

**RE-INTEGRATION OF EX-AL SHABAAB TERRORISTS INTO THE
KENYAN SOCIETY: A CASE OF KWALE COUNTY, KENYA**

AKWIRI JOSEPH AKWIRI

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ABSTRACT

The goal of all disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs is the pursuit of peace and stability through the management of weapons and sustainable reintegration of former combatants. Kenya faces a unique situation with the return of ex Al-shabab terrorists into the country, following the declaration of a government amnesty on any terrorist of Kenyan descent, willing to return and be rehabilitated. This study, therefore, sets out to: examine the reasons behind the rise and recruitment of Kenyan youth into the Al-shabab militia group in Kwale County; to evaluate the extent of social relations between Al-shabab returnees and members of the society in Kwale County, Kenya; to analyse the security challenges posed by Al-shabab returnees of Kenya's origin in Kwale County and lastly, to assess government efforts in addressing the issue of assimilation and integration of Al-shabab returnees into the society in Kwale County. It is demonstrated in this study that the state has continued to face challenges as it tries to engage in the process of re-integrating ex-returnee Al-shabab into the community. The study further demonstrates that social, political, and economic variables have played a significant role in the reintegration of ex-Al-shabab returnees in Kwale County, both favorably and adversely. The study used a descriptive survey design that is descriptive in nature as a methodological approach. In certain cases, quantitative research methods were utilized to supplement descriptions derived from the analysis of both primary and secondary data. Oral interviews, questionnaires, and an observation schedule were all used in the data collection process. Similarly, purposive sampling procedure was used to identify key informants' knowledgeable about issues of terrorism in order for the research to provide meaningful data. Additionally, secondary data was acquired from books and peer reviewed journal articles while analysis of data was done in a systematic and comparative way to reduce chances of bias and subjectivity. Overall, analysis also took into consideration the theoretical frameworks such as the rational choice theory as a tool of analysis. The study concludes that political factors, religious factors and social economic factors have contributed a lot to the re-integration (assimilation) of Al-shabab returnees in the Kwale County. This study, therefore, recommends that there is a need by the government to do more in order to accommodate the Al-shabab returnees. Since terrorism is caused by socio-economic dynamics related to poverty, family breakdown and unemployment, there is a need for the government to come up with a policy framework on poverty reduction and employment among the youth. This could be achieved by enhancing the *Kazi kwa Vijana* initiative. Finally, this study recommends that further research should be undertaken among counties which have experienced similar cases of ex Al-shabab returnees. There is also a need to undertake a study on the effectiveness of Kenya's security and intelligence system in curbing terrorism in Kenya.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

- AMISOM** - African Union Mission in Somalia
- ANSAs** - Armed Non-State Actors
- AQIM** - Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb
- DDR** - Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
- DRC** - Democratic Republic of Congo
- ICU** - Islamic Court Union
- IDDRS** - Integrated DDR Standards
- IGAD** - Intergovernmental Authority on Development
- NSAGs** - Non-State Armed Groups
- UNDP** - United Nations Development Program.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Al Shabaab	Al-Shabaab, also known as Harakat Al Shabaab Al Mujahidin ("Mujahidin Youth Movement"), is a Somali terrorist organization that was founded roughly ten years ago
Demobilization	Is the transition from military to civilian status of personnel of the armed forces or other armed groups.
Disarmament	Is the collection, management and/or destruction of arms.
Reintegration	It is a long-term process of integrating ex-combatants economically, politically, and socially into the community. . Al-Shabaab returnees are reintegrated in the society using government initiatives.
Risk	The likelihood of a loss, harm, or other negative outcomes occurring. In our context, the returnees from Al-Shabaab represent a security threat.
Risk reduction	Reducing the security risk posed by Al-Shabaab returnees through proper integration.
Risk reduction strategies	Involving the communities to embrace the Al-Shabaab returnees is one of the strategies that can be used to reduce security risk. The other one is government involvement.
Terrorism	Individuals or groups acting independently or governments acting on their own accord and belief in an attempt to achieve some political objectives by destroying or injuring civilian lives as well as ruining or destroying civilian or government property without the expressly chartered permission of a particular government
Vulnerability	A flaw that can be used to injure or destroy an asset, or to cause loss. Unemployed teenagers are particularly vulnerable to radicalization.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Kenya and other nations around the world are still struggling with the threat of terrorism. It now poses a risk to international security and nation-state economic prosperity. According to academics, terrorism is defined as the violent act of targeting unarmed individuals in order to further political or religious goals and to create an atmosphere of fear among those individuals, who then experience anxiety (Neria et al, 2006). In the course of instilling this fear, terrorists believe that a conducive environment for them to operate shall have been created.

In response to the terrorist attacks carried out by Al-Qaeda in the United States in September 2001 and the bombings carried out by Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia in October 2002, the first reintegration programs for Islamist militants were designed, developed, and put into practice. The majority of these experimental de-radicalization initiatives were carried out in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, in nations like Saudi Arabia (Prevention, Rehabilitation, and After Care in 2004), Yemen (Committee for Dialogue in 2002), Singapore (the Religious Rehabilitation Group in 2003), and Indonesia (the Religious Rehabilitation Group in 2003). These drives featured both a jail-based program and some sort of monitoring and aftercare after release. Similar initiatives were ultimately offered in other Muslim-majority countries such as Egypt, Morocco, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Malaysia. Since then, more people have appeared (Frank, Sharon & Laura, 2014).

Also, Singapore and Saudi Arabia adopted a far reaching strategy to plan and execute their de-radicalization programs (Angel et al, 2010) The three-pronged approach used by scholars to break and replace all levels of an individual's obligation to a violent fanatic group—full of feeling (characterized by friendly factors like daily assurance, community pride, and social commitment), sober minded (calculated factors like financial security, education, professional preparation, and expertise building), and philosophical securities—is generally regarded as the most encouraging. Together, these components may help ex-offenders reintegrate into society, lessen social alienation, foster stability, and reduce the likelihood of return. Thusly, these early endeavors accentuated the basic job of social and local area relations in an individual's entrance and exit into a savage fanatic gathering or development (Angel et al. 2010).

Morocco holds a unique position in reintegration in Africa because it hasn't embarked on a government de-radicalization campaign. Generally speaking, the state is incorporating counter-radicalization and de-radicalization strategies into its approach plan while simultaneously empowering common society organizations to do the same. The remarkable de-radicalization instances of Gama'a al Islamiyya in 1997–2007 and al Jihad association in 2007 have sparked much debate in Egypt on the role of the state in overcoming hardship. Outcome of de-radicalization has been estimated by the way that neither one of the gatherings has been engaged with any brutal demonstrations from that point forward (International Peace Institute, 2010). Besides, both have upbraided psychological oppressor assaults by different gatherings. Moreover, the Algerian de-radicalization program means carrying a feeling of conclusion to its considerate conflict period. Here, the methodology depends on the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, which was put to a public mandate in

2005 and afterward carried out as regulation in 2006. It includes a three-venture program fixated on re-establishing harmony; supporting public compromise, fortitude, and reintegration; and forestalling the reoccurrence of common strife (International Peace Institute, 2010).

Kenya in particular just like any other part of the world has encountered cases of terrorism. Nevertheless, the level of vulnerability that Kenya find itself in has increased due to her being at the forefront in the fight against terrorism. Other reasons could be her proximity to Somalia and Somalia's nature as a failed state, unguarded borders and security systems and institutions that are weak. Within the Horn of Africa, a number of criminal groups have been profiled as terror groups. These include the Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda domiciled in the Sahara region as its operational base (Kaufman, 2012). Within the East Africa Community economic block, Al-Shabaab has dominated as a terror group with serious implications on the security of the East African states. Hiding in Somalia as their operation base, they have conducted several terror attacks for almost a decade.

Kenya has suffered a number of high-profile attacks by violent extremist groups in recent years, in addition to several smaller-scale attacks in public areas and on public transport, and ongoing incidents near the Kenya border with Somalia, where police posts are particularly vulnerable. Al-Shabaab, the Al Qaeda-linked terrorist organization whose base is in Somalia, and its affiliate Al-Hijra, which is based along the Kenya-Tanzania coast, are the main organizations involved in these attacks on Kenyan soil—(Mkutu & Opondo, 2021). In recent years, Al-Shabaab's ongoing strength has relied upon its ability to build local support within Kenya (Anderson, & McKnight, 2014). This has been part of a transformation in strategy since African

Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces took Kismayo in 2012, loosening Al-Shabaab's hold on physical territory—a transformation which has had serious implications for Kenya. Al-Shabaab now operates covertly within Kenya to radicalize and recruit locals, using the narrative of economic deprivation, political marginalization, and social oppression to call followers to arms (Anderson, & McKnight, 2014). Al-Hijra has become the main arm of Al-Shabaab in this regard.

