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Radicalisation in Kenya

Recruitment to al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council

Anneli Botha

Summary

Despite a history of extremism and unconventional political developments in Kenya, relatively little empirical research has been done to determine why and how individuals join al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC). This paper is based on interviews with Kenyan and Somali-Kenyan individuals associated with al-Shabaab and the MRC. These organisations have very different profiles. Al-Shabaab pursues an Islamist terrorist agenda while the MRC pursues a secessionist agenda; the latter has not carried out terrorist attacks. Muslim youth have joined extremist groups as a counter-reaction to what they see as government-imposed 'collective punishment' driven by the misguided perception that all Somali and Kenyan-Somali nationals are potential terrorists. As long as Kenyan citizens exclusively identify with an ethnic/religious identity that is perceived to be under threat, radicalisation will increase.

ISLAMIST EXTREMISM DID not appear in Kenya for the first time after the country's military intervention in Somalia in 2011 or with al-Shabaab's subsequent attacks on Kenyan restaurants, public places and churches. The first significant manifestation of the growing threat of extremism in post-independence East Africa can be traced back to the 7 August 1998 attacks on the US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, which were attributed to al-Qaeda.
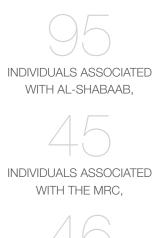
Although a number of political officials in Kenya and Tanzania claimed that their respective countries had merely been used as a battleground to target the United States and its interests, individuals involved in the attacks included both foreigners and locals. Since then violent extremism has gradually lost its exclusively foreign character and national and regional extremism has expanded, which suggests that there must be a local/national and regional element to this growing threat.

Although the objective of this paper is not to provide a historical analysis of al-Qaeda's and al-Shabaab's presence in Kenya, it is important to recall that al-Shabaab's roots are in Somalia, but the increasing acceptance of al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab's philosophy in traditional African communities has allowed al-Shabaab in particular to spread throughout the broader region, including in Kenya. The most dramatic manifestation of the group's abilities to strike beyond Somalia came when it successfully executed attacks in Kampala, Uganda, on 11 July 2010 and again on 21 September 2013 in Nairobi, Kenya. In the first instance, the group used two suicide attacks as its modus operandi, while in the Kenya strike attackers resorted to a Mumbai-style assault on the Westgate shopping mall using automatic rifles and hand grenades. Together with these dramatic

attacks, al-Shabaab was also implicated in smaller attacks in which Kenyan nationals were the primary targets of improvised explosive devices and hand grenade attacks, with the same devastating consequences.

In addition to being the victims of al-Shabaab attacks, nationals from Kenya and Uganda were also directly involved in recruiting their fellow nationals to join the organisation's ranks. Initially, after being radicalised, these individuals left their countries to fight in Somalia. This trend also gradually changed in that locally marginalised, radicalised and recruited individuals started being used to execute attacks in their own countries. Turning against their fellow citizens in this way means that these radicalised individuals are identifying with something other than being Kenyan. The aim of this paper is to determine what it is that such radicalised individuals identify with, and how they become radicalised.

Although the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) has to date not been implicated in acts of terrorism, it is often perceived to be associated with al-Shabaab in the coastal region of Kenya. Demonstrations calling for the secession of the region from Nairobi led to the brief banning of the organisation in October 2010 and the arrest of its members.[1]

FOR THIS PAPER, INTERVIEWS WERE CONDUCTED WITH

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45

INDIVIDUALS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MRC,

46

RELATIVES OF INDIVIDUALS ASSOCIATED WITH AL-SHABAAB, AND

5

RELATIVES OF INDIVIDUALS ASSOCIATED WITH MRC

Despite this long history of extremism and unconventional political developments in Kenya, relatively little empirical research and analysis are available regarding why and how individuals are radicalised and recruited into al-Shabaab and the MRC.

The analysis in this paper is based on interviews with 95 individuals associated with al-Shabaab, 45 individuals associated with the MRC, along with 46 relatives of individuals associated with al-Shabaab and five associated with the MRC.[2] Relatives were interviewed in cases where primary members had disappeared or were incarcerated or killed. All the respondents were Kenyan and Somali-Kenyan nationals who grew up in Kenya and who were radicalised while in that country.

Although the MRC is often mistakenly associated with al-Shabaab, it became apparent that there are very clear differences in the type of individuals who join al-Shabaab and the MRC and their reasons for doing so. Although both organisations mainly recruit from the same geographical area, they are very distinct in nature. Even though al-Shabaab has a foothold in Nairobi and has even attracted members from western Kenya, north-eastern Kenya particularly needs attention.

> There are very clear differences between the types of individuals who join al-Shabaab and those who join the MRC, as well as their reasons for doing so

Because the MRC partly functions in the same geographical area as al-Shabaab (i.e. Kenya's coastal region), it has attracted additional attention from the Kenyan security agencies. This co-existence also makes it a natural choice when an organisation is sought against which to test the al-Shabaab profile presented in this study.

Ethnicity and religion divide Kenyans politically and socially and have caused several violent clashes (the post-election violence in 2007 is the most recent manifestation of this). The reality is that ethnic coalitions and the rural-urban divide polarise politics in Kenya. This was especially felt in the north-eastern and coastal regions, which are characterised

by marginalisation, frustration and resentment towards Nairobi, the centre of political power. This divide is, however, not based on ethnicity alone: the religious divide between the coastal region, which is predominantly Muslim, and Nairobi, which is seen as predominantly Christian, further complicates politics in Kenya. Furthermore, with specific reference to the MRC, Mombasa was not ruled as part of the British Empire, but was part of the Sultanate of Zanzibar.[3] These factors contributed to the fact that both religious identity (reflected in al-Shabaab) and ethnic identity (reflected in the MRC) threaten the sense of national identity of individuals living in this region.

Introduction to al-Shabaab and the MRC

A renewed drive to fight for the self-determination of people in the coastal region appeared in 2008 when the MRC regained momentum, calling for secession from Kenya. The MRC was among 32 groups that were banned by the Internal Security Ministry in Gazette Notice 12585 published on 18 October 2010 in terms of the Prevention of Organised Crime Act, before the organisation was unbanned on 25 July 2012 after the Mombasa High Court ruled the banning unconstitutional.[4]

The MRC focuses on land grievances and the fact that 'outsiders' or people from the rest of Kenya dominate the local economy, which is centred predominantly on tourism.[5] Although the majority of its members are Muslim, the respondents interviewed clearly showed that the MRC has a very different agenda from al-Shabaab.

Despite the fact that the two organisations, influenced by different histories, contest different areas (the MRC focuses on land issues and is a secessionist movement while al-Shabaab stresses Islamist extremism), the question is whether they tap into the same frustrations and grievances that often manifest in demonstrations following allegations that prominent radical Muslim clerics are being assassinated by Kenyan security agencies. Most notable examples include the killings of Sheikh Aboud Rogo in August 2012, Sheikh Ibrahim Omar in October 2013[6] and Sheikh Abubakar Shariff – also known as Makaburi – in April 2014.[7]

> Only a few officials accepted that Kenya was experiencing internal problems that needed to be addressed

A number of publications provide an excellent historical overview of the spread of Islamist extremism in the Horn of Africa, including Kenya. What is important for this paper is, firstly, to recognise that extremism in Kenya is not a new phenomenon and, secondly, that although the threat originally came from outside the region, it increasingly gained momentum in Kenya itself by attracting local Kenyans to its philosophy and objectives since the US embassy bombings in August 1998.

The success of al-Qaeda's East African cell was further emphasised on 28 November 2002 when two suicide bombers targeted the Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel in Mombasa. Unlike in the case of the bombing of the US embassy in Nairobi in 1998, all of the suspects involved in both of these attacks were Kenyan nationals, with the exception of Abu Talha al-Sudani, a Sudanese national. Even the two suicide bombers, Fumo Mohamed Fumo and Haruni Bamusa, were Kenyan nationals. During the subsequent investigation another Kenyan national and suspect, Faizel Ali Nassor, killed himself and a Kenyan police officer when he detonated a hand grenade on 1 August 2003 rather than being arrested.[8]

When the reaction of Kenyan officials to the above attacks is analysed, a number of key themes emerge, most notably, denial that domestic circumstances in Kenya contributed to the radicalisation of Kenyan nationals. Politically, confronted with the bombing of the US embassy in Nairobi and the subsequent acts of terrorism in Mombasa in 2002, some Kenyan governmental officials considered Kenya to be an innocent victim of the conflict between the United States and Islamic extremists. At that time, only a few officials accepted that Kenya was experiencing internal problems that needed to be addressed, such as Chris Murungaru, the then-minister for national security, who on 29 June 2003 acknowledged that 'Kenya's war against terrorism will only be won by accepting that the problem exists'.[9]

Nevertheless, despite growing evidence of the gradual radicalisation of a number of local Muslim community members and evidence that Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan (who was closely linked to both al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda) was directly involved in the attacks in Mombasa in 2002, the dominant opinion, including that of Kenyan investigators, remained that the attacks in 1998 and 2002 were orchestrated from abroad. This is clearly illustrated by a comment made by John Sawe, Kenya's ambassador to Israel at the time, who in the aftermath of the bombing of the Paradise Hotel in Mombasa stated, 'There is no doubt in my mind that al-Qa'eda is behind this attack, because we have no domestic problems, no terrorism in our country, and we have no problem with our neighbours, no problem whatsoever'.[10]

Furthermore, security in Kenya is increasingly being politicised, which in turn affects the way in which the Kenyan

government responds to terrorism. For example, following the killing of at least 15 people in the village of Poromoko near Mpeketoni on the Kenyan coast on 15 June 2014, President Kenyatta blamed official political opponents, even though al-Shabaab accepted responsibility.[11] Instead of attempting to bring people together, politicians are harnessing political divisions for their own ends, which further threatens national unity.

