

Trends of Terrorism and Its Effect on Basic Education in Kenya

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Abstract: This study analyzes the effect of terrorism on basic education in Kenya. The year 1998 is significant in the analysis of terrorism trends because it marked the first major terror attack in Kenya that targeted the US Embassy. In this incident, 213 people lost their lives. This was followed by the terrorist attack on an Israeli-owned Paradise hotel and the surface-to-air missile attacks on an Israeli airliner taking off from the Mombasa airport in 2002. At the Paradise hotel, 13 people died and several were injured. Due to continued sporadic terrorist activities in the country and the attendant negative effects on tourism industry among other activities, the government decided to sanction military invasion of Somalia in 2011. The objective was to strike at the source of the transnational terrorism and eradicate the Al Shahaab terror menace. However, Terrorist incidents have continued to rise both in magnitude and the daring nature through which they are mounted. Since 2012, terrorist attacks have increased and killed over 600 people in Kenya. Policy makers often tout expanded access to education as an antidote for terrorism in Africa. Targeted economic development is also considered necessary complement to education gains because young, well-educated individuals who lack viable opportunities are vulnerable targets of radicalization. The sporadic terror attacks in North Eastern and coast regions of Kenya have greatly affected not only basic education, but also tertiary education. Several teachers have lost their lives in the process. Teachers who survive attacks abandon their duty posts in search for safer areas to teach. Meanwhile the education of many children is time and again compromised

Key Terms: Basic Education, Destruction of schools, Counter terrorism measures, Jihad, mental health, Terrorism

Background to the Study

Terrorism has society-wide consequences that extend far beyond the immediate victims of the violence. Many studies have analyzed the effects of terrorist acts on various aspects of the economy and society. However, very little attention has been given to the effect of terrorism on education and human capital, which are fundamental to economic and social development. Although the likelihood of an individual's being harmed by terrorism is negligible, terror attacks generate a disproportionate amount of stress and fear (Becker and Rubinstein, 2011). These effects may influence students' performance in the short term and, as a result, may also affect long term outcomes which are determined by academic achievement (Shany, 2016).

Terrorism activities in Kenya can be traced to 1976 when the plot by the Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Baader-Meinhof group to shoot down an El Al passenger plane during a scheduled stopover in Nairobi, was discovered and thwarted by prior intelligence sharing between Israel and Kenya security personnel (Mogire and Agade, 2011). This was followed by an attack by the PFLP on Norfolk Hotel in Nairobi in 1980, killing 15 people. This attack was in revenge for Kenya's assistance to Israel during the rescue operation to free hostages at Entebbe Airport in Uganda (Ibid).

Some of the major terrorist attacks that Kenya has experienced since the KDF invasion of Somalia include the Westgate Shopping Mall on 21 September 2013. Armed gunmen stormed the mall, killing at least 69 people and injuring more than 175. In late 2014, two terrorist attacks killed 64 persons in Mandera County. The first incident was an attack by gunmen on a bus traveling from Mandera to Nairobi, that killed 28 persons (22nd November 2014), mostly teachers and government workers heading to Nairobi for the December holidays. In the second incident, Al-Shabaab militants attacked and killed a further 36 quarry workers, many of whom were non-Muslims, near Mandera Town (2nd December, 2014). The worst terrorist attack since 1998 bombing of the US embassy was the massacre of 147 students of Garissa University College. The daring attack shocked the entire nation and world at large (BBC News, 2015).

Besides the major terrorist attacks alluded to, there have been a series of attacks in the country. These terror attacks have rendered the citizenry extremely fearful and uncertain of their security. Various incidents of fearful reactions to accidental explosions by university students have been reported. Such commotions in frightful escape have led to injuries and even deaths; indicators that fear of terrorists are real.

In response to these terrorist attacks, the government has put in place counter terrorism measures. The general perception of the public is that these measures are inadequate. In fact, there is an increase in terrorist attacks on military installations of late, an indication that more needs to be done to secure the country.