A UN report in 2011 gave a loose estimate of between 200 and 500 Kenyan fighters, most of whom were Muslim youths who have joined Al-Shabaab's campaign in Somalia or been part of terrorist attacks in Kenya. Roughly a quarter of Al-Shabaab's 7,000–9,000 forces are Kenyan. Cannon and Pkalya note that one of Al Shabaab's strengths in Kenya is its high number of Kenyan recruits able to operate from homegrown cells. The picture within Kenya is becoming more complicated. In 2014, the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM) estimated that around 700 returning foreign fighters—known by both communities and authorities as “returnees”—were living in Kenya, having returned from Somalia where they had trained and fought with Al-Shabaab (Mkutu & Opondo, 2021). The majority of these people had come from the coastal counties of Kilifi, Mombasa, and especially Kwale, while media reports estimated that around 1500 radicalized Kenyan youth mainly from Mombasa, Kwale, Kilifi, and Lamu Counties among other parts of the country had responded to a government offer of amnesty. In Kwale, which is regarded by some as “the epicenter of radicalized youths,” locals on the ground estimated that this figure was higher. It is not clear to what extent these “returnees” remain linked with Al-Shabaab, and whether re-integration into society is a likely prospect. While some

have responded to government amnesties, others remain fearful and in hiding, with limited options for a crime-free future (Mkutu et al 2016).

The origin of Al Shabaab could be traced to the Islamic Court Union (ICU) and its adherents (Elliot & Holzer, 2009). This was a conglomeration of many and varied militias operating in Somalia after Siad Barre's government was dethroned in 1991. The vacuum left by Siad Barre was filled in by the Islamic Court Union. In the year 2006, however, Somali was attacked and invaded by Ethiopia. This invasion by the Ethiopian army was to try and undo the *Sharia* law that the ICU had imposed in Somalia. Consequently, the Ethiopian government through her army managed to overthrow the ICU leading to the creation of Al-Shabaab which means 'the youth'. The Al-Shabaab would later pledge loyalty and affiliated itself to Al-Qaida in the year 2011. In terms of operations and to meet their financial needs, the Al-Shabaab got involved in piracy along the Indian Ocean littoral and became able to start massive recruitment campaigns of fighters from other East African countries and Kenya was not an exception with many young people finding their way into Somalia and joining up with the group with a promise of huge financial rewards. One of their major strategies to boost their financial basket was through kidnapping of foreigners, mainly tourists on holiday in Kenya who would attract ransom from their mother states before being released by the Al-Shabaab.

Kelley and Munaita (2014), observe that, with threat to Kenya's security, the government of President Kibaki resolved to mobilize her forces into Somalia territory in order to neutralize the Al-Shabaab as they look for ways to stabilize the Somalia state and her weak government. After destabilization of the Al-Shabaab, there was

reintegration efforts that were started by the Kenya government. This study, therefore, becomes significant as it explores the level of re-integration into the society by these self-confessed terrorists. Akwiri (2014) argues that there have also been cases of terror attacks on churches and police stations in Mombasa and Nairobi suggesting that terrorists would go an extra mile to torment state security institutions without fear.

Terrorist assaults, according to Mwaura (2014), have affected livelihoods along the coastal region of Kenya, created tension and conflict among religious groups in the area, primarily among Muslims and Christians, and resulted in a serious attempt to undermine Kenya's sovereignty. It is worth noting that terror groups operating out of East Africa are anti-Western ideologies and forms of knowledge, and thus making any western forms of knowledge, institution, or ally a target for the terror group. Efforts toward radicalization was also evident during Kenya's quest for a new constitution culminating with the New Constitution 2010. The review process began immediately after the terror attack, which affected relatives of many members of the Muslim community. Consequently, these hostile and indifferent relations between the Muslims and Christians created a perception among Christians that radicalized Muslim youth would be a threat to societal security and should therefore not be re-integrated into the society.

Eradicating terror risks in Kenya involves the use of force. This force has been supplemented by political forces whose objective is to reach and extend the government initiative of curtailing terrorism by engaging communities at a local level for purposes of assisting in identifying terrorists and to foster a continuation of mutual co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Kenya. To achieve this, Kenya

government decided also to involve social groups from the Muslim community who were apprehensive about the approach (Otieno, 2013), which the Kenya government has taken to deal with terrorism.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The move by some of the Al-Shabaab fighters from Kenya, or of Kenya's descent, to return back home and get integrated into the society has not yielded much success due to a myriad of reasons with the majority of these returnee ex- Al-Shabaab ending up back to terrorist activities or other forms of crime. Reports by Kenyan authorities have indicated that majority of the returnees fail to notify them of their return for purposes of getting amnesty and integration into the society. Others return but do not get integrated as promised, but instead, are stigmatized through isolation, treated with suspicion and are frequently victimized and harassed by security personnel.

In October 2017, the Boni Forest Enclave Campaign Director, Mr. Joseph Kanyiri attested that many Kenyan youths who had joined the Al-Shabaab army in Somalia had returned back to Kenya and were impeding activities to get rid of the Al-Shabaab assailants in Lamu, Tana River and Garissa regions. Mr Kanyiri observed that a considerable lot of the returnees were assisting the Al-Shabaab cells to launch attacks in Bodhei, Ijara and different regions lining Boni Forest. It was evident, therefore that the returnees were covertly re-gathering, enlisting and preparing assisting in different forms of attack on the people living around the Boni forest areas as well as those living around Lamu Tana River and Garissa regions. .

The terror attacks in Bodhei and the surrounding areas were “an indication that the perpetrators were under the guidance of local networks. The problem of suspected Al-

Shabaab returning to Kenya was evident through a newspaper report indicating that about 250 Al-Shabaab who returned back to Kenya were hiding in the coastal towns of Lamu, Kilifi and Kwale (Nation Newspaper, 19/72017), even with the government announcement for amnesty on Al-Shabaab youth who were willing to defect from the militia group and surrender. Consequently, this study explores the extent of re-integration of ex-Al-Shabaab back into the society with a view of understanding the dynamics of their social relations with members of the society within Matuga sub county in Kwale County of Kenya.

1.3 Study Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

The broader goal of this study was to assess how returnee terrorists were re-integrated back into the society in Kwale County.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- i. To assess the re-integration and assimilation of Al-Shabaab returnees.
- ii. To establish the social economic factors affecting re-integration of Al Shabaab returnees
- iii. To ascertain the religious factors affecting re-integration of Al Shabaab returnees
- iv. To find out the political factors affecting re-integration of Al Shabaab returnees

1.3 Research Questions

- i. How are Al-Shabaab returnees being re-integrated and assimilated?
- ii. What are the social economic factors affecting re-integration of Al-Shabaab returnees?

- iii. What are the religious factors affecting re-integration of Al-Shabaab returnees?
- iv. What are the political factors affecting re-integration of Al-Shabaab returnees?

1.5 Justification of the Study

The research was carried out in Kwale County, on Kenya's south coast. It was chosen as the study locale because the area has witnessed cases related to terrorism according to numerous media reports, and has a huge influence of both moderate and extreme Islamic ideologies. Since terrorism is a global problem, this study is significant and urgent because its findings are useful in mitigating over terror cells that operate within the state. It will also add up to the global effort towards countering radicalization of the youth and terrorism within Kenyan state. The study is, therefore, justified since the area of study has experienced serious issues of insecurity arising from terrorism. Subsequently, numerous families have lost young individuals because of being enlisted to the Al-Shabaab. Although a number of returnee Al-Shabaab members have come back, a number of them have kept on hiding from the state despite the fact that the state has declared amnesty to this category of people. This study will therefore add knowledge on the issues of disengagement, desistance, and reintegration of ex-terrorists who are back into the country. Research outcomes will also inform policy on how to curb security threats to the state coming from acts of terrorism. This study will also go a long way towards peacebuilding effort with a view to ensuring a peaceful and secure society devoid of threats from terrorists.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

Firstly, few available studies done on disengagement, desistance, and reintegration of Al-Shabaab returnees posed limitations in accessing empirical literature. Identification of these returnee Al-Shabaab also posed a challenge to the researcher.

However, this was overcome by piloting households where youths were conscripted to Al-Shabaab and came back. Language barrier was also a challenge. However, this limitation was overcome through engaging an assistant researcher from Kwale area who understand the local languages in Kwale. Geographically, this study was limited to Kwale County and not the entire Coast province. The study also took cognizance of the terrain in Kwale as a limitation due to geographical vastness of the county. However, the researcher strived to overcome this by relying on the readily available transport system within the county.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this section, a review of related literature on the re-integration of ex Al-Shabaab returnees back to the society has been undertaken. Similarly, the theoretical framework based on the Rational Choice Theory and Ecological Systems Theory of human development has been explored as a tool of analysis. The chapter also displays the conceptual framework all with a view to identifying a scholarly gap for the study.

2.2 Empirical Review

Kenya's coastal region has suffered decades of economic and socio-political marginalization from the colonial times. This marginalization has thereby established an environment where social services are rare and a situation where poverty levels have gone high. Such conditions have been useful in nurturing terror act by laying a foundation as well as an environment where terrorism thrives best among the populace (Cronin, 2002). The uneven development plan created by the colonial government furthered by the postcolonial government in Kenya ensured that economic development was only concentrated in the Rift Valley and Central provinces of Kenya (Eastman, 2014), consequently the coastal region remained less developed compared to other parts of the country. Additionally, bad colonial policies which were also accentuated by the post independent African government ensured that the Coast region continued to lag behind comparatively to other provinces. Compounded by this is the lack of labour in the agricultural sector, landlessness and high child mortality rate.

he issue of terrorism has become a menace that Kenya continues to grapple with as well as the global world. It has become a risk on matters security and the economic well-being of states across the world. Scholars have defined terrorism as the violent target on people who are not armed for purposes of achieving politico-religious objective as it ushers in a fearful environment amongst people who consequently becomes anxious (Neria, 2006). In the event of instilling this fear, terrorists believe that a conducive environment for them to operate shall have been created.