As a result the Kenyan leadership has not stepped in to address growing radicalisation when firm action could still

> Instead of attempting to bring people together, politicians are harnessing political divisions for their own ends

have prevented the current radicalisation process and increase in attacks in Kenya. Instead, local conditions have enabled growing frustrations to become worse, enabling al-Shabaab to strengthen its foothold in Kenya. The consequences of the country's inability to address growing radicalisation has not only enable al-Shabaab to recruit foreign fighters in Kenya, but has also facilitated the spread of al-Shabaab in the country and the broader region. Confronted with this growing threat, both security policymakers and practitioners are urged to carefully reassess the strategy and tactics they employ to respond to al-Shabaab and the MRC, as well as other organisations on the fringes of conventional political participation.

Radicalisation facilitators and process

Instead of understanding radicalisation from a perspective of the conditions conducive to it or root causes that almost exclusively focus on external circumstances, this analysis,

while recognising these external circumstances, will also refer to the process of political socialisation that introduces individuals to the radicalisation process. Political socialisation refers to:

> The way society transmits its political culture from generation to generation. This process may serve to preserve traditional political norms and institutions; on the other hand, when secondary socialisation agencies inculcate political values differently from those of the past or when children are raised with political and social expectations different from those of their forebears, the socialisation process can be a vehicle of political and social change. Political socialisation [is therefore] the process, mediated through various agencies of society, by which an individual learns politically relevant attitudinal dispositions and behaviour patterns. These agencies include such environmental categories as the family, peer group, school, adult organizations, and the mass media.[12]

In other words, political socialisation at the individual level can be described as a lifelong process through which a person develops a unique frame of reference that guides his/her individual political choices. An individual's frame of reference can be defined as the 'glasses' through which he/she sees the world around him/her.

This frame of reference also includes a person's views on politics and religion, which are developed through a similar process to his/her views on a specific political party or ideology. Ultimately, the political self is made, not born,

15

PEOPLE WERE KILLED ON 15 JUNE 2014

PRESIDENT KENYATTA BLAMED OFFICIAL POLITICAL OPPONENTS, EVEN THOUGH AL-SHABAAB ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY

and includes 'feelings of nationalism, patriotism, or tribal loyalty; identification with particular partisan factions or groups; attitudes and evaluations of specific political issues and personalities; knowledge regarding political structures and procedures; and a self-image of rights, responsibilities, and position in the political world'.[13]

It is this nexus between socialisation and radicalisation that Hogan and Taylor see as essential to the 'making of a terrorist'[14] and that a conscious decision is rarely made to become a terrorist. This paper will essentially argue that involvement in terrorism results from gradual exposure to and socialisation towards extreme behaviour and increasing legitimisation of the use of violence to achieve political ends.

The role of the family in radicalisation

Within the sample group, 18% of al-Shabaab and 31% of MRC respondents grew up without a father, while 16% of al-Shabaab and 20% of MRC respondents grew up without a mother. In the case of al-Shabaab, 11 respondents grew up without both parents present. What is particularly telling is the age at which respondents lost their fathers and mothers, respectively: in the case of al-Shabaab, 19% lost their fathers and 13% lost their mothers when they were younger than five; 81% lost their fathers and 40% lost their mothers between the ages of 16 and 18; while 47% lost their mothers between 19 and 20. In the case of the MRC, 17% lost their fathers when they were younger than five, 75% lost their fathers and 75% lost their mothers between 16 and 18, while 8% lost their fathers and 25% lost their mothers between 19 and 20.

Most al-Shabaab and MRC respondents lost a parent or their parents between early adolescence and early adulthood, at a time when individuals are particularly

vulnerable to a loss of this magnitude. However, the majority of respondents interviewed had a father (82% in the case of al-Shabaab and 69% in the MRC) and mother (84% in the case of al-Shabaab and 80% in the MRC) present in their lives.

To assess the relationship a person had with his/her parents while growing up, respondents were asked which parent had taken the lead in making the rules in the family, who had punished the respondent and what type of punishment the person had received. Respondents were also asked to indicate how severe this punishment was and how involved his/her parent was while they were growing up in an attempt to assess parental type. In the families of al-Shabaab respondents where both parents were present, the father made the rules in 100% of the cases.

It is particularly interesting that where a father was absent the mother made the rules in the house in only three cases, while a male relative made the rules most of the time. The three cases where the mother made the rules in the family were the only occasions when a female was 'permitted' to make the rules overall. This indicates a very conservative society. In the case of the MRC, the mother made

Most al-Shabaab and MRC respondents lost one or both parents between early adolescence and early adulthood

the rules in the household in all cases where the father was absent, with the exception of two cases where an older sibling stepped in.

A similar trend was also noted in terms of the person who was responsible for punishing respondents. Among al-Shabaab respondents fathers took the primary – almost exclusive – lead; in only two cases where both parents were

present did the mother play a role. In one of these examples both parents punished the particular respondent and, in the other, the respondent was female (punished by the mother). Among MRC respondents, mothers played a slightly more prominent role when both parents were present: fathers took the lead (47%), followed by mothers (34%), both parents (8%) and older siblings (11%). The prominent role that a father figure played had a direct impact on the level of respondents' interest in politics and was therefore a key factor in the political socialisation process.

Regarding the type of punishment, 73% of al-Shabaab and 71% of MRC respondents indicated that they were physically punished, 14% of al-Shabaab and 11% of MRC respondents were emotionally punished, and 13% of al-Shabaab and 18% of MRC respondents were not punished at all (permissive parents). When asked how severe this punishment was and how involved the person responsible for punishing the child was in his/her life, the majority al-Shabaab (59%) and MRC (80%) respondents indicated that severity was between 1 and 5 (on a scale of 1 to 10), and 41% of al-Shabaab and 34% of MRC respondents referred to harsher punishment. In contrast, 54% of al-Shabaab respondents

referred to a lesser involvement of their authority figure. In four of the most severe cases respondents rated very severe punishment (between 9 and 10), but very little involvement from a parent (between 1 and 2). In comparison, 31% of MRC referred to a lesser involvement of their authority figure.

Regarding the respondents' position in the family, 62% of al-Shabaab and
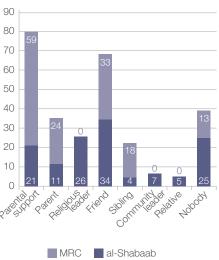
60% of MRC respondents were middle children, 26% of al-Shabaab and 11% of MRC respondents were the oldest, while 12% of al-Shabaab and 29% of MRC respondents were the youngest. According to Eckstein, middle children are generally sociable, relate well to older and younger people, and excel at working in a team.[15] In addition to these positive characteristics, middle children are known to experience the greatest sense of not belonging. It is particularly this quality that contributes to their vulnerability in searching for a sense of belonging (to be discussed later).

In terms of family size, the majority of respondents came from relatively small families. Some 68% of al-Shabaab and 56% of MRC respondents came from families of between one and four siblings, while 28% of al-Shabaab and 39% of MRC respondents came from families of between five and nine siblings. A very small minority (4%) of al-Shabaab and MRC (5%) respondents came from families of between 10 and 14 siblings. Coming from smaller families had an apparent impact on the involvement of parents, especially fathers, in discussing politics with their children while they were growing up: 68% of al-Shabaab and 78% of MRC respondents discussed politics with their fathers as children. It was not surprising to note that 59% of MRC respondents interviewed and 21% of al-Shabaab respondents indicated that their parents supported their decision to join the organisations. Figure 1 shows whom respondents informed of their decision to join al-Shabaab/the MRC.

Despite parental support, of those who did not keep their decision to themselves, only 24% of MRC and 11% of al-Shabaab respondents informed a parent of their decision to join the organisation. In addition to informing their parents, MRC respondents also informed other siblings (18%) or other relatives (5%). In contrast, only 4% of al-Shabaab

Figure 1: Whom respondents informed of their joining al-Shabaab/MRC

respondents informed another sibling. To put this analysis in context: 73% of al-Shabaab and 87% of MRC respondents informed another person; in other words, 27% of al-Shabaab and only 13% of MRC respondents kept quiet about their decision.
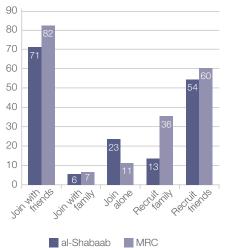
These discrepancies can possibly be attributed to the differences between the two organisations. Due to the MRC's history, children were most probably politically socialised to take up the cause of the Coast Province from their parents. In contrast, al-Shabaab does not have a history in the area, despite the strong religious connections with most residents. But al-Shabaab's nature causes it to function in greater secrecy than a community organisation such as the MRC. In other words, the MRC is possibly more accepted than al-Shabaab, but, more importantly, the ideology behind al-Shabaab is relatively new in the area.

In addition to relatively limited parental involvement in respondents' recruitment to the MRC and especially al-Shabaab, siblings played the smallest role in introducing respondents to the organisations (affecting 7% of MRC and 3% of al-Shabaab respondents).

THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS CAME FROM RELATIVELY SMALL FAMILIES. COMING FROM SMALLER FAMILIES HAD AN APPARENT IMPACT ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS IN DISCUSSING POLITICS WITH THEIR CHILDREN

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Secondly, only 7% of MRC and 6% of al-Shabaab respondents indicated that they had family members in the organisation they joined. In contrast, 36% of MRC and 13% of al-Shabaab respondents recruited family members to their respective organisations.

Role of peers in radicalisation and recruitment

The role of friends in respondents' decision to join the organisations was unmistakable: friends were identified as the most active role players in introducing MRC (66%) and, to a lesser extent, al-Shabaab (38%) respondents to the organisation (see Figure 13). Secondly, 60% of MRC and 54% of al-Shabaab respondents indicated that they had recruited other friends (see Figure 2). Friends were also the largest group that was informed of respondents' decisions to join these organisations (34% of al-Shabaab and 33% of MRC respondents; see Figure 1).

