EFFECT OF COLLAPSING INSURGENCY LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION ON ECONOMIC LIVELIHOOD OF HOUSEHOLDS IN LAMU COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The rise of insurgency in Kenya has increased in the recent past. The attacks by Al-Shabaab extremists in Kenya have threatened to wipe out the gains made from tourism and has destabilized livelihood earning activities in some parts of the country such as Lamu County. The struggle for Lamu is not an unfortunate but obscure episode in the War on Terror however; it is a battleground for the economic prosperity of East Africa. Lamu County is the planned site of one of the most ambitious economic initiatives attempted in Africa — the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport Corridor project creating a network of roads, rail-lines and pipelines connecting South Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya, with the additional construction of three resort cities and a modern port and refinery. Successful counter insurgency in the county is hence key in establishing economic stability of not only the region, but also the entire East Africa region. The study specifically sought to establish the effect of collapsing insurgency leadership and strategic communication on economic livelihood of households in Lamu County, Kenya. This study was guided by the Chaos theory and the Interactional View theory. The study adopted a mixed method research design where both quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted. The study targeted Three county administrators including the Governor, County Commissioner and County Minister in charge of security at Lamu County, 4 heads of security agencies in the county including Kenya Police, Administration Police, National Intelligence Service and Kenya Defence Forces to participate in the interview. The study also targeted the civic organizations in the county which totals to 48 according to the ministry of gender, culture and social services of Lamu County. Data was collected through the use of questionnaires and interview guides. The collected data was analysed through qualitative methods involving thematic / content analysis as well as quantitative analysis involving descriptive, correlation and regression analysis. The study established that only collapsing insurgency leadership has a significant effect on economic livelihood while strategic communication does not. All have a positive effect however. Based on the findings the study recommends the state agencies and organs involved in fighting terrorism and countering insurgencies in other parts affected to consider adopting the strategy of collapsing insurgency leadership, strategic communication, consider investing more in economic development and transformation by empowering the youth with skills and capital to manage economic activities in order to improves their economic livelihood significantly and reduce their engagement in terrorism activities and involvement of various organs such as security agencies, both levels of government, the people and the civic groups in the region affected by insurgent groups in the process of countering it so as to win the trust of the people and hence lead to a more successful mission which can restore normalcy and improves economic livelihood.

Key Words: *collapsing insurgency leadership, strategic communication, economic livelihood of households, Lamu County, Kenya*

INTRODUCTION

The youths in Africa have been involved in Armed conflicts either because of family issues, poverty, or being forcefully admitted onto militia groups, which has made them ready combatants that are being used by the political elite to cause violence in the society that they are within and as a means to achieve their own objectives, some of these groups are either controlled by the political elite or organized youth groups to achieve their economic objective. Insurgency groups in Kenya is a major issue that has stalled development agendas, the threat they cause have had an implication in restructuring the interest of investors from investing in various regions of the country with the fear of their security and that of their businesses (Coffey, 2014).

May and June 2014 Kenya appeared in the international media on a regular basis, the attacks in the City of Nairobi and Mombasa, the communal unrest in the Northern part of the country and the increased attacks by insurgence groups in small towns highlighted the variability of the security situation in the country by then, several travel companies issued travel bans to various destinations in Kenya until the end of October, the government was under severe pressure by the outrage public who were affected by the travel ban that had been issued, this affected much of the country operation cost on various markets that define the backbone of the country (Coffey, 2014). The unique structure of the militia groups has made it difficult for the government to eliminate them completely but only through controlling their influence within the region. Taking Mungiki as a unique characteristic, their influence within the region has proven to be difficult for government agencies to control and eliminate them; their well-established influence in the helm of the government has been a considerable factor that can be attributed to the success of their operations (Stephen, 2010).