Due to Boko Haram activities in Nigeria the U.N. estimated that more than 5.6 million people in the region are in need of emergency food aid.¹⁰ Most of the displaced have sought shelter with host communities and do not live in camps. Nearly 1.6 million displaced Nigerians have fled to the Borno state capital of Maiduguri, which continues to be subject to bombings, despite the expanded presence of the Nigerian army. According to UNHCR, "sweeping operations carried out by the Nigerian military have an equally disruptive effect on everyday life."¹¹ Boko Haram attacks have damaged health centres, markets, roads, homes, and schools, deterring the return of the displaced. According to the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), the violence has forced more than 2,000 schools to close and disrupted the education of more than a million children (Winsor, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

Terrorism is a contemporary security threat that affects many governments around the world. It has gained international attention because of its overall effect on nation-states and societies. Kenya has experienced numerous terrorist incidents that have resulted to loss of lives, injuries and destruction of property, general disruption of peace and security. These attacks have posed a challenge to national security systems, with regard to preparedness, capacity and the efficacy of national counter terrorism policy.

Terrorism incidences in Kenya demonstrate clearly that terrorism is, and will remain, one of the government's main security concerns. These terrorist attacks are not usually ad hoc, they conform to certain patterns and techniques. The implication of the shifting terrorist approaches is that counter terrorism measures ought to be comprehensive and dynamic as well.

Therefore, the task of this study was to analyse terrorism trends in Kenya and their effect on basic education in Kenya.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine terrorism trends in Kenya and determine the effect of these attacks on basic education in Kenya.

Research Question

What trends has terrorism exhibited in Kenya and how do they affect basic education in Kenya?

Significance of the Study

An investigation into trends of terrorism in Kenya and its effect on basic education is a worthwhile task. It contributes towards the existing knowledge on the subject and enhances the understanding of practitioners, scholars and general public on terrorism in Kenya. It is hoped that government and education policy makers will be able to address the terrorism menace and adopt measures that will ensure least interruption of learning in affected regions.

Theoretical Framework

The study is contextualized within the contagion theory of terrorism. This theory emanates from the psycho-sociological research tradition. It holds the view that terrorism is 'contagious'. A number of studies have demonstrated that the occurrence of terrorist attacks is far from random. Instead, there is a clear trend of periodical cycle in the occurrence of terrorist attacks, or waves of terrorism (Redlick, 1979; Midlarsky et al. 1980; Weimann and Brosius, 1988; Bjørge, 1997).

A high level of terrorism in one month is likely to be followed by few incidents in the next month, suggesting that the decision by terrorist groups to launch an attack is influenced by similar attacks elsewhere, hence, the 'concept of contagion'. These periodic 'waves' of terrorism may be partly explained by the desire of terrorists to guarantee newsworthiness and consequently, media access (Weimann and Brosius, 1988: 500). According to Weimann and Brosius (1988), there is 'accumulating empirical evidence pointing to the contagiousness of terrorism' with regards to the timing of terrorist attacks.

This theory is relevant with regard to counter terrorism measures that ought to identify a pattern and rhythm of terror attacks. Knowledge of the contagious nature of terrorism will assist in preparedness, prevention as well as defensive readiness to mitigate on impact of attacks. It will also be invaluable to ensure that knowledge of terrorist trends results to protection of essential service installations such as schools and hospitals.

Research Methodology

Research Paradigm

A paradigm is a set of beliefs or assumptions that guide research. In this study, qualitative research paradigm was adopted since the study was confined to non-statistical inquiry techniques and processes used to gather data about social phenomenon. Qualitative data refers to some collection of words, symbols, pictures or other non-numerical records, materials, or artefacts that are collected by a researcher and is data that has relevance to the social group under study. The use of these data goes beyond simple description of events and phenomenon; rather they are used for creating understanding, for subjective interpretation, and for critical analysis as well (McNabb, 2005). Qualitative research involves inductive, theory- generating, subjective and non-positivist processes.