Figure 2: Involvement of family and friends in recruitment

The fact that the majority of respondents joined with friends (see Figure 2) testifies to peer pressure, but also affects how interpersonal relationships should be interpreted. Associated with this category is also the sense of belonging respondents experienced

when joining and while being members of their respective organisations. In this category, 91% of MRC and 55% of al-Shabaab respondents rated their sense of belonging in joining their respective organisations at between 5 and 10 (1 represented the least and 10 the highest level of being accepted and experiencing a sense of belonging in the respective organisation). When asked to rate their sense of belonging while being members, 100% of MRC and 87% of al-Shabaab respondents rated their sense of belonging between 5 and 10. Although both indicated an increase in this feeling over time, al-Shabaab respondents recorded a substantial increase of 32%. In other words, over time the sense of belonging increased for most respondents, effectively providing recruits with a new identity.

This specifically speaks to the group dynamics in the organisation as drawing people to join it with and through friends. Being part of something bigger than the individual possibly explains why respondents rated their sense of belonging higher. This sense of belonging was also emphasised when respondents were asked to define 'us' (i.e. those they identified with). For 84% of MRC and 68% of al-Shabaab respondents, 'us' referred to members of the organisation. In addition to the above 84%, 16% of MRC respondents referred to people from Coast Province as 'us' at the same time as referring to members of the organisation.

None of the respondents referred to other Kenyan nationals as being part of 'us'. Naturally, if there is an 'us' there must be a 'them' (i.e. opponents): 52% of MRC and 30% of al-Shabaab respondents referred to the Kenyan government as 'them', while 5% of additional MRC respondents referred to a combination of the government and other ethnic groups. In the case of al-Shabaab, religion also played an important role in

both defining both 'us' and 'them' – this will be discussed below. As a result, clearly defined in- and out-groups exist for both al-Shabaab and the MRC.

Role of religious identity

Based on 2009 census figures as presented in Table 1, Kenya is a multireligious country. Christianity is the most practised religion (84%), followed by Islam (11%).

Table 1: Kenya's religious makeup

Religion	Total	%
Catholic	9 010 684	23
Protestant	18 307 466	49
Other Christian	4 559 584	12
Muslim	4 304 798	11
Hindu	53 393	Below 1
Traditionalist	635 352	2
Other religion	557 450	1
No religion	922 128	2
Unsure	61 233	Below 1

Source: WA Oparanya, minister of state for planning, national development and Vision 2030, *2009 Population & Housing Census results,* Nairobi: Government Printer, 2010, 33

Until the end of one-party rule in Kenya the role religion played in politics was kept in the background, with the exception of the Shifta war, which merged religion and ethnicity. It was only after the opening of the political landscape in 1982 that religion became a visible factor, when President Moi refused to recognise the Islamic Party of Kenya and the Democratic Movement (DEMO) due to their religious affiliation. DEMO had its origins in traditional beliefs, especially those of the Kikuyu, that 'foster the spirit of communalism in the agrarian sphere, fidelity to indigenous cultural expressions, and reverence for the ancestors'.[16]

Refusing to register these two parties was interpreted as an attempt on the part of the Kenya African National

Union (KANU) government to deal with the potential challenge these two parties might pose to the predominantly Christian political status quo. Despite the fact that Kenya is a secular country, Muslims feel discriminated against. In the first instance, Muslims are not well represented in key government positions and institutions. It is, however, when applying for national identity cards and passports that Muslims especially feel discriminated against. For example, when applying for a passport, Muslims

Consequently, it is not always easy for such organisations to reach and integrate those on the fringes who need to be incorporated into mainstream society. The unfortunate reality is that Muslims in post-independence Kenya have been kept on the borders of the national agenda, which caused many to feel that they were not fully part of Kenya. Equally, it causes the government and non-Muslims to question the patriotism of Muslims, a perception that was strengthened by the fact that after independence the Somalis started

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are required to produce additional documentary evidence of citizenship, whereas 'Christian applicants only needed two birth certificates, their own and of one of their parents, applicants with Islamic names were required to produce, in addition, the birth certificate of one of the grandparents'.[17]

Despite the challenges in obtaining recognition as an Islamic political party, Kenyan Muslims achieved collective representation through the National Union of Kenya Muslims (NUKEM), which was established in 1968 by junior members of KANU. NUKEM also established and maintained close links with Arab countries, most notably Saudi Arabia and Libya. This led to the establishment of the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims in 1973. Recognised as the sole legitimate representation of Muslims by the Kenyan government since 1979, its legitimacy is not always acknowledged among the Muslim community.[18] Similar to other established religious organisations in other countries, more radical individuals view these structures as being too close to the formal political dispensation and consider participating in them as a form of legitimising these institutions.

agitating for a separate homeland with the option of joining their brethren in Somalia, resulting in the so-called Shifta war.[19]

Starting with the importance of religion in respondents' lives, al-Shabaab respondents placed their religion in the three top positions: 'most important' (59%), 'very important' (37%) and 'important' (4%). MRC respondents equally regarded their religious affiliation as important: 32% regarded it as 'most important', 59% as 'very important' and 9% as 'important'.

At this point important it is important to note that, in contrast to al-Shabaab, MRC respondents came from different religious backgrounds, i.e. 59% were Muslim, 25% were Christian and 16% practised traditional beliefs. Therefore, although religious identity is important to MRC respondents, the organisation does not have an identifiable religious character. With regard to al-Shabaab, the Muslim community is predominantly concentrated in Coast and North Eastern provinces and in the Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi, where this community is in the majority. Muslim minorities also live in Christian-dominated areas scattered across Kenya. The Somali and Kenyan Somali community represents the largest part of Kenya's

73%

THE PERCENTAGE OF AL-SHABAAB RESPONDENTS WHO 'HATED' OTHER RELIGIONS

Muslim community; however, Muslims can increasingly be found among all ethnic groups.

Figure 3 summarises respondents' perceptions of religious diversity (the third bar indicates whether they thought they were able to live out their own religion).
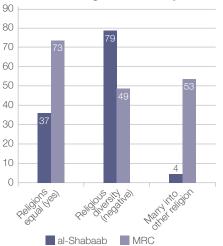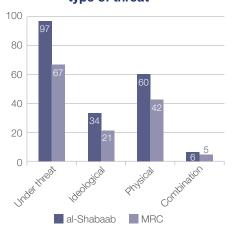
Figure 3: Respondents' perceptions of religious diversity

When evaluating respondents' perceptions of religious diversity, 79% of al-Shabaab respondents indicated that religious diversity was not a 'good thing', for the following primary reasons: there is no trust (67%) between religious groups, it contributes to a lack of understanding between different religious groups (12%) and the domination of one religious group by another (11%), and leads to violence between religious groups (10%). In contrast, 49% of MRC respondents indicated that religious diversity was not a 'good thing' for the following primary reasons: there is no trust (28%) between religious groups, it contributes to a lack of understanding (18%) and it leads to violence (5%). In an attempt to determine the extent of exclusivity, respondents were asked if they would marry a person from another religion. The majority (96%) of al-Shabaab answered in the negative.

In contrast, 53% of MRC indicated that they would marry a person from another religion. This directly speaks

to respondents' willingness to accept others, in terms of which only 27% of al-Shabaab respondents answered in the affirmative. In stark contrast, 76% of MRC respondents indicated that they accepted other religions. Most revealing is that 73% of al-Shabaab respondents indicated that they 'hated' other religions. This confirmed al-Shabaab's strong religious/ Islamic bias, but to indicate to what extent respondents perceived their religion (Islam) as being under threat, both al-Shabaab and MRC respondents were asked a series of questions to establish their threat perception, presented in Figure 4.
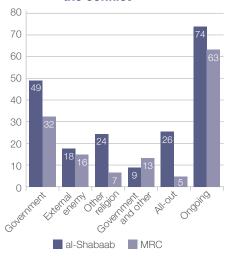
Figure 4: Respondents' religious threat perceptions and type of threat

In categorising the origin of this perception of threat, the majority of al-Shabaab respondents (49%) identified the government as the source of the threat to their religion, followed by other religions (24%), an external enemy (18%) and a combination of the government and others (9%). Kenya's military intervention in Somalia in October 2011 might possibly explain the increase in perceptions of threat, while the way in which the government continued to respond to radical scholars such as Aboud Rogo Mohammed, Sheikh Ibrahim Omar and Sheikh Abubakar Shariff further complicated matters.[20]

When asked to define the intensity of the 'conflict' between Islam and those perceived to be its enemies, 74% of respondents classified it as 'ongoing' and 26% as an 'all-out war' (Figure 5). This relates to the perception among Muslims that they are treated as second-class citizens: many feel they are on the receiving end of religious (Muslims) and ethnic (especially Somali) profiling.

Figure 5: Categorising 'the enemy' and intensity of the conflict

The role of religion was again confirmed when respondents were asked why they joined al-Shabaab: 87% of respondents cited religion (see Figure 6).

In addition to motivation, the role of a religious figure in the recruitment process should also be noted: 34% of al-Shabaab respondents indicated that they were approached by a religious figure. This was the second-largest group after friends that introduced respondents to the organisation. In contrast, none of the MRC respondents were introduced by a religious figure or joined for religious reasons. Radical preachers, however, do not have to be directly or physically present to radicalise individuals: a number of especially al-Shabaab and to a lesser extent MRC respondents interviewed referred to the effect that
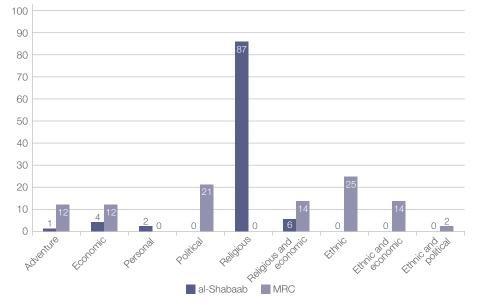
Figure 6: Reason why respondents joined al-Shabaab and the MRC

videos, CDs and audiotapes of radical preachers had had on them.