This spate of insurgency groups and their influence in Kenya have developed over the years to be among the emerging security threats in the country that limits proper government operations, the most common insurgence groups that are attributed for several attacks in Kenya and which has caught the attention of the international community has been Al-Hijra and Al-Shaabab, with the rise in Globalized radical islamist terrorism has been in the rise. (Sibena, 2015)Overtime the influence of terrorism has spread from its Middle Eastern roots and currently there is no country that is safe from attacks that have been master gated by terror groups, within the region of the Horn of Africa, Kenya has been the latest country to be hard hit by terror groups, the two groups Al-Hijra and Alshabaab work in coordination to recruit and organize attacks that can be done within the country, Al-Hijra is responsible for recruiting new members onto the senior group Al-shabaab which is tasked with launching attacks Kenya has found itself on the rush to raft a counter terrorism measure that range from legislative to institutional mechanisms (Sibena, 2015).

Despite the legislative and institutional mechanisms that have been established the fabric of implementations has failed the success of the mechanisms that have been proposed and this has led to continued growth of the insurgence groups, the threat of the terror groups still persists to the very day begging the question the legitimacy and the feasibility of the institutions, what else

does Kenya need to do to end this threat? According to (Charo, 2014) the 1992 general elections which saw Kanu win was the beginning of the government policy to address insurgence groups, the government took strong measures against insurgency groups such as Jeshi la Wazee and Mungiki which were highly attributed to the political elite and had the task to collect taxes from Matatus in the city were chased from the streets by the government when they had purportedly put it under their control (Sibena, 2015).

When these militant groups were economically orphaned they formed notorious militias who engaged in crime in the city and its surrounding for their survival and by the year 1997 several political violence was witnessed during the election period, this violence had been instigated by the militia groups who were retaliating to the government action of 1993 to withdraw them from the streets. With the then regime which the populaces were discordant with their way of ruling the then opposition used the militia group to instigate violence against the government to cause unrest within the country as a measure to put the government on its toes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Terrorism is a global issue that requires crafting global strategies. Paul, Clarke and Grill (2010), observed that winning a counter insurgency campaign needs well-crafted and revised strategies. The rise of insurgency in Kenya has increased in the recent past. The attacks by Al-Shabaab extremists in Kenya have threatened to wipe out the gains made from tourism and has destabilized livelihood earning activities in some parts of the country such as Lamu County (Omondi, 2015). This therefore warranted a look at the various counter insurgency strategies adopted and its effect on economic livelihood of the households in Lamu. The study also sought to fill in the knowledge gaps in previous studies. A study by Miraftab and Wills (2005) which investigated insurgency and spaces of active citizenship focused on Western Cape anti-eviction campaign in South Africa thus creating a contextual knowledge gap. A study by Doohovskoy (2009) similarly focused on an investigation of counter insurgency strategies but was done outside the country thus creating a contextual knowledge gap. The study by Ang (2015) on the counter insurgency strategies applied by British agencies during the Mau-Mau upsurge in Kenya can be linked to this study but it presented a knowledge gap because of the time lapse. Another study by Odhiambo, et al (2013) to determine the counter insurgency strategies used to counter Al Shabaab signaled out the use of strategic communication as the main strategy which is a conceptual knowledge gap due to the focus on one strategy only. The study by Bradbury and Kleinman (2010) which assessed the influence of aid and security provision in Kenya as a counter insurgency strategy presented is a conceptual knowledge gap due to the focus on one strategy only. This study focused on two strategies in order to fill these knowledge gaps.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the study is to establish the effect of collapsing insurgency leadership and strategic communication on economic livelihood of households in Lamu County, Kenya

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Chaos Theory

The Chaos theory was put forth by Bower (1988). The theory explains the desire to create order and control a situation in speed and agility to reduce negative spillover effects of a disaster. Further the theory explains that during times of high instability such as disasters and occasions when emergency services reach peak levels of activity it is essential to recognize that stability can only be regained by developing strategies that quick to elicit timely response.