The continent of Africa and Kenya in particular just like any other part of the world has encountered cases of terrorism. Nevertheless, the level of vulnerability that Kenya find itself in has increased due to her being at the forefront in the fight against terrorism. Other reasons could be her proximity to Somalia which has been considered as a failed state, unguarded borders, lapses in the security system and weak institutions. Within the Horn of Africa, a number of criminal groups have been profiled as terror groups. These include the Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and the Al-Qaeda domiciled in the Sahara region as its operational base (Kaufman, 2012). Within the East Africa Community economic block, Al-Shabaab has dominated as a terror group with serious implications on the security of the East African states. Hiding in Somalia as their operation base, they have conducted several terror attacks for almost a decade.

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the Ethiopian army was to try and undo the *Sharia* law that the ICU had imposed in Somalia. Consequently, the Ethiopian government through her army managed to overthrow the ICU leading to the creation of Al-Shabaab which means ‘the youth’. The Al-Shabaab would later pledge loyalty and affiliated itself to Al-Qaida in the year 2011. In terms of operations and to meet their financial needs, the Al-Shabaab got involved in piracy along the Indian Ocean littoral and became able to start massive recruitment campaigns of fighters from other East African countries and Kenya was not an exemption. Many young people found their way into Somalia and joined up with the group where they were promised huge financial rewards. One of the major strategies that Al-Shabaab used to boost their financial basket was through kidnapping of foreigners, mainly tourists on holiday in Kenya who would attract ransom from their mother states before being released by the Al-Shabaab.

Kelley and Munaita (2014), observe that, with threat to Kenya’s security, the government of President Kibaki resolved to mobilise her forces into Somalia territory in order to neutralize the Al-Shabaab Al-shaabab as they look for ways to stabilize the Somalia state and her weak government. To do this an operation by the Kenya Defence Forces was launched named “Operation Linda Nchi”. The Kenya Defense Forces would later formulate an alliance with other foreign armies to form the African-Union-backed military force, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) which includes forces from among other states such as the United States and the United Nations. Under the intense operation by AMISOM troops, many Al-Shabaab cells in Somalia were disintegrated, and many Kenyan-born Al-Shabaab fighters who had crossed into Somalia and joined the terrorist outfit, began finding ways to return home for their safety under a Kenyan government amnesty extended to them. Some of these fighters escaped and returned back home hoping to be

rehabilitated and re-integrated back to the community as the government had promised. Unfortunately, this reintegration effort seemed not to be bearing fruits. This study is, therefore, necessary since its main objectives is to find out the level of re-integration into the society by these self-confessed terrorists. Akwiri (2014) argues that there have also been cases of terror attacks on churches and police stations in Mombasa and Nairobi. This suggests that the terrorists would go an extra mile even to torment state security institutions without fear. The above observation was useful in analyzing the security threat posed by the Al-Shabaab and how returnee terrorists have been able to socially integrate with people within the society they came from.

Juma and Mwangi (2021) observe that most states are zeroing in on battling Islamist fear bunches like ISIS and Al-Shabaab in East Africa. Yet, the need to likewise construct other vital counter-psychological warfare abilities has grown considerably more so in the recovery and reintegration of returning ex-Al-Shabaab warriors. How people perceive this government approach as a complete shift from a government owned initiative based on a hard methodology, to an entire local area approach of, delicate methodology, will decide how powerful this system is in the worldwide battle against psychological warfare. In their work, Juma and Mwangi (2021) figured out that while the family and the general public at large may be yearning to see their friends and family, there are contending issues included, including disgrace and negative labeling. Although Juma and Mwangi's study is based on the perception of members of the community towards returnees, this study has utilized the findings from Juma and Mwangi's study with a view to understanding the process of integrating returnees from Al-Shabaab into the wider society within the study locale.

Looking at the issue of land in the Coastal region, Kanyinga (1998) and Meilink (2000) state that land issues have also accelerated the economic vulnerability of the people at the coast and as such speculation has given rise to the high cost of land in the coast which is considered as a tourist town for Kenya. The issue of land made locals in the coastal region to be squatters in their own land. Such developments coupled with lack of opportunities for the youth have rendered these youths vulnerable and thereby making them easy target for recruitment into the terrorist groups such as Al-shabaab. The discussions above by Karuti and Meilink were useful in laying the foundation upon which the issue of recruitment of the youth into Al-shabaab terror group was based.

Mwaura (2014) argues that terror attacks have affected livelihoods along the coast and increased tension and conflict among religious groups in the area mostly among the Muslims and Christians. Such conflicts have continued to pose serious threats to Kenya's sovereignty. Historically, Kenya's Muslims and Christians have cordially and harmoniously co-existed with each other because of the secularization of our constitution, which respects and recognizes freedoms as enshrined in the bill of rights. This constitution has expressed its recognition of the freedom of worship (Mulama 2014). Although Christians are the majority, they have also tended to dominate Kenya's political and economic spheres. The cordial relationship between Kenya Muslims and Christians took a nose dive with the 1998 terror attack in Nairobi which was linked to extremists prophesying Islamic faith (Potter, 2013). During this attack, most Christians blamed Muslims for conducting the attack (Mwaura, 2014) to the detriment of the Muslims and their perception of being marginalized politically and economically. These perceptions of being marginalized economically with Islam as a religion being seen as a violent religion would later inform the radicalization process that the Muslim have been associated with. This was evident in Nigeria where the Northerners Muslim demanded a federated system

of government, this would also be the same trend in Kenya with people in the coastal region pushing for secession of that region (Mulama, 2014).

Efforts toward radicalization was also evident during Kenya's quest for a new constitution culminating with the New Constitution (2010). The constitutional review process began immediately after the terror attack which affected the lives of many members of the Muslim community. Consequently, these hostile and indifferent relations between the Muslims and Christians created a perception among Christians that radicalized Muslim youth would be a threat to societal security and should therefore not be re-integrated into the society. Such discussions informed the issue of social integration which this study interested in interrogating.

Eradicating terror risks in Kenya involves the use of force. This force has been supplemented by political forces whose objective is to reach and extend the government's initiative of curtailing terrorism by engaging communities at a local level for purposes of assisting in identifying terrorists and to foster a continuation of mutual co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Kenya. To achieve this, Kenya government decided to involve social groups from the Muslim community who fear the approach (Otieno, 2012), which the Kenya government took to deal with terrorism. This includes, for instance the ruthless anti-terror bill. Nonetheless, the government has been very clear in reassuring members of the Islamic sect and the Muslim community that it is committed to a balanced application of the law regardless of religious or political affiliations, with a promise to review the harsh anti-terrorism bill and remove stereotypical representations of religion that were present in the original draft Anti-terrorism bill (Kelley & Munaita 2014).

The international community has also come in to boost the fight against terrorism by increasing aid towards strengthening of anti-terror agencies in the coastal and North Eastern regions of Kenya, which are dominated by Islam. This has been done through

the refurbishing of health centres, repairing of bridges, providing water, medical supplies alongside other humanitarian assistance spearheaded by the government of the United States of America. This has helped in the transformation of lives in those areas (CNN, 2002). Other assistance have also been given by religious groups such as the *Chemichemi ya Ukweli* which has undertaken to induce community members to undertake courses in peace and conflict resolution while other religious groups have advocated for religious dialogue across religious groups (Nyamai, 2004). The observation above therefore lays the foundation upon which issues of re-integration by returnee Al-shabaab into the society in Matuga sub-county of Kwale were understood.

Juma & Mwangi (2021) concentrated on networks' impression of the reintegration of Al-Shabaab returnees in Mombasa and Kwale Counties, Kenya. These scholars observe that while the family and the general public at large may be yearning to see their friends and family, there are contending with difficulties, including disgrace and negative naming. Their study further discovered that there is an absence of designs to guarantee the appropriate contribution of host networks in the reintegration of returnees. In that capacity, the interaction between the locals and the returnee Al-Shabaab is damaged by the absence of trust and negative marking, which influences positive reintegration. The above observations are valuable for counter-radicalization strategy definition and functional harmony building intercessions at the local area level.

2.2.1 Political Environment and Assimilation of Terrorism Returnees

It has been argued by scholars such as Mwaura, (2014) and Waxman (2011) that terror acts are driven by politics and the act of terrorism is a tool for gaining political mileage that has been widely used by some politicians. This act has serious impacts economically, psychological and socially to the development of a state. Because of these impacts and its ramification on members of the society, the state is always compelled to look for ways to restore public confidence after terrorist attacks. Pollack and Wood (2010) have argued that in cases of attacks and the response by the government is not worth, the citizens have tended to lose confidence because they feel that they are vulnerable and cannot get adequate protection from the government. In this situation the government has to be compelled to take drastic measures to arrest that situation. In some cases, governments have been able to come up with very punitive anti-terror laws which in many cases, in Kenya for instance, have been taken in bad faith by the Muslim community as they claim that the government has been targeting youths from that community. Likewise, due to poor securitization of the state, members of public in some cases have called for the withdrawal of Kenya forces from Somalis if that move could ensure a peaceful environment for them. In a similar way, Merari (2015) avers that terrorism has been utilized as a tool to realize political goals on regional basis too. For, instance, he argues that when certain level is exceeded, the populace is likely to succumb to the dictates of the terrorists. Under this level and circumstance, some people would become radicalized and join the bandwagon of terror activities.