Recently converted Kenyan Muslim youth

Another trend was that, in addition to being local – i.e. not foreigners or part of the Somalia expatriate or Kenyan Somali community – some of those implicated in attacks in Kenya were young people who had recently converted to Islam. For example, Elgiva Bwire Oliacha (aged 28), also known as Mohammed Seif, a Kenyan national, was arrested after the two grenade attacks on 17 and 24 October 2011.[21] Oliacha was found with six guns, 13 grenades and hundreds of rounds of ammunition in his house. He pleaded guilty to nine charges, including causing grievous bodily harm to two people, and was sentenced to life imprisonment.[22] What was interesting was that, according to his mother, he was brought up in a strict Catholic family and came from Busia in western Kenya and attended schools in Nairobi.[23]

This raised concern among the Muslim community as to the way in which young people were converted to Islam. Extremists not representing Islam in effect manipulated new converts who

were vulnerable and unable to defend themselves against extremists who are better versed in the Qur'an, and who know how to manipulate religion (Islam) to serve their particular ideology. The UN Monitoring Group for Somalia confirmed this concern and noted that since 2009 al-Shabaab had rapidly expanded its influence and membership to include non-Somali Kenyan nationals. Some of the non-Somali Kenyans said to be fighting inside Somalia include Juma Ayub Otit Were, Suleiman Irungu Mwangi 'Karongo' (also known as Habib), Mohamed Murithi and Ramadan Osao. In October 2011 a non-Somali Kenyan, Elgiva Bwire, was jailed for life after confessing to carrying out two grenade attacks in Nairobi.[24] In another example Kenyan police officers arrested Titus Nyabiswa, aged 26, in a village on the Kenyan coast close to Mombasa and confiscated several firearms and hand grenades. According to information, Nyabiswa converted to Islam in the western part of Kenya before becoming involved with Omar Faraj, who was allegedly involved in a bombing incident on 24 October 2012 that killed a police officer and two other suspected members of al-Shabaab after

87%

THE PERCENTAGE OF AL-SHABAAB RESPONDENTS WHO CITED RELIGION AS THEIR REASON FOR JOINING THE ORGANISATION

police officers raided the suspect's home in Mombasa.[25]

Among Kenyan security officials, newly converted Muslims are at the top of their list of possible suspects: based on the above examples this is a real concern. But among al-Shabaab respondents interviewed, only 9% had converted to Islam before joining the organisation. This is, however, not to say that converts are not vulnerable to be radicalised and recruited into al-Shabaab's ranks, but rather that Muslims who grew up in Islam and can be expected to be better informed are equally vulnerable and should not be overlooked. Equally, treating new recruits to Islam as suspects will make them more susceptible to radical scholars and even possible recruitment to al-Shabaab.

The role of ethnic identity

Since independence the reality experienced at the grassroots level in Kenya was that ethnic allegiances are a real factor in access to and the distribution of resources. Leys referred to the 'ideology of tribalism' to describe what he saw as a conspiracy by the Kenyan political leadership to manipulate ethnic identity to achieve its own goals.[26]

Al-Shabaab respondents interviewed in Nairobi came from a vast number of ethnic groups; however, ethnicity was a more prevalent factor among MRC respondents (discussed below). Before discussing the ethnic identity of MRC members, a brief overview of the ethnic composition of Kenya is relevant.

Kenya's population is divided into more than 40 ethnic groups (the most prominent are presented in Table 2) belonging to three linguistic families: the Bantu, the Cushitic and the Nilotic. Language traditionally has been the primary characteristic of ethnic identity. Bantu-speaking Kenyans are divided into three different groups: the western group (Luhya); the central, or highlands,

group (including the Kikuyu, the Kamba and other subgroups); and the coastal Bantu (Mijikenda). Among Kenya's Nilotic speakers, the major groups are the River-Lake or western group (Luo); the highlands or southern group (Kalenjin); and the plains or eastern group (Maasai). The Cushitic-speaking groups include the Oromo and Somali. The Kikuyu, who make up 22% of the population, are Kenya's largest ethnic group. The Luhya are the second largest (14%), followed by the Luo (13%), the Kalenjin (12%) and the Kamba (11%). Although economic and political development have increased

mobility and urbanisation among the country's inhabitants, the majority of Kikuyu live in south-central Kenya (in the Kiambu, Muranga and Nyeri districts); the majority of Luhya in western Kenya (in the Bugoma, Busia and Kakamega districts); the majority of Luo in south-western Kenya (this grouping consists of around 40 subgroups, each associated with an area); the majority of Kamba in east central Kenya; and the majority of Kalenjin (who include the Nandi, Kipsigis, Eleyo, Marakwet, Pokot and Tugen) in west-central Kenya.[27]

Table 2: Kenya's ethnic composition

Ethnic group	Population	Predominant location
Kikuyu	6 622 576	Central Province and Nairobi (estimated at 47%) and Rift Valley (15%)
Luhya	5 338 666	Western region (80%) and Nairobi (16%)
Kalenjin	4 967 328	Rift Valley Province (95%)
Luo	4 044 440	Nyanza Province (estimated at 87%) and Nairobi (15%)
Kenyan Somali	2 385 572	Wajir area, North Eastern Province
Kisii	2 205 669	Nyanza (95%)
Mijikenda	1 960 574	Coast Province
Meru	1 658 108	Meru district, Eastern Province
Turkana	988 592	Turkana, Samburu, Trans-Nzoia, Laikipia and Isiolo districts, Rift Valley Province
Maasai	841 622	Kajiado and Narok districts, Rift Valley Province
Teso	338 833	Busia district, Western Province
Embu	324 092	Embu district, Eastern Province
Taita	273 519	Taita district, Coast Province
Kuria	260 401	Kuria district, Nyanza Province
Samburu	237 179	Baringo district, Rift Valley
Tharaka	175 905	East Meru, Embu and Kitui districts, Eastern Province
Mbeere	168 155	Embu district, Eastern Province
Borana	161 399	Northern Province
Basuba	139 271	Western Province, originally from the Lake Victoria islands of Rusinga and Mfangano
Swahili	110 614	Coast Province
Gabra	89 515	Northern Province
Orma	66 275	Garissa and Tana River districts, North Eastern and Coast provinces
Rendile	60 437	Marsabit district, Eastern Province, between Lake Turkana and Mount Marsabit

Source: Oparanya, *2009 Population & Housing Census results,* 34–35; S Elischer, Ethnic coalitions of convenience and commitment: political parties and party systems in Kenya, German Institute of Global and Area Studies 68 (February 2008), 11

Coast and North Eastern provinces are home to the Mijikenda (who include the Giriama, Digo, Kauma, Duruma, Jibaba, Kambe, Rabai and Ribe), Pokomo, Taita, Taveta Malakote and Swahili (the group, not the language). Kenya's small ethnic minority groups, including the Borana, Burji, Garba, Orma, Sakuye and Waata, also live in these two provinces. However, over the years other ethnic groups, including the Kamba, Kikuyu and Luo, migrated to the coast from other regions.[28] The economic consequences of this migration have contributed to the ethnic marginalisation of the original inhabitants. Although MRC respondents interviewed included Bajun, Digo, Duruma, Gariama, Kamba, Luhya, Meru, Rabai, Shirazi, Somali and Taita, the majority of respondents came from four ethnic backgrounds: the Gariama (39%), Digo (13%), Bajun (9%) and Luhya (9%).
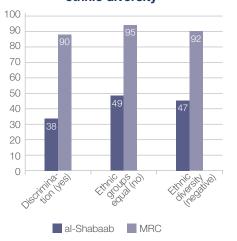
Al-Shabaab respondents, on the other hand, included Arab-Kenyan, Bajun, Barawa, Boran, Gabra, Garre, Giriama, Jomvu, Kamba, Kauma, Kikuyu, Kenyan Somali, Luhya, Luo, Mgunya, Mijikenda, Mohonyi, Nubi, Orma, Pokomo and Swahimis. The majority of respondents interviewed came from the following ethnic backgrounds: Bajun (20%), Kikuyu (10%), Luhya (7%), Luo (7%) and Mijikenda (7%). Although from a larger pool of ethnic groups than members of the MRC, there are remarkable similarities.

One of the ethnic communities that are categorised as marginalised on both fronts is the Kenyan Somali community. Perceptions on the part of other Kenyan nationals that the Kenyan Somali community is responsible for the growing security risks in the country further contribute to this marginalisation. Being visibly part of the Muslim community, despite not being in any way part of al-Shabaab, contributes to their being treated differently. Most notably, members of the Somali-Kenyan and Somali communities reported racial – or, rather,

ethnic – profiling and being rounded up and arrested.

The difference between al-Shabaab and the MRC is that only MRC respondents (25%) referred to ethnicity as a reason for joining the organisation. This was confirmed when respondents were asked to indicate why they joined: in addition to ethnic alliances (33%), 45% referred to their 'community'. When asked to explain what community they referred to, respondents indicated coastal people. Secondly, 43% of MRC respondents classified 'them' (opponents) as other ethnic groups. Some respondents even specifically identified the Kikuyu and other ethnic groups in government as the 'enemy'. To confirm respondents' ethnic identity they were asked to rate the importance of their ethnic group: for 18% their ethnic group was 'most important', for 68% it was 'very important', and for 13% it was 'important'.

When evaluating respondents' positions on ethnic diversity, 92% of MRC respondents indicated that ethnic diversity was not a 'good thing' (see Figure 7), for the following primary reasons: there is no trust (48%) among ethnic groups, it leads to violence (24%) between ethnic groups, it leads to domination (16%) by one ethnic group over others, and contributes to a lack of understanding between ethnic groups (12%).

