

The Impact of the Interreligious dialogue in society: A case study at Garissa public university in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Kenya has experienced terrorist attacks for many years. Garissa university in Kenya suffered religious-related conflicts from the al Shabab militia group causing the death of 147 innocent people. The interreligious dialogue was initiated after the attack. In many other terrorist attacks experienced in Kenya, none applied interreligious dialogue. This research seeks to find out the impact of interreligious dialogue in the concrete case at Garissa University and its inhabitants.

I did a qualitative study and collected data using semi-structured individual interviews. I selected five informants using a purposive sampling method. The informants included two survivors, a clergyman, a newly admitted student and a member of the administrative office. The interview guide questions were guided and focused on three things: the background of the attack, the definition of dialogue in this context, and the impact of interreligious dialogue at Garissa university. The collected data were coded and analyzed. The findings were thematically presented and analyzed using the concept of dialogue from three scholars, Leirvik Oddbjørn, Ann Hege Grung and Scott Dunbar.

The study revealed that Interreligious dialogue has/had positive impacts on Garissa University and its inhabitants. Interreligious dialogue reduces anxiety, fear, trauma and suspicion, which can be viewed as psychological aspects that take time to end. Survivors get better with time and learn how to live with the effects as they go through the healing process. Counselling is also revealed as another way of reducing and preventing damage caused by the experience of a terrorist attack.

Further, the research revealed that those who participated in interreligious dialogue overcame hatred, fear, and anxiety and had hope for the future through embracing forgiveness.

Through dialogue also the society was able to eradicate suspicion through mutual understanding and respect for other religious beliefs and teachings. The Muslims and Christians were able to share the teachings from their Holy books that shed light on the issue of terrorism which helped condemn the act of terrorism with the strongest terms possible.

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Special dedication to my lovely children Chosen Gitonga and Rianne Kendi who always reminded me to do my homework. Their contagious smiles brighten my days.

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1: INTRODUCTION

Woldeselassie Woldemichael in the article “*International Terrorism in East Africa: The case of Kenya*” points out that “International terrorism is significant and as such remains high on the agenda within policy and intelligence circles as a threat to world peace and security. Also adds that in Africa, the notion of terrorism itself can be traced back to anti-colonial struggles whilst the more recent terrorist attacks in Kenya and Tanzania give some indication of the severity of the threat of terrorism in the horns of Africa” (Woldemichael, 2014:33)

Joanna Bar in the presentation on *the problem of Islamic Terrorism in Kenya in terms of regional security in East Africa* points out that “Kenya has experienced terrorist attacks for over 20 years. Al Shabab terrorist militia group operating from Somalia charges that the Kenyan military has “massacred” innocent civilians in southern Somalia during its operations, and it threatened to increase attacks if Kenya does not withdraw its troops that play a key role in the regional operations against Al-Shabaab in Somalia” (Bar, 2016:147-149).

Conor Grearty in the book “*The International library of criminology, criminal justice and penology*” states that “the phenomenon of terrorism raises several theoretical, practical, and moral questions. Theoretically, what are its causes, and what are its numerous effects? Practically what is to be done about it, should terrorism be tackled directly, or is the only

promising way of dealing with it to attend to the grievances that give rise to it. Morally what is it that makes terrorism so thoroughly morally repugnant to most of us? Could it be justified under certain circumstances, or is it wrong? (Gearty, 1996:17).

The above-mentioned scholars give a picture of the problem of terrorism and the religious differences as the premises of Interreligious dialogue. This connects to the intention of this study.

This paper explores the concrete case at Garissa public university where tragic acts of terrorism took place. It is in the North-Eastern province of Kenya. Garissa university was established on 12th August 2011 as a constituent college of Moi University in the facilities of the former Garissa Teachers Training College. It became a fully-fledged university on 23rd October 2017. The first and it is still nowadays the only of its kind in the Northeastern Region is the youngest university in the republic. (Garissa home page, retrieved March 2022). Garissa University is a public institution offering the possibility of receiving higher education in the Kenyan North Eastern province. Situated 200 km from the border with Somalia, it had been considered the safest place in the region. Garissa university offers study in arts and social sciences, pure and applied sciences, business and economics, institute of peace and security and education. The current student population is slightly over 2000. (Garissa home page, retrieved March 2022). More about Garissa university will be presented in chapter three

The article *Kenya: Garissa University Massacre* explains that on 2 April 2015 four masked al-Shabaab militants stormed the campus at around 5.30 am local time, going from dormitory to dormitory to hunt down Christians. The day-long siege claimed 148 lives, including 142 students, three police officers, and three soldiers. One student who survived heard militants opening doors and asking those hiding inside if they were Muslims or Christians. Christians were shot on the spot. “The gunmen were saying, “Sisi ni al-Shabaab,” — Swahili for “We are al-Shabaab,”. Witnesses described the horrifying aftermath in the dormitories, with floors littered with blood, bullet casings, shattered glass, and the bodies of victims. Some had been shot and others beheaded. The killing spree was the deadliest attack on Kenya since 1998, when al-Qaeda bombed the US embassy in the capital, Nairobi, and killed more than 200 people.” (African Research Bulletin, April 1st-30th 2015)

In the Garissa university massacre and others experienced in Kenya, al-Shabaab militants have

spared Muslims and murdered anyone judged to be Christian or unable to recite verses from the Quran (Bar, 2016:148-151).

The media covered the story through radio stations and television both locally and internationally. This terrorist attack caused a lot of tension and suspicion between communities that lived together without hate. The incorrect perception that Muslims are a religion that is associated with the terror groups spread across the country causing more tension among people from Christian and Muslim traditions (IofC Home page, Sunday, April 22, 2018). Most of the inhabitants at Garissa are Muslims followed by Christians. Discriminating against Christians by Muslims created hatred and tension in Kenya. (BBC news retrieved March 2022). The university was closed on 2nd April 2015 for around 9 months.

The initiative of Change Africa (IofC) initiated an interreligious dialogue in 2016 including the students, the clergy, the civil society, and other members of the community. Dialogues were initially held in a hotel and later moved into the university for inclusion. There was a partnership between the university and the IofC to reach out to more students in 2018. (Initiative of change Africa. retrieved November 2020). The dialogue aimed at the new students and was able to shed light on the teachings, beliefs, and practices of both the Christians and Muslims addressing the issue of the Al Shabab terrorist attack. Muslims said that the Quran does not accept killing and that anyone who kills disobeys the teachings of the Quran.

The students appreciated the dialogue and recommended that the dialogue would be held when new students are admitted to the university. The initiative of Change Africa promised to continue to follow up dialogues at the university to reach more people and address this issue for sustainable peace and coexistence. (Ibid)

1.2 Research question

In this thesis, I will examine Garissa University, where many people suffer religious-related conflicts from terrorist attacks, losing their loved ones, their belongings, and their studies interrupted. The research tries to understand the experiences of the people involved directly or indirectly in the terrorist attack and interreligious dialogue.

The focus of this paper is not terrorism but rather interreligious dialogue. The initiation of interreligious dialogue in a public university forms the main concern also the initiation of

interreligious dialogue after the terrorist attack only happened in this case, unlike the many other terrorist attacks. Does this guide the idea to explore the relevance of interreligious dialogue in this concrete case at Garissa university where people suffer religion-related conflict with the desire to find out if it can be recommended for the future to the people in such difficult circumstances? My interview guide questions will be guided and focused on three things: the background of the attack, the definition of the dialogue in this context and the impact of interreligious dialogue at Garissa university.

The main research question of the thesis will be: What are the impact of religious dialogue in the concrete case at Garissa University in Kenya and its inhabitants? The more specific Sub-questions are as follows:

1. What was the background of the attack?
2. What are the effects of terrorist attacks?
3. What is the definition of dialogue in this context?
4. How does interreligious dialogue impact Garissa university and its inhabitants

I will use the qualitative research method that is essential in answering the research question(s) and for the primary data collection. Individual interviews will be used. John Swinton and Harriet Mowat in the book “Practical Theology and Qualitative Research express “The field of qualitative research is open-ended and has a wide range of perspectives: empirical, political, sociological, pastoral, gender-oriented and narrative-based. Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Swinton, John & Mowat, Harriet. 2006:28).

This study collected empirical data through interviewing the informants and tried to make sense and bring meaning in terms of the meaning the informants bring to this study theoretical aspects and methods used in this study, which are presented in-depth later in the paper.

1.3 Methodology

This study utilizes primary and secondary data. I will explain starting with the primary. Considering the research questions in my study I chose to use the qualitative research method as the primary data, which Alan Bryman says is, “a research strategy that usually emphasizes

words rather than quantification in the collection and analyzing of data.” (Bryman, 2012:380). This means I chose to focus on a few people in data collection however find out in-depth the meaning of their words. This is very significant because, in my study, I want to get an intensive understanding of the impact of interreligious dialogue on Garissa University and its inhabitants.

I decided on an interview method, where semi-structured interviews were utilized. Bryman explains that this method allows the interviewer to use general questions as interview guides. Not necessary to follow a sequence of the questions. This semi-structured interview also allows the interviewer to ask follow-up questions picked up from the interviewees. (Bryman, 2012:471). As I explained above, I am interested in the meaning of people’s words, which is the reason why I chose a qualitative study method. I chose an interview for data collection because they allow the researcher to get in-depth first-hand information from the informants in their personal views.

This study considered combining narrative research that is useful since with narrative analysis the focus shifts from what happened? How do people make sense of what happened and to what effect?” (Bryman, 2012:582). I think every individual has different experiences that are relevant to the study.

Semi-structured individual interviews whereby Self-created interview guide questions were the means to extract the data while flexibility was a guarantee to achieve the aim of the study. (Bryman, 2012:448). The participants were interviewed through zoom, WhatsApp, and email addresses were used for interview arrangements. The selection of the informants was done through purposive sampling as Bryman recounts it “the goal of purposive sampling is to sample cases/participants strategically so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed” (Bryman, 2012:418). In my study, I had to thoughtfully select people relevant to my study and in this study, these people included the student survivors, the former university administration staff, two clergies from Christian tradition and another from Muslim tradition, two former students and a neutral person who might have experienced the whole situation. The initial plan for primary data collection was to travel to the area of study (Kenya) for empirical research, however, due to the covid 19 pandemic, data collection was done online.

Garissa being a remote area the contact person suggested the use of WhatsApp since most of the people are active on that app, however, it was not appropriate for conducting interviews for

recording. The informants were contacted through the contact person who has been a friend and a colleague many years back.

1.4 literature Framework

Little is written about the Garissa University terrorist attack and the interreligious dialogue that was initiated barely a year after the attack. Hege also notes research on the social and political impact of interreligious dialogue is scarce. (Grung,2011:30) Some Kenyan scholars have written about Terrorist attacks in general mentioning this case, not about the dialogue that was initiated and continuing. I have mentioned some of the issues they addressed about terrorism which are relevant when talking about terrorism and the impact it has on society.

Joanna Bar has written about *the problem of Islamic terrorism in Kenya in terms of regional security in East Africa*. This research sort to state the issue of security in the region of East Africa, particularly in Kenya, given the development of the phenomenon of Islamic terrorism. Bar's work is significant as a reference regarding terrorism in Kenya which reveals most of the terror attacks the Al-Shabaab militia group claimed to be responsible for. Most of these terrorist attacks were experienced in Kenya, and they eliminated the Christians and left the Muslims. This helps to understand Islamic terrorist attacks.

Bar says "The terrorist attack of Islamic militants from the group al-Shabaab (official full name: Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahidin), allied with al-Qaeda, on Garissa University college, in which more than 150 people were killed and more than 80 were wounded, has been the deadliest massacre in Kenya. The former happened in 1998 when al Qaeda attacked the U.S. embassy in the capital city of Kenya, Nairobi, killing 263 people and injuring more than 5,000 people. (Bar,2016:149)

Lauren Ploch Blanchard specialist in African affairs presented "*Terrorist Attacks in Kenya. In Brief*. The research gives a clear presentation of terrorism in Kenya by explaining who Al Shabab is, the reasons why they attack Kenya and what is done to encounter Al Shabab's threats. (Blanchard, 2013:6).

The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence by Mark Juergensmeyer; Margo Kitts; Michael K. Jerryson states religious traditions are the endemic attraction between religion and violence.

(Mark Juergensmeyer, Margo Kitts, and Michael Jerryson, 2013:7).

Mark Juergensmeyer describes religious terrorism as “performance violence” _ acts that are performed to create a public event. (Mark Juergensmeyer, Margo Kitts, and Michael Jerryson, 2013:7). These acts present a dramatic scene into which observers are unwittingly drawn; they are compelled to enter the perception of cosmic warfare imagined by those who perpetrate the acts. Mark continues by saying performance violence is designed not only to achieve tangible goals but also to theatrically enact and communicate an imagined reality” (Mark Juergensmeyer, Margo Kitts, and Michael Jerryson, 2013).

Dov Waxman in the article “*Living with terror, not living in terror: The impact of Chronic Terrorism on Israeli Society*”, states that “the consequences of terrorist attacks include the direct and indirect economic costs of terrorist attacks, the psychological effects of terrorism upon the population, and the social and political impact of terrorist attacks.” (Waxman, 2011:5-16). Dov’s work is useful for analyzing the effects of terrorism and the impact of dialogue on Garissa university after the terrorist attack.

The article “*Evaluation of the Crisis Counselling Offered to Garissa University Terrorist Attack Survivors Kenya*” explores the issues that counselling did not address effectively. I am not going to mention them here however the findings are useful in shedding light on the things to consider in future when offering counselling in case of such an incident (Ibid)

The initiative of the Change Africa (IofC) webpage presents the initiation of interfaith dialogue that continues to build trust and peace among Garissa university and its inhabitants. (Interfaith dialogue report, retrieved: Sunday, April 22, 2018, seen March 2020). The initiative of Change Africa home page updates helps to understand how the dialogue started and progressed.

Catherine Cornille says in her “*Companion in Interreligious dialogue*” states “the world has always needed dialogue but after 1989 “fall of the wall” and even more 9\11 the world increasingly realized its need for dialogue.” (Cornille, 2013:1). Cornille also says that “At the heart of dialogue is interreligious dialogue because religion is the most comprehensive of all the human disciplines, explanation of the ultimate meaning of life, and how to live accordingly.” (Cornille, 2013:1). This research helps to see the need for interreligious dialogue since religion

is central in addressing most of the issues and questions about life.

Catherine Cornille contends “When we get involved in interreligious dialogue the question about what type of dialogue applies or needs to be applied is crucial” (Cornille, 2013;134). I present those types of dialogues as follows:

The dialogue of theology is based on the study, the attempt to understand one another’s beliefs, doctrines, and teachings. which studies to understand one another's beliefs, doctrines and teachings.

The dialogue of spirituality seeks to go deeper into the experiences that give rise to, or are brought about by the beliefs, that seeks to go deeper into the experiences that give rise to or are brought about by t the beliefs.

The dialogue of action is where participants get their hands dirty- but they do so together to confront or solve a problem.

The dialogue of life, the interaction that takes place when people from different religions live in the same neighbourhood” (Cornille, 2013:134).

Another necessary topic to consider when talking about dialogue is the virtues necessary for interreligious dialogue. Below I present Cornille’s views.

Humility: to achieve the purpose of interreligious dialogue, one needs to be humble about what they already know through their religion, there is always more to learn.

Commitment: for interreligious dialogue to be successful, all the participants have to hold firm to, and have to be held firm by, the truth they do possess through their religious traditions.

Trust in interconnectedness: within the rooted commitment of all the participants in interreligious dialogue, all of them must trust that despite the depth of their commitments and despite the often-incommensurable difference between religious perspectives there is something that makes it possible for religious believers to understand each other and to challenge each other.

Empathy: this virtue signals the need for dialogue to be personal even intimate while rooted in our commitment, we also must somehow get inside the commitments of our dialogue partners.

Hospitality: this virtual is pivotal among all the others Cornille calls it the sole sufficient condition for dialogue. Challenging it means that if we invite other believers into our own religious home as guests then we will not be good hosts unless we are genuinely open to the

gifts that they bring us” (Cornille, 2013:135). Some of these virtues are visible and useful in this study.