2.2.2 Religious Factors and Reintegration

There has been a rise in interest in and space for religious actors in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) policy over the past few years. However, discussions

about the degree to which ideological, religious, or structural factors contribute to violent extremism have not yielded any definite recommendations for policymakers or practitioners. Despite the fact that religion frequently interacts with a wide range of other circumstances and that causality is not always straightforward, religion has a significant potential to serve as a trigger for violent extremism. By concentrating on the role or function of religion in violent extremism, it is able to mobilize, create a competing narrative, provide a justification for, and sanctify violent acts (Mandaville & Novell, 2017).

Religious leaders are crucial members of civic society and play a key role in influencing public and political debate. People must be involved in all elements of government operations, but this must be done with caution, while being cognizant of potential implications and power imbalances. Understanding how religious factors affect violent extremism can help with the creation and implementation of CVE initiatives that engage the religious sector. A number of studies have demonstrated how religious actors may be partners, including how and when to involve them, how to offer effective training, and how to achieve successful cross-sector partnerships by being inclusive and resolving any political hurdles (Mandaville & Novell, 2017).

2.2.3 Socioeconomic Factors and Reintegration

As the situation in Iraq and Syria worsened, many countries struggled and are still continuing to struggle to find an effective solution for managing the return of people who went there to take part in the conflict. Given the scale and scope of this wave of foreign fighters and the nature of the conflict, there is great concern that some returnees may do so with the intention of committing violent crimes. Effective programs to rehabilitate and reintegrate returning foreign fighters are, therefore,

crucial for reducing future radicalization among adolescents and boosting overall community resistance to violent extremism in addition to preventing acts of violence. The bulk of "exit programs" in Europe for example use psychological approaches, individual therapy, and are voluntary. Although they require specialized knowledge and sustained long-term work to be effective, they may be useful in developing de-radicalization campaigns for a variety of circumstances (Holmer & Shtuni, 2017).

The most encouraging feature of first-generation de-radicalization initiatives in the Middle East and Southeast Asia is their three-pronged intervention strategy, which simultaneously addresses affective, pragmatic, and ideological bonds while highlighting the significance of social and community relations in the reintegration process. If rehabilitation and reintegration efforts are to be successful, they must be implemented with programs that address the dynamics and reasons that encourage radicalization, reform the criminal justice system, and boost societal and political resistance to the influence of violent extremism (Holmer & Shtuni, 2017).

2.3 Theoretical framework

The rational choice theory and the ecological systems theory were used as an analytical tool for the study.

2.3.1 Rational Choice Theory

Rational choice theory is a collection of rules that can be used to better understand economic and social behavior. In the eighteenth century, Adam Smith, a political economist and philosopher, is credited with creating the concept. An individual will undertake a cost-benefit analysis to assess whether a particular alternative is appropriate for them, according to the notion. It also suggests that an individual's reasonable self-interested behaviors will help the economy as a whole. In rational

choice theory, three notions are investigated: the imaginary line, sensible actors, and self-interest (Levin & Milgrom, 2004).

To fit the rules for the levelheaded decision hypothesis, it is made to follow suspicions. All activities are judicious and are made due to considering expenses and rewards the compensation of a relationship or activity should offset the expense for the activity to be finished, when the worth of the prize reduces underneath the worth of the costs caused, the individual will stop the activity or termination the friendship, people will utilize the assets available to them to improve their prizes. The Reasonable decision hypothesis communicates that people are in charge of their choices. They don't settle on decisions due to oblivious drives, customs or ecological impacts, rather, they utilize levelheaded contemplations to gauge outcomes and possible advantages (Snidal, 2013).

The way that normal decision hypothesis centers around individual activity is an imperfection. While the facts really confirm that singular activities impact huge social designs, a few pundits of sane decision hypothesis guarantee that the hypothesis' clarification is excessively confined. One more blemish in levelheaded decision hypothesis is that it overlooks instinct and natural reasoning. There may not be sufficient opportunity to evaluate the expenses and benefits of choices that should be taken rapidly, like choices that influence endurance (Levin and Milgrom, 2004).

Terror groups are people who make 'irrational' choices before committing terror attacks. However, it could be argued that these terror attacks are driven in some cases by ideological issues and belief system that arises from religious belief. By believing in such ideologies and connecting these beliefs to religion, terrorists are always at peace when they make a choice (which to them is rational) to kill, maim and instill

fear on their perceived enemies. Based on the fact that Al-Shabaab has been attacking and recruiting young Kenyans on their side, this has been a rational calculation that they have vowed to make in order to achieve certain objectives that fulfill their interest.

2.3.2 Ecological Systems Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner formulated the ecological systems theory. It provides a framework for community psychologists to evaluate people's relationships within communities and society as a whole. According to the ecological systems theory, we are exposed to a variety of surroundings throughout our lives, each of which can impact our behavior to differing degrees. The microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, macro-system, and chronosystem are examples of these systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

This hypothesis works with getting sorted out data about individuals and their current circumstance to get their interconnectedness. People travel through a progression of life advances, all of which require ecological help and adapting abilities. Social issues including medical services, family relations, insufficient pay, emotional wellness challenges, clashes with policing, joblessness, instructive troubles among others can be generally subsumed under the environmental model, which would empower experts to evaluate factors that are applicable to such issues (Hepworth, Rooney, Strom-Gottfried, & Larsen, 2013).

Some framework advisors reject the fundamental view for different reasons frequently connected with viciousness, exploitation and power. This study depends on an obsolete thin and fragmented information on straight frameworks hypothesis. A disservice of frameworks hypothesis recommends that all factors should have a few

uniformities in the degree of effect and command over the business climate conditions. This may not be the situation as certain factors will undoubtedly have a more prominent effect and level of control when contrasted with different factors. Framework hypothesis looks to make sense of and foster theories around attributes that emerge inside complex frameworks that apparently couldn't emerge in any single framework inside the entirety. This is alluded to as emanate conduct. Assuming that a mind boggling framework communicates emanate conduct, and that implies that it has attributes which its properties don't show all alone.

The Rational Choice Theory will thus be augmented by Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory of human development, which focuses on the interrelationships of diverse processes with a greater emphasis on variations in their context. Urie Bronfenbrenner's main contribution is that human development is directly linked to his environment. This theory was useful in explaining the social environment that affects assimilation of returnee Al Shabaab terrorists. It will also be utilized with a view to understanding how the prevailing environment in Somalia and Kwale was either conducive or not to the recruits from Kwale County which is the area of study for this project.

Most previous researchers have concentrated on examining, investigating and describing the cause and impact of terrorism in Kenya. No research has been done and published on factors affecting reintegration of returnees especially in Kwale County. For instance, Mokaya (2015) examined the impact of Al-Shabaab terrorist attacks in Kenya. He narrowed his scope on economic, political and social impact as well as vulnerability and resilience of Kenya as a primary target of the Al-Shaabab.

From the above foregoing and looking at both the theoretical framework and the reviewed literature, it is evident that there is scarcity on literature on the re-integration of ex Al-Shabaab returnees into the society. For instance, Kamindo (2016) surveyed the social variables making psychological warfare in Kenya with reference to households in Eastleigh area of Nairobi County in Kenya. He explicitly looked to lay out the degree to which financial factors like destitution and joblessness, socio-social elements as well as security policing and the level of admittance to assets add to psychological oppression. Similarly, Goldsmith (2018) investigated and gave a report on conflict assessment in terms of threats and opportunities for engagement... Although these studies explored issues of terrorism, none of them specifically dealt with the re-integration of ex-Al-Shabaab terrorist into the Kenyan society and specifically in Kwale County. That is the scholarly void that this research aims to fill.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section deals with methodological issues involving data collection, research design and sampling techniques among others.

3.2 Study site

The research was carried out in Kwale County, on Kenya's south coast. It was chosen as the study locale because the area has witnessed many cases related to terrorism according to numerous media reports, and has a huge influence of both moderate and extreme Islamic ideologies. Kwale County is one of the six counties in the coastal region of Kenya. It borders Taita Taveta County to the North West, Kilifi County to the North and North East, Mombasa County and Indian Ocean to the East and South East and the United Republic of Tanzania to the South West. The County is located in the Southern tip of Kenya, lying between Latitudes 30.05° to 40.75° South and Longitudes 38.52° to 39.51° East. Kwale County covers an area of about 8,270.2 Square Kilometres, of which 62 is water surface. The area excludes the 200 miles' coastal strip known as the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ). Matuga which is the study locale is therefore a sub-county within Kwale county.

3.2 Research Design

A descriptive research design which is cross sectional was used in this study. This research design is qualitative in nature. The main goal was to create a description and narration of events as they happened. This design can appeal to a wider strategy for purposes of planning as well as doing evaluation and monitoring of policy issues (Patton, 2002). This eventually led to the production of holistic and descriptive data

(Gay, 2001). As a result, the descriptive design was proven to be beneficial in determining the motivations for terrorists joining Al-Shabaab and then returning home to be reintegrated into society. The primary goal of descriptive research is to describe the current state of circumstances. It can be used to collect information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits, or any of a range of education or societal issues according to Orodho and Kombo (2002).