Figure 7: Ethnic contact and perceptions of ethnic diversity

al-Shabaab ■ MRC ■

From the above analysis one can conclude that ethnic identity for MRC respondents was more important than national identity (or being Kenyan). Although ethnic identity was not identified as a reason for joining the organisation, some al-Shabaab respondents still rated ethnic identity fairly highly: 5% indicated that their ethnic group was 'most important', 40% classified it as 'very important', 31% as 'important' and 24% as 'not important'. It was especially Bajun and Mijikenda respondents from al-Shabaab who rated their ethnic group as most important, serving as a link between al-Shabaab

important role of parents in the political socialisation process, politically active parents of MRC respondents contributed to their children's later involvement in the cause of the coastal people. This confirms Greenberg's view that in many instances adult opinions can be traced to political socialisation as a child in that 'the child is father to the man'.[29] This is particularly relevant to basic political orientations such as identifications, loyalties and values.

Remembering the Shifta war and subsequent developments surrounding the coastal people, the MRC advocates the same succession agenda as

participation will also explain declining political participation.

When assessing whether respondents trusted politicians and the political system, none of the MRC and 1% of al-Shabaab respondents indicated that they trusted politicians. Despite not trusting politicians, 22% of MRC respondents still believed that elections could bring about change, while only 4% of al-Shabaab respondents had the same trust in the political process (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Respondents' political experience

al-Shabaab   MRC

> When asked why respondents did not think that elections would bring change, 86% of MRC and 72% of al-Shabaab respondents did not consider elections to be 'free and fair'

and the MRC in terms of ethnic identity. It is important to emphasise that al-Shabaab respondents referred to their religious rather than their ethnic identity as being under threat.
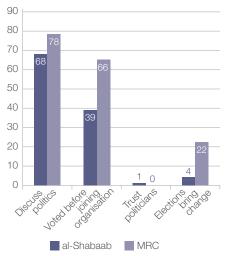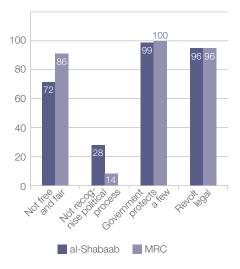
Political circumstances

Prior political experiences are an important indicator of the extent to which people trusted politicians and the political system. To put it differently, one would expect people who trust the political system to present their issues and frustrations through the legal and non-violent option in order to achieve change. Resorting to violence or the illegal option is therefore regarded as the last option.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the family serves as the first place where a child gets to know the political culture of his/her country. In both the MRC (78%) and al-Shabaab (68%) respondents indicated that parents discussed politics in their presence while they were growing up (Figure 8). Considering the

previously. Discussing politics possibly influenced later political participation in that 66% of MRC respondents voted before joining the organisation. In contrast, this might also explain why al-Shabaab respondents saw political participation as less important, considering that the ideology al-Shabaab represents is not historically embedded in Kenyan society. This is seen in the fact that 39% of al-Shabaab respondents voted before joining the organisation, versus 66% of MRC respondents (93% of MRC and 78% of al-Shabaab respondents interviewed were eligible to vote).

Greenberg's theory therefore implies that the parents of al-Shabaab respondents (referred to as the first generation) played a lesser role in transferring their political orientations through socialisation to their children. Instead of parental influence, peers played a more active role as an agent of political socialisation (which will be discussed later). However, lack of trust in politicians and political

When asked why respondents did not think that elections would bring change, 86% of MRC and 72% of al-Shabaab respondents did not consider elections to be 'free and fair', while 28% of al-Shabaab and 14% of MRC respondents did not recognise the political process. Among al-Shabaab respondents, those who did not recognise the political process indicated that their religion did not allow them (*haram*) to participate in this process. Additionally, when the researcher presented the statement 'Government only looks after and protects the interests of a few', all MRC and 99% of al-Shabaab respondents agreed with it. When asked if 'standing up against government is legal and just', only 4% of both al-Shabaab and MRC respondents answered in the negative (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Trust in the political system

	al-Shabaab	MRC
Not free and fair	72	86
Not recognise political process	28	14
Government protects a few	99	100
Revolt legal	96	96

It is clear based on the answers provided that politicians and government face a serious legitimacy crisis among individuals who ended up joining al-Shabaab and the MRC. In other words, if the government wants to present an option to unconventional political participation, it needs to create the necessary political space to permit the expression of political frustrations and interests other than through the use of violence.

Socio-economic factors

When socio-economic factors are mentioned, many who consider poverty or poor socio-economic conditions to be a motivating factor in radicalisation will read through the following section looking for proof that al-Shabaab and MRC respondents were driven to these organisations as a result of economic frustration. However, there was no direct link between poverty and the reason why respondents joined these organisations. However, uneven development and subsequent relative deprivation played a prominent role among MRC, but not al-Shabaab, respondents. To an extent, the description of the relationship between inequality and conflict, as published in the July 2006 World Bank *World*

Development Report, could not have stated the situation in Kenya better:

> High inequality can lead to latent social conflict, which manifests itself through political struggles for public resources. Inequality may mean that different social groups have different interests, and the outcome of the political process through which those interests are reconciled may lead to reduce aggregate outcomes. This may happen because political processes (electoral or otherwise) seek to effect redistributions, but may do so in ways that have high economic costs. Influencing *latent social conflict* are factors such as *inequality, ethnic and linguistic fragmentation, and social distrust in government institutions* (emphasis added).[30]

These factors, in turn, directly impact on the state's ability to deal with social conflict.

As mentioned, both religion and ethnicity divide Kenya. As explained in the section on ethnic composition, the most economically marginalised communities in the country include the Turkana in North Eastern Province, the MijiKenda and Sanye in Coast Province, the Burji in Eastern Province, the Maasai and Ogiek in Rift Valley province, and Muslims in the North Eastern and Coast provinces, although Muslims are considered to be generally better off than other minorities.[31] In Kenya, the coastal community feels economically marginalised despite the growth its members see around them, leading to unmet expectations. It is when access is based on ethnic, cultural or even religious differences between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' that economic conditions can possibly contribute to radicalisation and instability. The coastal region and North Eastern Province are not only less developed than the rest of the country, but are the two regions that have been traditionally Muslim (65% of MRC respondents interviewed are

96%

THE PERCENTAGE OF ALL RESPONDENTS WHO THOUGHT THAT OPPOSING THE GOVERNMENT WAS LEGAL AND JUST

Muslim). In other words, what makes this uneven development more volatile is the perception that the religious divide in the country ultimately contributes to this situation. It is therefore not only a debate about development; it becomes a religious or ethnic and, eventually, a political debate. Subsequent calls for self-determination and independence from Nairobi become intertwined in religious, political and economic circumstances that are increasingly difficult to separate.

Underdevelopment is measured in terms of per capita income, the level of education and the availability of health and other services. Based on this model, the North Eastern Province, which is almost exclusively Somali and Muslim, is still one of the most underdeveloped areas in Kenya. Although Mombasa might on paper give the impression of being better off than expected, after spending time in the district evidence of relative deprivation is clearly visible.

According to the Society for International Development, in Nairobi the top 10% of households command about 45% of total income, while the bottom 10% command less than 2%.[32] Nairobi, Nyanza and Rift Valley provinces seem to have the

Table 3: Regional inequality in Kenya

Region	Income (top 10%)	Unemployment	Access to electricity
Nairobi	45%	24%	71%
Nyanza	43%	12%	5%
Rift Valley	43%	12%	11%
Eastern Province	42%	7%	7%
Western Province	41%	28%	2%
Central Province	39%	6%	19%
Coast Province	34%	23%	19%
North Eastern Province	27%	35%	3%
Unsure	61 233	Below 1	

Source: Society for International Development, *Pulling apart,* 10 – 13

Claims by ordinary people that the Kenyan authorities disregard the needs of people at the coast are not unfounded, nor is it a new debate. According to Foeken, Hoorweg and Obudho in their regional study of the Kenyan coast, the coastal region was traditionally far more developed as a trade route from the Middle East and India into the mainland. This situation changed dramatically from the 1900s:

given to coastal representatives. Not surprisingly, the Coast has also taken a relative marginal position in respect to the distribution of investments and services … the Coast appears the most deprived region.[33]

Respondents were asked to identify the most important reasons for joining the two organisations. While the majority of al-Shabaab respondents referred to religion (as discussed above), 6% combined religion with economic reasons, while a further 4% referred to economic reasons. In contrast, MRC respondents gave a very different picture: purely ethnic reasons were the most prevailing (25%); then came political reasons (21%); followed by combinations of ethnic and economic reasons (14%), religious and economic reasons (14%), and ethnic and political reasons (2%). A further 12% of MRC respondents (in contrast to 4% among al-Shabaab respondents) referred to economic reasons. This confirms that economic frustration linked to ethnic and political marginalisation is the driving force behind the MRC.

Although the link between economic circumstances and recruitment to al-Shabaab is less defined (only 10% of respondents referred to economic reasons in any way), extremist movements have used poverty and unemployment, the growing gulf between rich and poor, inadequate government services, political corruption, and perceived government subservience to American demands to their advantage.

By sometimes providing humanitarian assistance, Islamists offer a solution: a return to core religious values would bring social justice, good government and a higher level of moral life. In summary, although the study recognises the role broad economic circumstances play in contributing to a person's susceptibility to extremism, MRC respondents were shown to be

> When access is based on ethnic, cultural or religious differences between the 'haves' and 'have-nots,' economic conditions can contribute to radicalisation and instability

widest income inequalities. In the present report the following regional inequalities, presented in Table 3, were identified as facilitating marginalisation that although not always based on facts, contributed to negative perceptions between ethnic groups. The divisions between Nairobi and communities in North Eastern and Coast provinces serve as a particularly good example.

Apart from Mombasa, no intermediate urban centres have been designated. There has not been any concerted effort or planning for the development of this part of the country by successive governments. Since Independence the centre has been dominated by up-country groups and there has been an under representation of ministerial positions

more susceptible than al-Shabaab respondents in this study.

