TERRORISM AND THE [RE] CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN KENYA

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Abstract
In an attempt to understand terrorism, various studies have examined the link between terrorist organizations and a variety of economic, religious, and geopolitics in relation to modernity and globalisation. However, this study analysed ways in which Kenya reconstructs its national identity following a terrorist attack. Using discourse analysis, the article reviewed presidential speeches in the aftermath of terrorist attack to reveal how the country mobilized its national identity. The study found that when Kenya is hit by terrorism, its national identity is shaken. This shaken identity is usually reflected in a new sense of national narration, one that often carves a boundary of ‘us’ against ‘them.’ Hence, the reconstruction process focusses on uniting Kenyan citizens to one another, differentiating them from other groups, particularly the terrorists, and emphasizing the positive characteristics of its nationals. Consequently, the significance of national identity becomes more apparent in the aftermath of a terrorist attack.

Definition of Terms
Al-Shabaab, Ideology, Nation-building, National identity, Terrorism
1.0. Introduction
Kenya has been a target by terrorists on various occasions. The significant attacks include; the bombing of the United States Embassy in Nairobi in August 1998 resulting in hundreds of deaths and injuries, the September 2013 terrorist attack on Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi where sixty-seven people died, the April 2015 Garissa University College massacre killing one hundred and forty-eight people, and, the January 2019 Dusit D2 hotel among others. These attacks, primarily thought to be executed by Al-Shabaab, have not only led to the loss of lives, pain, and personal suffering but also contributed to the reconstruction of Kenya’s national identity.

This study argues that there is no perceived need by the government to reaffirm or re-construct national identity in the state of normalcy. However, in the wake of a terrorist attack, there is a call to action by the state regarding the character, fears, and the values of nationals compared to the attackers. This is because national identity is dented following acts of terrorism, thus requiring reconstruction. The process of re-constructing the status takes various forms, such as national narratives, prayer vigils, moments of silence, and through the use of media narrative, as will be later discussed in the article.

Some studies point out that the idea about national identity arises in times of difficulties, “when experience and uncertainty displace something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable” (Larrain, 2000, p. 40). Considering this view, this article observes that National identity is one of the aspects taken-for-granted in the facets of Kenyan life: one does not think about it unless, in some way, it is under threat. However, in times of terrorist attacks, or when Kenya’s security is threatened, the government and the media alike pay more attention to the national identity than usual. As such, to get a better understanding of how a country sustains national identity is by examining the window of time following a terrorist attack. In this regard, the study analyses various speeches issued by the President geared towards promoting national identity in the aftermath of a terrorist attack.

The article analyses three major case studies to illustrate the preceding argument. While there have been several attacks in Kenya by terrorist groups such as Al-Qaida and Al-Shabaab, this study will not dwell on them but only three cases, namely: January 2019 Dusit D2 attack, April 2015 Garissa University massacre and September 2013 Nairobi Westgate Shopping Mall attack. Evolution of terrorism in Kenya, the emergence of al-Shabaab, as well as its links with a host of other terrorist groups, does not form part of this study. The research will, however, focus on three terrorist attacks [listed above] in Kenya and how they encouraged the reconstruction of the country’s national identity.

It is also noteworthy that this article doesn’t debate whether or not terrorists stormed the named places and killed hundreds. Instead, our study analyses the extent to which language used in presidential speeches make possible the construction of Kenya’s national identity in the aftermath of terrorist attacks. In this regard, a brief conceptual understanding of terrorism and its effects will be analysed. To comprehend the link between national identity and terrorism, the article begins by shedding light on the three tragic events and then proceeds to demonstrate their relationship on national identity reconstruction.

The first and most recent is the al-Shabaab terrorists attack carried out on January 15\textsuperscript{th}, 2019, against an office complex in Nairobi, which also hosts the Dusit D2 luxury hotel. The attack led to
the death of twenty-one people with at least twenty-eight injured. (Bryden & Bahra, 2019). Unlike most of the al-Shabaab attacks that featured only ethnic Somalis, the Dusit D2 attack comprised Kenyan nationals of non-Somali descent, including a suicide bomber, said to come from coastal Kenya, Mombasa.

