National Government and Academia: A Collaborative Approach in Advancing National Security in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Academia plays a critical role in the development of Kenya and its people. Academic research makes significant contributions to knowledge, innovations, and solutions that can drive national security and improve livelihoods. It is a vital contributor to the knowledge production of national security theories, principles, approaches, technologies, and techniques. In advanced nations, educational enterprise invests immense resources and deliberate efforts in the continuity of research and production of data and revolutionary technologies impacting national and international security. However, the contribution of academia to developing countries in security development remains limited and generally unknown.

This paper explores secondary research findings of the current education landscape and the contribution of academia to security development in Kenya. The goal of the study was to investigate and deepen understanding of the security development processes through an exploration of the most notable security developments, achievements, programs, research works, and technologies generated by the Kenyan academic body. The study revealed that few studies in Kenya have focused on this area and as such, it was useful to establish a foundation of knowledge regarding the contributions and collaboration between academia and national security.

The analysis of national security academic programs, several public national security research institutions, national security public forums, higher education institutional and national budgets for security programs, scholarships, scientific presentations, and security-specific technological exhibitions, posits a weak in fluence, wanton contribution, and involvement of the Kenyan academia and the government in matters of national security development. It shows challenges, needs, and opportunities associated with national security in Kenya that can be leveraged by exploring the attitudes, perceptions, views, and attitudes of key stakeholders espousing policies on national security in the country. To stimulate national security research activities in Kenya, this study recommends a collaborative approach in the integration and funding of national security development programs for academia and industry in the country and other advancing nation-states.

Common Words: National security Antiterrorism, Cyber security, Counterterrorism, Academia Defense, Counterintelligence, Research Bioterror

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the fields of academia and national security have become increasingly interconnected andthe collaboration between the national government and academia in the advancement of national security cannot be underestimated. Academic institutions and academic personnel are often involved in research that is used to explore and expand topics of intellectual inquiry. On the other hand, national security entails safeguarding a nation and the citizens of that nation from existential threats both foreign and domestic(Khan, 2022). Such threats include but are not limited to foreign governments that advance ill will or intent towards the nation, cyber-attacks from any adversary, bio terror, diseases, and other natural calamities like hurricanes or

drought, criminal groups such as cartels and gangs ,and terrorist attacks of any kind (Evans et.al., 2022). The collaboration between academia and security departments of the national government enables the utilization of research done by academic personnel or institutions, to develop national security and defense solutions. Academic research and the solutions they provide as well as lessons learnt from such research may feature greatly in all aspects of national security, including policy advancement, development of military infrastructure, and other establishments meant to advance the protection of the state against all threats.

In Kenya, the interconnectedness between academia and national security is a vital one. The two institutions are an interdependent and further collaboration between them is needed if Kenya is to become a completely secure nation. Academic institutions such as universities and research centers, most of which are constructed in universities or collaboration with universities, are major players in this geopolitical order. By facilitating cooperation between scholars and practitioners, universities have become valuable hubs for advancing knowledge concerning national security in Kenya. On the other hand, the national government ensures that there exists an environment that is secure, for academic institutions and their affiliate research organizations to function effectively. National security ensures that these institutions are shielded from possible danger. This secure environment is also essential for universities to conduct the research efficiently. Further to this, national government can provide essential resources to academic institutions such as funding, access to specialized materials and expertise, as well as logistical support when needed.

Research institutions have a critical role to play in equipping the nation's security forces with the latest knowledge and technologies to improve their capabilities and effectiveness. Moreover, research into relevant topics related to national security provides vital insight into security threats and strategic options. A further area of academic contribution is the training and education of security personnel in topics such as national defense, border security, and counterterrorism. Academia has made tremendous contributions to the advancement of Kenya's national security through collaborations and research. This paper will discuss the deliberate efforts that have been made so far to this end as well as the current relationship that exists between the two.

Research Questions

1. What is the impact of the collaboration between the national government and academia in advancing national security in Kenya?
2. What is the existing potential for further collaboration between the national government and academia in advancing national security in Kenya?
3. What are the challenges and opportunities of the collaborative approach between the national government and academia in advancing national security in Kenya?