3.3 Target Population

The target population for this study are Ex-Al-Shabaab combatants who formally joined the Al-shabab group but have now come back to society. The target population also included households where these former Al-shabab followers came from. Part of the target population also involved government officials, security officers and religious leaders living and operating within Matuga sub-County. The study also targeted businessmen and women and the youth which forms a bigger population as far as followers of Al-Shabaab are concerned. This formed a better pool from where data was collected.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

3.4.1 Sample size

This implies a section of the population, which is considered as the subject of study (Kothari, 2007). The researcher interviewed 30 people drawn from the categorization given above under target population. This is considered as an ideal representative of the targeted group. Orodho (2002) argues that when a sample size is manageable it becomes possible to quickly attain a saturation point from information gathered from respondents.

3.4.2 Sampling Technique

The primary respondents for the study were chosen using a purposive sampling technique. Similarly, to supplement the purposive sample technique, a non-probability sampling procedure was adopted. According to Kombo and Tromp (2018), sampling technique is the process of picking a group of individuals or things from a population so that the selected group has aspects reflective of the overall group's characteristics. It can be defined as a group of respondents (people) chosen from a broader population on the basis of a survey when dealing with people. The study therefore settled on a purposive sampling technique based on the fact that it is dealing with specific group of people and who purposely chose to join Al-shaabab. These people are considered as key informants because they are the main focus of this study. The non-probability sampling technique on the other hand targeted police officers, counsellors, church elders and religious leaders among others.

3.5 Research Instruments

In formulating the research instruments, the clarity of the objectives, the population sample and geographical distribution were taken into consideration. Interview schedules, questionnaires and observation checklist were utilized. Questionnaires were also used, and they were meant to include both organized and unstructured inquiries. Because some of the informants were unable to read and write without assistance, a semi-structured questionnaire was utilized to assure fair responses. Nevertheless, an interview schedule was also created for purposes of conducting oral interviews.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures.

This relates to the collection of data in order to support or substantiate a point. Primary and secondary data sources were used in this case. Oral interviews and focused group discussion were employed to gather primary data. In addition, secondary data was gathered and analysis done. This involved accessing publications that have already been written on Al-Shabaab. These included looking at documents such as books, projects, dissertations as well as journal articles. In cases where the researcher was not able to do interviews, questionnaires were employed for purposes of data collection.

3.7 Validity

A test's validity is a measure of how well it measures what it claims to measure. Before the start of data collection, I collaborated with my supervisors to validate the study tools. This was done to see if the tools could actually do what they were designed to do in the field. At this point, issues like instrument precision became crucial.

3.8 Reliability

A test's reliability is a measure of how consistent the results are (Kombo & Tromp 2018). Reliability issues were taken into account because they aid in determining the consistency of the results obtained from a series of trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Prior to the start of the study, the researcher planned to evaluate the research tools for their reliability in sub counties closer to Kwale county. This aided the researcher in correcting sections that may not have provided the desired study results. As a result, after consulting with my supervisors, a pre-test was conducted to guarantee consistency.

3.9 Analysis of Data

Analysis of data involved content analysis of secondary sources that were used during the research. The analysis involved comparing data gathered from oral interviews, questionnaires and also from the oral interviews. But also, data obtained from all the respondents, questionnaires and focus group discussions were grouped into different thematic areas. Secondary data was analyzed based on their content to reduce misrepresentation of facts. Oral interviews that were captured through tape recording were transcribed before being analyzed. Additionally, those interviews done through the use of local dialect were translated first before analysis was done. Overall, the theoretical formulation identified for the study played a major role as a tool for analysis.

3.10 Ethical considerations

Each research study requires maintenance of strict ethical standards. This entails authorization procedures for the research work, confidentiality of the participants among other things. On the basis of this, the researcher sought the consent of participants by engaging them. The rights of participants who wanted to remain anonymous were also respected throughout the study. Data given by the respondents was treated with a lot of confidentiality and were strictly utilized for scholarly purposes. All the works cited were also acknowledged to avoid running into the risk of plagiarism. To ensure a smooth process of undertaking the research, the researcher acquired approval and authorization from the appropriate offices, such as Kenyatta University's Graduate School and the National Council of Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). Following acquisition of authorization from NACOSTI, the data gathering process commenced.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the outcomes of the study. It interprets and analyses various findings while at the same time presenting these findings in terms of tables and pie charts. Finally, this chapter provides the overall conclusion of the study, analysis and interpretation of data. This is done through the use of tables with mean and standard deviations.

4.2 Response Rate

A total of 30 people were surveyed for the study. However, there were 27 people who responded to the survey, representing a 90 percent response rate. There were three questionnaires that were not completed, accounting for only 10% of the total responses received. A response rate of 50% is considered satisfactory, 60% is good, and 70% and above is exceptional according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2012). As a result, this response rate was deemed acceptable for the study.

Table 4.1 Response Rate

Details	Frequency	Percent
Response	27	90
Non- Response	3	10
Total	30	100

4.3 Demographic Characteristics

4.3.1 Level of Education

Table 4.2 Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent
Form Four	7	23
Diploma	9	30
Degree	12	40
Post Graduate	2	7
Total	30	100

Based on the respondents in this study, there were 2 respondents with postgraduate qualifications accounting for 7% of the total number of respondents. More so, about 7 respondents accounting for 23% of the total number of respondents had form four level of education and, therefore, it is important to note that most of the youth joining Al-Shabaab have basic education. Other respondents (9) accounted for 30% of the respondents. These respondents had attained a diploma level of education. Similarly, about 12 respondents accounting for 40% of the respondents and who formed majority of the youth joining Al-Shabaab had attained university level of education. Perhaps this could be explained through the high level of unemployment that has affected not only youth in Matuga County but also Kenya as a whole. Based on the fact that many respondents were educated, they were able to respond to questionnaires and to oral interviews appropriately. According to the data on the table above, majority of the respondents had some form of basic education and, therefore, were able to make informed choices of whether to join Al-Shabab or not. Therefore, the notion that most of the youth joining Al-Shabaab are not educated does not count and may not be valid.

4.3.3 Number of Years Worked

Table 4.2 Number of Years Worked

Number of Years Worked	Frequency	Percent
Unemployment	10	33
Under 1 year	6	20
1-3 years	3	10
3-5 years	8	27
More than 5 years	3	10
Total	30	100

In trying to link the number of years that respondents had been in employment, the researcher was convinced that the number of years in employment could have some bearing on the decision made by youths in Matuga sub-county, Kwale County in joining Al-shabaab. In terms of distribution, unemployed respondents accounted for 33% of the total number. Additionally, those who had worked for less than one year accounted for 20% while those who had worked for between one to three years accounted for 10% of the total number of respondents respectively. More so, those respondents with work experience of between 3-5 years accounted for 27% while only 10% of the respondents had worked for more than five years. It is, therefore, suffice to conclude that majority of the people are unemployed. This categorization gave a variety of response to the questions raised both orally and from the questionnaires.

4.3.4 Gender of Respondents

The study drew its respondents across both gender. Although, the study targeted youthful men, it emerged that even women were also constituted a certain percentage of the target group in the research. This is because both men and women were targeted by the Al-Shabaab as far as their membership and operations were

concerned. Consequently, the distribution of gender was that 70% of the respondents were men, while 30% of the respondents were women.

4.4 Reliability Test

Cronbach Alpha was used to assess the proposed constructs' reliability. Social economic elements were found to have a value of 0.832, religious factors had a coefficient of 0.925, political factors had a correlation of 0.862, and assimilation had a coefficient of 0.805, according to the data. Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructions were greater than 0.700, indicating that the study constructs were reliable. The Table 4.3 below illustrates this. This is similar to a study by Nyasio (2019) who obtained a Cronbach Alpha of above 0.7 in her study of media coverage and conflict management at Misingo Island.

Table 4.3 Reliability Test

Construct(Variable)	Cronbach's Alpha	Comments
Social Economic Factors	.832	Reliable
Religious Factors	.925	Reliable
Political Factors	.862	Reliable
Assimilation	.805	Reliable

4.5 Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

Various statements regarding the study variables were posed to the respondents. These were guided by Likert Scale of 1 to 5. Where 1 represents Strongly Disagree, 2 represents Disagree, 3 represents Neutral 4 represents Agree and 5 represents Strongly Agree. The responses' mean and standard deviation were determined and tabulated as discussed under section 4.5.1 below.

4.5.1 Re-integration and Assimilation of Al-Shabaab Returnees.

The overall mean was 4.06 which indicated that there was reintegration and assimilation of Al-Shabaab returnees in Kwale County. The respondents highly agreed to the assertion that the government enacted regulations to aid in the reintegration of Al-Shabaab returnees with a mean of 4.56, which is near 5 on the Likert Scale. One person's response was that "I can't identify a legislation, but I feel there are procedures in place to help us reintegrate into the community." Those who agreed were 44.4 percent, while those who strongly agreed were 55.6 percent of the total respondents. With a standard deviation of 0.506, it was the third highest, indicating significant fluctuation. Response on the administration (government) and its commitment to reintegrating returnees into society received a mean of 4.52 on the Likert Scale, which is close to 5, indicating that the respondents strongly agreed with this statement. Additionally, 7.4 percent of those polled disagreed while 33.3 percent agreed, and 59.3 percent strongly agreed respectively. The standard deviation was 0.643, which was the second highest, indicating that the replies were the second most valuable. Frank *et al.* (2014) observed that success in reintegration of terrorists in Yemen, Singapore and Indonesia was due to the commitments of the respective governments. The above study supports our current findings where it is evident that the government is showing keen interest to re-integrate ex Al-Shabab adherents back to the society where they came from.