While al-Shabaab has carried out deadly attacks against Kenya several times, the Dusit D2 attack can be argued to represent a disquiet milestone in its evolution. The composition of the attackers [Kenyans not of Somali descent], as well as the use of a suicide bomber distinguishes Dusit D2 operation from the previous al-Shabaab attacks in Kenya. Since the strike threatened the central canons of Kenya’s national identity [such as, I am proud to be a Kenyan], the study will use it to analyse how the nation carved out its identity by condemning the perpetrators. It also put into question the idea of what constitutes a Kenyan citizen, challenging the values and characteristics previously held.

The Al-Shabaab further claimed responsibility of the Garissa terrorist attack that probably remains the most recent in Kenya’s history with the highest number of deaths, mostly young university students. The attack which was carried out on April 02, 2015, by Al-Shabaab gunmen led to the death of one hundred and forty-eight people, leaving more than seventy-nine wounded. The relevance of the attack to this study relates to the institution of higher learning, which is perceived as a centre for cultural dissemination. Additionally, it is likely that the more significant and tragic the attack, the more the Kenyan national identity will need to be reiterated by its citizens. Indeed, Al-Shabaab’s attack was on what they perceived “as the institutions of culture, and in particular the institutions of Western culture. It is perceived that the development of Westernization starts at learning institutions” (Odhiambo, Onkware, & Leshan, 2015). Hence, institutions such as Garissa University are considered to stand in direct opposition to the beliefs and ideologies perpetrated by terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab (Odula, Muhumuza, & Senosi, 2015).

The September 2013 Westgate shopping mall attack is considered the first major external (three Somali nationals and a Norwegian citizen of Somali origin) act of terrorism in Kenya, which is after the 2010 Kampala bombings (Bryden & Bahra, 2019). The attackers comprising of four shooters claimed the lives of sixty-seven people leaving up to two-hundred wounded. Accounts from some of the survivors inside the mall showed that the terrorist “rounded up people, asked questions about Islam that a Muslim would know, and told the Muslims to leave” (CBS News, 2013). Because Westgate Mall bout ranks as one of the worst external terrorist attacks in the country, it would be interesting to find out how it merged into the national narration, “one of inclusion that provides a boundary around ‘us’ and one of exclusion that distinguishes ‘us’ from ‘them” (Schlesinger, 1991, p. 301). The study also reasons that it is through such narration that the nation-state reiterates national identity in the aftermath of a terrorist attack.

From the preceding, it is evident that terrorism remains one of the biggest challenges facing Kenya, serving as a significant threat to its national identity. While terrorism negatively impacts other sectors such as the economy and politics, such will not be discussed but mentioned in passing. As noted earlier, this research is interested in uncovering ways through which the country re-construct its national identity following the terrorist attack. The study will aid in highlighting the challenges as well as the resilience of Kenya’s national identity in the face of constant terrorist attacks from the
Al-Shabaab group. Additionally, while a growing number of scholars have researched the effect of terrorism on a population, there remains a gap in literature analysing reconstruction of national identity in the aftermath of terrorist attacks, which is an undertaking of this study.

2.0. Methodology
The study employs Roman Jakobson’s discourse analysis model to analyse the construction of national identity in the aftermath of a terrorist attack. The article analyses identity construction by focusing on six aspects of communication: context, sender/addresser, addressee, contact, the code, and the message (Jakobson, Fant, & Halle, 1951), which affect the speeches made by the President in the aftermath of three major terrorist attacks in Kenya, namely; the Westgate shopping mall siege, Garissa University College massacre, and Dusit D2 hotel attack.