Ann Hege Grung In her *article Interreligious dialogue: Moving between compartmentalization and complexity* contends that “interreligious dialogues as organized activities establish religious differences among its participants as a premise” (Grung, 2011:25).

Leirvik Oddbjørn expresses in his book *“Inter-Religious studies: A relational Approach to Religious Activism and the Study of Religion* expresses the two models of dialogue, the spiritual and the necessary dialogue. The necessary dialogues are driven by a felt sociopolitical need to prevent or reduce religion-related conflict in society, by fostering peaceful interaction between representatives of different religious groups (Leirvik, 2014:17-18). The necessary dialogue will be applied in this study since it is relevant.” (Leirvik, 2014:17-18).

John Mbiti a Kenyan theologian, in a conference at Tangaza college in his lecture notes *on the dialogue between African Religion and Christianity*, said, “Bible translation was a significant facilitator of the encounter and dialogue between Christianity and African religion.” (Mbiti, lecture notes Thursday, May 20, 2010).

Kajivora in *Interreligious dialogue and its impact on bible translation in Sudan* contend that Bible translation is essentially an interreligious dialogue. (Kajivora,2012:169). Mbiti and Kajivora help in understanding different ways interreligious dialogue or encounters have taken place in Africa.

Simon Mokaya Momanyi in his master’s thesis focused on *the impact of the Al-Shabaab Terrorist attack in Kenya*.

Momanyi presents similar effects of terrorist attacks as Waxman has presented earlier in this section. The impact of terrorism explained by Momanyi and Waxman will be useful in analyzing and discussing the findings in this study concerning the effects of terrorist attacks. Most of the material presented in this section will be relevant for the analysis and discussion of this study.

This research will try to understand the impact of religious dialogue in a society where people suffer religious-related conflict and more specifically in the concrete case at Garissa University

in Kenya. The study can shed light on some of the impacts of religious dialogue; the study covers a limited area. The study also can connect to the already existing research by Momanyi about understanding the impact of terrorist attacks in Kenya. The primary data is the findings from the interviews conducted using people who directly or indirectly participated in the concrete case of the Garissa terrorist attack, while the secondary data will be the literature presented from books, articles, and some internet sources.

1:5 Defining terms

1:5:1 Dialogue

The term dialogue is important because this study is concerned with the impact of interreligious dialogue. Therefore, defining dialogue is crucial. There are so many definitions of dialogue. In this paper, I will use dialogue in the sense that follows below to analyze the definition in this context from the findings.

Anne Hege Grung says “the meaning of the word dialogue could be restricted to a description of a particular activity: it could be used in a broader perspective to describe a long-term process between groups, or it could be based on naming human interaction intentionally based on specific ethical, moral, and religious values.” (Grung, 2015:67)

Dag Hareide contends that dialogue involves the whole person and does not necessarily have an agreement as to its aim.” (Oddbjørn, 2014:21 -26).

From the Hareide definition, we find that dialogue takes place not only through talking but also when people are not talking dialogue is taking place.

Catherine Corneille says that dialogue means “I can learn from you.” (Cornille, 2013:20). This definition is necessary for analyzing the material in this study. According to Mbiti “dialogue is a form of engagement, communication, participation, in which each person talks for one-third of the time and listens to two thirds” (Mbiti, 1987:194). This sheds light that dialogue is more about listening or being present and talking is minimal.

1.5.2 Interreligious dialogue

Dunbar defines interreligious dialogue as “a respectful communication between two or more

persons committed to different religious, about issues of religious significance, is a common attitude of open-mindedness” (Dunbar, 1998:456).

Cornille refers to interreligious dialogue as “any form or degree of constructive engagement between religious traditions.” (Grung,2015:67).

This means for interreligious dialogue to take place; it should be a constructive engagement between people who belong to a certain religious tradition. “Narrow definition Interreligious dialogue is human communication between religious leaders for the primary purpose of clarifying theological/philosophical similarities and differences.” (Grung, 2015:67). Our broader definition described Interreligious dialogue as all forms of human communication both through speech and shared activities that help mutual understanding and cooperation between people who self-identify religiously. (Ibid)

This is necessary to understand the different forms in which interreligious dialogue takes place. Olugbenga Olagunju states that “interreligious dialogue is primarily a conversation between believers of different faiths or religions.” (Olagunju, 2013:36).

1.5.3 Terrorism is an act of targeting innocent unarmed civilians to achieve religious/ political goals.

1.5.4 Alshabaab is translated in Arabic as “the youth” is Al Qaeda linked radical terrorist group operating from Somalia.

1.5.5 Al Qaeda/Al Qaida is a terrorist group, whose founder was Osama bin Laden, meaning “the foundation.”

1:6 Research outline

This study is structured into seven chapters. Chapter one is the introduction of the topic and the research question, method, literature review, and defining terms and concepts. Chapter two presents the theories that are useful in the whole process of this study. I will give specific dialogue concepts applied. Chapter three talks about the study area. I will give more background information on Kenya and Garissa where the study is based.

Chapter four is the Presentation and analysis of the findings, starting by presenting the informants, ethical issues, the process of data collection, the positioning of the researcher,

challenges faced during the interviews, the attack and the themes emerging from the attack while chapter five is the presentation and analysis of the dialogue process. How it was initiated, defining dialogue and the impacts on Garissa and its inhabitants. Chapter six is a presentation and discussion of the impact of the interreligious dialogue on Garissa university and its inhabitants and lastly, chapter seven presents the limitations and the recommendations for the future.

2: THEORETICAL APPROACH

In this thesis, the theoretical aspects concern the concept of dialogue. I will discuss the material and findings by drawing on the insights from these scientists: Leirvik, Grung and Dunbar. Leirvik is a Norwegian professor of Interreligious Studies, Systematic Theology, Islamic Studies, and interreligious dialogue at the University of Oslo.

I will consider Leirvik's presentation of the distinction between the two dialogues, the spiritual dialogues, and the necessary dialogues (Leirvik, 2014:17). In his book “Interreligious Studies: A Relational Approach to Religious Activism and the Religion Lervik contends that necessary dialogues are driven by a felt sociopolitical need to prevent or reduce religion-related conflicts in society, by fostering peaceful interaction between representatives of different religious groups while spiritual dialogues are based on personal motivation and guided by an expectation of being enriched by other spiritual traditions (Leirvik, 2014:18). Leirvik uses Buber's metaphor of the space between interreligious coexistence as a social phenomenon and interfaith dialogue as a spiritual practice. Leirvik also uses the same metaphor to establish a critical research perspective, arguing the impossibility of stepping outside of the space to take a neutral view of social relations in which everyone is already involved (Ibid) He also deals with ethical and religious dialogue in schools as a category by itself, under the label of ‘dialogue didactics’ (Leirvik, 2014:28-31). The necessary dialogue is a theory that will be used in this paper to analyze data as we explore the impact of religious dialogue at Garissa University in Kenya.

Anne Hege Grung is a Norwegian professor of interreligious studies and feminism at the University of Oslo. The article “Interreligious dialogue: Moving between Compartmentalization and Complexity presents two models of interreligious dialogue: religious difference as constitutive, and religious differences as a challenge.

In religious difference as a constitutive model, keeping and protecting the existing religious boundaries is emphasized throughout the process of interreligious dialogue. Religious differences as the constitutive elements in the encounter imply that other differences may be downplayed among them cultural, gender, and social/ class differences (Grung, 2011:30). “In religious differences as challenge model religions are seen as systems of meaning that are always possible objects of change, and interreligious dialogue may contribute to this change” (Ibid)

Dunbar is a lecturer on the history of religion, at Monash University, Australia. He is a researcher on Hinduism, South Asian religions, religious conflicts, and interfaith dialogue. In addition, he is a religious editor for the New World Encyclopedia. In his attempt to explore the role of interreligious dialogue in the academic study of religion, he presents the four criteria that qualify for interreligious dialogue (Dunbar, 1998:455).

1. Interpersonal communication,
2. Different religious commitment
3. A mutual attitude of respect and open-mindedness, implying a willingness to learn and grow from the other; and
4. The significant religious context in or implied by the conversation.

Different scholars have written about Interreligious dialogue, some differ while others have a common view. I chose the three mentioned earlier which aspects of interreligious dialogue I used to discuss my findings against in this study. I also selected a few scholars whose definitions of the term dialogue address the kind of dialogue experienced at Garissa university.

3: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AREA

Figure 1. A map of Kenya Indicating the area attacked by terrorists



3.1 Kenya

Kenya is in eastern Africa. Bordering Uganda to the west, South Sudan to the northwest, Tanzania to the south, Ethiopia to the north, and Somalia to the northeast. Kenya is composed of eight provinces namely Nairobi (the capital city) Central, Coast, Eastern, North Eastern, Nyanza, Rift valley, and Western. Kenya is rich in cultural diversity constituting 42 tribes as per the census in 2009 and three major religious affiliations: Christians, Muslims, Hindus

Kenyan census 2009 constitute 31.8 million Muslims 4.3 Hindus 53.393 (Lando, Muthuri & Odira, 2015:63)

Kenya is characterized as a Christian nation with leadership being insensitive to its Muslim citizens. Northeastern and Coastal regions, which are populated by Muslims predominantly, are the most underdeveloped. (Lando, Muthuri & Odira 2015:63-64).

. Their grievances with Kenyan Government have grown along with increasing economic, political and social marginalization (Lando, Muthuri & Odira 2015:63-64).

About 15 million Kenyans live below the poverty line. This can be justifiably concluded that poverty provides a fertile ground for the recruitment of terrorists. (Woldemichael, 2014:46) Kenya is considered one of the countries in the world where extensive corruption continues to present a major problem for the country's security (Woldemichael, 2014:46).

Kenya is headed by the president at the national level together with the deputy president. The political leaders are elected by the people. On 27 August 2010, the constitution provided government structure with the national government and 47 devolved county Governments (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2015).

3.2 Garissa County

Garissa county is in the North-Eastern province. Garissa is the largest town in Kenya in the northeastern region and is mainly populated by ethnic Somali, who are mostly Muslim, but the students at Garissa university were from around the country, of many ethnicities and religions (London: Open democracy, 2015). It borders the Somalia border to the East Lamu to the south, Tana River County to the West, Isiolo to the Northwest and Wajir County to the North. It covers a total area of 44,174 sq km (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2015). The county government consists of two arms namely the County Assembly and the county executive (Kenya Bureau of statistics, 2015).

Corruption and lack of accountability have long been identified as two roots of many of the Kenyan institutions including the police (London: Open democracy, 2015).

Livestock production is a significant part of the county's economy. For many, it is the only form of savings available. Therefore, efficient production and marketing are essential for sustaining pastoral livelihood. The livestock market exists in Garissa town and covers a total area of approximately 10 acres. It provides a range of employment and income-earning opportunities to the residents of not only Garissa County but the entire north region (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2015).

Farming is turning Garissa into a breadbasket, and waters from river Tana are transforming the region into a valley of opportunities where individuals and groups are engaged in mixed farming. The valley stretches from the Fafi constituency and covers all of Garissa township and part of Lagdera (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2015)

Islam is the leading religion with 815,755 members followed by Christianity which comprises Catholics, protestants, evangelicals, other Christians and other religions from the lowest population. Most of the people here are Muslims since the locals are Somalis and in Kenya most of the Somalis are Muslims. Garissa county has experienced several terrorist attacks for the longest time.

3.3 Garissa university

As it was presented in the introduction, Garissa University is in the North-Eastern province and Garissa County. Garissa University College was founded in 2011 as a constituent college of Moi University, in the facilities of the former Garissa Training College (Bar, 2016:150).

Garissa University became a fully-fledged university on 23rd October 2017. The first and it is still nowadays the only of its kind in the North Eastern Region as the youngest university in the republic. (Garissa home page, retrieved March 2022). Garissa University is a public institution offering the possibility of receiving higher education in the Kenyan North Eastern province. Situated at 200 km from the border with Somalia, it had been considered the safest place in the region before the brutal raid on the university on 2nd April 2015" (Bar, 2016:150). Garissa university offers study in arts and social sciences, pure and applied sciences, business and economics, institute of peace and security and education. The current student population is slightly over 2000. (Garissa home page, retrieved March 2022)

Most locals are Somalis therefore Islam is the leading religion in the area. The students who were attacked by terrorists on 2nd April 2015 were the first students to be admitted to the university which at that time was a branch of Moi university, however, now it is a fully affiliated university. Most of the students who were admitted in 2013 and 2014 were Christians followed by Muslims opposite the population outside the university. Many of the informants that were interviewed pointed out that the fact that Christians were the majority in the university resulted in them being hunted or wanted by the Muslims who saw them as a threat to their culture which they preserve. The dress of the students was different from the dress of the locals.

Muslim women are identified with their Hijab, Niqab, Burka, and many more-Muslims men wear Thobe, Ghutra and Egal, Bisht, Serwal, and Sjalwar/Gameez (bbc.co.uk news retrieved March 2022). In Kenya, there is a saying "my dress is my choice. Garissa the county is marginalized in terms of receiving equal education, public health services and economic uplift from the Government. Most Garissa people are very conservative to their culture for lack of exposure; therefore, they are not open to anything that seems to interfere with their culture.

4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

This chapter deals with the presentation and the analysis of the materials collected. This will be done starting with the presentation of the informants, the process of data collection, challenges faced during the interview, ethical issues, the positioning of the researcher and the analysis and discussion of the findings. I will do a thematic presentation and discussion of the findings.

4.1 presentation of the informants

The research question of this study directed the choice to use a non-probability sampling method where the selection of the informants was done through purposive sampling as Bryman recounts it: “the goal of purposive sampling is to sample cases/participants strategically so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed” (Bryman, 2012:418). Snowball sampling is a purposive sampling approach as noted by Alan Bryman (Bryman, 2012:418). was used to reach out to identify individuals who had the knowledge needed for the study.

The target of this study was to interview six informants including two former students, two clergies, one neutral person and one member of administration- However, five people were interviewed, whereas three of the contacted informants were not interviewed. One among the three withdrew from the interviews. One of them explained that the sensitivity of the case puts the informant's life in danger. The other two did not respond even after agreeing to be interviewed and scheduled the interviews. Their decision was respected, and the researcher thanked them for their time and desire to contribute to the study, though it was not possible now.

The informants were directly or indirectly involved in the terrorist attack at Garissa University we find out that the students and the administration staff were living in the university compound. The process of contacting informants was possible through a friend who conversed with the informants through WhatsApp sharing my research topic and they agreed to be interviewed.

The informants were coded A, B, C, D, and E for confidentiality purposes. Informants A and D

were students at Garissa university at the time of the attack. Informant B was working at Garissa university at the time the attack took place. Informant C was admitted to Garissa university in 2016 after the attack, and informant E is clergy who was working around Garissa and still working there. The coding was done from the first to be interviewed to the last.

I employed a thematic analysis technique which Bryman suggests is commonly used and is not identifiable (Bryman, 2012:578). I read through the material that I had transcribed in-depth, and I reduced the information into main themes within and between the data (Ibid). To come up with the themes from the transcription I used coding.

Bryman argues coding is a system in which the researcher is breaking down material into sections or parts and labels these sections. Using the coding system, I read through my transcripts page by page, writing down on a table some keywords, remarks and observations that came up and were important (Bryman, 2012:576-577).

After coding, I read through the codes, and I analyzed and interpreted the codes by checking out for the repeated, and those about the three concepts of dialogue from the three scholars mentioned in chapter two on theories used in this study.

4.2 Ethical issues

This study faces moral and ethical issues that need to be investigated before and after collecting data. This is according to (NESH) and University of Oslo requirements. These requirements are about people's rights and the Informant's confidentiality. (See more Ethical evaluation of Project (SHINE, 2017:169), Forskningsetikk. Issues related to confidentiality are very critical and need ethical consideration “interview research is saturated with moral and ethical problems, particularly there is a lot of complexities in researching people’s lives or situations and placing accounts or information given in the public sphere” (see Mauthner et al.,2002, p.1). as cited in Kvale, 2007, p.23).

Consequently, during the interviews and any other discussion on matters relating to this kind of study, moral, ethical and confidentiality issues were observed before and after collecting the data. Direct identity information given in one way or the other will not be revealed to the public.

High care and confidentiality in the storage or retrieval of data were observed during the entire study (Bryman, 2012:144-145).