According to Azar and Vaidyanathan (2016), when planning for emergencies, whether connected to terrorism, epidemics, hurricanes, earthquakes, fires, floods or any other manmade or natural cause, the value of the planning process will add markedly to the degree of preparedness and response attainment. Given that logistics to enhance timely response may be complex there may be need to involve all layers of public institutions and private citizenry.

The theory is relevant to the study as it links counter-insurgency strategies to economic livelihood. The theory explained the desire to create order and control a situation with speed and agility to reduce negative spillover effects. According to the theory, better preparations are essential to manage the negative effects of a disaster such as terrorism.

Interactional View Theory

The Interactional View is an interpretive theory developed by Watzlawick (1984). According to this theory interpersonal communication is centred on five axioms. First, every behaviour is a system of communication and since behaviour does not have a counterpart (there is no anti-behaviour), it is not possible not to communicate. Secondly, every communication not has content but also relationship component determined by how the speaker wishes to be understood and his view of the relationship of with the information receiver. Thirdly, the way in which the communicating parties punctuate their message determines the form of relationship among them and thus portray their behaviour in response to the other communicating party's behaviour. Fourthly, human beings communicate not only communicate digitally but also analogically and fifthly, communication is concurrently centred on equal power and variances in power.

The counter insurgent strategy of strategic communication requires the coordination of multiple actors and their activities. The interaction between various organs, ranging from the stakeholders

and security agency and other operational staff is fundamental in having a successful counter insurgent strategy.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Collapsing Insurgency Leadership (Infiltration)

Collapsing insurgency Leadership involves targeting militant leaders and is central to many states' national security strategies (Abrahms & Mierau, 2017). It has previously been argued that killing or capturing militant leaders increases the chances of a rapid end to insurgencies; enhances the probability of campaign outcomes favorable to counterinsurgents; reduces the intensity of violent conflict; and shrinks the number of insurgent-initiated attacks, such as armed attacks and kidnappings (Price, 2016).

Other scholars have argued that killing or capturing militant leaders can be a useful tool, though it may be more effective when integrated into a larger counterinsurgency strategy. Counterinsurgents are more successful in campaigns in which they decapitate the insurgent leadership than in those in which they do not, regardless of the group's aims or ideology (Abrahms & Potter, 2015).

There also exist contrary opinions, according to the conventional wisdom, the civilian population, not the group's leadership or rank-and-file members, is the insurgent's center of gravity. Weaning civilians away from insurgents by winning their hearts and minds is the key to effective counterinsurgency; direct action against insurgent leaders through raids or air strikes may come at the cost of civilian support, inadvertently strengthening insurgencies. The policy would therefore be counterproductive if leadership decapitation is associated with prolonged campaigns and high rates of government defeat and if it increases both the number and lethality of insurgent attacks (Stevenson, Pate & Asiamah, 2017).

Generally, there is a consensus that military leaders' matter. Abrahms and Potter, (2015) argued that militant leaders do matter and that removing them enhances the effectiveness of counterinsurgency strategies. Leadership decapitations are associated with curtailed insurgent activity, decreased insurgent violence, and an increased likelihood of government victory. These patterns are not limited to certain types of groups and there is no statistical evidence that the impact of decapitation differs across groups with different aims and ideologies.

Strategic Communication

Every act in counter insurgency camp portrays a message that will either foster or discourage community support of the counter insurgency efforts (Khan & Jamshed-ur- Rehman, 2014). On the other hand, insurgents use strategic communication designed at reflecting the communal beliefs and ideologies but strategically conveying messages meant to undermine the government

authority while also enhancing legitimacy of the insurgent activities (Rid & Keaney, 2010). Furthermore, insurgents manipulate their informational dissemination to have maximum effect aimed at generating support from the community and strategically altering response by the government agencies (Desouza & Wang, 2007).