The response on the question about the commitment of the government in guaranteeing that Al-Shabaab returnees are re-incorporated into society had a mean of 4.15 which is close to 4 on the Likert scale suggesting that the respondents consented to this assertion. Especially, 85.2% of the respondents concurred and

14.8% firmly concurred. The standard deviation was 0.362 and was the most uninferring that the reactions were somewhat changed. 'Ordinarily security organizations follow us up to ensure we are dedicated to peacemaking' said another respondent. The Al-Shabaab returnees who have not gotten critical help from the public authority had a mean of 3.74 which is almost 4 on the Likert scale showing that the respondents consented to this assertion. Specifically, the people who differ were 44.4%, while the respondents who concurred were 37.1%, and the individuals who firmly concurred were 18.5% of the total number of respondents. The absence of help is credited to question from government offices. The standard deviation of 0.764 was the biggest. However, it was exceptionally differed to show that the reactions were highly varied. The respondents disagreed with the assertion that the government compensates ex-combatants in order to cease firing and disarm. Consequently, the mean for this response was 3.33, which is close to 3 on the Likert scale, indicating that the respondents disagreed with this statement. Those who disagreed accounted for 66.7 percent of the total respondents, while those who agreed accounted for 33.3 percent of the total respondents. This Implied that disarmament was not supported or rewarded. The standard deviation for the matching responses was 0.480, which was the second lowest, indicating that the responses were the second least varied. The above remark is backed up by Angel et al' (2010) research in Singapore and Saudi Arabia, where the governments took a proactive and comprehensive approach to planning and implementing de-radicalization programs with the goal of reintegrating ex-terrorists back into society. The fact that there were some former Al=shabab members who have taken a rational choice to come back and continue with meaningful ways of eking a living is within the tenets of rational choice theory. But also this behavior

change by ex-Al-Shabaab is supported and can be explained within the ecological system theory.

Table 4.4 Re-integration and Assimilation of Al-Shabaab Returnees

Re-integration and Assimilation of Al-Shabaab Returnees	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Government enacted laws to help re-integrate Al=Shabaab returnees.	-	-	-	44.4%	55.6%	4.56	.506
The government is committed to re-integrations of Al=Shabaab returnees into the society.	-	7.4%	-	33.3%	59.3%	4.52	.643
The government makes a follow up to ensure Al=Shabaab returnees have settled into society.	-	-	-	85.2%	14.8%	4.15	.362
Al=Shaabab returnee have not received significant support by government.	-	44.4%	-	37.1%	18.5%	3.74	.764
The government rewards ex-combatants in to cease fire and disarmament.		66.7%	-	33.3%	-	3.33	.480
Overall Mean						4.06	

4.5.2 Social-Economic Factors Affecting Integration of Al Shabaab Returnees

The aggregate mean of 4.39, as seen below, indicates that socio-economic considerations influenced Al Shabaab returnees' integration. With a mean of 4.89 on the Likert scale, most respondents couldn't live close to ex-Al-Shabaab. The percentage of people who agreed was 11.1 percent, and the percentage of those who strongly agreed was 88.9%. The standard deviation of 0.320 was the smallest, indicating that the replies were the least diverse. The majority of young people who joined Al-Shabaab owing to poverty or financial problems had a mean of 4.85 on the

Likert scale, which is close to 5, indicating that they agreed with this statement. One of the oral informants argued that ‘were it not for the situation at home, I would not have joined Al Shabaab’ perhaps indicating that the deploring conditions at home and poverty could have driven him to join Al-Shabaab in order to get some form of livelihood and make money. Particularly, those who agreed with socio-economic factors as the cause for joining Al-Shabaab accounted for 14.8% and those who strongly agreed were 85.2%. The second-lowest standard deviation was 0.362, indicating that the replies were the second-least diverse. According to Githigaro & Juma (2021), there aren't enough mechanisms in place to ensure that host communities are properly involved in the reintegration of returnees. Their observation agrees with the aforementioned findings to some extent.

The majority of respondents agreed (59.3%) or strongly agreed (40.7%) that economic progress in their area will lead to a decrease in terrorism. This statement has a mean of 4.41. In addition, 7.4% of respondents disagreed, 44.5 percent agreed, and 48.1 strongly agreed that ex-Al-Shabaab fighters should not be trusted. This statement has a mean of 4.41. The former and the latter had standard deviations of 0.501 and 0.636 respectively showing that the responses were highly varied. Ex-Al Shabaab returnees found something to do in the society, since those who disagreed to the statement regarding Ex- Al-Shabaab finding nothing to do after returning back home were 63% and those who agreed were 37%. The statement had a mean of 3.37. One of the returnee ex Al-Shabaab argued that “Since returning home I have been a part time motorbike rider and this has helped me considerably”. The responses were moderately variable, as demonstrated by the standard deviation of 0.492. These

findings contradict Mwaura (2014), who claimed that ex-terrorists are economically isolated.

Table 4.5 Social-economic factors affecting integration of Al Shabaab returnees

Social-economic factors affecting integration of Al Shabaab returnees	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
I cannot live close to an Ex-Al-Shabaab	-	-	-	11.1%	88.9%	4.89	.320
Most young people join Al-Shabaab due to poverty or financial hardship.	-	-	-	14.8%	85.2%	4.85	.362
If the economy of our area improves terrorism will decline significantly.	-	-	-	59.3%	40.7%	4.41	.501
Ex-Al-Shabaab militants should not be trusted anywhere.	-	7.4%	-	44.5%	48.1%	4.41	.636
Al Shabaab returnees cannot find anything meaningful to do in the society.	-	63%	-	37%	-	3.37	.492
Overall Mean						4.39	

4.5.3 Religious factors affecting integration of Al Shabaab

The overall mean of 3.58 on Table 4.6, below, shows that there were religious factors which affected the integration of Al-Shabaab returnees in the society. Christians and members of other religious group do not trust Muslim Al-Shabaab returnees. The mean of this response was 4.00, indicating that the respondents agreed with this statement. 14.8 percent of respondents strongly disagreed, 7.4 percent extremely disagreed, 40.8 percent agreed, and 37 percent strongly agreed. This lack of trust has made the ex-terrorists to be marginalized as noted by Mwaura (2014). The comparing standard deviation of 1.038 was the second biggest and it was the second generally exceptionally differed. Al-Shabaab returnees can't be permitted to allowed to worship

openly in the mosques or temples as a response had a mean of 3.74 which is almost 4 on the Likert scale. This shows that the respondents consented to the assertion. For instance, one oral informant stated that ‘Sometimes our fellow Muslims don’t allow us to worship because of our previous radicalization’. In particular, 18.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed, while 3.7% of the respondents disagreed as per the Likert scale rating. Similarly, 63% of the respondents agreed and 14.8% strongly agreed. For the second question and assumption ‘If there was no religion, there could never be terrorism.’ This question had a mean of 3.00 showing that the respondents disagreed to this statement. In particular, 51.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 22.2% disagreed and 25.9% agreed. The maximum standard deviation was 1.271, indicating that the replies were extremely variable.

Table 4.6 Religious factors affecting integration of Al Shabaab

Religious factors affecting integration of Al Shabaab	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
Christians and other religions do not trust Muslim Al-Shaabab returnees	14.8%	7.4%	-	40.8	37%	4.00	1.038
Al Shabaab returnees cannot be allowed to worship freely in the mosques or churches	18.5%	3.7%	-	63%	14.8%	3.74	.944
If there was no religion, there could never be terrorism.	51.9%	22.2%	-	25.9%	-	3.00	1.271
Overall Mean						3.58	

4.5.4 Political factors affecting integration of Al-Shabaab

The overall mean of 4.47 shows that there were political factors that affected integration of Al-Shabaab in Kwale County. Muslims' wish for a federal government

to adopt Sharia (Islamic) law received a mean of 4.67, close to 5, on the Likert scale, indicating that the respondents strongly agreed with this statement. This statement was particularly well received by 33.3 percent, with 66.7 percent of the respondents strongly agreeing. 'Despite the fact that we have returned from terror-related operations, we still desire a federal government,' one returnee stated. The associated standard deviation of 0.480 was the second lowest, indicating that the replies varied the least. The government use too much force against radicalized youth hence the community especially the Muslim community feel targeted as a response had a mean of 4.63 which is near 5 on the Likert scale showing that the respondents strongly agreed to this statement. Particularly, 37% agreed to this statement while 63% of the respondents strongly agreed. With a standard deviation of 0.492, the associated standard deviation showed substantial variance. This contradicts Issa and Machikou's (2019) results, which stressed the importance of collaboration between county and national administrations, local organizations, and traditional authorities, such as village elders and community elders in the reintegration of ex-Al-Shabaab members.