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the impact of collaboration between the national government and academia in advancing national security in Kenya.
2. To identify the challenges and opportunities of the collaborative approach between the national government and academia in advancing national security in Kenya.
3. To explore the potential for further collaboration between the national government and academia in advancing national security in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The security climate in Kenya is of paramount importance, not only to its citizens and government but to organizations and alliances around the world. To this end, academia and national security organizations in Kenya have formed a unique relationship. Academia consists of groups of scholars, researchers, and

students who are advancing knowledge via the systematic study of a topic or field, while national security departments in the national government provide protection of national interests, safeguarding of the rule of law, and protection of citizens and national borders (Bush, 1990). In Kenya, the collaboration between academia and national security organizations can be exploited to create a powerful force for change and growth. National security and academia are intertwined and complementary in the way they operate and that necessitates the need for these two fields to coexist within a society (Albert, Nikolaev, and Jacobson, 2023). To ensure national security is maintained in the country, the various institutions of government must work together with academic professionals and institutions to develop strategies that promote social cohesion, economic development, and human welfare. Unfortunately, as evidenced by experiences elsewhere in Africa as well as globally, this cooperation is often undermined by factors such as bureaucratic rivalry or indifference to problems confronting the general population in the country.

According to The National Cyber security Strategy developed by the republic of Kenya through the National Computer and Cybercrimes Coordination Committee Secretariat (2022), the Kenyan government recognizes emerging frontier in cyber threats and expresses commitments towards collaborating with other stakeholders in the cyber security space such as those in academia. The strategy recognizes that further engagements with academic institutions in research are required, to provide multi-sectoral solutions in the development of new adaptive technology and enactment of relevant policies towards cyber security. The main objective is to harness the intellectual capacities of the academic community and explore, investigate, and research key issues of cyber security in Kenya and other countries in Africa (Bada, Von Solms, and Agrafiotis, 2019).The outcomes of such collaboration will serve as a reference for policymakers, politicians, and regulators to ensure that the government adopts new measures to enhance national security.

A new generation of threats to national security that are constantly evolving continues to emerge each day and states must therefore continue to invent and develop new technological solutions to be able to defend themselves against such threats (Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for America's national security, 2016). The nation's national security research and development, often headed by respected academic experts, must continue to reinvent, and offer solutions to these threats. Academia makes modest contributions toward the nation's basic research and development needs, thereby contributing significantly to national security through discovery (Manyika, McRaven, and Segal, 2019). Manipulation of scientific and technical methodologies through research and the training of the next generation of science, technology, and engineering professionals through academic scholarship, undergraduate and graduate degrees, and advanced training both at home and abroad play an incredible role in advancing the country's ability to develop new technology and ways to protect its citizens.

Academia is an important source of knowledge, especially when it comes to the complex elements of national security. According to Mansour (2017), universities and other academic institutions have both the resources and expertise to provide valuable insights into both past and current security threats. The research academic institutions conduct on relevant issues such as counterterrorism, cybersecurity, espionage, surveillance, and the overall security situation in the country is critical in developing effective evidence-based national security solutions. The research outcomes and recommendations provided by academia are used by decision-makers and security experts to develop appropriate policies and strategies that ensure the best possible protection of the Kenyan nation and its citizens (Jepkemoi, 2017). The prevalence of cybercrime and related data breaches worldwide has increased in recent years, which have a direct impacton the security of information systems and by extension the national security of the country.

Training of security personnel such as the armed forces and intelligence officers in the various areas to make up the backbone of the country's defense system. Through education in the fields of politics and security, this personnel can identify potential threats and opportunities and understand the best ways to deal with them, thus protecting the national interests of Kenya. According to the Egerton University website

(www.egerton.ac.ke), the National Defense University situated at Kenya's Military Academy in Lanet Nakuru is pursuing a partnership with the Egerton University, an academic institution, in training and the collaboration between the institutions is expected to grow. The partnership is expected to further national security by providing opportunities for students from both institutions to collaborate and enhance their professional growth. The partnership provides two levels of engagement that constitute the development of personnel character in leadership through seminars, workshops, and classes as well as meaningful research and development opportunities for both institutions to benefit from.

The efforts of academics and national governments in Kenya have had a direct impact on domestic policies that influence national security. The development of counterterrorism infrastructure, for example, hasenabled the Kenyan government to establish effective strategies for responding to terrorist threats(Bachmann and Hönke, 2010). The purpose of counterterrorism is to create an environment where the citizens of the country can live free from acts of terrorism, violence, and intimidation that can negatively impact their day-to-day activities. Counter-terrorism policy and planning should seek to enhance access and freedom of movement and prevent terrorist threats while allowing the provision of physical security and ensuring personal safety. Research initiatives have furthered the ability of security organizations to monitor online activities and perform surveillance of digital data. According to Mutonyi and Sirera (2020), the findings of their study continue to provide valuable information for national security practitioners, researchers, and decision-makers across Africa who are interested in enhancing their understanding of security-related issues in the context of African countries. The findings are also being leveraged to encourage further research by more academic professionals on how they can make contributions towards the improvement of the national security of Kenya.