Insurgency information use is considered the life-blood since it serves as a basis to which it recruits its members, portray societal beliefs, gain communal support and beyond, as well as gain greater alliances in to the global extremism (Schmid, 2014). In most cases it is the insurgents who develop the narrative and the government agencies develop the counter-narrative (Onuoha, 2014). Counter Insurgency strategic communication is not only about winning the hearts and minds of the locals but also provides de-radicalization avenues for insurgent recruits thus inhibiting radicalization. In addition, strategic communication enables the government agencies to enhance their legitimacy and foster collaboration with the locals hence enhanced intelligence gathering thus more effective counter insurgency operations (Marine Corps, 2014).

To reduce discontent and enhance local's support, the strategic communication should endevour to generate and sustain a realistic local's expectations while also enhancing the population's acceptance for the unavoidable inconveniences caused by on-going counter insurgency operations (Hunton, 2008). This conveying of messages should however be harmonized with actions consistent with the wider counter-narrative. The aim of strategic communication should be to manipulate the insurgent's ideological susceptibilities, plummeting prospective for ideological resonance, reducing the abilities of the insurgents to influence the locals, and cause discontent among the insurgents or between the locals and the insurgents thus reducing mobilization ideology (Forest, 2012). As a result, strategic communication should seek to foster damaging perceptions of the insurgent's authority, religious trustworthiness, operational capability, financial reliability, and much more.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A mixed-method research design will be adopted for this research. This approach combines the strengths of both quantitative (Closed-ended data) and qualitative (open-ended data) research approaches to present a more enhanced insight into the research problem, trustworthiness of inferences from the data acquired, providing flexibility for the researcher to highlight the similarities, differences and to ensure total representation of particular aspects of a phenomenon (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Additionally, the merging of both methods can complement each other to reduce the weaknesses in both quantitative and qualitative designs. The study targeted county administrators including the Governor, County Commissioner and County Minister in charge of security at Lamu County and heads of security agencies in the county including Kenya Police, Administration Police, National Intelligence Service and Kenya Defence Forces. This group participated in the interview. The study also targeted the civic organizations in the county which totaled to 48 according to the ministry of gender, culture and social services of Lamu County at

the time of the study. The study adopted purposive sampling by specifically focusing on agents related to security in Lamu County and they included Governor, County Commissioner and County Minister in charge of security at Lamu County and heads of security agencies in the county including Kenya Police, Administration Police, National Intelligence Service and Kenya Defence Forces. The study used both quantitative and qualitative primary data. Quantitative data was collected through closed questions in questionnaires. The closed questions were obtained through a likert scale on a rating of 1 to 5 ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The intent of this scale is that the statement represents different aspects of the same attitude (Ledford & Gast, 2018). Likert scale is simple to construct, and is easy for the respondents to read, understand and respond appropriately to the statements put across. Qualitative data was collected through key informant interviews as well as open ended questions in the questionnaire. During the stage of data collection using a questionnaire, the method of drop and pick was used. The questionnaire was self-administered to the members of the civic groups in the county. After they filled, the questionnaires were collected within two weeks' timeframe. During the stage of data collection using interviews, a mixture of methods ranging from recording and noting was used. Data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data was then analyzed by content analysis method. After quantitative data had been collected through the closed ended questions in the questionnaires, it will be prepared in readiness for analysis by editing, handling blank responses, coding, categorizing and keying into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software version 24 for analysis. SPSS was used to produce frequencies, descriptive and inferential statistics which will be used to derive conclusions and generalizations regarding the population. Data was presented in form of tables, charts and bar graphs. Descriptive analysis entailed the use of frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. In addition, inferential analysis involving correlation analysis and regression were used in the study to achieve the objectives. The following multivariate regression model was adopted:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Where: Y is the dependent variable (Economic Livelihood of Lamu Households); X_1 is Collapsing insurgency leadership; X_2 is Strategic Communication; β_0 is the regression constant or intercept; β_1 and β_2 are the unknown parameters (regression coefficients); ε is the error term

RESEARCH RESULTS

Collapsing Insurgency Leadership

Descriptive findings showed that in order of strength, the most preferred strategy in as far as collapsing insurgency leadership is concerned has been arresting insurgency leaders temporarily followed by capture insurgency leaders then jailing insurgency leaders. Inferential statistics

showed that collapsing insurgency leadership has a positive and significant effect on economic livelihood of the households of Lamu County, Kenya.