In addition to the economic and social development issues raised in this section, education or a lack thereof was identified as a crucial contributing factor to relative deprivation. Education is not only key in securing a future, but, as mentioned before, the type of education a person receives is equally important. It is, however, in the area of education that Muslim areas, most notably the Coast and North Eastern provinces, feel discriminated against, especially when comparing the education figures of Kenya's provinces, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Number of students at different education levels based on the 2009 census, by province

Province	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Population
Nairobi	155 936	490 314	176 837	69 345	3 138 369
Central	220 612	987 348	265 881	25 321	4 383 743
Coast	250 380	758 062	108 401	8 941	3 325 307
Eastern	257 690	1 509 526	268 751	13 645	5 668 123
North Eastern	24 383	414 541	60 133	2 431	2 310 757
Nyanza	426 046	1 513 952	309 130	18 359	5 442 711
Rift Valley	640 044	2 475 352	411 416	49 061	10 006 805
Western	271 971	1 276 295	195 918	11 016	4 334 282
Total	**2 247 071**	**9 425 390**	**1 796 467**	**198 119**	**38 610 097**

Source: Oparanya, *2009 Population & Housing Census results,* 26
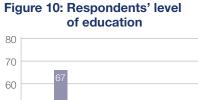
According to Mazrui, in the educational sphere Muslims encounter inequality in the provision of essential services, facilities and opportunities.[34] For example, in Mombasa the majority of government-sponsored elementary schools that have performed the poorest in the national examination are predominantly Muslim. In contrast, Muslim schools that have performed relatively well have been predominantly privately owned.[35]
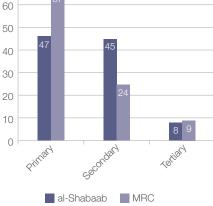
In addition to the lone al-Shabaab respondent who did not attend school,

72% of al-Shabaab and 75% of MRC respondents attended public school, followed by 25% of al-Shabaab respondents who attended an Islamic school. The remaining MRC respondents attended a combination of public and Islamic schools (13%) and Christian schools (2%). Schools should have served as an integrating tool for the majority of respondents who attended public school. As a result, the majority of both al-Shabaab and MRC respondents had contact with and friends from other religious and ethnic groups.

In addition to the type of school respondents attended, the level at which and length of time a person attended should also be taken into account, remembering the theory that each extra year of schooling per capita reduces the risk of conflict by around 1%.[36] Among MRC respondents, 67% only attended primary school, 24% secondary school and 9% studied further. Al-Shabaab respondents had a better record, with 47% only attending primary school, 45% secondary school and 8% studying further (see Figure 10). When analysing school-leaving age, the majority of MRC (44%) and al-Shabaab (56%) respondents left school between 15 and 19 years of age, followed by 36% of MRC and 33% of al-Shabaab respondents who left school between 20 and 24. Considering that the school-going age is six years, the majority of respondents had 9–13 years of schooling, followed by 14–18 years for the second group. Only 8% of al-Shabaab and 6% of MRC respondents interviewed attended school between four and eight years, leaving school between ten and 14 years of age.

Of those al-Shabaab respondents who studied further, 12 respondents opted for Islamic studies, four studied electrical engineering, three studied information technology, while two studied commerce and business administration. One of

Figure 10: Respondents' level of education

the most impressive respondents (from an education perspective) studied medicine at Nairobi University, while another studied psychology at the same university, but did not finish his studies. Those MRC respondents who studied further focused on information technology, accounting and social work. Overall, al-Shabaab respondents were better educated.

The number of years a person spent at school is therefore not the most important factor in preventing later radicalisation; it is also the quality of education that determines its value in preparing a person for a career. To put this differently, not being able to finish school will have an impact on the kind of opportunities or career options the person will have in later life. Employment opportunities are determined by education, and a lack of education is the biggest cause of relative deprivation, which in turn can facilitate radicalisation.

According to Rakodi, Gatabaki-Kamau and Devas,[37] traditionally coastal people are found in all occupations, but are disproportionately concentrated in unskilled and casual jobs because of their low educational levels.[38] Up-country groups gained an early foothold in the large-scale formal sector due to their

willingness to take up unskilled manual jobs. The Kikuyu came to dominate the lower grades in Mombasa Municipal Council's staff by the 1970s and are also successful traders.

The Luo moved from labour-intensive professions in the port and railway sectors to management and trade union posts, and the Kamba have developed woodcarving businesses. These groups are reputed to be more successful in petty trade and manufacturing than coastal people. Tending to see the city as their own, the latter resent the success of migrant groups and characterise up-country people as more aggressive, unscrupulous and grasping than themselves. In contrast, up-country people (referring to Kenyans from the central and western regions) formed the perception that coastal people are unsophisticated, unprogressive and neither entrepreneurial nor hardworking.

Rakodi, Gatabaki-Kamau and Devas also found that coastal respondents considered themselves to be more susceptible to poverty because up-country people are single migrants or have only small families to support, while up-country people felt that

the organisation. In contrast, 47% of MRC respondents were employed, 51% unemployed and 2% were studying at the time of their recruitment. Regarding type of employment, 56% of MRC and 20% of al-Shabaab respondents were employed in the unspecified low-income group (e.g. petrol attendants, labourer, driver, etc.), while 26% of al-Shabaab and 19% of MRC respondents were fishermen (although this group can also be classified as low-income, the number of respondents in this career justified it being a separate category).

Considered to be in a better position, 33% of al-Shabaab and 25% of MRC respondents classified themselves as businessmen. A further 21% of al-Shabaab respondents were religious scholars. In addition to the employment status, respondents were given an opportunity to indicate whether their economic situation was a factor in their joining the organisation (discussed below). It is important to note that, with the exception of a few, the majority of respondents did not have the necessary education to secure better

> The number of years a person spent at school is therefore not the most important factor in preventing later radicalisation; it is also the quality of education

they were more vulnerable because they lacked the support of local kinship networks.[39]

Returning to the potential role unemployment has in radicalisation, employment and unemployment figures among al-Shabaab and MRC respondents can be summarised as follows: among al-Shabaab respondents, 33% were employed, 50% unemployed and 17% were students at the time they joined

employment. One of the reasons for this situation might be access to quality education institutions, as alluded to in the section dealing with education.

Why and how respondents joined al-Shabaab and the MRC

The analysis above identified a number of differences and similarities between al-Shabaab and the MRC with reference to the personal background of respondents, lack of trust in the political system, and

religious and ethnic background. The only remaining yet essential questions are why and how respondents joined the two organisations and if there is a difference between the organisations in this regard.

Regarding the age at which respondents joined: 57% of al-Shabaab and 52%

– targets adolescents and young adults, 43% of respondents only joined after their 25th birthdays. In contrast the MRC predominantly targets people in their 20s and older. This is also in line with its primary focus: that secession will resonate more with people who

The majority of respondents did not have the necessary education to secure better employment

of MRC respondents joined between the ages of 10 and 24. Although very close, when ages are broken down, a few interesting trends emerge: 5% of al-Shabaab respondents joined between the ages of 10 and 14, 17% between 15 and 19, and 35% between 20 and 24. Some 25% of MRC and 21% of al-Shabaab respondents joined these groups between the ages of 25 and 29, followed by 20% of al-Shabaab and 14% of MRC respondents who joined between the ages of 30 and 35. After 35, only 2% of al-Shabaab respondents joined, whereas 9% of MRC respondents joined, with 7% of the latter even joining after the age of 40 (see Figure 11).

This implies that although al-Shabaab – in keeping with its name 'The Youth'

have experienced relative depravation first hand.

In terms of whether marital status and having children of their own at the time of joining al-Shabaab and MRC had any impact: 54% of al-Shabaab and 52% of MRC respondents were single, 42% of MRC and 41% of al-Shabaab respondents were married, 4% of each were divorced, and 2% of MRC and 1% of al-Shabaab respondents had lost their spouses at the time of their recruitment. Although a majority of single respondents did not have children, 14% of al-Shabaab and 12% of MRC respondents had children when they joined their respective organisations. In other words, although the majority were not married at the time of their recruitment, marital status did not have a specific impact in preventing individuals who were married and having children from joining. The small difference in marital status should also be interpreted along with the age of respondents at the time of joining, remembering that al-Shabaab attracted younger respondents.

The families of especially al-Shabaab respondents were asked to shed light on the process and changes they had noticed in the behaviour of respondents who disappeared, were incarcerated or were killed (i.e. changes prior to their deaths in the latter case). Among the
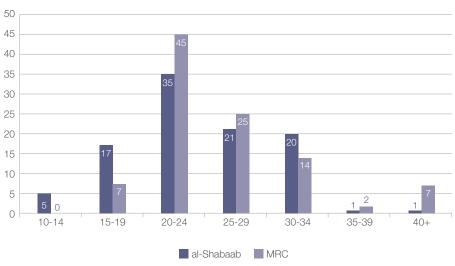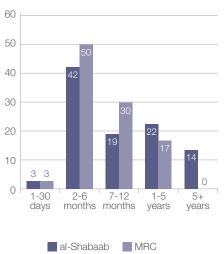
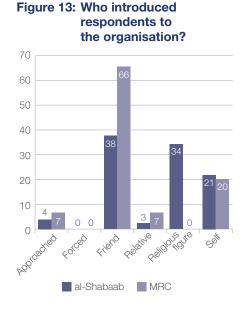**Figure 11: Age at which respondents joined al-Shabaab and the MRC**

most noticeable changes, 85% became very religious, 65% isolated themselves, while 52% withdrew from former friends. Only 28% became very prescriptive to other family members as to their behaviour in what was acceptable and forbidden. Of those interviewed, 91% indicated that the person who was recruited disappeared at some stage.

These changes were noticed over the following periods: 3% over days to a month, 37% over two to six months, 23% over seven to 12 months, 23% over one to five years, and 14% over more than five years. In other words, the majority (63%) of family members noted changes in the behaviour of their sons/daughters, brothers/sisters and husbands within a year. Breaking this figure further down, the overall majority (37%) noted these changes at between two and six months. These changes in behaviour reflect a relative short recruitment process (a few months to a year), as indicated in Figure 12.