Another study argues that this method is applicable in examining the use of language, either written or spoken in a social context (Sipra & Rashid, 2013, pp. 27-33). Other researches consider this framework as it reveals the “dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s), and social structure(s) which frame it” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258 in Magistro, 2007, pp. 51-73). According to Hall (1997), discourse is a way of representing or talking about something which shapes perceptions and practice. It helps to analyse the relations of control, dominance, discrimination, and power that is manifested through language (Reisigl & Wodak, 2005).

In analysing the speeches, the study highlights instances where specific phrases and words such as “terrorism,” “terrorist(s),” “Kenyan” and “Kenya” (naming and labelling) were used. The researchers further noted paragraphs and sentences where words other than the abovementioned were used, including “we,” “they,” “our,” and “us” (sameness and difference). In fact, “the use of the personal pronoun “we”- including all its dialect forms and the corresponding possessive pronouns - appears to be of the utmost importance in the discourses about nations and national identities” (Wodak, De Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 2009). These sentences and paragraphs were then extracted and organised in prevalent themes and narratives (origin and continuity), hence discursively construct specific identities and realities (Rettig, 2013).

3.0. Terrorists and Terrorism in Kenya
Terrorism is defined (Neria, Gross, & Marshall, 2006) as a form of violence targeting unarmed civilians to achieve political or religious goals. The goal is to create an atmosphere of fear and anxiety among the people where a terrorist attack is being carried out. A different study on the other hand defines terrorism as “the premeditated use or threat of use of extra-normal violence or brutality by sub-national groups to attain a political, religious, or conceptual objective by intimidating a huge audience, typically not directly concerned with the policymaking that the extremists seek to influence” (Enders & Sandler, 2002). On his part, Chalk (1999: 151) argues that terrorism is “the systematic use of illegitimate violence that is employed by sub-state actors as means of achieving specific political objectives, these goals differing according to the group concerned.” However, for this article, terrorism will be defined as the deliberate targeting of non-combatant civilians and
civilian cites with the aim of causing injury, death, and destruction of property (Schwartz, Dunkel, & Waterman, 2009).

As such, terrorism is characterised by violence and brutality, which is advanced against a population with the motive of validating an ideology ranging from religion (culture/identity) to political.

The recruitment and involvement of terrorists in Kenya has also attracted a number of studies. Among them is Hellsten (2016, p. 3) who argues that some of the major refugee camps in Kenya, such as Kakuma and Dadaab, serve as the breeding ground for the terrorists. Suna (2019, p. 201) also observes that it is “horrendous conditions in refugee camps” that “make some refugee youth more prone to radicalization and violent extremism.” Kenya’s slums have also been pointed as recruiting ground for the al-Shabaab or ISIS, where boys and young men are the primary targets (Hellsten, 2016). Most of these youths are vulnerable to the recruiters due to their inadequate education access, lack of employment opportunities, and lost hope in the dysfunctional politics (Hellsten, 2016). Ploch (2010) argues that Al Qaeda and Al-Shabaab employ “victimization narrative” in countries like Kenya to elicit perceptions of societal discrimination to recruit Muslims [youths] into terrorist groups.

Terrorists’ organisations also conduct their recruitment across Kenya’s border points. Corruption is cited as an underlying factor where foreigners from neighbouring countries are illegally admitted into the country in return for a small fee (Hellsten, 2016). Other literature points out that most East African Muslims have been drawn into the terrorist groups through extremist religious ideologies that purport Islam is under attack by the west (Ploch, 2010). Al-Shabaab’s messaging plays to this perception, equating their attacks [on behalf of Islam] to the fight against America and its perceived “proxies” in the East African region. Additionally, domestic anti-terrorism efforts have also been viewed as a more comprehensive strategy by the West against Muslims in the area. In January 2010, Muslims in Kenya rioted in Nairobi, with some waiving Al-Shabaab flag after the government deported a radical Jamaican Muslim Imam and scholar. Widespread resentment was also reported emanating from subsequent Kenya police raids into the Muslim neighbourhoods (IRIN, 2010). As such, the government of Kenya was put on the spot by the Muslims claiming to humiliate its community under the guise of counter-terrorism (Ploch, 2010, p. 16).