Research Design

The research design for this study was explanatory research design. According to Schwandt (1997), explanatory research studies are conducted to develop a causal explanation of some social phenomenon. A researcher identifies a social event or circumstance such as crime or terrorism for investigation. The researcher then seeks to identify characteristics or variables that can be explained. This design aims at building theories that a researcher can use to explain a phenomenon, and predict future behaviour or similar circumstances. Therefore, the ultimate goal of explanatory research is the control of natural and social events (White, 1999). This design is suitable for this study because the focus has to do with a social phenomenon with cause and consequence relationships. On the one hand, the studies investigated trends of terrorist attacks in Kenya and on the other hand, examined the effects on basic education.

Research Methods

The method adopted in this study was historical research method. This method requires gathering of data, evaluation of data, and the presentation of the facts, in interpretations and conclusions that the researcher draws from the facts (Hockett, 1958).

McDowell (2002), spells out specific steps that a historical researcher must observe. He categorizes the steps into three:

- planning of the research (selection of subject, precise definition of subject, identification of source materials, identify methods and background reading
- Gathering and interpretation of data: draft outline, peruse source materials, review research notes, draft outline of chapters, complete the survey of sources of materials
- Writing and presentation of the findings: write the first draft, edit, then write final draft

This method was suitable for this study because the study predominantly adopted a historical analysis of terrorism trends in Kenya and how terrorism affects basic education.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher focused on the following sources for data collection: journals, internet data bases on terrorism, newspaper articles, position papers on the subject, government policy documents, status papers on terrorism from the national counter terrorism centre, thesis and projects related to the study. Data was extracted from the materials, organised according to the objectives of the study and recorded.

Data Analysis

Data was analysed according to the main themes as per the objective of the study. Analysis involved interpretation, analysis of trends in terror attacks, discussion on effects of terrorism on basic education, elucidation of the phenomena and derivation of logical recommendations.

Literature Review

There is a lot of literature, mainly focused on developed countries, on the impact of terrorism on the economy. Frey et al. (2007) review some of the literature on the effects of terrorist acts on tourism, savings and consumption, investment, stock markets, foreign trade, the urban economy, and national income and growth. The literature on the effect of terrorism on children in developed countries and particularly on their education, is however limited. Psychiatric and psychological literature examines the development of PTSD in children who are exposed to terrorist acts. Pfefferbaum et al., (1999, 2000) and Pfefferbaum (2001) find that middle- and high-school students who experienced direct exposure to the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing were at higher risk of developing PTSD than peers not exposed, however, they also detected PTSD symptoms in children who experienced in direct exposure (mainly via television). Duffy et al. (2015) find similar results among adolescents

aged 14–18 who were exposed to the Omagh car bombing in Northern Ireland in 1998. Schwarzwald et al. (1993) find higher stress responses among fifth-, seventh-, and tenth-grade Israeli children in areas hit by missiles during the 1990–1991 Persian Gulf War than among peers who had not been exposed to missiles, and that the responses were influenced by proximity to sites or individuals who had sustained actual damage. According to Hoven et al. (2003), New York City public schoolchildren (grades 4–12) exhibited higher than expected rates of PTSD six months after the September 11, 2001, terror attack in the city. Studies in this field show that PTSD symptoms are accompanied by school avoidance, rebellion at school and decline in school performance (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services et al., 2004). Studies of the Israeli-Palestinian political conflict find an effect on adolescents' mental, behavioural, and emotional problems as well as PTSD, with a greater effect on children who live in more intense conflict zones (Dimitry, 2012, and Al-Krenawi, 2009). Schiff et al. (2007) find that in addition to PTSD, negative consequences of terrorism exposure among Israeli tenth- and eleventh-grade students included abuse of substances such as alcohol and cannabis.

