Implications of Terrorism in Community Likelihoods: An Interrogation on Insurgency and Strategic Leadership Challenges in Lamu County, Kenya

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Abstract

Kenya has seen an uptick in insurgency activity recently. In areas of Kenya, like Lamu County, the attacks by Al-Shabaab militants have destabilized livelihood-earning activities and threatened to wipe out the benefits garnered from tourism. Instead of being a minor footnote in the War on Terror, the struggle in Lamu is for the future of East Africa's economy. The construction of three resort cities, a modern port and refinery, and a network of roads, rail lines, and pipelines connecting South Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Kenya all take place in Lamu County, making it the site of one of the most ambitious economic initiatives attempted in Africa. As a result, the area and all of East Africa depend on the success of the counter-insurgency effort in the country. The goal of this research was to determine how the breakdown of insurgency leadership and strategic communication affected the daily lives of families in Lamu County, Kenya. Both the chaos theory and the interactional view were used as theoretical frameworks for this research. The research strategy was a hybrid one, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. The study identified the Governor, County Commissioner, and County Executive Committee Member responsible for security in Lamu County, as well as the four heads of the county's security agencies (Kenya Police, Administration Police, National Intelligence Service, and Kenya Defense Forces), while 18 civic organizations were the focus of the research. Information was gathered using questionnaires and structured interviews. Quantitative methods including descriptive, correlation, and regression analysis, as well as qualitative methods like thematic and content analysis, were used to examine the data. According to the results, strategic communication has no bearing on people's economic well-being, while the collapse of insurgency leadership has a profound impact. State agencies and organs involved in fighting terrorism and countering insurgencies in other affected regions are urged to adopt the strategy of collapsing insurgency, and strategic communication, and to invest more in economic development and transformation by equipping young people with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to manage economic activities.

Key Words: Terrorism, Community Likelihoods, Interrogation, Insurgency, and Strategic Leadership

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Introduction

The youth of Africa have become ready combatants due to their involvement in armed conflicts as a result of family problems, poverty, or being forcibly admitted into militia groups (Meinema, 2020). These groups are sometimes controlled by political elites or organized youth groups to achieve economic objectives. The presence of insurgent groups in Kenya is a big problem that has slowed progress on development projects. According to Meinema (2020) this is because investors are understandably wary of putting money into certain areas of the country out of concern for their safety and the safety of their enterprises.

The attacks in the cities of Nairobi and Mombasa, communal unrest in the north, and increased attacks by insurgence groups in small towns all brought international attention to Kenya in May and June of 2014, and as a result, several travel companies issued travel bans to various destinations in Kenya until the end of October, and the government came under intense pressure from the international community (František Žák, 2020). Due to their organizational differences, the government has found it difficult to eradicate militia organizations and has instead focused on limiting their sway over the territory. Mungiki's well-established influence at the helm of government is one significant factor that can be attributed to the success of their operations.

The rise of Al-Hijra and Al-Shaabab, two insurgent groups, coincides with globalized radical Islamist terrorism and has hampered government operations in Kenya. According to a study (Mwangi, 2023), Terrorism has spread from its Middle Eastern origins, and today no country is immune to attacks masterminded by terror groups. In the Horn of Africa, Kenya is the most recent country to be severely affected by terrorism, with two groups, Al-Hijra and Alshabaab, working together to recruit members and organize attacks. Kenya is currently in a mad dash to hastily draft a variety of anti-terrorism measures, from laws to bureaucratic structures, according to Mwangi (2023).

To this day, the threat of the insurgence groups remains, calling into question the legitimacy and the feasibility of the institutions, and prompting the question, What else does Kenya need to do to end this threat? Legislative and institutional mechanisms have been established, but the fabric of implementations has failed to ensure the success of the mechanisms that have been proposed. According to (Sammy & Gitau, 2020), the government's policy to address insurgence groups began with Kanu's victory in the 1992 general elections. At that time, the government took strong measures against insurgence groups like Jeshi la Wazee and Mungiki, which were widely blamed on the political elite and had the task of collecting taxes from Matatus in the city.

The economic isolation of these militant groups led to the formation of infamous militias that turned to crime in the city and its environs for survival (Mwangi, 2023). By 1997, political violence had broken out repeatedly during election periods; this violence had been instigated by the militia groups in retaliation for the government's action in 1993 to

remove them from the streets. When the people of a country were unhappy with the government's methods of rule, the opposition would utilize militias to incite violence against the government to stir up discontent and keep the administration on edge as noted by Feichtinger (2017).

Assumptions

The implications of terrorism on community livelihoods in Lamu County are likely to be significant, leading to various challenges related to insurgency and strategic leadership.

Objective

To establish the implications of terrorism on community livelihoods, through interrogating collapsing insurgency and strategic communication in Lamu County.