National identity has received numerous scholarly attention over the last few decades, with some studies (Hutcheson, Domke, Billeaudaux, & Garland, 2004, p. 28) defining it as a “constructed and national public self-image based on membership in a political community as well as history, myths, symbols, language, and cultural norms commonly held by members of a nation.” National identity is also perceived as “a form of consciousness, the consciousness of belonging to a nation-state that knows how to articulate its reasons for existence by invoking continuity between past and future” (Johnston, 1991, p. 39). Another notable scholar (Smith, 1986, p. 14) on the subject identified fundamental components of national identity including “a historic territory, or homeland,” “common myths and historical memories,” “a common mass public culture,” “common legal rights and duties for all members,” and “a common economy with territorial mobility for members.”
These features offer some sense of the components that at least must be present for the national identity to occur.

A different study (Miller, 1995, pp. 22-26) identifies aspects of national identity which are essential for establishing a national community. Miller argues that a nation comes into existence once its members share a common ‘belief.’ It means that “when I identify myself as belonging to a particular nation, I imply that those whom I include as my co-nationals share my beliefs and reciprocate my commitments.” He further recognizes the aspect of historical continuity, including the responsibility to defend and build the nation as passed down by the national forbearers. Another feature is that of ‘active’ identity, that is, a country makes or takes the decision as one, does things and attain goals through proxies such as statesmen, military, and sportsmen. Miller also pinpoints the aspect of the homeland, which connects people to a particular geographical place. Finally, the element of ‘national character, as noted by Miller, includes principles such as democracy, patriotism, or the rule of law.

Other studies argue that national identity is “one of inclusion that provides a boundary around ‘us’ and one of exclusion that distinguishes ‘us’ from ‘them” (Schlesinger, 1991, p. 301). A similar view is shared by Price (1995, p. 42), who notes that national identity can be used by a community to derive “a sense of who belongs and who is differentiated, what is the norm, and who is the ‘other’.”

Without creating these distinctions, the ‘enemy’ cannot be identified (Campbell, 1998). Thus, national identity fulfills certain functions, including internal and external, unifying members of a nation to each other, while at the same time separating members of other nations. This study attempts at showing ways through which the government of Kenya, after terrorism attack, drew a boundary differentiating the attackers from the rest of Kenyans, reasoning that terrorism is not part of the national norm.

Despite various research studies focusing on national identity, a significant lacuna remains in comprehending how national identity is reconstructed in the aftermath of a terrorist attack. This paper analyses tactics that the government employs to illuminate how national identity is reconstructed in the face of terrorist attacks.

5.0. Analysing Terrorism as a Tool for Reiterating National Identity in Kenya

The analysis of the speeches in the aftermath of the terrorist attack is in two phases; the language functions and the discourse strands/tenets. It follows a qualitative analysis of ideological content approach where the significant component is ideas that evoke action. The concepts are analysed since they guide interactions and actions that make up an identical society comprising institutions, power, and social relationships. The section identifies ideological content, interprets, describes, then classifies the content in three speeches by His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta, following various instances of terrorist attacks in Kenya to showcase the preservation of national identity and maintaining the social order in the country.
5.1. Distinguished Features of the Speech

I. The speeches are coherent since they contain themes that are organized rationally and can be followed within a specific cultural context.

II. They are communicative since they contain a meaningful message that the readers can react when reading them. The reaction is to condemn terrorism and maintain the Kenyan national identity.

III. The speeches are cohesive as the sentences are delimited and kept together internally by using linguistic features such as lexical repetition and the use of similar utterances (Chilton, 2004).