Research also contributes to the expansion of the knowledge base and provides society with the right tools to understand the way world systems operate, which is critical for the peace and stability of the country. According to Chauhan (n.y), the government should recognize that it has an urgent task to address the needs of its people concerning emerging threats, especially global epidemics caused by infectious diseases that can easily be weaponized. In this respect, scientific research about these subjects should be conducted by universities and other institutions under state control. The findings of the research can help to determine potential threats to national security.

According to Tozan (2023), universities and other institutions of higher learning can promote peaceful coexistence by reducing the existing inequality and promoting social cohesion among existing communities. Academic research has also improved the citizen's understanding of what makes people different from one another and encourages people to embrace diversity, thereby leading to greater tolerance within society.

Academic institutions are mostly aligned with policymakers and political actors to create awareness about strategic issues, foster diplomatic relations with other countries, prevent conflicts from happening, and promote peace (Rovner, 2011). It should be noted that academic institutions are sometimes subject to pressure from the government to make policies that support national security interests. The cooperation between academia and national security departments in the country has contributed to the continued sharing of information across the sector. Through such partnerships, security organizations have been able to exchange best practices and strategies, while universities and colleges have had the opportunity to gain access to intelligence sources and data.

METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

The paper uses secondary research by reviewing existing literature and the contributions made by previous authors in discussing the topic at hand. The literature review helps to identify relevant academic studies, analyze the successes and failures of previous initiatives, and identify gaps that need to be filled by future

initiatives.

First, the researcher began by establishing the research gap and the problem that needed to be addressed. The researcher then sought to search and screen previous works that can best inform the topic under research. The review encompassed works from sources such as academic journals, books, magazines, online articles, websites, and other forms of published media. These sources were scrutinized and determined to be generally reliable and have provided a lot of information for the author of this research paper. This was followed by an intensive review and synthesis of the available data which was then analyzed and then used to draw relevant conclusions. The results reported could serve as a basis for more effective policy-making processes. During this review process, the author assessed the reliability of information sources, their accuracy, and the context in which they were derived before using them to conclude this paper.

The review of existing literature on the relationship between academia and national security as well as the collaboration between them for their advancement is informatively too heterogeneous in terms of the methodologies used and the way the findings are reported. Nevertheless, to establish the most reasonable and fact-based outcomes, a thematic analysis has been conducted to internalize the literature, analyze the findings as reported, and report on the findings of these previous papers. The researcher was able to establish the current state of national security in Kenya, the challenges faced by the country, and the continued collaboration between the two sectors in addressing some of these challenges.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

National Security Academic Programs

The research conducted entailed looking into the role of academia and the relevant institutions in providing training and education to security personnel, as well as the involvement in research and development activities related to national security. Academia plays a large role through its efforts in research and skills. One notable example is the Master of Arts in Strategic and Security Studies offered at the University of Nairobi (https://politicalscience.uonbi.ac.ke). The course provides students with an understanding of national security issues and equips them with the skills and knowledge required to address these challenges. According to the University of Nairobi website, the program focuses on topics such as international relations, conflict resolution, terrorism, and intelligence. While such courses exist, there is a serious disconnect between the institution and the national security departments that can offer hands-on experience and real-life insights. The overall effect is that there are limited opportunities for students to gain practical experience through internships and field trips.

National Security Research Institutions

The contributions of academia to national security have been further solidified due to the increasing number of national security research institutions in the country. The significance of the establishment of national security research institutions such as the National Counter Terrorism Centre, Kenya Institute of Security and Criminal Justice, the National Intelligence Research University (www.ndu.ac.ke/national-intelligence-research-university-college), the National Crime Research Center (www.crimeresearch.go.ke), and the National Security Research Institute cannot be overemphasized. These security research institutions contribute to national security through the provision of advanced security training and capacity building. Some of the skills offered in these facilities include counterterrorism strategies, gathering, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence, organized crime, and cyber security. By engaging professionals from academia in these institutions, relevant skills and knowledge are shared with the security personnel undergoing the training.

Public engagements on National Security

Beyond research and the exchange of strategies and best practices, academia and the national government have also collaborated on initiatives that prioritize the safety and security of the public. Universities and colleges have begun offering public forums and workshops in which citizens are encouraged to discuss their experiences and challenges with security organizations. Additionally, academics and security organizations have helped initiate public education and awareness campaigns regarding terrorism and domestic security issues for their students and staff as well as the public.

Technology Exhibitions on National Security

Technology exhibitions such as the Nairobi ICT expo and the Nairobi Cyber security summit are intended to make significant contributions to national security due to the importance of information technology. The exhibitions showcase the latest innovations available in network technologies, security products, cybercrime prevention, identity management solutions, cloud computing, and big data analytics. They provide an opportunity for decision-makers and industry leaders to explore best practices and collaborate with experts from government agencies and private sector firms alike. Such events also facilitate public dialogues around emerging threats posed by cybercriminals, highlighting best practices regarding national security. Technology Exhibitions on National Security in Kenya should offer key opportunities for stakeholders to discuss present challenges as well as prospective advancements that will shape the security landscape of the country moving forward. Unfortunately, this is not the case most of the time as the exhibitions are usually poorly attended and always fail to fully meet their objectives.