Statement of Problem

Terrorism is a worldwide problem that calls for worldwide solutions. A successful counterinsurgency campaign requires careful planning and regular re-evaluation. Kenya has seen an uptick in insurgency activity recently. In other areas of Kenya, like Lamu County, the attacks by Al-Shabaab militants have destabilized livelihood-generating activities and threatened to wipe out tourism benefits. As a result, it was necessary to analyze how different counterinsurgency tactics affected the daily lives of Lamu's residents financially. The study's authors also aimed at closing research gaps. There is a lack of information regarding insurgency and spaces of active citizenship. A comparable analysis of counter-insurgency techniques was conducted leaving a gap in understanding the background. This research can be linked to counter-insurgency techniques used by British agencies during the Mau-Mau upsurge in Kenya, although the information gap is understandable. The study identified the counter-insurgency techniques used to counter Al Shabaab, and they found that strategic communication was the primary tactic, highlighting a deficit in our conceptual understanding of the topic. Due to its singular focus, analysis of the effectiveness of aid and security provision in Kenya as a counterinsurgency tactic exposes a gap in our understanding of the field. To address these informational gaps, our study focused on two approaches.

Review of Related Literature
Infiltration

In many countries' national security strategies, eliminating insurgencies relies heavily on eliminating insurgent leaders (Abrahms & Mierau, 2017). Killing or capturing insurgent leaders has been argued to hasten the end of insurgencies, increase the likelihood of successful counterinsurgent campaigns, lessen the likelihood of violent conflict, and decrease the number of insurgent-initiated attacks like armed attacks and kidnappings (František Žák, 2020).

Killing or capturing insurgent leaders has been advocated as a valuable weapon by other authors, albeit it may have a greater impact as part of a broader counterinsurgency campaign. Decapitating the insurgent leadership is crucial to the success of any counterinsurgency effort, regardless of the group's goals or ideology (Abrahms & Potter, 2017).

The civilian population, not the group's leadership or rank-and-file members, is the common wisdom's center of gravity; however, this view has its detractors (Omondi, 2015). Taking direct action against insurgent leaders through raids or air attacks may come at the

cost of civilian support, unwittingly boosting insurgencies. The key to effective counterinsurgency is to wean civilians away from insurgents by gaining their hearts and minds. Decapitating leaders wouldn't be a good idea if it increases the frequency and severity of insurgent attacks, as well as the length of campaigns (Stevenson, Pate, & Asiamah, 2017).

The importance of military leadership is widely acknowledged. Counterinsurgency efforts are bolstered by the elimination of militant commanders, according to Abrahms and Potter (2017). Reducing insurgent activity, bloodshed, and the chance of a government triumph are all correlated with the elimination of insurgent leaders. There is no statistical evidence that the effect of decapitation varies amongst groups with diverse purposes and beliefs, therefore these trends are not unique to any one category.

Strategic Communication

Every action taken by a counterinsurgency group sends a message that can either increase or decrease public support for these activities (Jones, 2017). The insurgents, on the other hand, employ strategic communication aimed at reflecting communal views and ideologies while strategically transmitting messages meant to weaken government authority and enhance the legitimacy of insurgent activities (Sammy & Gitau, 2020). In addition, insurgents systematically adjust the response of government authorities and manipulate the information they disseminate for maximum effect (Gitau, 2020).

Since it is used to recruit members, depict social beliefs, acquire communal support and beyond, and forge larger ties in global extremism, information is considered the insurgency's lifeblood (Mesok, 2022). For the most part, rebels craft stories while government organizations create rebuttals (Schrader, 2022). Strategic communication against insurgency is not only about winning over the people but also about providing de-radicalization opportunities for insurgent recruits, hence reducing their likelihood of becoming radicalized. Effective counterinsurgency operations are made possible by better intelligence gathering and collaboration with locals, both of which are facilitated by improved strategic communication (Sammy and Gitau, 2020).

Strategic communication should aim to create and maintain realistic expectations among locals to reduce discontent and increase support, as well as to increase the population's tolerance for the inevitable inconveniences brought on by ongoing counterinsurgency operations (Schrader, 2022). It is important that these messages be accompanied by actions that are in line with the broader counter-narrative. The goal of strategic communication is to manipulate the insurgents' ideological susceptibilities, thereby decreasing the prospects for ideological resonance, reducing the insurgents' abilities to influence the locals, and causing discontent among the insurgents or between the locals and the insurgents, thereby decreasing mobilization ideology by Sammy and Gitau (2020). Therefore, strategic communication should work to promote negative views of the insurgent's authority, religious trustworthiness, operational competence, financial reliability, and many other factors.

Methodology

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach. The advantages of both quantitative (Closed-ended data) and qualitative (Open-ended data) research methods were combined in this method (Mackey & Gass, 2015), giving researchers a deeper understanding of the research problem, greater confidence in the conclusions drawn from the data collected, and more room to maneuver when drawing parallels or contrasting aspects of a phenomenon. Together, the

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strengths of the quantitative and qualitative approaches were strengthened, and their respective flaws were mitigated. Researchers sought out the Governor, County Commissioner, and County Minister responsible for security in Lamu County, as well as the chiefs of the county's security agencies, including the Kenya Police, Administration Police, National Intelligence Service, and Kenya Defense Forces. These individuals took part in the survey. According to the Ministry of Women, culture, and social services in Lamu County, at the time of the study, there were a total of 48 civic groups in the county.