The analysis focused on the following tenets, which are pivotal to aspects of speech to the functions of the language discussed earlier. They include; vocabulary, grammatical features, modalities, and evidentiality (Chilton, 2004). Further, it employs Roman Jakobson’s discourse analysis model to analyse the construction of national identity in the aftermath of a terrorist attack. The article analyses identity construction by focusing on six aspects of communication: context, sender/addresser, addressee, contact, the code, and the message in relation to the six factors of communication which are focal points of functions (Jakobson, Fant, & Halle, 1951).

The functions work between the message and the relation. They include; referential (F1), emotive (F2), the conative (F3), phatic (F4), metalinguistic (F5), and the poetic function (F6) respectively. They affect the speeches made by the President in the aftermath of three major terrorist attacks in Kenya, namely; the Dusit D2 hotel attack, the Garissa University College massacre, and the Westgate shopping mall siege. The table below represents the analysis of the speeches at the language function level by pointing out various discourse functions hierarchically with their interpretation in relation to the construction of the Kenyan national identity.
Figure 1: Speech on Hotel Dusit 2 attack

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utterances from the Dusit Speech</th>
<th>Hierarchical Discourse Function</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My fellow citizens, Kenya was struck yesterday by a gang of criminals who hoped to terrorize our people by committing acts of murder and mayhem. I can now confirm that at as about one hour ago, the security operation at Dusit complex is over and all the terrorists eliminated. As of this moment, we have confirmation that fourteen innocent lives were lost by the terrorists, with others injured. <strong>We are grieving as a country this morning:</strong> my heart, and that of every Kenyan, goes out to the innocent men and women violated by senseless violence.</td>
<td>F4, F3, F1, F6</td>
<td>The President sets a sense of belonging by promoting the Kenya identity when he begins the speech by “my fellow Kenyans.” He moves on objectively to present facts about the events in the Dusit 2 attack; it happened yesterday, it lasted one hour, and at the time of the speech, 14 innocent Kenyans had perished. The use of the pronoun “we” in ‘we are grieving’ distinguishes the Kenyans who are attacked from the attacker, thereby using a rhythmic presentation to present the innocent Kenyans who are victims of the event. The statement presents the President and every Kenyan as people linked by a collective identity- being Kenyan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I also take note of the Kenyans who took to social media to encourage one another, to spread hope and hold that distorting information to account. Kenyans showed the world the best part of us: brave, patriotic, loving, and unbowed.</td>
<td>F3</td>
<td>The utterance promotes encouragement among Kenyans, promotes bravery, patriotism, and love to one another.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My Fellow Kenyans, we are in the process of building a new Kenya that is prosperous, secure, and inclusive, and in which every Kenyan has an opportunity to thrive. We will allow no one to derail or frustrate our progress. No one in Kenya today, or at any time, should doubt our resolve to maintain security in our country, our determination is unswerving.</td>
<td>F4, F1, and F5</td>
<td>The statement establishes a relationship between the speaker and the audience. It shows Kenya as a prosperous country, secure, inclusive, and a country of equal opportunities. It shuts loopholes for nepotism and promotes a focus for a more secure country through a collective determination of citizens. The speaker elaborates on what a “new Kenya” implies; a prosperous, secure, inclusive, and everyone has a chance to thrive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have prevailed and shall always prevail over evil. Let us now go to work without fear and continue with our work of building our nation.</td>
<td>F3</td>
<td>The speaker wants the listener to act by embarking on their daily routine without any fear. It reflects the promotion of the spirit of hard work and nation-building.</td>
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**Figure 2**: Speech on Westgate Mall attack