To further assure the confidentiality of the informants, this study was ethically approved by NSD and the University of Oslo (UIO) by filling in the form explaining in detail how I will deal with moral and ethical issues. This study followed all the rules and regulations required by NSD and the University of Oslo. In addition, I got a letter from the University of Oslo signed by the supervisor as proof to carry on this study. This information was very well communicated to the informants. I called them and informed them about the study and requested them to be interviewed. The list of interview questions can be seen in the Appendix.

4.2 The process of data collection

I conducted individual interviews from the 4th of January 2022 to the 30th of January 2022 using a telephone call. Which Bryman suggests can be used instead of face-to-face (Bryman, 2012:214) The interview started with open-ended questions from the self-created interview guide questions that allowed the conversation to go on. Follow-up questions were asked where necessary to allow the informant to explain more on the topic.

On average each interview used 30 to 40 minutes. Each interview started by confirming again if the informant read the information letter, the consent and the interview guide which was sent to them earlier on and if they had any questions regarding that. The researcher requested the informant for permission to continue with the interview and informed them that the conversation was being recorded. After the informant agreed then the interview started immediately.

The audio of the interviews which were saved on the researcher's laptop was immediately saved in one drive. The researcher then transcribed word by word the audio of the interviews conducted in English into written work.

The transcription process was challenging because there were disconnections during the interview because of the poor network and some words were not very clear therefore the researcher ended up replaying the audio repeatedly to be sure. The noise also from the background interrupted the process of transcription. The narrative method was not applied

because of the limited time in this study considering the need to grasp the relevant material regarding the topic that required guided questions for clarity.

4.3 The positioning of the researcher

The researcher is an outsider because the researcher comes from the Eastern part of Kenya where terrorist attacks have never been experienced. When the attack took place, the researcher was out of the country. The researcher can also be viewed as an insider for the fact the researcher was born and raised in Kenya for the longest time where the effects of the terrorist attacks are felt by the whole country. The article “Uses of the Self: Two Ways of Thinking about Scholarly Situatedness and Method” presents how A scholarly self is irretrievably tied to the world and self-situation is a fruitful source of data production.” (Neumann. Neumann, I, B, 2015:798).

Since the researcher goes through the process of bringing the study to its fulfilment it is impossible to remain in the same position as before. The first stage of data production concerns how the researcher came to pick the topic of study. The second stage concerns how the scholars shape the context in which data are produced, and stage three concerns textual production. Therefore, the researcher produces data” (Neumann. Neumann, I, B, 2015:79). The researcher attended course work in religion and diversity conflict and coexistence and attended the seminars. This equipped and influenced knowledge production by the researcher.

4.5 Challenges faced during the interviews

Most of the informants were working during the day and were available in the evening, as a result, there was an interruption by the kids in the background, but it was manageable. Garissa is a very remote area; the internet connection was very poor. This resulted in repeating statements during the interviews and challenges during data transcription. Some informants did not appear for interviews even after scheduling the interviews. One of the informants pointed out that this matter was very sensitive, and it is putting their lives in danger. I tried to assure the informant that the process was safe, and it is for education purposes only but did not change their mind. I respected their decision since they had a choice to withdraw from the interview without any reason or they could withdraw even after the interview. One of the informants requested the researcher to pay for his internet, the request came too late after waiting for confirmation on the schedule for the interview, there was limited time. The researcher

interviewed another informant in the same position. The researcher explained the situation and thanked the informant for the desire to contribute to this study.

The initial plan was to interview in December 2021, but it was a busy time for the informants. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, there was a lockdown in Norway where homeschooling was the option. Also, it was challenging for most of the informants who work during the day and were available in the evening. This resulted in the adjustment of the scheduled interviews.

The informant who had rich knowledge on the topic passed on two weeks before I started the interviews.

4:6 The attack

This section is going to report findings from the interviews about the Garissa terrorist attack. During the interviews, two students and a member of the administration narrated how the attack took place. The people mentioned above were directly involved in the attack because they were living inside the university premises where the attack took place. One of the informants narrated in depth the whole story and this will be presented here. The other informants, that is the clergy and the student who was admitted to the University in 2016 presented the presuppositions for the attack. Those presuppositions are going to be presented thematically following in this chapter. The informant's description of the attack depends on their positioning before, during, and after the attack. This section is very important for the understanding of the tragic incident at Garissa university.

One of the informants explained was sleeping in the dormitory, the other one was praying. The third informant was in the teacher's quarters, The clergy was working in the Church located around the university and the other informant was admitted to the university after the attack.

During the interviews, it stands out that the attack took place at around 05:00 am local time on the 2nd of April 2015, when the students were in various morning sessions as usual. Some were going on with their morning devotions, others were studying, and others were sleeping. The attackers started shooting the gatemen before proceeding to the dormitory and classes. This is seen when the informant said,

The Christians were early in the morning praying and that is where the attack started. I was there

as well. Being closer to the entrance, most of the students who were killed were Christians who were in the morning devotion as normally every morning (Informant, D)

The attackers were non-Christians as it was noted by one of the informants who thought a Christian cannot attack another Christian.

When the mentioned informant was asked how survived during the attack the response was,

“I was in the room, so I did not run. I was shot with seven bullets. He shot me three times when I was standing so when I lay down on the ground, he also continued shooting me. So, I think seeing a lot of blood all over my body he concluded I was already dead and decided to leave. But I thank God I did not die; the bullets were able to be taken out of my body. Because I was taken to Kenyatta hospital. I stayed there for about two weeks then I was released after getting treatment.” (Informant, A)

It must have been so traumatizing, stressful and heartbreaking to spend the whole day in a pool of blood flowing from fellow students while struggling in pain with no one to help. The informant was taken to Kenyatta national hospital which is in the capital city of Nairobi. This is what the informant informed

My family was unable to raise money for the hospital bill and had to persevere. go home, heal then go back to school. Because they wouldn't wait until they were taken back to school after fully recovering because of the family's financial status. When the government said all the students should go back to school, they didn't want to know if somebody was okay or if they had not yet recovered (Informant, D)

Another informant said they were told about the attack by a lady who came to their room running and woke them up, but it was too late. The gunmen were already inside the dormitories, the students could not run. However, some students had heard the gunshots earlier, and some of them managed to run and escape the attack. The informant continued explaining that they decided to use the metallic double beds to back up the door and they hid in the wardrobes inside the room. The gunmen came to their door and started threatening them. informant A expressed

We put the door in place but when they came, they were like if you don't open, we are going to throw grunt inside, you all die inside there. But if you open, we are going to let the women go, the Muslims go (Informant, A)

Inside the room where the informant was hiding, there was a lady and one guy who were not Muslims and two Muslims who did not have anywhere to hide. The Muslim opened the door and two of the roommates who were in the vicinity because there was no place to hide were shot on the spot. “The two Muslims were asked to leave and the other four of us were left hiding inside the wardrobes. The Muslims were escorted to a nearby mosque. After shooting the two and asking the two Muslims to leave is like they thought they are done and no one else is inside, they left” (Informant A)

The same informant pointed out they stayed in their hiding the whole day as the shooting went on. Later around the evening, the KDF arrived at the institution. The Shooting continued. It grew bigger and when the shouting went on, they could take the advantage of continuous shooting and take a breath or get out of the wardrobes and grab some water or juice. The informant said they had a birthday party the previous day so there was a lot of juice and sodas in their room. The KDF comprises the Kenya Army, Kenya air force and Kenya Navy. The primary mission of the Army is to defend the nation against external land-based aggression. (KDF services home page seen 11 April 2022).

The same informant said it might have been around 02:00 pm or 03:00 pm local time when the KDF was overwhelmed and decided to check the dormitories one after the other. The wardrobe door and the room door where the informant was hiding were directly pointing at each other, so it was easy to see who was getting into the vicinity, but the informant did not take chances to come out of the hiding. The informant had (Malika mwizi) meaning an old button phone and made a call to the deans of students to inform them there were some students inside the building who needed to be rescued (Informant, A). The informant explained their worries with the words noted below.

“When it started to get dark at around 05:00 pm local time. We were getting worried. You know that now the moment it gets dark, the KDF will leave because they did not know who was dead and who was not. Even inside the building, apart from our two friends' bodies who we knew were lying on the door, we did not know anything else. Since we spent the whole day inside the wardrobes” (Informant, A)

At around 06:00 pm local time the informant decided to take chances by either running or

spending the whole night with the attackers because they did not know whether KDF was going to remain in the university. As the informant opened the door a little, he saw the recce squad dressings and did not take chances because he knew the Al-Shabaab was dressed in a uniform similar to the Kenyan recce squad. However, they were the recce squad that appeared on the premises at around 05:30 pm and in 30 minutes everything was in control (Informant, A)

The recce squad is a special unit of the General Service Unit (GSU) that is tasked to protect the Kenyan president. They undergo intensive and even life-threatening training both in the country and abroad mainly in the UK, USA and Israel. The Recce squad is efficient when employed in war, terrorism attacks, guarding high diplomat officials and other high-risk operations. They arrived at Garissa University late and neutralized the enemy in 30 min whereas KDF was unable to do it. (Opera. news retrieved 11/04/2022 10:3).

When the informant opened the wardrobe and went back into hiding one of the recce squad officers saw him. Since he did not know who the informant was, he said, “raise your hands or you put your student ID and the national ID in your mouth. The informant did as ask. After verification, he was asked if there were other students inside and they were also taken out. (Informant, A)

“When we were going outside, we realized things were worse than we anticipated. We could hear the shooting, but we didn't know that the students were being killed because we saw them getting rounded up. I ed by my sibling's body, who was in the first year, I was in the second year” (Informant, A)

The KDF asked the informant and the fellow students if they had left anybody inside and they said someone was pulling the beds in the next room, maybe some of the students were trying to hide inside. The recce squad went to the room only to find out it was an al-Shabaab who was trying to hide, so he surrendered to the police after trying to shoot but he was shot first.

In the evening the students who were rescued were taken to Garissa KDF (Kenya Defense Forces) barrack where they stayed for around two days and then they were taken to Nyayo Stadium in Nairobi where their parents were waiting. The bodies of the deceased students were flown to Nyayo stadium in Nairobi. The students who were injured were taken to the hospital and the survivors were taken to Nyayo stadium where parents were waiting. They later started

the process of identifying the deceased and proceeded to burial.

When the informants were asked if there is any connection between religion and terrorism, they had different opinions. Two of the informants said there was a connection since the attackers discriminated against or eliminated the Christians based on their religion and the alerts sent were clear, the target group were Christians. The other two informants had no idea about the connection between religion and terrorists, but they said depending on what prevailed in Garissa Terrorist attack and what people say there might be some connections though they are not a hundred per cent sure. One of the informants said there was no way religion and terrorism were connected. The people who perform terrorist acts are just cartels or thugs like any other trying to brainwash people.

Two of the informants who were indirectly involved in the attack talked about some of the prepositions of the attack. Following I thematically present the topics.

4.7.1 Themes that emerged from the collected data

During the interviews, some topics were repeated severally that needed to be addressed for a better understanding of the main topic. Thematic approaches were used in this section for data analysis. The analysis combined the literature framework and the data collected from the interviews with the informants.

4.7.2 Going for the Christians

All the individuals interviewed separately pointed out that there were threats and alert sent about the attack earlier and the threats were directed at Christians at Garissa. Also, during the attack, the al-Shabab declared that they were attacking because they do not want anyone who is not Muslim at Garissa. In addition, the terrorists shot the Christians and let them free the Muslims. The informant expressed this by saying,

“The attack happened on the 2nd of April 2015. The previous year around Easter of 2014, there was a threat and some written documents that were targeting the Christians. It was information telling Christians to go away from that county so that they can celebrate Easter there. Or else they will face it.” (Informant, D)

It was noted by most of the informants that the attackers first rounded up the students and made sure they separated Christians from the Muslims before shooting. This was evident when one of the informants said a lady who was a Muslim from Maua, which is located in the Eastern part of Kenya heard the terrorist ask those who were Muslims to get off from the dormitory. She was walking out but she was shot though she tried to explain that she was a Muslim. This act made me think, as well as the informants who expressed the same, “why did they shoot her even after explaining she was a Muslim and pleading with the attackers not to kill her.” (Informant, B).

In connection to that, I would like to point out that the Somali people have physical features that are not like any other tribe in Kenya. In Kenya, the Somalis make up most Muslims. The Muslim girl who was shot came from the Meru tribe, which is rarely Muslim, maybe that is why the terrorists did not believe that she was a Muslim. This was evidence from two of the informants who separately used the same words.

As mentioned earlier the informant who was hiding in the dormitory together with his fellow roommates witnessed non-Christians being shot and the Muslims escorted to a nearby mosque. Another informant had a different view than the Muslims and wanted only their sound to be heard, but the university had given the Christians an opportunity to hold open-air meetings, prayers and fasting and the Christian student union had grown in big numbers. That would be one reason why the Muslims felt the Christians need to be eliminated.

“Every time we were having prayers and open-air meetings, I think Muslims only wanted the Islamic sound to be heard in the atmosphere. But when the university gave us a go-ahead to conduct the service in the school compound, the Christian community attracted so many more people than the Muslims. The evening prayers, the morning prayers, the fasting, and other things that the Christians were doing, would be one of the reasons why the Christians were being targeted.” (Informant, D)

All the informants noted some people were not happy with the way the Christian students were dressing. They said their dressing was polluting religion.

It was said that Christian students who joined the university that was 2013 and 2014 were polluting the religion because they were influencing the local students and the local people to dress badly and doing all that. So, there was a need for that group to be eliminated and that is

why the attack happened (informant, C)

Garissa is a public university; therefore, I think it is obvious the students dress in their desired styles. One of the informants pointed out there is a saying in Kenya “my dress my choice” (informant, E) but in this situation, it was not respected. One of the informants said Garissa is marginalized, and the majority of the locals are not well educated and lack exposure. They strongly hold to their culture so their young ladies and men mingling with the young men and women from different cultures, tribes, locations, and religions may be a threat to them. this was noted in the statement below

“When the students come near the walls of the university you know they are dressed as you know here in Kenya they say “my dress my choice” as if some people were not happy about it. And even the young men who came here were mingling with Muslim young ladies and ladies were mingling with Muslim young men. They felt as if this was going to drive them away if they mingle with them as if they were going to drive them away from their culture and what we feared was that the young Muslims were going to drift away through their influence. (Informant E).

Muslim women dress in hijab, niqab, burka, Al -Amira etc.,” (bbc.co.uk. news retrieved March 2022) while the Muslim men wear the Thobe, Ghutra and Egal, Bisht etc. Some attire is named depending on the region” (learnreligious.com retrieved March 2022).

Dov says, “social effects of terrorism can be pronounced and far-reaching influencing many different acts of society, one being the effects that terrorist attack has upon people’s beliefs and attitude.” (Waxman, 2011:11)

“Thus, terrorist attacks are events of a highly negative nature, they can change people's beliefs and attitudes. Such beliefs concerned how people view other society, especially the society to which the terrorist belongs” (Waxman, 2011:11).

This is evident during the interview when one informant said,

Any Somali seen anywhere was seen as if he /she is a terrorist and therefore it made them be segregated in our country (informant, C)

During the interview, informants A expressed a personal encounter after the attack saying, “I was not very committed in church but after the attack, I just decided to be an atheist and I cannot

associate with any religion that is violent”. The informant also challenged God by saying “who is this God who could let an aspirant of one religion kill the aspirant of another religion without doing anything”.

The attack motivated the informant mentioned to read more about the world religions to understand and address some of the questions that arose after the attack. The informant mentioned that in history religion spread through violence and that influenced his decision though he is not against religion.

4.7.3 Kenyan Government support towards Somalia

For several years KDF had considered and broadly prepared for intervention in Somalia, this was because of several al-Shabaab terrorist attacks in Kenya. In several series of kidnappings of aid workers from refugee camps in North Eastern Kenya and some tourists from the coastal area Lamu. Kenya's military the idea was to push the al-Shabaab from southern Somalia and to awaken their operation. The presence of Al-Shabaab in the southern part of Somalia was a threat to Kenya” (Momanyi, 2013:10-11). In 2010, a plan was drawn up by the staff of the Eastern African Standby Brigade to capture Kismayo at the behest of AMISOM (African Union Mission in Somalia). This intervention plan was not implemented because of the objections from major Western allies and concerns of political leaders that they would not succeed. (Momanyi, 2013: 10-11). In 2011, the Kenyan Government started an operation called (Operation Linda Nchi) meaning (Operation protect the Nation) led by KDF which is still operating in Kenya (Momanyi, 2013:10).