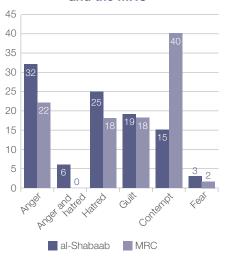**Figure 12: Period between introduction and joining**

What is particularly interesting is the role a friend and a religious figure played in introducing the person to al-Shabaab, while 21% of al-Shabaab and 20% of MRC respondents joined alone (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Who introduced respondents to the organisation?

As mentioned in the section on religion, the majority of al-Shabaab respondents (87%) referred to religion or the need to respond to a threat to their religious identity as their motive for joining the organisation, while a further 6% combined religion with economic reasons. Only 4% of al-Shabaab respondents exclusively referred to economic reasons. In sharp contrast, MRC respondents were motivated by a combination of ethnic, political and economic reasons, as discussed in the section on economic circumstances. Some respondents who referred to economic reasons – 12% of MRC and 4% of al-Shabaab respondents – thought that by joining these groups, membership would become a career. This places a question mark over these individuals' ideological commitment. In other words, if these individuals had access to other employment opportunities they would not have joined these organisations. At the same time, it also places a question mark over the success of strategies – based on a small percentage of respondents who raised employment as an issue – that if these individuals are offered employment opportunities, they will not join these groups.

Respondents were also asked to rate their level of frustration at the time of joining: 96% of al-Shabaab and 87% of MRC respondents rated their level of frustration at between 5 and 10. Breaking this figure down among al-Shabaab respondents, 48% rated their frustration levels between 5 and 7, with a further 48% indicating frustration levels of between 8 and 10. With reference to MRC respondents: 54% rated their frustration levels between 5 and 7 and 33% indicated levels between 8 and 10, while only 13% of MRC and 4% of al-Shabaab respondents reported lower frustration levels of between 1 and 4. These figures directly support the role emotions play in the radicalisation process, as presented in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Emotions respondents experienced when joining al-Shabaab and the MRC

Considering the relatively high levels of guilt in the results given in Figure 14, respondents were asked to clarify what made them choose guilt as a factor. Respondents recalled personal stories of letting close family and friends down and that as a result guilt made them leave for Somalia or stay in the organisation. The initial reasons for joining were, however, similar to other respondents already mentioned.

When asked to clarify or to provide additional information that finally 'pushed' the person to join, the majority of both al-Shabaab and MRC respondents referred to injustices at the hands of Kenyan security forces, specifically referring to 'collective punishment'. When asked to identify the single most important factor that drove respondents to join al-Shabaab, 65% specifically referred to the government's counterterrorism strategy. Comments included: 'Government and security forces hate Islam', and 'All

faction. According to Najib Balala, the former mayor of Mombasa: 'Harassment and intimidation [by the government] have always been there for us. Now we are already branded as second-class citizens because we are Muslims and Arabs.'

Similarly, according to the then director of Muslims for Human Rights, Khelef Khalifa, the police harassed Muslim residents in Mombasa in response to the attacks. Instead of pursuing the

> The majority of both al-Shabaab and MRC respondents referred to injustices at the hands of Kenyan security forces, specifically 'collective punishment'

Muslims are treated as terrorists', but also pointed to more specific examples: 'the assassination of Muslim leaders' or the 'extra-judicial killing of Muslims'. One respondent even referred to a specific incident (although the date was not provided): 'Muslims were beaten badly by GSU [General Service Unit, a paramilitary wing of the Kenya Police Service] at the Makadara grounds', while others referred to Muslims being arrested for no apparent reason. All of these enforced the perception that the government, with specific reference to its security forces (the government's representatives in terms of respondents' day-to-day lives), hated them, leading to injustices (referred to by name) and marginalisation.

This led to discriminatory responses, further fuelling sentiments of marginalisation, since many of the arrests appear to have been discriminatory and arbitrary in nature. Even after the Paradise Hotel blast in 2002 – at a time when extremism was not well known and before the formation of al-Shabaab – local Muslim leaders feared for their community. This would provide further justification for the increasing radical

key suspects, the police arrested their relatives when they failed to arrest those directly involved in the attacks.[40] When talking to Kenyan Muslims, especially in the coastal region, one notices a growing perception of people being treated as second-class citizens. People complained and gave examples that, despite being born and regarded as Kenyan nationals, their fellow Kenyans, and especially police officers, treated them as 'foreigners'. Especially following growing insecurity in Kenya since the intervention of the country's forces in Somalia, people are told to 'go home', are often disregarded at government buildings and are arbitrarily arrested without cause. This further contributed to a sense of not being seen as being Kenyan.

The worst example of a campaign of mass arrests came during the period 4–10 April 2014, when Kenyan authorities arrested 4 005 Somali-looking individuals as part of Operation Usalama Watch in an attempt to root out al-Shabaab or al-Shabaab al-Mujahidin, or 'The Youth', which can be traced back to al-Ittiād al-islāmiyya and Ittihād

4 005

THE NUMBER OF SOMALI-LOOKING INDIVIDUALS ARRESTED IN THE PERIOD 4–10 APRIL 2014

al-mahãkim al-islãmiyya, commonly known as the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). The ICU had its origins in a coalition in 2006 between local sharia courts and Islamists in Mogadishu.[41] The operation was launched following two attacks in which gunmen shot dead six worshipers at the Joy in Jesus church in Likoni, Mombasa on 23 March 2014,[42] while a week later, on 31 March 2014, six people were killed and ten others wounded in the California area in Eastleigh, Nairobi when attackers hurled explosives into a food kiosk and at people waiting at a bus stop.[43] This was probably one of the most visible examples of mass arrests following a campaign of racial profiling. Confronted with a problem of insufficient holding areas, suspects were even held at a sports stadium in Nairobi to give authorities an opportunity to verify individuals' status in the country. However, the authorities released 3 010 people after they were interrogated and ascertained to be Kenyans without any criminal record. Those considered to be in the country illegally were almost immediately deported to Somalia.[44]

It is clear that strategies based on mass arrests, racial profiling, etc. have proved more than once to be counterproductive. Additionally, police-led criminal justice responses to terrorism are more effective than an arbitrary and heavy-handed

left civilians dead, including a local chief, women and children.[45]

Even though the incident sparked retaliatory attacks and protests, it also opened debate on how the state should respond to a very challenging security threat. While security forces (the police and military) have experienced constant threats of attacks since the armed forces' intervention in Somalia, the consequences of blind retaliation are severe. Fighting an often-unidentifiable enemy who uses the anonymity of the masses to hide among and to strike and then disappear is extremely frustrating. However, lashing out against the collective is not only ineffective, but is also counterproductive, because a real danger exists that those not involved in affected communities might see the need to defend themselves against the 'other', thus 'driving' individuals to extremism.

It is, however, not only the government and its security forces that treat people on the fringes of society as the 'enemy', but also the broader Kenyan community, which is driven by an established perception that al-Shabaab only consists of Somali nationals or those who are visibly Muslim. To illustrate this, Kenyan nationals turned against and attacked Somali and Kenyan Somali nationals following the detonation of an explosive

Consequently, it was not a surprise that the 'us' for al-Shabaab respondents referred to members of the organisation (68%) and Muslims (32%), as shown in Figure 15. When asked to identify 'them' (opponents), al-Shabaab respondents referred to other religions (67%) and the government (30%), as shown in Figure 16. To al-Shabaab respondents, 'them' extends well beyond other religious groups in Kenya: 3% even specifically referred to Ethiopia (following its intervention in Somalia), the United States and other countries that fall in the category of being anti-Islam. One respondent categorically stated that imposed Western values finally drove him to join the organisation.
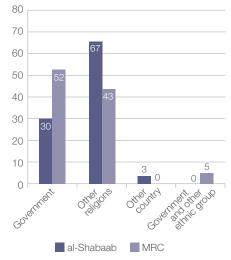
Figure 15: Respondents' perceptions of 'us'

For MRC respondents 'us' referred to members of the organisation (84%) and a combination of organisational members and ethnic or coastal people (14%), versus 'them', who are the Kenyan government (52%), other ethnic groups (43%) and a combination of government and other ethnic groups (5%). Similar to al-Shabaab, MRC respondents referred to arrests and mistreatment on the part of security forces, but the vast majority specifically referred to: 'Fighting for our tribal rights and the rights of coastal

In the coastal region, one notices a growing perception of people being treated as second-class citizens

response. One of the most prominent and recent examples occurred following the killing of three soldiers in Garissa in November 2012. After the incident, attackers reportedly fled to the Bumuila Mzuri area, resulting in an operation to pursue them. Although the incident is under investigation, according to reports Kenyan troops retaliated by burning markets and opening fire on a school that

device on 18 November 2012 in Eastleigh, Nairobi. This was not the first occasion on which people retaliated in this way. Earlier, on 30 September 2012, ordinary people attacked Somalis living in Eastleigh after a grenade attack on St Polycarp Church that killed one child and injured nine others. During this retaliation incident at least 13 Somalis were injured and property was destroyed.[46]

people', 'land grabbing on the part of government and other ethnic/tribal groups' and 'resource distribution'.

Figure 16: Respondents' perceptions of 'them'

The reasons for joining al-Shabaab and the MRC are only a part of understanding why people become involved in these organisations; the second part deals with why a person would want to stay in them. In answering this question, the majority of both al-Shabaab (61%) and MRC (59%) respondents considered it their responsibility, followed by a sense

of belonging (32% of MRC and 16% of al-Shabaab respondents). A further 13% of al-Shabaab and 7% of MRC respondents indicated that they stayed for the adventure, while 8% of al-Shabaab respondents referred to a combination of adventure and the sense of belonging they had experienced. The remaining 2% of both al-Shabaab and MRC respondents referred to a combination of responsibility and a sense of belonging (see Figure 17).

