement and social organisations be guided to identify and reach individuals at risk? The process of answering this question starts with calling on governments and their security forces to understand the uniqueness of each militant organisation. In other words, to copy and paste counterterrorism strategies from one country to another is likely to be ineffective if not downright counterproductive. The only inclusive finding across organisations and between countries has to do with the way in which countries and their security forces respond to these organisations. Indiscriminate repression provokes feelings of revenge and contributes to terrorist recruitment. Strategies based on ethnic and religious profiling, mass arrests and torture proved extremely counterproductive. In line with this, the study found that both Kenya and Uganda have been unable to establish an inclusive national identity. Instead, religious and ethnic identity drives perceptions of political exclusion and feelings of relative deprivation.

One of the key findings of this study is that only a very small minority is driven purely by poor economic circumstances. A core influence among individuals being radicalised relates to the fact that people lose their trust in politicians and the political system, while anger and frustration are directed at security agencies that are viewed as agents protecting the current regime at any cost. As a result, instead of preventing and combating terrorism, their repressive approaches ensure that young people affected by them – and even other family members – are radicalised. The prevention of unconventional political participation should therefore start with creating a political landscape in which people, especially those being marginalised, can express themselves freely. In addition, it must be stressed that the legitimacy of the political process can only be ensured when the political playing field is perceived as being free and fair. Therefore, the legitimacy of the government, the measures security agencies implement to respond to threats of terrorism, and the enhanced individual potential for unconventional political participation are interlinked. Finally, the study also found that education is a key factor in ensuring legitimate participation in the political process and the most effective strategy to prevent perceptions of relative deprivation.

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