Developing countries usually experience more disruptive forms of conflict that affect children's education both by causing psychological distress and also by changing educational investment decisions, school functioning, and schooling quality (Justino, 2011). Recent studies on the effect of lower-intensity violent conflicts on students' academic achievement suggest two mechanisms for the negative impact: degradation of school quality and deterioration of student's psychological wellbeing (Monteiro and Rocha, 2016; Kibris, 2015 and Bruck et al., 2014). In developed countries, however, acts of terror cause hardly any disruption to the functioning and quality of the education system and have virtually no effect on the individual's educational investment decision.

Therefore, even if terrorism has a detrimental impact on human capital in developing countries, it is unclear if the same effect exists in developed countries with more stable education systems. Psychiatric and psychological studies on terror attacks in developed countries show that children and adolescents who experience terror events, either as direct victims or as indirect victims through visual and other media descriptions, have a higher risk of developing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Among adolescents, PTSD symptoms are accompanied by a decline in school performance and a higher incidence of involvement in risk-taking behaviour (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services et al., 2004; Pat-Horenczyk et al., 2007 and Schiff et al., 2007).

Effects of Terrorism on Basic Education in Kenya

The impact of terrorism on education in Kenya has been immense. First and foremost several teachers have died in many of the attacks. In the Mandera bus tragedy alone, twenty two teachers got butchered by the attackers. Over eight hundred teachers declined to report to work in North Eastern fearing for their lives. Even the national parliament demanded the transfer of teachers from Mandera citing security concerns (K'Odipo, 2017 and Moulid, 2014).). At the opening of the year, several teachers from the region refused to report to work and camped at the TSC offices for over two months demanding transfers. The ministry was adamant and employed others to fill their vacancies. They missed their salaries as result of the boycott. Mandera County alone has experienced a shortage of over 600 teachers (K'Odipo, 2017 and Moulid, 2014).). The situation has gotten worse with the killing of the remaining teachers. For example in Mandera Secondary School, over half of the non-native teachers refused to report to school this year, 2015. Some students do not have a qualified teacher in a given subject like Physics. They have to rely on previous students to handle the subject. Needless to say, their level of competence is highly questionable. It greatly affects the preparation of the candidates for the national examinations that are important to qualify for places in the public universities. Many teachers have demanded for transfer from the region (K'Odipo, 2017). The employer's regulations demand that a teacher spends at least five years in a station before transferring. Some who were unable to bear with that have got resignations with others staying but under great anxiety. The teacher unions Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) and Kenya Union of Post Primary Education Teachers (KUPPET) formally asked their members to leave the region due to insecurity. The KNUT leader reportedly told the government to turn the University College into a military camp before the attack. The teachers are not able to spend quality time with the students thus affecting the delivery and learning process (K'Odipo, 2017).

Distraction and Dissuasion The state of insecurity in the North Eastern region as well as other areas such as Kapado and Lamu dampens the teachers' spirit. Those who are willing to remain in the area have more important thing to worry about that is their security.

In Lamu County, five schools in the terror prone Basuba ward that closed down in 2014 remained closed till January 2020. The schools include: Milimani, Basuba, Mangai, Mararani and Kiangwe, all of which are inside the dense Boni Forest where a multi-agency security operation to flush out Al-Shabaab militants is ongoing. Upon opening, Only 10 teachers were posted to across the 5 schools, teachers each per school with learners in preschool up to grade four (Kasungu, 2020).

The government has been unable to guarantee their security even after several processes. In many instances, there have been assurances of enhanced security only for a more serious attack to happen. They are no longer able to believe the assurances from the governments. Consequently, the teachers spend less time researching so as to be better prepared to teach their lessons. The attendance to classes has never been regular with several classes going unattended. All these have served to lower the quality of education in the schools and the region. Many have to commute to Nairobi in an effort to process their transfers leaving students with no one (Woldehlase, 2013). The death of teachers at the hands of the terrorist has been a traumatic event even to the students and fellow teachers.

For instance, Mandera Academy lost four teachers in the bus attack. The remaining colleagues could not teach as normal. Even the students resent the prospect of becoming teachers if such can be the fate of a teacher. Few would want to train for the profession if there are better alternatives. It even affects the future prospect of education in the area. Several institutions have had to close due to the insecurity scare.