Strategic Communication

Descriptive findings showed that there was an agreement that strategic communication has been applied in Lamu County to counter insurgency through social platforms, media, civic groups and barazas. Inferential statistics showed that strategic communication has a positive but not significant effect on economic livelihood of the households of Lamu County, Kenya thus an increase in strategic communication would lead to an insignificant improvement in economic livelihood of Lamu households.

INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

Results further revealed that collapsing insurgency leadership significantly improves economic livelihood ($r = 0.796$; $P < 0.05$). This means that when the insurgency leadership is collapsed, there is more hope that the counterinsurgency would be a success which then restores trust thus people engage more in economic activities thus improving their livelihood in the long run. Price (2016) similarly agreed that collapsing insurgent leaders increases the chances of a rapid end to insurgencies and enhances stabilization.

The results also showed that strategic communication improves economic livelihood ($r = 0.691$; $P < 0.05$). This means that when the government is more in strategic communication countering propaganda and creating awareness among the people, there is more trust in the efforts to counter insurgency thus people invest more thus improving their economic livelihood. Odhiambo, et al (2013) also agreed that the use of strategic communication to counter Al Shabaab was a significant strategy in Kenya.

Table 1: Correlation Results

		Collapsing Leadership	Strategic Communication	Economic Livelihood
Collapsing Leadership	Pearson Correlation	1		
Strategic Communication	Pearson Correlation	.452**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004		
Economic Livelihood	Pearson Correlation	.792**	.691**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	
	N	39	39	39

The regression model coefficients indicated the strength of the significance of the beta coefficients and indicated that collapsing insurgency leadership has a positive and significant effect on economic livelihood of the households of Lamu County, Kenya ($\beta = 0.376$; P-Value < 0.05). It shows that a unit increase in collapsing insurgency leadership improves economic livelihood of the households of Lamu County significantly. Abrahams and Potter (2015) agreed that collapsing insurgency leadership can be a useful tool, though it may be more effective when integrated into a larger counterinsurgency strategy.

Last results showed that strategic communication has a positive but not significant effect on economic livelihood of the households of Lamu County, Kenya ($\beta = 0.078$; P-Value > 0.05). It shows that a unit increase in strategic communication would improve economic livelihood of the households of Lamu County but not in a significant manner. A study by Doohovskoy (2009) also indicated that the use of strategic communication in Soviet Union which involved information distribution through local dailies and radio stations led to success of the mission.

Table 2: Model Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-0.554	0.342		-1.621	0.114
Collapsing Insurgency Leadership	0.376	0.092	0.359	4.076	0.000
Strategic Communication	0.078	0.104	0.075	0.746	0.461
Dependent Variable: Economic Livelihood					

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that when the insurgency leadership is collapsed, there is more hope that the counterinsurgency would be a success which then restores trust thus people engage more in economic activities thus improving their livelihood in the long run. Another conclusion is that when the government is more in strategic communication countering propaganda and creating awareness among the people, there is more trust in the efforts to counter insurgency thus people invest more thus improving their economic livelihood.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings that collapsing insurgency leadership would improve economic livelihood significantly, the study recommends the state agencies and organs involved in fighting terrorism and countering insurgencies in other parts affected to consider adopting this strategy. Since strategic communication would improve economic livelihood though not significantly, the study recommends the state agencies and organs involved in fighting terrorism and countering

insurgencies in other parts affected to consider adopting this strategy although at a manageable extent while giving emphasis to other strategies.

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