It has also been argued that there is an institutional challenge and capacity by various agencies in Kenya necessary for ensuring security of Kenyans against threats coming from terrorists or their sympathizers. This was based on the feeling that Kenya's security and intelligence systems are ill-equipped to properly monitor Al-Shabaab returnees. These findings received a mean of 4.52 out of a possible 5 on the Likert scale, indicating that the respondents strongly agreed with this statement. In particular, 7.4 percent of respondents disagreed with this statement, 33.3 percent agreed with it, and 59.3 percent strongly agreed with it. The associated standard deviation of 0.643 was the highest, meaning that the replies varied the most. The

respondents agreed with the assertion that there is no clear policy framework to accommodate Al-Shabaab returnees. This response gained a mean of 4.30, which is close to 4 on the Likert Scale. In some instance, 70.4 percent of respondents agreed, with 29.6 percent saying they strongly agreed. The associated standard deviation for this response was 0.465, showing that the responses are the least variable. Some politicians profit greatly from terrorism and are unable to advocate for returnees' reintegration into society. The mean for this response was 4.15, which is close to 4 on the Likert Scale, indicating that the respondents agreed with this statement. Other responses such as 'I have personally received payments from extremist organizations to incite violence on multiple occasions,' were also tabulated. In particular, 11.1 percent of respondents disagreed, whereas 63 percent agreed and 25.9 percent strongly agreed. The matching standard deviation of 0.602 was the second greatest, meaning that the variation of responses was the second highest. This confirms the previous studies where terror acts are driven by politics and the act of terrorism is a tool for political gain employed by politicians (Mwaura, 2014; Waxman, 2011). In a similar way, Merari (2015) avers that terrorism has been utilized as a tool to realize political goals on regional basis too.

Table 4.7 Political factors affecting integration of Al Shabaab

Political factors affecting integration of Al Shabaab	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Muslim demand for a federal system of government to accommodate Sharia (Islamic) law.	-	-	-	33.3%	66.7%	4.67	.480
The government use too much force against radicalism hence the community feel targeted	-	-	-	37%	63%	4.63	.492
Kenya security system and intelligence is ill-equipped to effectively monitor Al-Shabab returnees	-	7.4%	-	33.3%	59.3%	4.52	.643
There is no clear policy framework to accommodate Al-shabaab returnees	-	-	-	70.4%	29.6%	4.30	.465
Some politicians gain from the terrorism and cannot advocate for returnees	-	11.1%	-	63%	25.9%	4.15	.602
Overall Mean						4.45	

4.6 Regression Analysis

A multivariate regression analysis was used to determine the association between the study variables.

4.6.1 Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The independent and dependent variables were subjected to linear regression analysis to gauge the model's appropriateness and forecast causal relationships between the independent factors and the dependent variable in order to assess the research model.

Table 4.8 shows the same information.

Table 4.8 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.724 ^a	.524	.461	.24018

a. Predictors: (Constant), Political Factors, Religious Factors, Social Economic Factors

Table 4.8 above shows that, 46.1% of variance in assimilation of ex Al=Shabaab returnees is explained by the social economic factors, religious factors and political factors since the adjusted r-square is 0.461. The result is that other variables not examined in this study account for 53.9 percent of the variance in ex-Al=Shabaab returnees' assimilation. The average distance of the data points from the fitted line is roughly 24.0 percent, according to the standard error of the estimate of 0.24018.

4.6.2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The F ratio indicates that the model was significant (p0.05) in the analysis of variance. The upshot is that political, religious, and socio-economic factors reliably predict Al-shabaab returnees' assimilation (re-integration) in Kwale County. Table 4.9 shows the results of the study.

Table 4.9 Analysis of Variance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1.458	3	.486	8.427	.001 ^b
Residual	1.327	23	.058		
Total	2.785	26			

a. Dependent Variable: Assimilation(Re-Integration)
b. Predictors: (Constant), Political Factors, Religious Factors, Social Economic Factors

4.6.3 Coefficients

The beta coefficients of the independent variables are shown in Table 4.10 below. According to the data, assimilation of Al-Shabaab returnees in Kwale County would be at 8.558 if all parameters were held constant at zero. Taking all other independent variables to zero, the data show that a unit increase in social economic factors results in a 34.5 percent decline in assimilation. Assimilation is reduced by 35.0 percent for every unit increase in religious components. Assimilation is reduced by 38.8% when political influences are increased by one unit. As a result, the data suggest that social economic factors, religious factors, and political factors all have a detrimental impact on Al-Shabaab returnees' assimilation (re-integration) in Kwale County. These findings corroborate those of Githiga and Juma (2021), who found that adequate community involvement aids in the integration of Al-shabab returnees in Kwale and Mombasa counties. As a result of these discoveries, the regression model can be presented as follows:

$$Y = 8.558 - 0.345X_1 - 0.350X_2 - 0.388X_3$$

Table 4.10 Coefficients of the Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	8.558	1.783		4.800	.000
1 Social Economic Factors	-.345	.248	-.234	-1.391	.177
Religious Factors	-.350	.075	-.716	-4.648	.000
Political Factors	-.388	.210	-.292	-1.847	.078

a. Dependent Variable: Assimilation(Re-Integration)

The independent variables were tested for significance using the t-test. Since $p=0.177>0.05$, social and economic elements were judged to be unimportant in their association to assimilation. Since $p=0.0000.05$, religious considerations have shown a substantial link with assimilation. Since $p=0.078>0.05$, political considerations showed no significant relationship with assimilation.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1 Introduction

The research findings, conclusions, and recommendations are summarized in this chapter. This is in accordance with the study's goal.

5.2 Summary of Findings

5.2.1 Re-integration and Assimilation of Al-Shabaab Returnees.

The study has established that there was reintegration and assimilation of Al-Shabaab returnees in Kwale County. This was made possible through the government enacting laws to help re-integrate Al-Shabaab returnees. These included laws curbing violent extremism. More so, other laws were enacted to hold to account people who violate human rights of the Al-Shabaab returnees. It was also established that T the government is committed to re-integration of Al-Shabaab returnees into the society. These have been achieved through the involvement of the civil society and various security agencies. Moreover, the government has been keen on making follow ups to ensure Al-Shabaab returnees have settled into the society. Nevertheless, it was also established that although Al-Shabaab returnees have received some support from the government towards their integration, this support has not been significant enough and perhaps this explains why a critical number of ex Al-Shabaab returnees have not been integrated into the community within Kwale county of study.

5.2.2 Social-Economic Factors Affecting Integration of Al-Shabaab Returnees.

There were socio-economic factors that affected integration of Al-Shabaab returnees. It was established that most respondents could not live close to ex-Al-Shabaab

because of fear. It was evident in the study that most of the young people joined Al-Shabaab due to poverty or financial hardship. The study further established that many respondents felt that if the economy improves terrorism would decline significantly thereby supporting the fact that terrorism is directly linked to the economic situation that the youth find themselves in. Poverty and bad economic situation were thus considered as the main driving force behind the youth joining Al-Shabaab. Most respondents also did not trust ex-Al-Shabaab militants and therefore it became so difficult for the ex-Al-Shabaab returnees to be engaged in any meaningful production process of work within the society.

5.2.3 Religious Factors Affecting Integration of Al-Shabaab Returnees

The study argues that religion also plays a major role in the re-integration process within a society. Within Matuga sub-county, there were religious factors which affected the integration of Al-Shabaab returnees in the society and among community members in Matuga sub-county. For instance, Christians and members of other religious groups other than Islam did not trust these Al-Shabaab returnees who were mostly considered to be Muslims. Ironically, these ex-Al-Shabaab returnees could not be freely allowed to worship in the mosques even among those who believe in Islam. Although majority of respondents alluded to the fact that religion played a critical role in the re-integration process, other respondents disagreed that terrorism is a religious matter and that it was directly linked to certain religious belief system. Their argument was that acts of terrorism could still happen regardless of the existence of religion or not.

5.2.4 Political Factors Affecting Integration of Al-Shabaab Returnees

There were political factors that affected integration of Al-Shabaab in Kwale County. For instance, Muslims living in the coastal region have historically agitated for federalism or a federal system of government which would allow the coastal region to be administered under a strict *Sharia* (Islamic) law. There were also some aspects of politicization of the Kenya government's war against terrorism which involved the use of excessive force against radicalization. Since most of the youth were believers in Islam, the Muslim community felt that they were being targeted.

5.3 Conclusion of the Study

The study concludes that political factors, religious factors and socio-economic factors have contributed a lot to the re-integration (assimilation) of Al-Shabaab returnees in the Kwale County. For instance, it was established that these factors had some positive and negative effects as far as re-integration of ex Al-Shabaab into the community was concerned. . More so, religion was considered to have contributed to the rise and recruitment of Kenyan youth into the Al-Shabaab. The same Islamic religious beliefs also significantly affected the extent of social relations between Al-Shabaab returnees and members of the society since in some cases even Christians were apprehensive of these returnees based on the fact that most of them were Muslim. Similarly, fellow Muslims were also apprehensive to have ex-returnees worship together with them in the mosques.