The Garissa University College terror attack in April 2014 was one of the worst attacks on learning institutions. After the attack, surviving students were transferred by the government to Moi University and other campuses to progress with their studies. Some however got too traumatized and did not proceed with studies. Possibly, they have deferred their studies at the fear of a prospective attack like the one they escaped. The Kenya Medical Training College, Garissa branch also closed due to security fears. The students were advised to apply to other branches for admission since the government could not guarantee security. Over three hundred students were affected by the closure. Another college had closed in fear of security just before the University attack. The trend of closure of education institutions hinders the process of learning for a region that has been lagging behind in terms of adult literacy. The private schools have also been affected by the wave of insecurity. However, some of their teachers remain in the area because of higher pay. Several mobile schools that were helpful in the area have had to close due to insecurity (Odhiambo et al. 2015).

The fear of terror attacks has driven down the enrolment levels in the region. Parents fear to send their children to schools in the region preferring to keep them alive even though uneducated. The wealthy parents opt to send their children to Nairobi to learn in a safer environment. On the other hand, the poor have to be content with the minimal education standard they have already attained. The closure of schools has also left even the willing students without any chance for better education. Some students have had to endure the painful memories of their dead teachers. The Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD, comes with such experiences and hinders their ability to learn. They require counselling and psychological support that is not available to them. This leaves them at the mercy of nature for their survival. Poor performance is inevitable in such circumstances even for the most brilliant brains. Terrorists have at times targeted infrastructure that aid in the process of learning. The Mpeketoni attack for example led to the burning of schools and buildings. Delays in the reconstruction leave the schools with no room to teach the students. Some have to learn under trees with all the distractions of an open environment.

The management of education in several regions of Kenya has been under serious threat due to terrorism. Experienced education administrators have died due to such attacks leaving a gap in the management. Many years of expertise and experience have been lost at the hands of terrorism. Some managers and head teachers have opted to resign or take lower positions in safer regions. Also, there have been losses of important education records from terrorist attacks. Destruction of such crucial information systems has been a major source of setback in terms of continuity of their programs. The exam processes have been under attack (O'Malley & UNESCO, 2010). For instance, a vehicle ferrying exam papers came under attack leading to destruction of materials and loss of lives. The continuity of education in such regions has been heavily reliant on support from Non-Governmental Organizations. They have run programs to supplement government effort in offering feeding, health and other programs. Due to insecurity, they have had to withdraw their staff from such areas and stop any funding. Such moves make it more difficult for the continuity of education in the areas. Several education-related programs have had to be cancelled in fear of such attacks. These areas that have lagged behind in education appear destined for more time in the dark unless the government acts to end insecurity.

Terrorism has greatly affected the whole world. It has disturbed both mental and physical health of all people of all ages. Undoubtedly terrorism has greatly affected all aspects of life but terrorist attacks on educational institutions have greatly traumatised the people especially students and their parents as these are soft

and vulnerable targets. In some parts of Africa, terrorists are opposed to the western education and the education of girls and have targeted schools and advocates of equal education (Jamal et al., 2016).

According to Ahmed et al. a total of 65.8% of the students had mild stress level. 91% of the students cancelled or postponed their plans for sports week trips as a result of fear. This was done without putting into consideration the value of extracurricular activities to their physical and mental health besides helping them to cope with terrorism especially the high endurance sports that train students to maintain patience and resilience in times of difficulty

Another study by Gilleppe et al., (2002) shows 53% psychiatric morbidity in terrorism exposed young adults. While in another study an adverse effect of an impairment of mental health Jamal et al., (2016). Found out that 80.3 of the total students think that watching news and discussion regarding terrorism on media channels or printed media has affected them. Majority i.e. 50.4% of these total students think that media exaggerates their situation and create a hype by extra promoting the news among "others" 60% think that media is useless and distressing whereas in another study 91.5% of university students were exposed to terrorism through television. 32.8% of the students avoid social gatherings due to fear of terrorism hence their exposure is seriously jeopardized. The fear of where and when the attack might occur causes worry affects their activities. They not only have suffered individually but 265 of them had lost one or two family members. During ward rotations and their duty they witness many victims of terrorism. All these factors lead to increased stress and anxiety in medical students.