This operation has eliminated most of the terrorist groups in Somalia. This is evident from an informant's contribution that the gunmen claimed they were al-Shabaab and the reason they attacked was to revenge for their fellow who had died during the operation. This is also a way of calling the attention of the Government of Kenya to withdraw their soldiers from the operation. One of the Informants pointed out that the terrorist said they are intensifying the attack in Kenya because they wanted the Kenyan government to withdraw their soldiers who are in Somali fighting against terrorists. The informant also pointed out that the terrorist attack was to destroy the Kenyan borders. As mentioned earlier when presenting the area of study, Somali borders Kenya, and the university is 200km to the Somali border.

The issue of withdrawing Kenyan soldiers from Somalia has been vocal in Kenyan politics for quite some time. Some politicians condemn the government for not withdrawing their soldiers from Somalia since the Somalis continue attacking Kenya.

The issue was they were saying that they are intensifying the attack on our soil in our country because our soldiers are in their country (informant, E)

4.7.4 Positional

When Garissa university started the principal who is the head of the University came from the western part of Kenya, and most of the people working there were Christians. The process of employing new people in the university went through a vetting process but after some time when the principal was changed, this was ignored. Most of the people were employed without having to go through the vetting process and the majority were from an Islamic background. This might have portrayed weak leadership or a change in leadership skills which was not approved by other people in leadership. Which was considered by others in leadership as putting the safety and security of the majority at risk since there was no proper procedure to identify the people being employed. This might have been the reason why some people wanted some of the administration positions. This can also demonstrate that since the majority of the workers were Christians when the first principal was a Christian, then it was the time for the Muslims now to have the many positions since the principal was a Muslim.

During the time we were having the first principal we used to vet the people who worked at the university college. We would sometimes go to the police and ask them to search to know who they are and later, we could employ them. But when the second principal came in, it was unfortunate that people started getting employed just like that, most people who were the locals. Even the first principle was employing the local people but now the local people became too many (Informant, B)

Most of the Christian students were not happy with the Muslim employees who were attached to taking care of them in their dormitory. This is an issue that the Christian students did not want to share with anybody because they were uncomfortable with the Muslim workers. The Christian students only requested and talked about it with the County commander. The students also complained about being told by some of the top leaders “Hii sio Kenya” meaning this is not Kenya. This would be an indication that Muslims were against Christians therefore the

attack was to eliminate all the Christians at Garissa?

Some of the people in the management wanted some people to be removed so that they may take the position and the only way was to use the student as a way out. When the whole issue of the attack was being prepared, they knew the reason that they wanted some of the people to be removed from the position (informant, C)

The statement that was said to the Christian students “this is not Kenya” may reflect how the position was used to communicate to the Christian students that they are in a foreign land or that the space is not theirs. Also, the fact that they complained about being uncomfortable with the Muslim employees and no action was taken poses a lot of questions. Why did the administration not follow up to understand what was really at stake here?

4.7. 5 Clannism

The struggle over control of the Somali inhabited region now spanning Southern Somalia and Kenya has long been contested since 1895. The British government proclaimed a protectorate in the region, but the area that is now Southern Somalia was of marginal economic interest, and in 1925 the British transferred control of Juba land and the port of Kismayo to Italian Somalia. Later the colonial border between Kenya and Somalia remained uncontested until later independence in 1960” (Africa Report N°184 – 15 February 2012). The emergence of a sovereign Somali state raised the issue of the status of a sovereign Somalia-inhabited region. As Kenya approached its independence the majority of Kenyan

Somalis prefer joining Somalia, but the regional boundaries commission recommended that predominantly Somali-inhabited areas remain in Kenya, constituted into a separate North Eastern province” (The Kenya Military Intervention in Somalia, 15 FEBRUARY 2012).

It was said that where the university was positioned is not where it was supposed to be positioned and the teacher's college was moved from the Somalis environment. So, there were high chances that the attack was well coordinated as revenge on the university at the expense of 147 innocent people” (Informant, C)

Another informant said,

They claim that the university is in Somaliland and not in Kenya therefore the management and

everything that is in the university should be taken care of by the Somalis. They don't want a person who is not from Somaliland to oversee anything, the Somalis can do on their own.

As mentioned earlier the Garissa inhabitants are Somalis and in Kenya majority of the Somalis are Muslims but in the university context, most of the students were Christians. From colonial times and the findings, Garissa is Islamic land. The presence of many Christians may be a competing factor threatening the Islamic culture. Most of the informants mentioned that most of the Muslims were not happy with the Christian way. The students' dress was questioned by some of the inhabitants.

4.8 What followed the attack?

This part is going to talk about what took place following the attack to lay the foundation for the following chapter five. There was tension related to the claim that Muslims were responsible for the death of innocent people. Most of the students lost their lives and their properties were destroyed. Some people survived the attack and some of them were seriously injured. The students were in the middle of the semester, which means their studies were interrupted. The purpose of this part is to find out how this deadly attack affected the society at Garissa university and how it was dealt with for a better society thereafter.

The informants commented that after the attack, the university was closed. the bodies of the deceased students were flown to Nyayo Stadium in Nairobi which is near the city Centre. The stadium is used for various activities including National celebrations and different sports. The stadium holds 30000 people and was built in 1983. It is currently used mostly for athletics and various ceremonies, other facilities at Nyayo stadium include a gymnasium and a 50-metres swimming pool. and the survivors were driven by buses to the same destination. The people who were injured were taken to the hospital.

“That evening all of us who had been rescued and managed to hide were taken to the Garissa KDF military base. We spent the next I think two days before the NYS buses were sent by the government to come to get us. We were taken to Nyayo stadium where most of the parents were waiting (informant, A)

After that, they went home and waited until they were called to help in the process of identifying the deceased. This was a very difficult task since most of the deceased were shot in their faces,

their bodies had spent the whole day in the sun and Garissa is a very hot place.

You could not identify anybody unless you knew somebody before, she was shot. After “kufura” (swelling). The bullets blew most of their faces out. When identifying it couldn't work the government started using DNA testing for identification (Informant A)

The informant added it took their family two weeks to try to identify their sibling and they were losing hope. Luckily, a friend who had given the informant's sibling a blazer helped identify their sibling. He also pointed out how difficult it was for the mother to accept DNA testing which would mean she is accepting that her child is dead. After identifying the bodies, they proceeded to burial.

During those two weeks and the two weeks that followed, I and another student and the deans of students went to a series of burials and attended all of them. One day one county another day another county and like that, though after my sibling's burial I did not attend any other. My sibling's burial happened towards the end of April. (Informant A)

Most of the students did not want to continue with their studies, others decided to never go back to Garissa University anymore. The government had to change its plan and relocated them to Moi university Eldoret in Uasin Gishu county in Rift valley province. The 646 survivors were welcomed to Moi University's main campus on the 20th of May 2015 (informant A) This was barely a month after the attack. It was clear that there was no exceptional reporting to Moi University Eldoret after the government announced the reporting dates which means the survivors who were nursing wounds from the bullets were also expected to report at the same time.

The government offered free counselling sessions to the survivors to help them deal with the effects of the massacre. Other non-governmental organizations volunteered also to offer free counselling sessions and had dialogue with the survivors of the attack. In addition, the international communities came to their rescue, helped students pay their school fees and others were taken out of the country to continue their studies. Garissa university was reopened in 2016 after the dialogue between the Government, the university, and the inhabitants

Security was guaranteed after the dialogue between Garissa University and the Government. A police post was built inside the institution, security lights were fixed all around the university

compound and a big wall was constructed where students meet for dialogue. The locals were also willing to volunteer, giving any suspicious people or activities around their premises without any intimidation from the security officers as it was before the attack. (Informant A)

4.9. The impact of terrorist attack

This section will find out and discuss some effects of the terrorist attack on Garissa University and its inhabitants. This was done using the literature framework and the findings from the interviews with the informants. I Chose to discuss the impacts of terrorism in this section and concentrate on the main aim of this study which is the impact of Interreligious dialogue in Chapters five and six. Terrorism is not the main topic however the conflict dealt with in this case is related to terrorism. Discussing the impact of terrorism is of significant help in understanding the impact of dialogue and counselling on the survivors of the attack

4.9.1 Psychological effects

Dov Waxman expresses that “terrorism is a form of psychological warfare against a society. It is designed to strike fear into the heart of the targeted society, and it generally succeeds in doing so” (Waxman, 2011:8). Avoiding people or situations that remind one of the traumatic experiences. are the commonly identified symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)” (Waxman, 2011:9).

Most of the survivors I interviewed pointed out that they struggled with fear, anxiety, and trauma after witnessing their fellow students being shot by gunmen. The two surviving student informants explained their difficult experiences in wake of the attack. The majority of the survivors avoided going to places, avoiding gatherings, and avoiding being together with the people from the Somali community. This was noted when one of the informants said,

If a Muslim boarded a matatu (bus) or entered a building that I was inside I leave. When I got to Moi, I stayed in the school dormitory for a month and when the nightmares did not stop, I had to live outside the university. Nowadays I cannot live inside big buildings, nor in a closed building. I must find a building which has an open gate, somewhere I can open whenever I want. Not a gate that can be closed I mean, not a building that has just one entrance and one exit. Since then, I cannot live in such closed places (informant, A)

The Garissa incident is a story that informant most of the survivors avoid informant A indicated “it was only during the counselling sessions when I told because it is part of the healing process but since then I have never talked about it” further the informant mentioned he never disclose to people that he was a student at Garissa University rather from Moi University Eldoret that is where he finished. and that Garissa University is part of the experience that tries to avoid because of many questions that people ask regarding the incident.

Another informant said before making any prayer, he must check around the area to find escape in case of anything.

The students were traumatized. I am one of them because the attack happened when I was in the prayer room. Before I started conducting prayers, I was looking for an escape. I would check the ceiling if we have enough. If I go stand near the window, I just imagine another attack happening at any time. Or sometimes even if you are in class and somebody just screams you quickly connect to the screams that were happening at Garissa and connect to the other screams that are in the school compound. You would find that you are raising, you are garnering where freeing, yet was just a normal thing” (informant, D)

When informants were asked if they have healed one of them responded laughing in a sarcastic voice,

Healing is a continuous process because sometimes something triggers a thing that is likely to cause trauma to me. I reflect and recall that. It is not that it has healed although I am still healing. So, whenever such a thing comes, I recall it is not yet over. Still healing.” (Informant, D)

Another informant explained “before, I could not talk to anybody, I would just cry. It was too bad, but now it is getting better (informant, B) and informant (A) said “You know is not something you are healed from, it is something you learn to live with

The findings paint a picture of the terrorist attack experience that unexpectedly awoke the informants early in the morning and left them with terrible memories, of watching their fellow students being shot in their presence and others heal from the deadly bullet wounds.

The attack did not only have effects on the individuals involved but also the families of the informants responded with different perspectives. One noted majority of the students came from economically unstable families, losing their loved ones meant losing everything because they invested all they had in their children. Another informant said,

“Personally, after the death of my sibling, things got so bad with my family. My parents divorced, one of my siblings dropped out of school, and I never recovered even academically. My other sibling got into some wrong company and dropped out of school for two years.”
(Informant, A)

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Another informant said “before, I could not talk to anybody, I would just cry. It was too bad, but now it is getting better (informant, B)

The other informant said, “You know is not something you are healed from, it is something you learn to live with

4.9.2 Economical challenges

The informant mentioned that when the university started in Garissa County in 2011 many people opened businesses around the university. Some people had taken loans to open the businesses therefore the closure of the university after the attack was a big blow to the economy both locally and nationally. Even after the attack and reopening of the university, it was very difficult for the business to thrive.

The university was closed for almost a year or two, there was nothing that was going on in the compound. There was no activity or there were no social-economical activities around the compound. Secondly, the students who were in Garissa had a bad attitude toward going back again to Garissa because of the trauma they could have if they could go back to the same place.
(Informant, B)

The closure of the university is also a big economical loss to the country since there were no students in the facilities for a long period. The university contributes to the economy both locally and nationally. Businesses that were supported by the students took so long to recover and other people who were not the inhabitants did not go back to Garissa after the attack. We can note this from the informant's comment below.

The university being the only university in North Eastern Kenya, was still young because we were the founders or we can say the pioneers, the first group to be admitted to that university. It depended on how the university was able to take care of the pioneer students that could enable the university to grow because it was still young. There was no graduation because we were the first people who were supposed to graduate from the university, but now everything was to start from zero because some of them or most of the students were transferred from Garissa university to Moi university (Informant, D)

Another economic challenge was the government introduced curfews and the number of police officers was also increased in the area for security purposes. This also affected the opening and closing hours of business which affected the economy as well. Many buildings were demolished, and Garissa was chaotic. Most of the people who owned some of the businesses were Christians and they were not from Garissa they came from different parts of Kenya. After the attack, they could not stay in the area anymore, they feared for their life and moved from Garissa. The informant's voice

Most of the casual work that was happening at Garissa was done by the non-Muslims because in a way they are stronger than the Somalis and stuff. Jobs like mechanics were not done by residents of Garissa, they were not Muslims they were not Somalis. So, most of them left. because I had a friend who was a mechanic. He was reluctant to leave but now he realized he and a few others were left as non-Muslims so eventually, they left, and now most of the businesses that were being supported by the university now closed (Informant, A)

Most of the employees in the university lost their jobs after the university was closed, though some joined other institutions and others were not willing to work in such an environment anymore. The promising lives of young people and their belongings were lost in the attack which is a big economical loss to their families, themselves, and the country. This has both direct and indirect impacts on the Garissa community (Informant, A and B)

One of the informants pointed out that when the burials of their fellow students were taking place, they attended many of them and they realized that most of the students came from humble backgrounds meaning they were not financially stable. The parents were struggling to raise money for their children to go on with their education therefore losing them meant losing everything they had. They invested in them with the hope that they will better their lives. The informant explained “Losing their loved ones meant losing all they had because some of them had sold their land and were left with only a home or homestead” (informant, D)

Students’ education and health were interrupted and some of them did not have the drive or motivation to go back to school or work hard in their studies which affected their performance as well. The informant who was shot seven times and was admitted to the hospital for two weeks shared his experience, despite going through such a traumatizing experience as mentioned earlier. The government paid only for the hospital bills but after he was released all the services needed to heal the wounds had to be catered for by themselves.

Coming from a humble background it was so challenging to raise the finances required. Coping with the loss of their beloved ones after investing so much in them their hope was shunned.

Dove contends that one of the direct economic effects of terrorist attacks is the damage caused to life and property at the sites of attack (Waxman, 2011:10). “The cost of rebuilding or repairing buildings, shutting down the shops, and loss of lives is insignificant for the national economy” (Waxman, 2011:10). Garissa terrorist attack caused a lot of damage, losing 147 innocent lives and their belongings, the parents had given all they had to make sure that their children get a better education to better their lives. The Garissa society also had to pay the cost of repairing and improving their services.

4.9.3 Social challenges

Most of the informants posit the attack created hatred, fear and suspicion among Muslims and Christians. In the whole country, Somali people were seen as terrorists, and they were segregated from society. This is reflected in this comment made by one of the informants

Any Somali seen anywhere was seen as if he /she is a terrorist and therefore it made them be segregated in our country (Informant, C)

It was noted that the bond between the students grew stronger after the attack. They stood with each other in everything. the informant said we survived this together we must hold together. And the same time there was a disagreement between the Muslim and Christian students after joining Moi University. When the students from both Christian and Islamic traditions interacted, the Christians were so bitter with the Muslims and blamed them as the cause of the pain that Garissa university was going through. The Christians wanted to beat them up, but the Muslims came in a group and explained they had nothing to do with the attack. The people who are involved in terrorism hiding in Islam are going against the Quran. Since then, they have walked together through studies and the healing process. The informant said they maintained the relationship since they had no evidence to prove the terrorist were Muslims.