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<tr>
<th>Utterances from the Westgate Speech</th>
<th>Hierarchical Discourse Function</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fellow Kenyans,</strong> this morning, a group of armed <strong>terrorists</strong> forcefully entered the Westgate Mall in Nairobi's Parklands area and unleashed senseless violence upon customers and workers. <strong>They have killed at least 39 innocent</strong> people and injured more than 150 others.</td>
<td>F4, F2, F3</td>
<td>The statement creates a Kenyan sense of belonging and identity. It emphasizes how innocent lives have been lost while other unspecified number injured through a baseless violent activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>With <strong>our values of solidarity</strong> and love for <strong>our homeland,</strong> we <strong>fought proudly and bravely</strong> to secure the freedom to lead our lives as we choose. Our choice is codified in our Constitution.</td>
<td>F4, F3</td>
<td>A mutual relationship is imbedded in values of love together with solidarity in the Kenyan land. The speaker wants the audience to continue promoting the freedom to live, which is stipulated in the Kenyan constitution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But let me make it clear. <strong>We shall hunt down the perpetrators wherever they run to. We shall get them. We shall punish them for this heinous crime.</strong></td>
<td>F3</td>
<td>The speaker drives away fear to the listeners, making them feel relaxed and satisfied that the enemy will be arraigned, and they will be responsible for the crime they committed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have directed security agencies to be decisive in their response to this or any other threat. They must and will do this to demonstrate our constitution's categorical guarantee of Kenyans' indefeasible rights to life and property. Across the country, <strong>we have tightened security</strong> but I urge all of you to remain calm and vigilant.</td>
<td>F3, F4</td>
<td>The President wants security agencies to be decisive to reflect compliance with the constitution demand for the protection of life and property, which are a citizen’s rights. Further, the citizens are assured of protection, and they are required to be calm and vigilant. The utterance reflects a Kenyan identity where the constitution is mandated to offer guidance.</td>
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Figure 3: Speech on the Garissa attack

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<tr>
<th>Utterances from the Garissa Speech</th>
<th>Hierarchical Discourse Function</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My Fellow Kenyans, Our Nation is in a profound state of mourning following the heinous attack and mindless slaughter of 147 Kenyans in Garissa at Garissa University College on Thursday 2nd April 2015. It was the most lethal terrorist attack on Kenya since the 1998 US Embassy bombing. During the day-long ordeal, the terrorists took more than 800 students’ hostage; thankfully, more than 600 were rescued.</td>
<td>F4, F1, F2.</td>
<td>The speaker establishes a common link with the listeners deploying their relationship as Kenyans. The statement is objective by presenting the effect of the attack on a nation. The intensity of the attack is portrayed to be catastrophic evident from the number of hostages. A Kenyan identity is emphasized in the utterance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our security forces responded and killed 4 of the terrorists while arresting 5. I commend the three officers who paid the ultimate price in their selfless service to Kenya.</td>
<td>F1, F4</td>
<td>The utterance is objective showing the counter-attack and its outcome. It reflects the pride and collective ownership of the subject matter by the speaker and the Kenyans. The statement promotes patriotism and selflessness among Kenyans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Let us take a moment to remember those who died and pray for the eternal repose of their souls. Let us also pray for those who were injured and for solace to all affected families. Today, villages and towns throughout Kenya are in mourning.</td>
<td>F3</td>
<td>Kenyans are required to take a step of praying for the injured together with the affected families. This reflects an identity of unity and being each one’s brother’s keepers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As we mourn together, and pray together for the fallen and for this our precious Republic of Kenya, I declare three days of national mourning during which our flag shall fly at half-mast.</td>
<td>F5, F4</td>
<td>The flag flying at half-mast reflects that the country is mourning. The statement joins Kenyans with the speaker since it implies an upcoming period of national mourning. The sign indicates respect in mourning the departed, making the country to be under distress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday wounded Kenya, Thursday wounded families, friends and the communities of the victims of the attack.</td>
<td>F6</td>
<td>The speaker uses a passive relationship by deleting the actors from the arguments. The use of passive phrases obscures the associations behind the utterance to shirk responsibility. It reflects an identity- Kenya as one, and the attack has affected the entire country as a whole.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above analyses show that the use of personal pronouns such as ‘we,’ ‘us,’ ‘they’ and ‘them’ serve as crucial strategies for reconstructing national identity. A similar view is observed by Billig (1995), who notes that there cannot be national ‘we’ without the foreign ‘other.’ Thus, the nation-state needs to detach the identity it represents from the foreign one by pointing out fixing differences within its territory. For example, in figure 1, the use of the pronoun “we” in ‘we are grieving’ distinguishes the Kenyans who are attacked from the attacker, thereby using a rhythmic presentation to present the innocent Kenyans who are victims of the event. The statement presents the President and every Kenyan as people linked by a collective identity- being Kenyan.