Respondents were also asked if they experienced a sense of regret. Forty-six per cent of MRC and 40% of al-Shabaab respondents indicated that their biggest regret was that they had not recruited more members to the organisation; 42% of al-Shabaab and 33% of MRC regretted some of the tactics the organisation used; 13% of al-Shabaab and 9% of MRC respondents regretted being caught; while 12% of MRC and 5% of al-Shabaab respondents regretted joining their organisations. These results further emphasise the role identity plays in both groups in joining and staying, associated with a sense of belonging and responsibility. In assessing a sense of belonging, respondents were asked to rate their sense of belonging when they joined the organisation and while they were part of the organisation (see Figures 18 and 19).
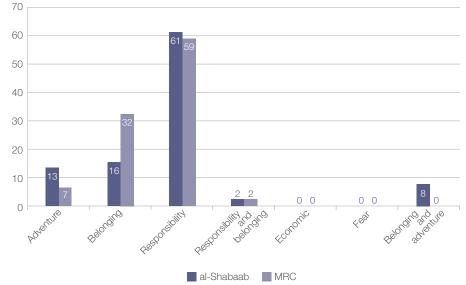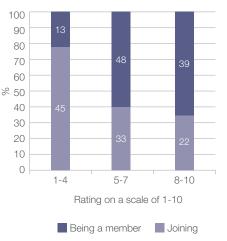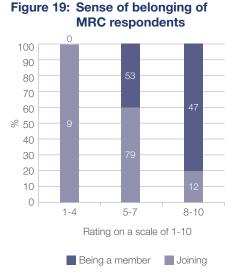
Figure 17: Reasons why respondents decided to stay in al-Shabaab and the MRC

Figure 18: Sense of belonging of al-Shabaab respondents

Figure 19: Sense of belonging of MRC respondents

Although the values differ, it is important to note that in both organisations the sense of belonging respondents experienced increased substantially the longer the person stayed in the group. Some al-Shabaab respondents explained that they rated belonging between 1 and 4 as a result of obstacles they had encountered and the dangers associated with being a member.

This confirms that the identity of the organisation becomes the identity of the individual, in that belonging to a terrorist organisation can result in a collective identity in terms of which individual identities are replaced by a sense of being part of something greater.

Conclusion

Based on the answers provided by al-Shabaab and MRC respondents, it can be empirically stated that the two organisations have two very different profiles. Despite the geographical overlap, the two organisations are clearly driven by two different motivations: the MRC is driven by a combination of ethnic and economic factors, while al-Shabaab's core is radical Islam. The two can meet in fighting against a 'common enemy' in the form of the Kenyan government and the politically influential ethnic groups it

represents, but based purely on the answers provided by respondents, it would be a mistake to place extremists from both groups under one banner. Finding a solution to the problem posed by both groups – as well as other similar groups – requires a better understanding of their respective members and what drives individual members.

In both organisations middle children were particularly vulnerable to radicalisation. Although respondents from both organisations came from very similar family structures – most came from relatively small families – a number of important differences could be noted. Firstly, more MRC (31%) than al-Shabaab (18%) respondents grew up with a father figure. This is particularly interesting since a number of practitioners the author interacted with were under the impression that growing up without a father is one of the single most important factors facilitating later radicalisation.

Secondly, more MRC than al-Shabaab respondents informed their families

that they were joining their respective organisations. Similarly, the parents of MRC respondents were more active in discussing politics with their children and were aware of their child's decision to join the MRC. This indicates the active role parents played in the political socialisation process in establishing an active ethnic identity as coastal people who had a history of being marginalised by other Kenyans. In addition to peers who took over from parents as another socialisation agent by introducing respondents to the organisations, al-Shabaab respondents also exposed the

central role religious figures played in the radicalisation process.

As mentioned earlier in the paper, al-Shabaab and MRC respondents leaned either towards a religious (al-Shabaab) or an ethnic (i.e. a geographical) identity (MRC). This differentiation was also reflected in the reasons for joining the organisations, as well as the distinction made between 'us' and 'them' that presented clearly defined in- and out-groups. With reference to 'them' (opponents), both organisations identified the government. Although al-Shabaab respondents firstly referred to other religions and secondly to the government as 'them', the majority of respondents identified the government as being behind the threat to their religion when asked if they considered it to be under threat and to identify the type of threat.

The government and the way it has responded in the past to both al-Shabaab and the MRC is the most important unifying factor. Political factors have pushed Muslim youth to join

> The sense of belonging respondents experienced increased substantially the longer the person stayed in the group

extremist groups as a counter-reaction to or way of retaliating against what they see as 'collective punishment' that is driven by a misguided perception that all Muslims are terrorists or potential terrorists. In addition to their religious identity, Kenyan Somalis as an ethnic group are also marginalised. As a result, a convergence of religious and ethnic identity provided a bridge between al-Shabaab and the MRC, especially in the coastal and north-eastern regions.

This convergence did not start when Kenyan troops entered Somalia in 2011. Instead, ethnic marginalisation among

Kenyan Somalis can be traced back to the Shifta war that gained momentum following the growing economic and political marginalisation of coastal people. The role perceptions played in classifying people further fuelled marginalisation and the entrenching of in- and out-groups. At the same time it is important to remember that the MRC is multi-religious, although the majority of members are Muslim. Religious identity, however, became increasingly prominent following the anti-terrorist campaign after the US embassy bombings in 1998. As a

meaningfully and non-violently attend to the problems thrown up by this context.

It is apparent that Kenyans are extremely divided. While diversity can be celebrated when mutual respect exists, it can also destroy a country from within when there is no trust with reference to both religious and ethnic differences, as described by al-Shabaab and MRC respondents. The greatest threat to stability in Kenya will be if extremists succeed in dividing the country between Muslims and non-Muslims or between the coastal people

It would be a mistake to group extremists from both organisations under one banner

result of the security forces' counter-terrorism activities, many Muslim youths (especially Kenyan Somalis) have been arbitrarily arrested and incarcerated on suspicion that they are engaged in terrorist activities. This has contributed to a form of xenophobia directed at Muslims by non-Muslims, or at least this was the perception that was created. Furthermore, al-Shabaab was able to break through ethnic separation by attracting followers from different ethnic backgrounds.

Of even more concern are claims of extrajudicial killings of 'problematic' individuals, most notably radical Muslim scholars. The reality is, however, that the 'elimination' or assassination of such leaders or scholars has radicalised and recruited dozens, if not hundreds, to the ranks of extremist organisations, ensuring a new wave of radicalism and collective resolve among their members, ultimately indicating that threats of violence or imprisonment are rarely effective deterrents. An effective counterterrorism policy and strategy should appreciate the broader context in which violent actions or attacks occur and seek to

and those in Nairobi. Addressing and breaking these perceptions extend well beyond the responsibility of the police – the process requires the entire Kenyan government to initiate dedicated strategies to build national identity in a country that is religiously and ethnically divided. As long as Kenyan citizens, especially those on the fringes of society, exclusively identify with an ethnic or religious identity that is perceived to be under threat, radicalisation will continue to increase.

In addition to the political circumstances described above, economic circum-stances – with reference to relative depravation – played a prominent role in the radicalisation of MRC respondents. It is, however, important to emphasise that it was not poverty that drove respond-ents to the MRC, but rather evidence of inequality based on ethnicity and geographical location. Access to basic services, especially education, together with the quality of this education, directly contributed to marginalisation, which later facilitated radicalisation. Al-Shabaab respondents were, however, better off in comparison to their MRC counterparts in that more individuals attended secondary

67%
THE PERCENTAGE OF MRC RESPONDENTS WHO ONLY ATTENDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

> The 'elimination' or assassination of leaders or scholars has radicalised and recruited dozens, if not hundreds, to the ranks of extremist organisations

school – 45% versus 24%, respectively, considering that a further 67% of MRC respondents only attended primary school. This difference might also serve as a reflection of the agenda and driving force behind both organisations: whereas the MRC has a domestic agenda, al-Shabaab is driven by a radical interpretation of Islam that has an external origin where developments beyond Kenya influence its overall agenda.

Domestic circumstances directly influenced the individual's susceptibility to radicalisation and recruitment. If we return to education, attention should be directed at the type and quality of education people receive. Similarly, even though the majority of both al-Shabaab and MRC respondents attended public school, the level of integration and contact with individuals from different ethnic and religious backgrounds needs attention.

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About the author

Anneli Botha has been a senior researcher on terrorism at the Institute for Security Studies in Pretoria since 2003. After completing an honours degree in international politics she joined the South African Police Service's Crime Intelligence Unit in 1993, focusing, among other things, on terrorism and religious extremism. She has a master's degree in political studies from the University of Johannesburg and a PhD from the University of the Free State. Her specific areas of interest are counter-terrorism strategies and the underlying causes of terrorism and radicalisation.

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The Institute for Security Studies is an African organisation that aims to enhance human security on the continent. It does independent and authoritative research, provides expert policy analysis and advice, and delivers practical training and technical assistance.

Acknowledgements

ISS Pretoria

Block C, Brooklyn Court
361 Veale Street
New Muckleneuk
Pretoria, South Africa
Tel: +27 12 346 9500
Fax: +27 12 460 0998
pretoria@issafrica.org

ISS Addis Ababa

5th Floor, Get House
Building, Africa Avenue
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251 11 515 6320
Fax: +251 11 515 6449
addisababa@issafrica.org

ISS Dakar

4th Floor, Immeuble Atryum
Route de Ouakam
Dakar, Senegal
Tel: +221 33 860 3304/42
Fax: +221 33 860 3343
dakar@issafrica.org

ISS Nairobi

Braeside Gardens
off Muthangari Road
Lavington, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 20 266 7208
Fax: +254 20 266 7198
nairobi@issafrica.org

www.issafrica.org