The research used a purposive sampling method, selecting as participants the Governor, County Commissioner, and County Minister responsible for security in Lamu County, as well as the heads of the county's security agencies, which included the Kenya Police, Administration Police, National Intelligence Service, and Kenya Defense Forces. Quantitative and qualitative primary data were employed in the study. Closed-ended questionnaire questions were used to glean quantitative information. The responses to the closed-ended questions were compiled using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 representing strongly disagreeing and 5 representing strongly agreeing.

According to the theory behind this scale (Ledford & Gast, 2018), the statement is meant to express varying degrees of the same mindset. Likert scales are straightforward to create, and responders have little trouble reading them, comprehending their meaning and providing thoughtful responses. Open-ended questions in the survey and in-depth interviews with key informants were used to gather qualitative information. Drop and pick were used during the questionnaire data-gathering phase. Members of county civic groups administered the survey to themselves. Within two weeks of being filled out, the questionnaires were collected. The interview phase of data collecting involved a number of different approaches, including recording and noting.

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to examine the data. Following this, content analysis was used to examine the qualitative data. The quantitative data collected through the questionnaires' closed-ended questions will be edited, blank responses handled, codes assigned, and data entered into SPSS version 24 for analysis. Statistics, both descriptive and inferential, were generated in SPSS to be utilized in drawing inferences and broad strokes about the population. Tables, charts, and bar graphs were used to display the data. Frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation were all utilized in the descriptive analysis. Furthermore, the study's goals were accomplished with the use of inferential analysis, including correlation analysis and regression.

Findings

Descriptive research on the topic of insurgency collapse found that, in order of efficacy, the temporary arrest of insurgent leaders, the capture of insurgency leaders, and finally incarceration of insurgency leaders have all been used as strategies with the greatest success. The collapse of insurgency leadership has had a favorable and considerable impact on the economic livelihood of the households in Lamu County, Kenya, according to inferential statistics.

Descriptive research on strategic communication found consensus among local stakeholders that these various channels have been used to fight insurgency efforts in Lamu County. Based on inferential statistics, it may be concluded that strategic communication positively affects the economic livelihood of the households in Lamu County, Kenya, although not to a statistically significant degree.

The collapse of insurgency leadership was also found to considerably boost economic living using inferential statistics ($r = 0.796$; P 0.05). This means that when the insurgency's leadership falls, people have higher expectations that the counterinsurgency will succeed, which in turn restores trust and encourages them to participate more actively in economic activities, enhancing their standard of living in the long run. Insurgencies are more likely to terminate quickly and stabilization is improved if their leaders are eliminated, as was argued by Jones, (2017).

The findings also demonstrated that strategic communication contributes to increased financial security ($r = 0.691$; P 0.05). This means that when the government invests more in strategic communication aimed at opposing propaganda and raising public knowledge, people have more faith in counter-insurgency efforts, and as a result, they are more likely to make financial investments, which in turn improves economic conditions for everyone. Strategic communication as a tool in the fight against Al Shabaab in Kenya was deemed important by Odhiambo et al. (2013). According to the results of the regression analysis, the beta coefficients are very significant ($\beta = 0.376$; P-Value 0.05), indicating that the collapse of insurgency leadership has a positive and statistically significant effect on the economic livelihood of the households in Lamu County, Kenya. It demonstrates that the economic well-being of households in Lamu County increases dramatically with each additional unit of insurgency leadership that is destroyed. Collapsing insurgent leadership is a helpful technique, as agreed upon by Abrahams and Potter (2017); nevertheless, it may be more effective when incorporated into a broader counterinsurgency strategy.

Strategic communication has improved the economic well-being of households in Lamu County, Kenya ($\beta = 0.078$; P-Value > 0.05), however, this effect is not statistically significant. It demonstrates that an increase of one unit in strategic communication would marginally improve the economic well-being of households in Lamu County. Strategic communication in the Soviet Union, including the dissemination of information through local daily and radio stations, was crucial to the success of the operation, according to research by Doohovskoy (2009).

Conclusion

The research found that when the insurgency's leadership falls, people have more faith that the counterinsurgency will succeed, restoring confidence and encouraging them to participate more actively in economic activities, which ultimately improves their standard of living. Another takeaway is that people are more willing to participate in the economy and less likely to support insurgents when the government is actively engaged in strategic communication aimed at refuting propaganda and raising knowledge among the populace.

Recommendations

State agencies and organs involved in combatting terrorism and opposing insurgencies in other places affected are urged to consider adopting this technique after it was found that the collapse of insurgent leadership would considerably improve economic livelihood. The study concludes that state agencies and organs involved in fighting terrorism and countering insurgencies in other affected regions should consider adopting this strategy, albeit to a manageable extent, while emphasizing other strategies, because strategic communication would improve economic livelihood, albeit not significantly.

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