As Wodak et al (2009, p. 44) argues, personification ‘favours identification of the addressee with that of the personified collective,’ and suggests intra-national similarity, which in President Uhuru in the aftermath of the attack, demonstrate Kenya’s democratic state as the foundation of the country’s national identity. Hence, it was the republic that was attacked, and it is the republic that would lead the fight against terrorism. In one of his speeches, he reiterated that “we are a country governed by-laws, rules, and regulations,” and that being “a nation that never forgets those who hurt its children” we will “seek out every single person that was involved in the funding, planning, and execution of the heinous acts.” (The Presidency, 2019).

The reconstruction strategies focus on uniting Kenyan citizens to one another, differentiating them from other groups, particularly the terrorists, and emphasizing their positive characteristics. As such, the efforts towards identity construction focus on characterizing the terrorist acts as not “real” Kenyans, hence, distinguishing ‘them’ from ‘us,’ who are characterized in the most glorious terms. This distinction between “us” and “them,” or between good and evil, aids in reinforcing national identity. The differentiation leads to the binding of Kenyan citizens together as people sharing common beliefs, feelings, goals, and values.

Such values were emphasised by the President in the eve of Westgate Mall attack to remind the terrorists that the nation is ready to defend its freedom it bravely secured through the “values of solidarity, unity, and love” for the homeland (PSCU, 2013). At the same time, the President defined the terrorists as wholly evil and cowards, with no regard for the Kenyan way of life. A similar reiteration was made by the President after the Garissa attack, insisting on the beliefs that are the founding blocks of Kenya. The President recognized diversity, openness, and freedom as what characterised the country’s belief and value system (The Presidency, 2015).

The speeches also employ National self-glorification, a strategy geared towards ‘gluing’ the nation by establishing distinctiveness and uniqueness (Hall, 1996). For instance, figure 3 shows how the president invokes this strategy when he said that ‘our security forces responded and killed 4 of the terrorists while arresting 5. I commend the three officers who paid the ultimate price in their selfless service to Kenya.’ The utterance is objective, showing the counter-attack and its outcome. It reflects the pride and collective ownership of the subject matter by the speaker and the Kenyans. The statement promotes patriotism and selflessness among Kenyans.

Besides, the dissimilation strategy targeting to demonise the terrorist after the attack is also employed, which in turn constructs a ‘good’ national ‘us.’ As observed from the Presidents’ speeches while referring to the attackers, words such as ‘terrorists,’ ‘cowards,’ ‘killers,’ ‘barbarians’ and ‘murderers’ were used. This strategy was used to create Kenya’s identity, which involved
establishing a mirror image of the evil ‘other’ as opposed to the glorified self. Thus, using dissimilation strategy served the purpose of ‘unification by a foe shared in common’ (Burke, 1996, p. 408). Additionally, the act of demonising the ‘other,’ ‘automatically excludes the question of why these actors perpetrate acts of terrorism as the answer is inherent in their evilness’ (Spencer, 2012, p. 406).