“We were very bitter with them, saying these people were the main source of our suffering. many students who came from Garissa wanted to fight them and beat them up because it was their colleagues who caused all this. but they come as a group and said to us we have nothing and there is nothing like terrorism in Islam. therefore, those who are carrying on terrorist attacks are on their own. we the Muslim students are brothers so don't take us as if we are terrorists but take us as brothers and sisters” (Informant, D)

“If you go to Somalia they are divided because some of them, say those things they are doing are against the Quran” (Informant E)

Waxman says terrorist attacks are events of a highly negative nature, they can change people's beliefs and attitudes such beliefs concern how people view other societies, especially the society to which the terrorists belong. (Waxman, 2011:11). Waxman's claim is revealed at Garissa where there was suspicion between the Christians and the Muslims. Muslims were segregated in the country as well. This also was evident when one of the informants decided to be an atheist after the attack because he did not find the need to belong to a religion that historically was spread through war and believed in a God who lets people from one of his adherents kill the adherents of another religion without doing anything. This was a statement from the informant.

Islam and terrorism are not two things you cannot say they are different. Not that there are no good Muslims, but now terrorism is based on the radical teachings of the Quran. So, for someone to become a terrorist must convert to a Muslim first? (Informant, A)

4.9.4 Political criticism

Waxman says, “political impact of terrorism is often hard to pinpoint, nevertheless it can hardly be doubted that terrorism has political effects and influences, the political process, at least in democratic and partially democratic states” (Waxman, 2011:14). As seen earlier terrorism has some aspects of psychological, economic, and social impacts on Garissa university and its inhabitants. Due to this, the government is forced to find ways to regain public confidence and recover from attacks (Waxman, 2011:14) Waxman posits in cases where the effects of the attacks seem to be mishandled, the citizens may lose confidence in the government and the public institutions” (Waxman, 2011:14). The terrorist attackers at Garissa university claimed that they were doing this to communicate to the government of Kenya to withdraw her soldiers from Somalia.

Further, the informants pointed out that the Garissa terrorist attack alert was very well known to the Government as it was communicated by the students and the principal to the security officer in charge of the Garissa region. The reluctance of the government of Kenya before and during the attack was questionable. First, the government did not act when they were notified about an attack to be carried out at Garissa. Secondly, it took so long for any of the armed forces to arrive at Garissa university where the terrorist was carrying on their operation. It took almost the whole day for the GSU unit that is trained and responsible for such attacks to arrive at Garissa University, and this was after the KDF had spent some hours trying to rescue the students from the attackers. It took the GSU unit less than 30 minutes to bring everything under control. The KDF unit also arrived at the premises very late after too much damage.

The people involved wonder why the Government did not act quickly though they could do so. One of the informants was concerned that the government had helicopters that could be used in this case, but the KDF had to drive to Garissa. This is the reason why some of the parents of the deceased students went to the court of law seeking legal help for the government's negligence. It has taken too long, and justice has not been served. Now they are wondering if the saying that justice delayed justice denied is becoming true for them. Kenyans also highlighted the security failure in the area. Two of the informants noted that the attack involved a lot of politics. The Christians pointed fingers at the Muslims and the Muslims denied the allegations. Most of the politicians and Kenyans tried to convince the government of Kenya to withdraw the Kenyan soldiers from Somalia. Some of the people in the university wanted some

positions in the administration.

From the findings presented it is noted that the attack was one of the most traumatizing experiences. The informant struggles with nightmares of the memories of their fellow students shot in their presence. The students were traumatized, they were full of hatred, discouraged and hopeless and never wanted to go back to school anymore. The Garissa society that lived together in peace was overtaken by suspicion amongst themselves after the attack that segregated them into religious classes. The Garissa community was economically affected by the attack, they lost their fellow students, jobs, and belongings and their studies and lives were interrupted.

4.10 Concluding remarks

This chapter dealt with the presentation and analysis of the data collected from the interviews through a thematic and literature framework used to discuss the Impacts of terrorism on Garissa University and its inhabitants.

The purposive sampling method was used for the selection of the informants. Snowball sampling which is a purposive sampling approach was used to reach out to the informants for interviews. Five informants were interviewed including two student survivors, a clergyman, administration staff and a newly admitted student.

The informants were coded for confidentiality purposes. Confidentiality is a very critical ethical issue that was under consideration in this research by following all the rules and regulations from NSD and the University of Oslo. The data collection process and the challenges are also noted. The researcher's positioning is both an inside and an outsider.

The findings presented were the case in this context the terrorist attack at Garissa. Several themes emerged from the interviews with the informants explaining what was going on at Garissa before, during and after the attack. Christians were hunted, and the attack was a result of the Kenyan government's support of Somalia's fight against terrorists, some of the leaders desired to take some of the higher positions, but there was a struggle for the positioning of the university.

The findings also revealed what took place after the attack by pointing out that there was

tension, death of so many innocent people, the majority injured, others survived under difficult circumstances and the university and the businesses around were closed for a prolonged time.

Those people who were injured were taken to the hospital, and the diseased and the survivors were taken to Nyayo Stadium. The survivors met their parents/Guardians and helped in identifying the deceased for burial.

The informant presented some of the impacts of the terrorist attack. The impacts touch various aspects or fields. People at Garissa developed fear, anxiety, trauma, and suspicion, Muslims were segregated from others, people lost their loved ones, properties were destroyed, and lost jobs. people were bitter, hopeless, and full of hatred, condemned the government for neglecting its own, as well as questioning religion and point out the need to check on the indoctrination and radicalization of people since those two can be identified as some of the causes of terrorism.

5: ANALYSIS OF THE DIALOGUE PROCESS

This chapter does a thematic presentation of the dialogue process from the data collected. The presentation is done starting with the initiation of dialogue, the definition of dialogue in this context and thirdly the impacts of interreligious dialogue. The analysis is done using the literature and the concepts of dialogue from Leirvik, Grung and Dunbar

5.1 Initiation of interreligious dialogue

The findings noted that there was tension. Garissa was a kind of hell, because of the KDF operation and the shootings during the attack that demolished some of the buildings. The religious leaders around Garissa were already meeting in other forums as pastors, priests, Imams, and sheikhs. Religious leaders were discussing issues that affect society such as infrastructure, clean drinking water supply in all households, the services in hospitals and so

on, and decided to sit and have a dialogue about the terrorist attack that caused suspicion among the inhabitants. this was reflected in a conversation and the informant noted

The dialogue just began because we met in other forums the sheikhs, imams, pastors, and priests from the Roman Catholic, and we said let us sit down and talk. And we went to the mosque, and the sheikhs and imams told their congregations how they should respect the Christians. They went to the church and the priests and pastors told their Christian congregations not to be suspicious of their brothers and sisters from the Islamic religion (Informant, E)

As it was noted by the same the mentioned religious leaders, when the attack took place, agreed to incorporate dialogue by structuring and formalizing the process. The reason for dialogue was for the sake of harmony and coexistence. The Clergy noted “the imams, sheikhs, priests, and pastors fellowship said they are brothers they are not separated. They should not be divided by those people saying the Muslims are attacking Christians. The people who say that the Muslims are attacking Christians want to split the Muslims and the Christians and the leaders and congregants will not allow that.”

The Priests, Pastors Imams and the sheikhs together went to the Mosque, the Imams and the sheikhs asked the Muslims to respect the Christians and they went to the Church where the priests and the pastors told the Christians not to be suspicious of the Muslims because they are people like them. Those religious leaders and their congregants together demonstrated around Garissa condemning the act of terrorist attacks. Muslim learn from the Christians the teaching in the bible that says, “do unto others what you want to be done to you and don’t do to others what you do not want to be done to you”. The Christians learn from the Muslims that “killing one person is killing the humour, and hurting your brother is hurting yourself”. The religious leaders encouraged people to volunteer to give information to the authorities in case of any suspicious activity around the Garissa area.

During the interview, the clergy also noted that at Garissa different kinds of dialogue were present, which is evident in the statement “When you define dialogue, there are different types of dialogue: a dialogue about life, dialogue about work, dialogue about spirituality and dialogue about theology” (informant, E)

The clergy also pointed out that the dialogue they were doing at Garissa was the dialogue of

spirituality. However, at the same time, it was composed of dialogue about work because they were working together and interacting with each other for peacebuilding in the society. In addition, it was a dialogue about life, they were living together and were affected in the same way in that locality. It was also a dialogue about Theology because the Imams, sheikhs, priests, and pastors were educators. The informant explained

Like me now, for example, I know a bit of the Quran “if you kill one person you kill humour” and the Muslims. They also know a bit of the bible, from my side. “Do unto others what you want them to do unto you”. “Don't do unto others what you don't want to be done unto you (Informant, E)

The last comment by the clergy was that the dialogue at Garissa was a kind of dialogue which was in a round table where there was no prejudice and saying, I am better than you because this is my area. You have just come and found me here.

One of the student informants who was admitted to Garissa University in 2016 after the attack participated in a dialogue that was started involving the new students. The informant informed me there was a dialogue initiated before and after the reopening of the university. But did not include the survivors since they did not go back to the university. The dialogue is aimed at the new students. As a result of the attack, the students who survived the attack were not willing to go back or continue their studies in the same environment the Government had to relocate them to Moi Eldoret university which is in Uasin Gishu County in Kenya. The informant also noted that the Initiative of Change Africa (IofC) initiated the dialogue aiming at the newly admitted students. The same informant explained the dialogue that included all the students was held twice in two years, however, after some time it was moved out of the university the reason being they wanted to be all-inclusive. The informant again mentioned it started as dialogue and then changed to Initiative of Change Africa. The religious leaders in the university selected a few students who participated in the dialogue. This is clear in this statement

It started as a dialogue and then it turned out to be the initiative to change Africa. I participated when they started and the last time, I attended was November 2021 before I moved out of Kenya. Currently, some of the students participate. The last time I heard them they said the reason why it moved to the new level is that they wanted to be all-inclusive. I think when they took a few people from the group and then they have an opportunity to like you know to go deeper to what dialogue is all about and they touch the contagious topic, that many students not contagious but

you know those topics that depend on the religion, we want to defend somehow, I think it is having a little bit of impact but now to the few individuals. I think what they are doing is precise but again it needs to involve other students like the initiative of change was very intentional in going to the student at the campus (Informant, C)

Currently, some of the students participate. I attended the last one in November last year 2021.

Yes, I participated when they started. I have attended the initiative of change but currently am not participating maybe because I am outside Kenya.” But are you sure that dialogue is currently ongoing? Yes, of course, the reason why I am sure is that it was going on for two months before I moved out of Kenya. I attended one I think in November, if I am not wrong, I can say it is still going on (Informant, C)

The dialogue initiated in the university targeted the newly admitted students since the former students did not report back to the university after the attack. The informant who was a survivor noted that they were given free counselling sessions at the same time to participate in the dialogue, however, this took place outside the Garissa University. The informant also mentioned that the Christian body in Kenya known as Kenya Student Christian Fellowship, which deals with students who are Christians supported Garissa students through counselling and financial support. “When the students were discharged from the hospital, all of them had to financially cater for their treatments individually which was challenging for many of them. Open doors, and DAIMA which are a non-governmental organization, also offered some training and assist in counselling as well as assisting financially” (Informant, D)

When the informant was asked what they refer/call the service offered by the groups, the response was, “It was combined, the dialogue and the counselling together. We had many sessions with them, so it was just combined, the dialogue and the counselling” (Informant, D) The clergy indicated they did not experience any problem starting the dialogue; they just changed the agenda because they were already meeting in other forums as clergy.

There was no problem simply because we had ready programs as I just have told you before the attack. We used to meet as Christians and Muslims in other forums among religious leaders. We also had a structure that was laid down by the religious leaders. pastors fellowship. Imams and shakes also the Catholics. Normally we meet to discuss other things. We may discuss the infrastructures around, the services in the hospitals, maybe provision of clean water to each and

everybody, maybe the roads the way it is. Already we had a connecting thing before even the attack. So, there was no big problem as such. because it was very simple for us to engage in the dialogue. It was a kind of structuring and formalizing dialogue. It was very smooth (Informant, E)

Three of the informants who were directly involved in the attack explained they underwent counselling sessions that opened a platform for the survivors to share their experiences as well as accept their situation and be able to go on with life normally. I learned from the informants that the government offered counselling to the survivors after the attack, however, it was conducted outside Garissa. Two of the student survivors and the administration staff attended counselling sessions and one of the students participated in dialogue as well. Counselling is intended to help the survivors recover from the effects of the terrorist attack.

Also, during counselling sessions, survivors were advised by the counsellors to avoid going back to the same site to help in the healing process. One thing that stood out was that there was no problem regarding the initiation of dialogue. However, the centres where counselling was being offered were far away from where the survivors resided, therefore they had to pay for transportation, food, and someplace to stay since the counselling was offered in sessions that would take two or three days. Sometimes some of them could not afford to cater for the expenses, therefore they ended up missing some of the sessions. (Informant D)

5.2 The informant's definition of the dialogue

In this section, I am going to present the definition of dialogue in this context using the theories and some literature mentioned earlier in the introduction. I decided to discuss the definition of dialogue in this chapter and then concentrate on the impact of interreligious dialogue in chapter six.

Dunbar says an interreligious dialogue requires four criteria that must be met for the conversation to be called interreligious dialogue. "First interpersonal communication, two different religious commitments, three a mutual attitude and open-mindedness, implying a willingness to learn and grow from the other; and fourth significant religious content in or implied by the conversation" (Dunbar, 1998:456).

I found out that dialogue was initiated At Garissa university after the attack and continued. The

dialogue was between Muslims and Christians. come together and talked about the suspicion that was caused by the terrorist attack. Despite their religious differences the Muslims and Christians were willing to learn from the Quran and the Bible. The Christians shared the teachings from the bible concerning killing one another or how human beings should treat each other, and the Muslims also shared what the Quran teaches about the same. The Christians learnt that the Quran does not accept killing other people instead the Quran teaches “if you kill one person you kill the humour. When you kill one person you kill the whole society. When you save one person you save the whole society and the Muslims learn that the bible does not accept killing as well, they learnt the Bible teaches " do unto others what you want them to do unto you, don't do unto other what you don't want to be done unto you” (Informant, E). the dialogue was significant for eradicating suspicion by creating awareness about terrorist attacks. The inhabitants were also encouraged to volunteer and report any suspicious activity around them to the authorities.

Referring to Dunbar’s definition of dialogue that it is a respectful communication between two or more persons committed to different religions, about issues of religious significance, in a common attitude open-mindedness (Dunbar, 1998:456), at Garissa both Muslims and Christians involved in a respectful communication in a common attitude to confront the issue of a terrorist attack that caused tension between Muslims and Christians.

Hareide claims that dialogue involves the whole person and does not necessarily have an agreement as to its aim. The religious leaders’ aim was harmony and coexistence. They come together to understand one another point of view regarding the issue of terrorism which was religious-related and resulted in tension among people. After they understood none of them supported the act of terrorism, they tried to share the truth with the people. From Cornille’s definition of dialogue that dialogue means I can learn from you we can witness that both Muslims and Christians learn the beliefs, teaching and practices concerning terrorism. They learn to respect and coexist together as people. They were involved in the worship services both in the Mosque and the church. Where they get to go deeper into the experiences that give rise to or are brought about by the beliefs as Cornille notes in her presentation of the dialogue of spirituality.

Leirvik's theory of the necessary dialogue is driven by a felt sociopolitical need to prevent or reduce religion-related conflict in society, by fostering peaceful interaction between

representatives of different religious groups. is visible at Garissa university where the people's safety was at stake. The security was questionable. People lost their lives, jobs, and properties, others were nursing wounds from the bullets. The student's educational achievement was challenged, the Muslims suffered from being segregated, and their freedom was limited. All these factors considered made it very necessary for dialogue. After the initiation of counselling and dialogue and the survivors getting financial support from non-governmental organizations and international bodies, there was peace and healing from the traumatizing experience. This is a process and something to learn to live with as some of the informants pointed out.

One of the informants defined dialogue as

dialogue is either to discuss and to have a take and give attitude towards, coexistence without any or with their religious beliefs, whether you are Muslim or Christians they can dialogue mostly to understand one another point of view to be able to sit and accept people the way they are (Informant, B)

This definition buys from Mbiti's definition the people at Garissa participated in dialogue where the Muslim leaders talked when they went to Mosque and the Christian leaders talked when they went to the church.