Conclusion

Majority of the students perceived that terrorism had profound effects on their academics, mental wellbeing and social life, yet a majority of them were optimistic and enthusiastic to overcome this issue with determination and their recommendations.

The results of this study suggest that terror attacks affect student performance on tests mainly through stress that affects the learning process and cognitive acuity. Using within-student variation, the effects of terror from other possible channels (such as school quality, school accessibility, and education investment decisions) and overcome the potential effect of exposure to a sustained terrorist conflict. Hence, the implications of this study are relevant for developed countries that experience terror attacks in an intermittent manner, even when no damage was done to the functioning of the education system.

The findings also can be generalized to the effect of terror on performance in other exams (e.g., SAT or university exams) and may be relevant for other activities that are associated with cognitive acuity, such as productivity at work. This study provides evidence that terror attacks, apart from all their other adverse effects on society, temporarily impairs students' learning and exam performance. This result leads to more questions regarding the permanent effect of terror on a student's human capital formation. Although I find that the effect of terror is transitory, it is possible that there are lasting effects on human capital accumulation. A reduced form analysis performed in this study indicates a negative effect of terror on academic out comes with long-term implications. I find that the intensity of a terror attack if it occurs before a matriculation exam is negatively associated with the probability of passing the exam, the probability of obtaining a matriculation certificate, and the quality of the certificate earned, which have meaningful long-term implications in determining access to college and admission to various programs or majors. The identification strategy used in this paper could be used for future research into the effect of terror on long-term human capital outcomes

The education sector is reeling from the constant attack of terrorists. Deaths of students and teachers as destruction of educational facilities are just some of the impacts. In the most affected counties of Mandera, Wajir and Garissa the level of enrolment has dropped down significantly. Many teachers that were working in the area have left their work stations. Some opted to resign, seek transfer yet those left work under trauma and anxiety. The few rich parents have managed to send their children to Nairobi for education. The others remain to study under difficult conditions. The government has to carry out immediate and extensive measures to restore the level of security so as to ensure continuity of education programs. Securing every single school is important in giving the school fraternity a sense of security as well as courage. The government has to do that and more to ensure the students re-enrol and teachers get motivated to work in the area.

Recommendation

The measures to reduce the impact of terrorism on education can be classified in two categories. There have to be measures to prevent attacks as well as the impact of the attacks. In the first place, the government has to beef up security in the educational facilities. Each school should have at least a police post to grant the staff and students a sense of security in addition to scaring away prospective attackers (Woldeslase, 2013). The move will be expensive in the short run, but ultimately it will help to raise the standards of education in the area.

Another immediate short term measure is to ensure that the government offers better terms of work for the teachers and other government workers that offer to work in the area. As in any other business venture in the world, the higher the risk, the greater should be the reward. In addition the better security, many people can offer to work in the area for better remuneration. It may be helpful for the government to encourage the natives of North Eastern province and other insecure areas to work in their home places. The logic is that they are more able to withstand the pressure than strangers. They have to be at the fore front in developing their areas rather than leave others to do it for them. In the event of a terrorist attack, the government has to be proactive in reconstructing the necessary facilities to assist in the learning process. Schools and other infratructures that get destroyed should get replaced the soonest to avoid inconveniences (Woldeslase, 2013). The teachers will also be motivated to see a government that is responsive to their needs. The government has to invest in social programs to reduce poverty and economic disparities. Many youths that get recruited by the Al Shabaab are poor and with the promise of better life they accept to embrace their lie. They easily get radicalized and carry out attacks against Kenya. Meaningful education to counteract the extremists' propaganda will ensure that the country remains secure.

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