Nevertheless, the impact of the integration of some of the Al-Shabaab returnees to the socio-economic well-being of Kwale County has been positive. For example, some Al-Shabaab returnees were able to start small scale businesses which have improved their living standards. Some have been employed in the government sponsored *Kazi Mtaani* program which has kept them busy away from acts of

terrorism. Additionally, some others found employment in local firms and the county government. It is also evident that not all ex Al-Shabaab returnees were re-integrated among members of the society in Matuga, Kwale county. Some of these returnees have not found it easy to peacefully co-exist with members of the Matuga community from where they emanated before joining Al-Shabaab. Consequently, these ex-Al-Shabaab opted to go and live in nearby counties resulting into dejection amongst family members. Such moves have also exacerbated stigma and stereotypical representation of such ex Al-Shabaab as social misfits. These have been some of the challenges that ex Al-Shabaab returnees have been grappling with despite the fact that some have been willing to be re-integrated into the society.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

This study therefore recommends that there is a need by the government to do more in order to accommodate the Al-Shabaab returnees. Since terrorism is caused by the socio-economic dynamics related to poverty, family breakdown and unemployment, there is a need for the government to come up with policy framework on poverty reduction and employment among the youth. This could be achieved by enhancing the *Kazi kwa Vijana* initiative. This initiative may help in ensuring that the youth who are mostly vulnerable are engaged in productive activities that are not only useful for their economic growth but also for the general growth of Kenya's economy. The study further recommends that the government should enhance intelligence gathering at the village level especially in areas with high number of youth joining Al-Shabaab. More so, both local and national governments need to work in collaboration with a view to sensitizing the locals on the need for these locals to embrace and fully accept the returnees. This will go a long way in stopping the stigmatization of the returnees

and giving them a good life. Finally, there is need for more securitization of our national borders as a way of ensuring that Kenya as a state is well secured.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The study collected data from Kwale County, Kenya. However, the issues of re-integration of Al-Shabaab returnees is spread across the country. Therefore, there is need for other scholars to explore doing comparative research among counties which have experienced cases of ex Al-Shabaab returnees with a view to documenting the similarities and differences if any on the extent of integration of the ex-Al-Shabaab returnees. in these areas. There is also a need to undertake a study on the effectiveness of Kenya's security and intelligence systems in curbing terrorism in Kenya.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Sample Questionnaire

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA/INFORMATION

Sex:

Residence

Source of income

Means of communication and access Information

Word of Mouth [] Mobile phone []

Computer [] Others (specify).....

SECTION B: Government effort in re-integration of Al Shabaab returnees into society

The following are items intended to examine government effort in assimilation and integration of Al Shabaab returnees into society in KWALE COUNTY, Kenya Please tick where appropriate. (√)

	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	DK
1	The government is committed to re-integrations of Al-Shabaab returnees into the society.					
2	Al-Shabaab returnee have not received significant support by government.					
3	The government rewards ex-combatants in to cease fire and disarmament.					
4	Government enacted laws to help re-integrate Al-Shabaab returnees.					
5	The government makes a follow up to ensure Al-Shabaab returnees have settled into society.					
6	The government is committed to re-integrations of Al-Shabaab returnees into the society.					

SECTION C: Social-economic factors affecting integration of Al Shabaab returnees into society

The following are items intended to establish the Social-economic factors affecting assimilation and integration of Al Shabaab returnees into society in KWALE COUNTY, Kenya. Please tick where appropriate. (√)

	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	DK
1	Most young people join Al-Shabaab due to poverty or financial hardship.					

2	If the economy of our area improves terrorism will decline significantly.					
3	Al Shabaab returnees cannot find anything meaningful to do in the society.					
4	I cannot live close to an Ex-Al-Shabaab.					
5	Ex-Al-Shabaab militants should not be trusted anywhere.					

SECTION D: Religious factors affecting integration of Al Shabaab returnees into society

The following are items intended to establish the religious factors affecting assimilation and integration of Al Shabaab returnees into society in KWALE COUNTY, Kenya. Please tick where appropriate. (√)

	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	DK
1	If there was no religion, there could never be terrorism.					
2	Christians and other religions do not trust Muslim Al-Shaabab returnees					
3	Al Shabaab returnees cannot be allowed to worship freely in the mosques or churches					

SECTION E : Political factors affecting integration of Al Shabaab returnees into society

The following are items intended to establish the Political factors affecting re-integration of Al Shabaab returnees into society in KWALE COUNTY, Kenya. Please tick where appropriate. (√)

	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	DK
1	Muslim demand for a federal system of government to accommodate Sharia (Islamic) law.					
2	The government use too much force against radicalism hence the community feel targeted.					
3	Some politicians gain from the terrorism and cannot advocate for returnees.					
4	There is no clear policy framework to accommodate Al-Shabaab returnees.					
5	Kenya security system and intelligence is ill-equipped to effectively monitor Al-Shabab returnees.					
6	Muslim demand for a federal system of government to accommodate Sharia (Islamic) law.					

.....*Thank you for your participation*.....

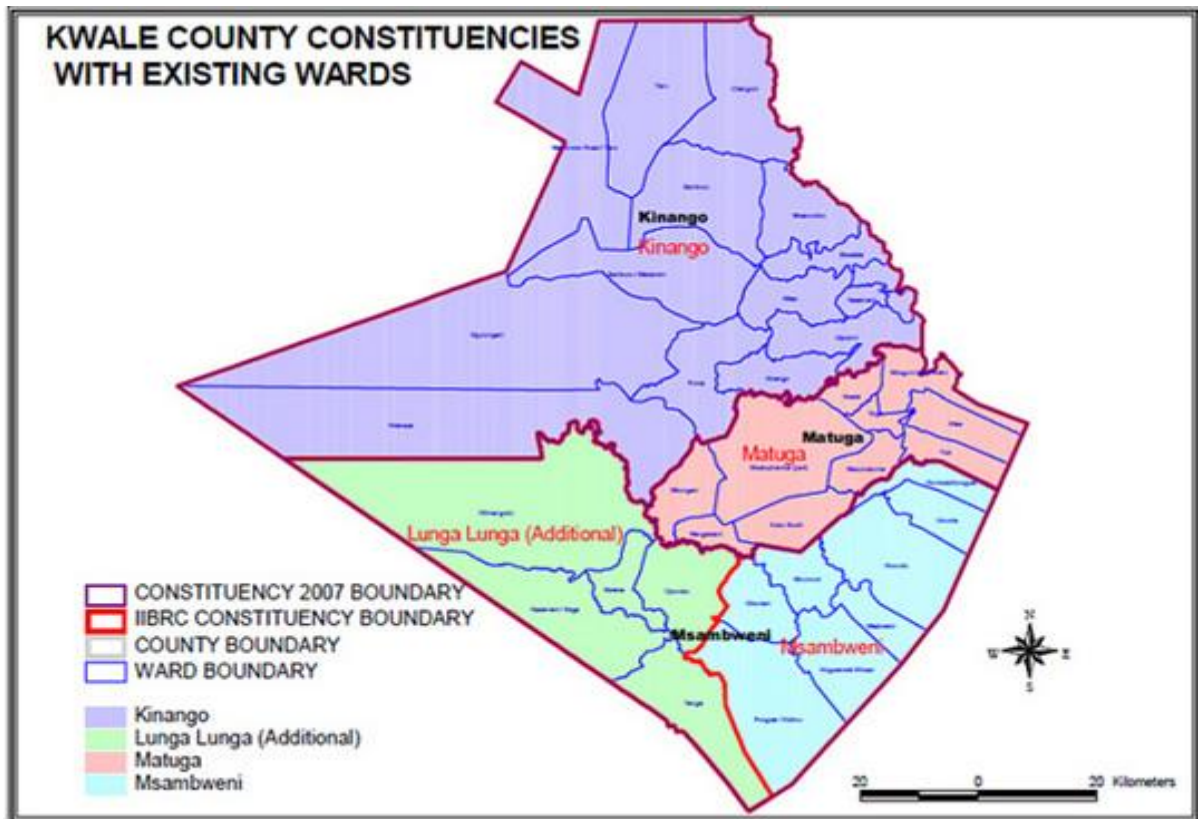
Appendix II: Work Plan

MONTH/ACTIVITY	JAN-APR	SEPT -OCT	April - May	September- December
	2019	2019	2021	2022
Writing the concept proposal				
Departmental Defence				
Incorporation of Comments after Defence				
Gathering of data and analysis				
Compiling of the draft document				
Reading of the first draft by supervisor				
Corrections from the supervisor				
Submission of the project				

Appendix III: Budget

ITEM	UNIT COST	TOTAL COST
Travel and accommodation	-	16,000
Research Assistant Hire	-	21,000
Computer services	-	9,000
Proposal Binding 3 copies	100	300
Data analysis	-	15,000
Hard copy binding 5 copies	1,000	5,000
Internet services	-	2,000
Miscellaneous	-	10,000
TOTAL		78,300

Appendix IV: Kwale County Map



Appendix V: Research Authorization



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke

Website: www.ku.ac.ke

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA

Tel. 8710901 Ext. 57530

Our Ref: C50/MSA/PT/37700/2015

DATE: 31st August, 2021

Director General,
National Commission for Science, Technology
and Innovation
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

SUBJECT: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR AKWIRI JOSEPH LAVINGTON- REG. NO. C50/MSA/PT/37700/2015

I write to introduce Mr. Joseph Akwiri Lavington who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. He is registered for M.A degree programme in the Department of International Relations, Conflict and Strategic Studies.

Mr. Akwiri intends to conduct research for a M.A Project Proposal entitled, "Re-Integration of Ex-Alshabaab Terrorists into the Kenyan Society: A Case of Kwale County, Kenya".


Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,


PROF. ELISHIBA KIMANI
DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

DK/evj


Appendix VI: Research permit



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: 432327
Date of Issue: 14/October/2021

RESEARCH LICENSE




This is to Certify that Mr. JOSEPH LAVINGTON AKWIRI of Kenyatta University, has been licensed to conduct research in Kwale on the topic: RE-INTEGRATION OF EX-AL SHABAAB TERRORISTS INTO THE KENYAN SOCIETY; A CASE OF KWALE COUNTY, KENYA. for the period ending : 14/October/2022.

License No: NACOSTI/P/21/13320

Applicant Identification Number
432327

Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &
INNOVATION

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