The religious leaders despite their religious differences had a take and give attitude. They were willing to learn and understand each other's points of view concerning beliefs, teachings and practices that point to terrorism.

Another informant defined dialogue as,

“Conversation between one or two people or groups of divergent views to seek mutual understanding whereby there will be respect, coexistence, and eradication of suspicion among one another. (Informant, E)

Informant C said “Dialogue can be defined as where two or more parties come together to discuss worrying issues or those things that make them fight from a neutral point of view.

Ann Hege Grung the meaning of the word dialogue could be restricted to a description of a particular activity: or it could be based on specific ethical, moral, and religious values” (Grung. 2015:67). Informant C mentioned above definition of the dialogue may have been based on religious values that needed to be checked or respected.

From the two definitions above we can point out that the Muslim and Christians sought mutual understanding and they respected each other that way, they managed to address the worrying issue of the Al-Shabab terrorist attack reducing suspicion among Muslims and Christians.

In summary, dialogue can be defined as a discussion or a conversation, a take and give attitude between two or more parties/groups with or without religious beliefs, seeking a mutual understanding in respect, and coexistence with one another. The Muslims and the Christians came together to talk for the sake of harmony and coexistence. Humility was an evident virtue, both Christians and Muslims were willing to understand each other's point of view about what was related to Islamic tradition. Muslims were committed to sharing or explaining the truth they have experienced in their religion. Both Muslims and Christians welcomed each other and were open to receiving the truth and insights that are new, different, and perhaps in tension with their own. one of the informants earlier in this paper noted that the Muslims themselves differ when it comes to the claim that Islam is responsible for the attack. some Muslims claimed Islam is the cause of terrorism and others denied it.

Ann Hege Grung supposes religious difference as the constitutive element in the encounter and implies that other differences may be downplayed, among them cultural differences, gender differences and social/ class differences (Grung, 2011:30). The dialogue at Garissa university downplayed the cultural differences. The dialogue did not bother about the tribe, gender or social/class differences. They sort for harmony and coexistence through understanding one another take on terrorism and trying to find ways to eradicate or reduce suspicion. Both adherents were aware of their religious difference which is why they advocated the fact that they are all human beings, and they live and are affected by the same issues. I think terrorism was the only issue of concern in this incident.

5.3 Presentation of the impact of Interreligious dialogue on Garissa university and its inhabitants

In this section, I will do a thematic presentation of my findings from the data collected. My presentation will be carried out as follows: Reduced Anxiety, fear and suspicion. family recovery. survivors going on with their normal lives. hope and forgiveness. economic consequences. Social deterioration. religious consciousness.

5.3.1 Reduced fear, anxiety, trauma, and suspicion

The informant mentioned some of the effects caused by the terrorist attack that they struggled with. Fear, hatred, trauma, anxiety, and suspicion were evident. It was also noted that some of the informants avoided being in the same environment as the Muslims because of the claim that Muslims were responsible for the attack.

From the findings, all the informants indicated that there was a very big positive impact after participating in counselling and dialogue. The impact was both on a personal and a communal level. Dialogue and counselling helped Christians to let go and embrace forgiveness.

The dialogue or the counselling had a lot of impacts which made us Christians take the virtue of forgiveness and leave the avenges to God. By the words of our counsellors, we were able to be assured that we don't need to do anything or avenge anybody, especially Christians because we don't own the avengers, it is God who owns it. So, the bitterness and the desire to avenge were able to be released from us and therefore we have left it to God. Because some of the students were feeling there is no need to even leave again because some of them had lost their loved ones and their relatives God” (Informant, D)

From the findings it is clear were it not for dialogue, the tension and suspicion between Muslims and Christians could not have been eradicated.

“Dialogue is very positive. We are living together with a very positive aspect, we eradicate suspicion, between Muslims and Christians. And we are walking forward together. That is why you have not even heard of an attack in Garissa.” (Informant, E)

Most of the people a pre

ciated the counselling sessions that helped not only him but the whole family even after the siblings got into bad company, the other sibling's school performance deteriorated, and the parents separated after the counselling things got better this was clear from the informant's remarks.

Counselling was helpful for most people. I still want to say for myself, because eventually, I managed to get a few sections for my mum, my dad, and my sister and brother. After that my

brother managed to go back to school. Although my sister never recovered academically, she managed to finish her form four. My mum and dad as much as they never got back together, do talk (Informant, A)

One of the informants had a different view on religious dialogue suggesting that if the religious dialogue had to be practised it should be based on the truth. When dealing with the conviction the people involved should concentrate on the true conviction of what took place does not defend or take any side. The informant explained that the terrorist attack at Garissa, al-Shabaab were responsible for the attack, and they declared that they don't want anybody who is a Christian in the area if the dialogues tried to convince the survivors otherwise it would make them angry. This means if the religious dialogue must have a positive impact it has to be open and based on the truth about the situation.

One aspect I hated about the counselling was the conviction, telling people that the attack has nothing to do with religion. That is not counselling, that is just being, that is aggregating people. They are just going to be angry because the terrorists declared, "Sisi ni Al-Shabaab na watu wote Wenye sio waislamu Wako huku hatuwataki." Meaning, "we are al-Shabaab and all the people who are not Muslims we don't want them here (Informant, A)

The informant who participated in both counselling and interreligious dialogue said that dialogue and counselling were combined.

It helped because if they were not the ones, I couldn't be the way I am because I had given up on life. I didn't even want to continue with my education, I didn't even want to meet any gathering. They walked with us, encouraged us and they strengthened us. Through that dialogue and counselling and that is why most of the students were able to proceed with their education to the last hope none of them dropped out of school.

With the initiative of Change Africa, the government and the non-government organizations came together in dialogue. This fostered peaceful interactions in a society that was overtaken by fear, anxiety, hatred and suspicion between the Muslims and Christians. Garissa university and the inhabitants came together with a common agenda to condemn the act of terrorism, though they belong to different religious traditions and cultures.

The act of discriminating and killing Christians only created differences and questions

regarding Islamic beliefs and teachings. The Muslims felt the need to share their teachings and beliefs about terrorism and conflict, in addressing the claim that Islam is a religion of violence and that terrorists are Muslim. Christians also shared their teachings and beliefs that condemn such actions.

5.3.2 Family recovering

As mentioned earlier the family of one of the informants was very much affected but after the informant was able to secure a few counselling sessions for them their status improved. Though the parents did not come back together, they were able to talk to each other. The siblings' life got better. The two siblings went back to school, and though one never recovered academically, she managed to complete secondary education. The informant also lived in guilt, if he did not choose to join Garissa University, the sibling would not have died. The sibling was in Garissa to be together with the informant since they grew up together and they had similar interests. "Counseling helped me get over the guilt" (Informant, A)

Kenya Student Christian Fellowship is one of the organizations that offered counselling and financial support to the students who survived the attack. Their support relieved the burden on their families during this challenging moment. Other international bodies also paid for their school fees, the students were able to go back to school and complete their studies without too much struggle. In the case of Garissa university, there was no counselling offered for the families; it was offered to the individual survivors. From the contributions made earlier in this chapter, one of the informants was lucky to get the family into the counselling sessions which helped the family start recovering.

5.3.3 Survivors going on with their lives

Two of the Informants indicated that the students who were involved in the attack had given up and did not want to continue with education because of the trauma after undergoing a very difficult moment witnessing their friends and other siblings dying in their presence. They associated the university with death, and they did not see any need of risking their lives for an education and dreams that can be shattered at any time. The counselling sessions were very helpful, though some of them did not manage to attend full sessions. They were encouraged,

strengthened, and they all managed to join Moi University and graduated after completion.

The counselling? Of course, I would say it is necessary, you see such an experience is not an experience that most people can handle like they can experience and just be normal. Is something that most people require adjusting to learning how to live with. You know after that, most of the students didn't want to go back to school because they were like life is too short, it can end at any moment. People we were with yesterday now we are not with. Most people who we were with at Garissa were in the process of requesting the school dropping out, just going into business, or getting employed wherever (informant A)

Asked this question, “Can you say you have recovered from trauma?” One informant responds, I think I have recovered. Before I could not talk, I would just be crying because I used to be too much. Too bad. But now I am okay. Laughing in a kind of impossible voice. Healing is a continuous process because sometimes something triggers a thing that is likely to cause trauma to me, I reflect and recall that. It is not that it has healed, although I am still healing. So, whenever such a thing comes, I recall it is not yet over. Still healing.

The informants feared for their lives, and they did not find any need for education at the expense of their lives. They feared for their physical safety as well as their health. They were psychologically affected. However, after the dialogue, they were able to handle the situation. It did not happen instantly, it will take time, but they were able to come back to their normal life.

5.3.4 forgiveness and hope

The findings indicate that most of the survivors struggled with bitterness, and hatred and wondered how someone would just choose to end the life of so many innocent people. It was also confirmed by many of the same informants that the Interreligious dialogue and the counselling had a lot of impacts which made us Christians take the virtue of forgiveness and leave the avenges to God. The informant mentioned

By the words of our counsellors, we were able to be assured that we don't need to do anything or avenge anybody, especially Christians because we don't own the avengers, it is God who owns it. So, the bitterness and the desire to avenge were able to be released from us and therefore we have left it to God. Because some of the students were feeling if they were given a gun and allowed to use it, they would avenge (Informant, D)

The sentiment above shows how dialogue and counselling enabled the Christians to choose forgiveness over revenge hence creating peaceful interactions with the Muslims without causing any conflict. The anxiety, hatred, and suspicion were reduced, and they were able to live together with all the people, even the Muslims. The informants said their relationship became stronger after they understood that their brother's Muslims did not have anything to do with the attack. They stood with each other whenever necessary. The survivors had lost the motivation and meaning of life and opted to drop out of the University. The counselling sessions and the dialogue helped them to forgive, and leave avenges unto God. The encouragement from the counsellors and the dialogues changed their views and they were hopeful again.

It helped because without them I could not be the way I am because I had given up in life. I didn't even want to continue with my education, I didn't even want to meet any gathering.

They walked with us, encouraged us and they strengthened us through that dialogue and counselling. That is why most of the students were able to proceed with their education to the last hope, none of them dropped out of school because of the situation. (Informant D)

Dialogue and counselling were an experience that created hope for the future life and earned the participants skills to substantiate their feelings whenever they encountered them. One informant indicated that the Initiative of Change Africa tried to separate emotions and reality, to separate feelings which helped survivors to realize that they can discuss religious issues with a lot of respect and humility between the two religions. The informant also said he is going to initiate dialogue where he lives though not formally.

Am looking to settle where I am and trusting God to initiate dialogue not in a formal way, but just in an informal way. (Informant C)

Another informant did not participate in the dialogue, but he volunteered at the cousin's hotel where most of the customers were Somalis and Muslims to make peace with them.

eventually, I got over my hatred, my bitterness towards the Muslims but not towards Islam. I am fine with Muslims. If you are a Muslim, I do not mind about your life if you don't try to force it upon me, am fine. Concerning religion, we cannot even discuss that, because I will offend you, I have nothing good to say about that. Why the choice of atheism and there are other religions? I was not that religious before, but I was not a strong believer (Informant, A)

Counselling also helped the students to overcome hatred toward Islam and were able to associate with their fellow Muslim students who were there during the attack. This was possible after dialogue and understanding that Islam does not have any practice or teaching that supports killing other people, but rather discourages killing your brothers (anyone who is not of the same beliefs) because killing your brother is killing yourself. Christian survivors choose forgiveness over revenge though at first, they were feeling if they were given weapons, they could get revenge. The Christians learnt that Islam does not support terrorism and they grew from that by embracing the Christian virtue of forgiveness.

5.3.5 Economical challenges

The situation at Garissa university premises and the surroundings were under the KDF control for a prolonged period after the attack. The informants noted that Garissa was hell, and buildings were demolished. Businesses were closed, people lost their loved ones, properties were destroyed, and many lost their jobs. but today the university has many students because of the dialogue that was conducted before the reopening of the university. The dialogue also bore fruit because there were better security measures that were put in place after the tragic incident. The informant said,

The economy is booming again. There are some people assigned to the institution, and the supporting staff both locals and non-locals are employed in the institution. Businesses are operating so well since most of the businesses are supported by the students. (Informant, E)

As noted by the informants, some people sell food, others operate transport cars, others have rental houses that are occupied by the students, and many other kinds of businesses that offer services to the students and the inhabitants.

This affects the economy of Garissa directly or indirectly, who benefits in one way or the other from the students. Most of the informants said the dialogue created awareness among all the inhabitants that everyone can volunteer to give information about any stranger or any suspicious activity in the area through the “nyumba Kumi” (the ten houses). This is a group of families which include some elders and young people who are selected to report any suspicious strangers around their vicinity, who have not been in that locality. They check for young men and women who are supposed to be in the community and if they are not in the community, they find out

where they are. They inquire from parents to tell them where their sons and daughters are. The informant emphasized this by saying,

Recently they managed to get hold of some of the people who were around somewhere in a plot or rental house. The strangers had around four AK47s and another extra gun which was a kind of automatic weapon (Informant, E)

5.3.6 Social deterioration

From the findings, it was clear that the Garissa inhabitants were good at hospitality. They welcomed new people at Garissa without bothering about who they were which completely changed after the attack the inhabitants become very cautious. they had to know new people better before they engage in any activity. If they realized something suspicious, they reported it to the Nyumba Kumi or the security officers for further investigation. The security officers encouraged residents to do so without any fear of intimidation for the safety of everyone. This has helped to eradicate suspicion and provide transparency among themselves. “The supporting staff in the area and we members live together and we became exposed to one another, we respect one another and at the same time we came to eradicate the suspicion which was created by that act of terrorism” (Informant, E)

All the informants who participated in the dialogue process said the dialogue enabled them to come out together with the Muslim brotherhood and condemn the criminal act of people who hide in religion, bringing a split between Muslims and Christians. The dialogue eradicated suspicion and the people interacted with respect and coexisted regardless of their tribe, gender, class, or religion. They lived as brothers and sisters (informant A) Information E noted that the priest, the pastors, the sheikhs, and Imams together visited the Mosque and the church. I think this was a big step in demonstrating togetherness.

5.3.7 Religious consciousness

Garissa University is a public university which means it is a diverse society. However, people lived together in peace, but after the attack, there was suspicion because the Christians who survived the attack and those who resided at Garissa feared for their lives. Some of the Muslims denied that they were responsible for the attack while others agreed. The Christians could not

believe that Muslims were not involved because the students knew about the warning and threat that confirmed Christians were unwanted at Garissa. Also, Christians were the majority who were killed in the attack. Three of the informants mentioned radicalization and indoctrination based on the teaching and practices of Islamic tradition as the sources of terrorism and some criminal activities. The informant who experienced and survived the attack at Garissa University said before the attack was not a very committed Christian but after the attack, the informant decided to be an Atheist. The informant did not find the reason to belong to a religion of violence. However, the same informant supposes that religion is an ethical compass for many people, but he did need religion to have an ethical compass.

The attack motivated and raised critical questions that made the informant study on their own the History of religion. to understand the true teaching and philosophies behind religion. The informant read about the history of religion and how it spread. The fact that people died in connection with their beliefs made him criticize religion and decided not to belong to any, however, the informant has the moral values that guide him (Informant, A)

The dialogue provided an opportunity for Muslims and Christians to share what the Quran and the Bible teach about violence and killing. They stood together to condemn the act of killing and associated the people who performed the act with criminals and thugs. The counselling and dialogue created an avenue for Muslims and Christians to come together and share the truth or opinion on the issue of terrorism since the attackers said they are Al-Shabaab, and they did not want Christians to be in their land.

One of the informants noted that this attack led him to research more on religion and he understood that religions spread through war. According to the informant he decided to respect religion but never be part of any.