However, the collaboration between academia and the national government concerning the nation's security is not exploited to its full potential. The inefficiency is largely attributed to a lack of adequate financial capitation for their programs. The national government and academia often lack the required resources to effectively fund research and relevant development projects related to national security. This has led to restricted progress in advancing national security affairs and the ability of government departments to fully leverage the skills and expertise that exists in academia. Additionally, a strong clash of cultures in the modus operandi between academia and national security professionals is also a challenge. The academic experts may want to publicly express their ideas and strongly advance their research findings, but the security fellows are more inclined to maintain the highest level of confidentiality on such matters that are relevant to national security. Even though campaigns and lobbying continue to bear some fruits, especially on the funding front, the progress made is very limited.

CONCLUSION

The relationship between academia and national security merits continued enthusiasm and attention. Therole played by that collaboration in strengthening national security is twofold. First and foremost, academic institutions and researchers provide the necessary context for merging different perspectives and sources of knowledge to create a comprehensive picture of the security landscape. Through research, expert lectures, academic events, and other resources, universities facilitate the sharing of intelligence that can be beneficial in creating policies and strategies to address security threats. If collaboration is enhanced, academia canraise public awareness of global security issues and create an informed citizenry that can contribute to defense and security efforts.

Finally, the relationship between academia and national security in Kenya is crucial for both sides. Universities and research institutions provide national security institutions with vital knowledge, expertise, and resources to help them deal with threats to national security. On the other hand, national security provides a secure environment that academic institutions need to function optimally and bring out the best of

their potential. It is only through a strong bond between these two sectors that Kenya can ensure that it has the best chance to remain secure in an ever-changing environment. In essence, the collaboration between academia and the national government has been a growing trend over the years with positive implications for defense and security operations.

Finally, academic institutions provide a platform for the sharing of intelligence and resources, the training of personnel, and the cooperative development of technology. In a world characterized by geopolitical complexities, well-funded, adequately supported, and well-staffed research centers are invaluable hubs that can help ensure the security of nations and their citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The national government must develop a framework for assessing the efficiency of the existing collaboration between academia and the national government regarding national security. This will strengthen their collaboration and enable more efficient deployment of resources and more technical support. Universities and research institutions have the wealth of expertise and innovative talent that can offer security services a different perspective on security matters. In the same manner, national security personnel can provide insight to academic institutions on the deployment of resources to increase security- related research and training capabilities.

The academia and specifically academic institutions of higher learning should be adequately funded and supported to contribute to the development of technology and equipment that enables defense forces to stay updated with the latest innovations in their field. More funds can be availed through public-private partnerships in research and by cutting spending in other non-essential budgets by ensuring that national security is prioritized. By leveraging their collective resources and research, academic institutions often constitute launching points for technological developments that are of strategic importance in national defense such as cyber security, counterterrorism, counterintelligence, and control system security. University laboratories, for example, can be employed to investigate military technology, biological weapons, and even nanotechnology, as well as develop countermeasures and strategies for defense.

Research programs on national security should be realigned to offer students the opportunity to contribute toward improving and strengthening the country's security mechanism. The research is conducted on topics such as international and local security threats, risk management and cyber security can greatly benefit from the creativity and innovativeness of the extremely driven Kenyan youth. The realignment will allow universities to offer students the chance to produce policy documents and draft regulations that are often implemented by the government.

The national government must adopt a multi-sectoral approach reinforced by well-crafted national security academic programs that will empower the country has been able to address some of the national security challenges that currently exist. This includes the mobilization of the public as well as other security stakeholders to prioritize, develop and implement anti-terrorism, anti-crime, and other security measures to uphold the country's security and safety. This approach by the government will bring together various stakeholders from academia and national security departments. The deliberate efforts mentioned are focused on policy and regulation, education and training of personnel, advancement in technology, and research and development. Through these national security academic programs, the government and its agencies will be better equipped to identify and address any emerging security threats.

Additionally, the government should provide additional funding and technical support to the National Security Research Institute to facilitate further collaboration between the government, academia, and other stakeholders in advancing national security through research, development, and innovation.

Finally, the government should create a National Security Information Sharing Platform that can facilitate the sharing of information and data between the national government, academia, and other stakeholders. The platform can contribute to the incubation and advancement of new ideas in developing innovative solutions to national security challenges.

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