It is also observed that the President’s speeches reconstructed national identity in the aftermath of a terrorist attack through the use of national narratives. The national narrative is “the story that a (national) collective tells about itself (Yadgar, 2002). This is evident in figure2 in which the president reminded Kenyans how the country triumphed against the colonialists and secured independence. He added that, ‘with our values of solidarity and love for our homeland, we fought proudly and bravely to secure the freedom to lead our lives as we choose. Our choice is codified in our Constitution.’ As such, he was telling those constituting the nation (and anybody else who is interested) who they are, what comprises their past (the national, common one), the structure of their characteristics as a collective, and where they are heading.” In doing so, the speech reminds the citizens of their homeland, calling them to reflect on the meaning of the nation.

The President used this narration to encourage the students who had survived the attack to continue and finish their studies. He stated that “terror and evil can never prevail over the hard work and resilience that characterises the Kenyan spirit” (The Presidency, 2015). In so doing, the President was urging the nation to remain united by safeguarding peace and stability, which are part of the nation’s narration, also found in the country’s national anthem. The President further asked Kenyans to be ready to stand for the country by using a historical referent point when he said that “our forefathers bled and died for this nation” and that “we will do everything to defend our way of life” (The Presidency, 2015).

The government adopts systems of narration such as ‘War on Terror’ (Cap, 2008), reiterating of state-power metaphors (Charteris-Black, 2005; Lakoff, 2001), using of call-to-arms speeches to unite its citizens (Graham, Keenan, & Dowd, 2004), as well as reassurance by the state as the protector of its citizens through counter-terrorism measures (Lazar & Lazar, 2004). Imposing its narrative is of great importance, especially after the terrorist attack that shakes the state’s legitimacy. Thus, the President reasserts state power through a series of narration, thereby reconstructing National identity after a terrorist attack. The national leadership publicly emphasizes ‘the strength, values, and vision’ of the nation and its people (Hutcheson et al., 2004, p. 27) with a view of uniting the state against its war on terror.

Studies argue that terrorist attacks among a given population lead to a state of unbearableness as well as ‘to a kind of moral panic’ (Garapon, 2015 in Bogain, 2018). This act of terrorism is perceived to undermine the social contract between the state and its citizen. In so doing, the state is prompted to reproduce and justify its existence (Campbell, 1998, p.12), which is mostly achieved through actions and the creation of myths aimed at ensuring people’s safety. For example, in the aftermath of the Dusit D2 hotel terrorist attack on January 2015, President Kenyatta promised the nation that the government was going to pursue the terrorists “relentlessly wherever they will be until they are held to account” (The Presidency, 2019).
The speeches further use symbolic objects, actions and discourses to create and maintain a collective identity. While referring to courage depicted by Kenyans after the attack on the Westgate Mall, the President stated that ‘we are as brave and invincible as the lions on our Coat of Arms.’ Such symbolism serves to perpetuate an emotive link between the citizens and the national state. For example in figure3, the president ordered the national flag to fly at half-mast for a period of three days during which the nation will be mourning and praying together for those who died from terrorist attack. The flag flying at half-mast not only joins Kenyans with the speaker but also indicates respect in mourning the departed, making the country to be under distress.

6.0. Conclusion
The study has analysed ways through which Kenya reconstructs its national identity in the aftermath of terrorist attacks. It argued that terrorism remains one of the biggest challenges facing Kenya, posing a significant threat to its national identity. Whereas Terrorism and its aftermath challenged the country’s national identity, the government of Kenya seized the moment to reiterate values of the nationals compared to that of the attackers. Despite the attacks leading to the loss of lives, pain, and personal suffering it also contributed to the reconstruction of Kenya’s national identity. The state, led by the President, reiterated the values and character of national identity to aid the nation to endure through the tragedy. The President’s speeches from the three cases show that Kenyan identity is something to be proud of, one that is characterised by resilience and strength, and its insistence on freedom and democracy. The speeches not only called for national unity in the face of terrorist attacks, but they explicitly spoke of similar feelings, beliefs, and actions from Kenyan citizens. The analysis further revealed that terrorism brings out negative aspects of Kenya’s national identity, the tendency to blame terrorist attacks on the Muslim people, whether Kenyans or not.
References