When I finally convinced myself that I am an atheist I tried to make my peace. I had a cousin who had converted before to Muslim and gotten married to a Muslim. I kind of started, she had a hotel at Luthuli, and I started volunteering at her hotel (Informant, A)

The informants had an opportunity to understand the religious teachings of one another and changed their attitudes towards one another. They were able to come together and condemn the

act of terrorism with the possible terms. They understood the morals and beliefs of each other's religion. Most of the people affected by the attack were able to reduce suspicion of the Muslims and blame games and focused on peacebuilding. Considering Cornille's presentation of types of dialogue, dialogue of theology was applied in this context by sending light on another's beliefs, doctrine and teachings. The Muslims highlighted that Islamic beliefs, doctrine and teachings do not support terrorist attacks, rather they advocate for brotherhood. Christians emphasized the bible teaching that quote “do unto others what you want them to do unto you and the same way do not do unto others what you do not want them to do unto you” (Informant, E)

The Quran states that when you kill one person you kill the homer, you kill the whole society. When you save one person, you save the whole society (Informant, E)

The Quran itself says don't kill and don't force somebody to your denomination. let them be free there is freedom (Informant, E)

The clergy also said that through the dialogue one was able to learn from the Quran and the Muslim knows from the bible. Christians are driven by the bible which says.

“Do unto others what you want them to do unto you, don't do unto others what you don't want to be done unto you.” That is the rule, and we know” (Informant, A)

5.4 concluding remarks

I found out that religious leaders initiated a dialogue that involved Muslims and Christians since they were the majority at Garissa. Different kind of dialogue was present, the dialogue of life the Muslim and Christians live together. The dialogue of action worked together to deal with the challenge of suspicion and tension among the people. In the dialogue of spirituality, they shared and appreciated each other's beliefs. the dialogue of theology the religious leaders were teaching their beliefs, doctrines, and teachings. Some of the informant's definition of dialogue has aspects that corresponded to some of the theories and literature used in this study.

Counselling was another means that was used after the attack to help the survivors undergo the healing process. Counselling was offered by the government and other non-governmental organizations.

There were seven different aspects of the impacts of dialogue that were noted from the findings. People who participated in counselling and dialogue experienced reduced fear, anxiety, trauma and suspicion. Family members' lives improved, the students continued their studies, and the survivors forgave their attacker and left vengeance to God. The economy was revived after the opening of the university and in businesses around Garissa, people are working together and coexisting with respect. Some of the informants were provoked and started to question their religion and religion at large to an extent of deciding to be Atheists.

6. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE IMPACT OF THE INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

This chapter is a discussion of the findings between theory and the material which I collected from the interviews. I will interpret and discuss my findings comparing them with the theory and some of the literature presented earlier in this study. In my analysis, we may see different impacts or aspects in different fields concerning the impact of the interreligious dialogue on Garissa university and its inhabitants.

6:1 Reduced fear, anxiety, trauma and suspicion

It was evident from the finding that Interreligious dialogue was initiated at Garissa post the terrorist attack. Referring to the findings, the dialogue initiated by religious leaders included the Muslims and the Christians. Religious leaders from both religions agreed to structure and formalized interreligious in response to the effects of the terrorist attack.

Dunbar in his criteria for interreligious dialogue explained that the dialogue must be

“interpersonal communication between people from different religious commitments” In this context, the dialogue was between the Muslims and the Christians. They practised a mutual attitude of respect and open-mindedness, implying a willingness to learn and grow from the other. Both Muslims and Christians came into a dialogue about their beliefs, teachings and practices to deal with the suspicion, fear, anxiety and trauma that was caused by the terrorist attack. The interreligious dialogue was significant for peacebuilding through understanding each other's points of view. This was visible when one informant said,

The Christians learnt that the Quran does not accept killing other people instead the Quran teaches “if you kill one person you kill the humour, you kill the whole society. When you save one person you save the whole society and the Muslims learn that the bible does not accept killing as well, they learnt the Bible teaches, “do unto others what you want them to do unto you, don't do unto other what you don't want to be done unto you” (Informant, E)

At Garissa university, religious differences are present because the dialogue is/was among two different religious traditions. The Muslims and the Christians come together to discuss the issue of the terrorist attack. Religious leaders incorporated dialogue in their continuing forums where they discussed other issues affecting Garissa inhabitants. Considering Leirvik’s dialogue theory, I can say that the dialogue initiated by the clergy was necessary. The religious leaders came together for the sake of harmony to discuss the issue of terrorism which caused anxiety, trauma, and suspicion segregation of the Muslims who were the minority in the university.

Catherine Cornille says that at the heart of dialogue is interreligious dialogue because religion is the most comprehensive of all the human disciplines, explaining the ultimate meaning of life, and how to live accordingly (Cornille, 2013:1). At Garissa religious leaders, Initiative of Change Africa initiated interreligious dialogue aiming at fostering peaceful interactions and preventing or reducing religious-related conflict from the terrorist attack for which Muslims were held responsible. The dialogue sought to seek harmony by understanding the religious view of the Islamic and Christian teachings, beliefs, and practices. Peace and hope are meaningful aspects of life that needed to be restored for the better of the people at Garissa.

Ann Hege Grung in her presentation of the two models of dialogue says, ‘the aim of the model

of religious differences as a challenge is to create a space where communication can contribute to a power-critical platform for action." She continues and says the powers that are possible subjects of criticism are religious and secular authorities and practices alike, not only the secular" (Grung,2011:30). At Garissa, both the Muslims and the Christians created a space to communicate their religious practices which I think is vulnerable to religious criticism. Referring to Grung we can see Islamic traditional practices are criticized also religion at large. The militia group discriminated against Christians from Muslim living people with no doubt that Muslims were responsible for the attack.

Getting involved in the interreligious dialogue offered an opportunity for the people involved to act and demonstrated condemning the tragic act of terrorists because it was not based on any of their religious teachings, beliefs and practices. Leirvik presents "Buber's idea of 'the space between' as a pivotal metaphor both for interreligious coexistence as a social phenomenon and for interfaith dialogue as a spiritual practice" (Leirvik, 2014:18). From the statement above we learn that interreligious dialogue thrives in the space between. The space between the Muslims and the Christians was important for the coexistence of the Garissa people. Leirvik notes the "impossibility of stepping outside of the space between to take a neutral view of social relationships in which everyone is involved" (Leirvik, 2014:21). The Muslims and Christians came together as people of the same community, though not belonging to the same religious tradition. They were affected by the same things, so they could not step outside of the space between if they aimed at harmony and peacebuilding in the society of which they are all part.

Most of the informants pointed to Suspicion as one aspect that was present after the terrorist attack. I found out that the dialogue initiated by the religious leaders contributed largely to eradicating suspicion. The Christians were suspicious of the Muslims and segregated them. There was tension in a community that lived together peacefully. One of the informants explained how dialogue positively impacted the interaction among Garissa inhabitants.

Those who are like chaplains in the university normally go on bringing the students together, bringing that kind of harmony, and respect and eradicating suspicion amongst each other. Both Christians and Muslims outside here are also doing our part. As religious leaders when we meet, we also discuss more and we tell our people in the church and Mosque to respect even those who are not from here, those who are not locals from this area. (Informant, E)

Most of the informants mentioned they were traumatized to an extent that they avoided people and situations that remind them of the traumatic experiences. They also assert they are in a healing process, and they have learnt how to live with the trauma. After participating in dialogue and counselling, they were able to separate emotions and engage in positive interactions. Their situation improved, and they were able to go on with their normal lives.

Cornille claims that interreligious dialogue means “I can learn from you” (Cornille, 2013:20) Both Muslims and Christians and the survivors learn to respect and coexist together regardless of the differences whether religious, cultural, social, economic or physical differences. They also learn how to keep themselves safe by reporting what goes on around them as well as manage their emotions,

Segregation of Muslims was another thing that was mentioned during the interviews. After the initiation of dialogue both Muslims and Christians worked together to condemn the tragic act. The clergy from both religious traditions motivated their people to respect one another. They also requested people to volunteer to report to the authority any suspicious activities going on around them. The dialogue that was held between the university fraternity, the government, the newly admitted students, and the inhabitants has contributed to the reopening of the institution, and the security at the university was also improved.

The findings revealed various types of dialogues were taking place at Garissa.

dialogue of Spirituality was present the dialogue was concerned with understanding the beliefs of one another. People participated in the dialogue of action because they confronted the problem of terrorism which affected the whole society. Dialogue of life is present people from different religions interact while living in the same neighbourhood” (Cornille, 2013:134) Both Muslims and Christians interact daily at Garissa since they all live in the same society. dialogue of theology was also seen at Garissa where the leaders read the bible and the Quran to their congregants regarding how people should treat each other. These types of dialogues were mentioned by Cornille. The clergy added the dialogue of perseverance where they together held one another through the tough moments. The clergy said he come across this type while reading.

6.2 Family recovering

From the findings, it was mentioned that families were deeply affected by the death of their

loved ones. loss of their properties and many more. The counselling and the dialogue were not offered to the families but the individual survivors. However, one of the informants was able to get some counselling sessions with his family. And the informant confirmed that after the counselling sessions things got better This was evident when the informant said,

The dialogue was necessary, I managed to get a few sessions for my mum, my dad, and my siblings, I managed to get a few sessions for them after that one of my siblings managed to go back to school, and another sibling never recovered, however, managed to finish form four- My mum and dad as much as they never got back together, they do talk (Informant, A)

From the statement above we can see a family is a social place or a social need that if one person who is part of it is affected then everyone else including the whole society is affected. As Leirvik pointed out, the felt sociopolitical need drives the necessary dialogue which fosters peaceful interactions, preventing or reducing religious-related conflict in this sense counselling contributed at large to the improvement of the condition of the informant and the family (Leirvik. 2014:18).

From the findings also the international bodies paid school fees for the survivors to be able to complete their studies. This reduced the burden on parents/guardians who were not financially stable as was noted by the informants. Kenya student Christian fellowship (KSCF) which is a Christian body in Kenya, offered counselling and financial support to the survivors to be able to cater for their hospital bills and other personal needs. Economical and health statutes are social-political needs essential for a peaceful society. Those factors affect all human beings in society.

Leirvik's theory of the necessary dialogue is present at Garissa. peace, family, health, security, and many more are social and political needs that drove the Government and the religious leaders to initiate interreligious dialogue aiming at peaceful interactions in response to the effects of terrorist attacks.

Levina speaking about the distance of proximity as presented by Leirvik optimizes the understanding of dialogue as a form of communication in which one is critically aware of the

symmetry between me and the other (Leirvik, 2014:22). Buber speaks of “dialogue as a third dimension beyond the individual and social aspects of existence” (Leirvik, 2014:22). Hareide says that “dialogue involves the whole person and does not necessarily have an agreement as to its aim” (Leirvik, 2014:26) The family of the survivors is not an exception when it comes to the effects of the attack and the impact of dialogue; however, the family got more affected when they lose their loved ones and their properties.

6.3 The survivors going on with their normal lives

During the interview it was pointed out that the students lost hope in going on with their studies and their life, in general, they lost the meaning of life or living. Some did not want to go back to the same university. Others were fearing for their lives after seeing their friends' lives being cut short within no time. They had nothing to motivate them. Others were nursing wounds from the gunshots However, after participating in counselling and interreligious dialogue all of them were able to continue with their education. The informants were able to overcome some of the effects of the terrorist attack. One informant said,

I would say counselling is necessary, you see, such an experience is not an experience that most people can handle like they can experience and just be normal. Is something that most people require adjusting to learning how to live with. You know after that most of the students didn't want to go back to school because they were like life is too short and can end at any moment. People we were with yesterday now we are not with. Most people who we were with at Garissa were in the process of requesting school dropping out, just going into business, or getting employed wherever (Informant. A)

The informants pointed out that the nongovernmental organizations walked with them and encouraged them to move on with their studies and to leave the venges to God. The informant noted their encouragement helped and all the survivors were able to graduate.

Leirvik explains that necessary dialogue is driven by felt social-political needs, I think hope is a socio-political need that was dealt with during the counselling and dialogue process. My interpretation of people who have lost hope is that they are vulnerable and can be influenced in either a negative or positive way. However, in this case, they were influenced positively thus reducing or preventing conflicts at Garissa.

Cornille notes that “At the heart of dialogue is interreligious dialogue because religion is the most comprehensive of all human disciplines, explanation of the ultimate meaning of life, and how to live accordingly” (Cornille, 2013:1). People involved in dialogue and counselling got to understand the ultimate meaning of life and they were able to live their normal life once more. The students, the staff, the subordinate staffs, and the inhabitants continued with their daily life. Greg notes that “religions are generally viewed as positive, collective and stable systems of meaning and there is little focus on other differences than the religious ones” (Grung, 2011:30).

6.4 Is it possible to forgive?

From the findings, hatred and anger were at a higher rate. The survivors were drowning in deep thought and memories of their loved ones who were massacred in their eyes. The survivors had so many questions and desired revenge. Most of the informants mentioned that after participating in interreligious dialogue and counselling they understood that forgiveness is a Christian virtue. they choose forgiveness over venges. The informant said, “vengeance belongs to God” The informant's statement was

The dialogue or the counselling had a lot of impacts which made us Christians take the virtue of forgiveness and leave the avenges to God. By the words of our counsellors, we were able to be assured that we don't need to do anything or avenge anybody, especially Christians because we don't own the avengers, it is God who owns it. So, the bitterness and the desire to avenge were able to be released from us and therefore we have left it to God (Informant. D)

The same informant continues like this “. If their leaders have read the Quran and they very well know about it there is no connection between terrorism and the Quran, then we have no reason to judge them because they also don't support it”. From the statements above, we learn that forgiveness is a Christian virtue and venges are owned by God in the Christian beliefs. Also, we can see the people involved trusted and believed the Muslim leaders when they shared that the Islamic teachings, beliefs, and practices do not support Terrorism or killing people. The religious leaders pointed out that Quran discourages killing one person which is killing the humour. Grung indicates keeping the religious boundaries stable between the religious traditions by entering a dialogue that may be a way to create a safe space and show respect for the differences between them. The Muslims and Christians entered the dialogue where they had

time to share their teachings, beliefs, and practices in respect of their differences. Grung also says interreligious dialogue is human communication between religious leaders for the primary purpose of clarifying theological/philosophical similarities and differences.

The informant pointed out that after joining Moi university where some of the Muslim students lived in one room and they closed themselves inside. The students wanted to burn that room because they were not sure what was going on. This is what the informant said

so, we wanted to know what they were planning are they again trying to bring the terrorist to Moi university? up to that point is when they decided to call one of the chairs or their leader from the nearby mosque to come and explain to us if they are supporting the terrorism or not. we found out that some of the leaders, religious leaders in the region were condemning this act that had been done to the students (Informant, D)

Another informant who could not be in the same environment as the Muslims noted that he decided to find peace with the Muslims, by volunteering to work in a restaurant where most of the customers were Muslims and that way he came to forgive though. the same informant noted that don't like Islam but have no problem relating with Muslims now, however, cannot allow anyone to force to believe in any religion.

From the statements I interpret hatred as a factor that can contribute to conflict however in this case the dialogue and counselling helped the people to forgive and let it go.

Most of the survivors lost interest and motivation in continuing their studies. The surviving informant associated the university with the terrorist attack. They planned to request the school to withdraw from the studies. However, they were encouraged and strengthened by the words of the counsellors and the religious leaders. The informants noted that healing is a process and also the effects as something to learn to live with however the good part is that they accepted and understood what going on and what to do to manage the situation.

6.5 Economical consequences

Referring to the findings, Garissa was economically challenged in terms of loss of lives, and properties, loss of jobs, and economic development were affected because of insecurity that led to the closure of the university and businesses for a long time. The findings show that dialogue

enhanced peace, respect, understanding and coexistence among Garissa inhabitants and Garissa University. This stands out when an informant insists

Dialogue has an impact positively because the university now has a lot of students who are there and at the same time also the locals, the economy is again booming. You know it is going on well. “Imeanza,” in Swahili, meaning it has started. some people are attached there inside there are employed both the locals and non-locals. The supporting staff in the area and we members live together and we became exposed to one another, we respect one another and at the same time, we came to eradicate the suspicion which was created by that act of terrorists (Informant, E)

After the dialogue the Government built a police station inside the university, they put security lights all around the university compound to make it easy to see anyone who comes in and out of the university. I think Economic impact is a sociopolitical need that Leirvik explains. The economic impact influenced the Government, the non-Governmental organizations, religious leaders and the Initiative of changing Africa to start dialogue and counselling to prevent or reduce conflict from terrorist attacks.

Businesses started again and curfew was not in place anymore, so people could engage in business as usual. The businesses that defeneded students picked up. Security also contributed to business welfare. The dialogue at Garissa was constructive it contributed to reviving the economy of the society.

6.6 Social adjustments

At Garissa, the Muslims and Christians lived together peacefully, but after the attack, there was tension, confusion, suspicion, fear, and anxiety. The Christians felt that the Muslims were the cause of their suffering; they did not trust them. On the other side, Muslims suffered from being segregated. Whenever they go, they were seen as a terrorist. However, after the dialogue between the Christians and the Muslims, there were peaceful interactions that fostered peace and eradicated suspicion.

The impact of this dialogue was the positive side. we can respect one another, we can coexist together with respect and work together without fear of intimidation (Informant, E)

Catherine Cornille claims that religion is an explanation of the ultimate meaning of life and how to live accordingly (Cornille, 2013:3) This can be interpreted as a true statement in this situation because interreligious dialogue contributed to peaceful interactions and understanding from religious others. The inhabitants and Garissa university found a way to coexist together in respect of one another despite their religious, cultural, social and political differences.

Ann Hege grunge says, “interreligious dialogue intersects not only with the field of religion but also with social and political fields” (Grung, 2011: 25). The findings and our normal lives can attest those human beings are social and political. We exist together which makes it political because we have different views on issues of life.

Cornille points out that “for interreligious dialogue to achieve the goal, the dialogues need to be humble about what they already know through their religion and admit that there is always more to know” (Cornille, 2013:135). Both Muslims and Christians admitted there was more to learn from each other when they engage in the interreligious dialogue. Am sure they learnt a lot from each other which is also evidenced by the interviews conducted in this study. They also “trust in the interconnectedness despite the depth of their commitments and despite the often-incommensurable difference between religious perspectives, there is something that makes it possible for religious believers to understand each other and to challenge each other” (Cornille, 2013:135).

6.7 Religious consciousness

From the findings, it was clear that some of the survivors questioned their religion, religious teachings, beliefs, and practices. This was very clear when one informant said,

I started studying religion now because I wanted the answer. What conviction does one have to wake up one morning to decide now am going to kill people who do not worship Islam? I then realized, later, that it is not just Islam only. Christianity might be the biggest religion in the world, and it might be a religion with the biggest followers in the world, but how did it spread? It spread like that. In the history of religion, there were crusades. That is how Christianity spread (Informant, A)

The informant further explained the Muslims were attacked by the popes of those times who

targeted non-Christians to follow them to be Christians. Right now, we are experiencing Islamic attacks. The Muslims of those times were not many because Islam was spreading then, but the Muslims of those times used to be like the Christians of now. We are afraid of Islam because it forces us, it kills people who are not Muslims so was it with Muslims. The informant again stated

In my conscious mind, how can I continue believing in a religion that gets spread through mass murder, and hatred? I mean that is not the religion I want to be part of, that is not a belief I want to be part of, spread on fear no-no-no” (informant, A)

This brings us to Mark Juergensmeyer, Margo Kitts and Michael Jerryson who explain religious traditions as the endemic attraction between religion and violence.

The same informant mentioned that the people entering dialogue should be very careful not to defend or sugarcoat issues during the process of dialogue or counselling. The informant commented that during the counselling sessions there is the side of conviction where the people participating should convict themselves of what happened. The informant gave an example that if someone tried to convince them that the terrorist attack at Garissa was not related to religion would anger them.

6.8 Concluding remarks

This research disclosed that the interreligious dialogue involved the Christians and Muslims. Religious leaders from both traditions incorporated interreligious dialogue in the already existing forums where they meet for discussions about other issues about the Garissa community.

The interreligious dialogue created an opportunity for both religions to share their teaching, beliefs, and practices. Sharing what the Quran and the Bible say about killing other people. Through mutual understanding, they joined hands in condemning the act of terrorism. They encouraged their congregants to respect and avoid being suspicious of the Muslims who are people just like them. The same leaders encouraged the people to give information to the authorities in case they suspect any activity going on around them.

The process of interreligious dialogue eradicated fear, anxiety, trauma, and suspicion among the inhabitants. They were able to tolerate each other and coexist in respect. Together the leaders moved from church to mosque talking and demonstrating to people that they are all human beings. This also helped people to stop segregating their fellow brothers and sisters who are Muslims.

The attack affects families as well. This research has shed light on how the family that managed to participate in counselling sessions got better after. Through the help of the international bodies, the survivors got their tuition fees covered which is a good thing for the parents because they were struggling financially. Some non-governmental organizations also helped with finances for hospital services.

The survivors were encouraged during the counselling sessions and dialogue process, and they had hope and motivation to go on with their lives. The students went back to the university though not to the same university. Although they were not completely healed, they took the initiative to go back and continue from where they left, and they all managed to graduate. The majority of those I interviewed are working currently.

It is evident that the attack was very traumatizing, and most of the people were involved in one way or the other. suffer from hatred, bitterness, and urge for revenge however this research shows that forgiveness took place. The Christians learnt the Christian virtue of forgiveness and they decided to forgive. It is noted that it took time, but they choose to forgive and leave vengeance to God who owns. Another person made a deliberate choice to mingle with the Muslims to make peace and this worked. Though the person chose to be an Atheist.

The closure of the university and businesses had economic consequences on people. However, after the university and the businesses opened people worked together without any tension and suspicion since they understood each other through the dialogue and the counselling in which they were part. This also contributed to people adjusting to their social life. They were able to live peacefully, respecting one another, coexisting together without fear of intimidation. They are also very conscious of any suspicious activities around them.

Most of the informants questioned religion, researched more on religion and made decisions that were informed by the knowledge they acquired. The interreligious dialogue was

recommended and at the same time, people involved were warned to be very conscious when it comes to conviction. The advice to the dialogues was to face the truth.

7. conclusions

The focus of this study has been to find out what is the impact of interreligious dialogue in the concrete case at Garissa university and its inhabitants. I choose informants who experienced the terrorist attack directly and indirectly. I have discussed my findings using the concepts of dialogue provided by Leirvik, Grung and Dunbar concepts. To answer the main question “what is the impact of interreligious dialogue at Garissa University in Kenya and Its inhabitants?”

I used a qualitative method and collected data using individual interviews through the telephone. I did not combine the Narrative research method as I intended earlier because it required a lot of time and more information. In addition, for the sensitivity of the research topic, it was not possible to get more people to interview because the majority feared for their lives. And people were not very open to the fear of risking their lives. The other materials used were

textbooks and articles. I used purposive sampling in selecting the interviewees who included two student survivors, a clergy, administrative staff, and a newly admitted student. I used similar questions and follow up questions where necessary. I used Follow Up questions in case of some more information or clarification is needed. My interview guide questions were guided and focused on three things: the background of the attack, the definition of the dialogue in this context and the impact of interreligious dialogue at Garissa university. The interview guide questions are listed in the Appendix.

The findings show that the Garissa university attack targeted Christians who were the majority in the university and Muslims followed. Many Christian students and businesspeople from other different religious beliefs and tribes were perceived as a threat to the Muslims and the Garissa inhabitant's culture, which they preserved at all costs. This was noted as a reason among others why the terrorists attacked Garissa.

There were different views on the relationship between religion and terrorism. Indoctrination and radicalization were listed as the causes of terrorism which can be reduced as it was recommended by checking which religious teachings people undergo. Both young and adults.

The involvement of the Kenyan soldiers in Somalia in the terrorism fight was also another reason why the al-Shabaab attacked Kenya frequently for revenge and to seek the Government's action on the issue. From history, the Somalis feel Garissa is their land and the University should be left to their people to work there, manage and study without interference.

This chapter also has identified the religious, economic, social, and political impact of terrorism on Garissa university and its inhabitants.

There is an in-depth presentation of the attack from the survivors which gives a clear picture of what prevailed in this incident that lost the lives of 147 innocent Kenyans. The presentation also shed light on some of the negligence of stakeholders before, during and after the attack. The attack interfered with the studies, business, social and religious life of people. Different aspects in different fields were revealed in this study. Some of the effects of terrorism were viewed as psychological aspects that take time since healing is a process as was noted by the survivors. Fear, anxiety, trauma, and suspicion are some of the psychological aspects that were discovered in his study. Survivors get better with time and learn how to live with the effects as they go through the healing process.

This research shows interreligious dialogue at Garissa was between the Muslims and the Christians. The dialogue contributes positively to reducing anxiety, fear, trauma, and suspicion. Christians and Muslims coexisted together in respect. They worked together peacefully condemning and working towards exposing any terrorist-related activities.

I found out that Counselling is also revealed as another way of reducing and preventing damage caused by the experience of a terrorist attack.

Further, this research reveals that those who participated in interreligious dialogue overcame hatred, fear, and anxiety and had hope for the future through embracing forgiveness.

Through dialogue also the society was able to eradicate suspicion through mutual understanding and respect for other religious beliefs and teachings. The Muslims and Christians were able to share the teachings from their Holy books that shed light on the issue of terrorism which helped condemn the act of terrorism with the strongest terms possible.

Interreligious dialogue has contributed to the courage to speak out and report any suspicious activity around the Garissa surroundings. Hospitality is taken into consideration, especially for new people. The inhabitants are very cautious when it comes to welcoming strangers. People at Garissa are also kind enough to identify and find out about their local people who are not living in the area for some time and come back. They inquire to know where they are, what they are doing, and why they are back. to be sure that they are not giving room to any terrorist activity in the area.

Interreligious dialogue positively impacts the Garissa university and the community enabling them to interact in their daily activities peacefully and to relate with one another in respect whether locals or from another part of the country. The Muslims were able to be incorporated into the society that had started to segregate them.

I found out that there was a relation between theory and empirical findings. The necessary dialogue by Leirvik was evident, the dialogue at Garissa was driven by felt social-political needs to prevent or reduce religion-related conflicts in society, by fostering peaceful interaction

between representatives of different religious groups. Dunbar's four criteria that qualify interreligious dialogue were fulfilled at Garissa university's dialogue process. The Ann Hege Grung theory was used partially. The theories mentioned were useful for analyzing and discussing empirical data and it was clear that dialogue at Garissa was driven by the felt sociological need to reduce and prevent religious-related conflict.

There were several aspects of the impact of interreligious dialogue. The aspect of the healing process from anxiety, fear, trauma and suspicion, and avoiding people and places associated with the experience of the terrorist attack. The family is recovering after losing loved ones. Students were able to go on with their studies though they had given up on the idea. The survivors became hopeful and forgave their attackers. The economy of Garissa was affected when the university was closed, and the shops were closed as well. Also, the employees at universities and around lost their jobs. The social aspect: suspicion, fear and segregation of the Muslim group associated with the attack. Lastly, a religious consciousness; the attack created an opportunity for Muslims and Christians to share the teachings from the Quran and the Bible.

The attack also challenged reading more about religion and one of the informants chose to be an Atheist and challenged God who let his people kill each other without intervening, and religion as violence. Religion was also judged to be associated with terrorism by some informants.

7:2 Limitations of the study

This study was carried out only at Garissa university by interviewing a few people. There is little written about the impact of interreligious dialogue, therefore, making it challenging to find literature about the topic.

The topic of the research is very sensitive in terms of security and the memories behind the whole incident which made it difficult for informants to disclose. Some Informants thought there was much that could have been done to prevent and dig deep into this case. Fact that this did not happen the informants were worried if they opened up this might be used against them.

7:3 Recommendations for the future to the stakeholders

During the interviews the informants first recommended the government take precautions rather than wait for the more expensive damage. The alerts and warnings should be taken seriously as well as improve the security system.

The government should find a way of monitoring religious training or teaching their people to get involved to avoid being indoctrinated in certain religious doctrines, which results in radicalization. Parents and guardians also should know the kind of religious programs the children are taking.

The interreligious dialogue is to be taken to a new level involving the community, the students of Garissa and the stakeholders. Lastly, the Government should create awareness about terrorism and the need for all inhabitants to volunteer to give information to the authority in case they notice any suspicious activity around them.

In the literature framework, I presented some of the research done on terrorism in Kenya where the Garissa case was mentioned briefly. I mentioned research done on the impact of terrorism in Kenya. I briefly pointed out the research done on evaluation of the crisis counselling offered to Garissa University terrorist attack survivors addressing issues that counselling did not address effectively.

In this study, I used theory to interpret the empirical data since very little is written about the impact of interreligious dialogue and terrorism. Therefore, my contribution to the academic work is that this study has revealed some of the impacts of interreligious dialogue. The research has provided an opportunity to consider the necessity of interreligious dialogue in reducing or preventing religious-related conflicts.

After conducting this study, I see the need of conducting a depth study about the Garissa University terrorist attack, and the measures to be put in place in such circumstances.

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APPENDIX 1

The Interview guide questions

1. What was the background of the attack?
2. How did the attack affect the Garissa community and its inhabitants
3. How was dialogue initiated?
4. Was there any problem regarding this?
5. What impact does dialogue have on Garissa university and its inhabitants?
6. How can you define dialogue?
7. Is there any relationship between religion and terrorism?
8. Are you participating in the dialogue currently?
9. Do you have any recommendations for the future?

APPENDIX 2

Information letter on participation in the research project

This is an inquiry about participation in a master's degree thesis research project for Faith Ntarara Muketha the purpose is to understand the impact of religious dialogue at Garissa University where people suffer terrorist attacks. In this letter, I will give information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

This master's thesis project is conducted at the University of Oslo which is a public University in Oslo Norway.

The intended participant is one member of the administration staff at Garissa University, one clergy from a Christian denomination and one from a Muslim affiliation who were involved in the dialogue, and two of the students who were involved in the attack and participated in the dialogue initiated by the Initiative of change Africa (OifC), and one neutral person. The participants from the administration are considered for understanding the impact of the terrorist attack and dialogue in the university set-up. While the two members of the clergy help to understand the impact of the attack and dialogue from their perspective and how it affects the community and its inhabitants, the student's participation will make a great contribution to the

understanding through sharing their experience, the neutral person is meant to give an outsider perspective of the whole issue as they participated in the process.

Who is responsible for the research project?

Faith Ntarara Muketha is responsible for the research project with the help of my Supervisor Hallgeir Elstad from the University of Oslo taking my master's degree.

Why are you being asked to participate

You are asked to participate in the interview because you have experienced the terrorist attack that took place at Garissa University as well as the dialogue that was initiated after the attack. This makes you a rich source of the data which would be relevant to the research project.

What does participation involve for you?

The interviews will be conducted online on zoom, email address, teams WhatsApp and Messenger video calls, the videos and conversations going to be recorded and deleted after the 31st of August 2022 scheduled to complete the master's degree. The participant interviews will be anonymous

Participation is voluntary

Participation is voluntary in case one does not wish to participate they can withdraw without giving any reason. All the information gathered during this research is protected and there are no negative consequences after or in case one participates or withdraws from the participation. The data is only useful for this master's thesis project.

Your privacy how we will use and store your data

We will use your data only for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your data with confidentiality and according to data protection legislation (the general data protection regulation and personal data act), The student and supervisor will assess the personal data. your name will be replaced with a code

What will happen to your data at the end of the research project

The project is scheduled to end in June 2022. personal data will be anonymized at the end of the project

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

Access the personal data that is being processed about you

request that your data be deleted

request that your incorrect data be corrected\ rectified

receive a copy of your data (data portability) and

send a complaint to the data protection officer or the Norwegian data protection authority regarding the processing of your data.

What gives us the right to process your data?

We will process your data based on your consent.

Based on the agreement with the University of Oslo, NSD, The Norwegian Center of Research data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is by data protection legislation.

where can I find more

If you have questions about the project or want to exercise your rights, contact:

University of Oslo via Hallgeir Elstad my supervisor

NSD the Norwegian Centre of Research data AS by email (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone +4755582117

Yours Sincerely

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consent form

I have received and understood the information about the project's religious dialogue and terrorist attack and have been allowed to ask questions. I give consent to participate in the interview

- to participate in an online interview
- for my school to give details of the admission year in the University and the participation in the process during the occurrence at the University
- I give consent for my data

Time and method were affected by the covid 19 restrictions. I could not travel for empirical data collection which would be more convenient because of the sensitivity of the topic of this study.