# THE ROLE OF SPORTS CLUBS IN REDUCING TERRORISM IN TABUK REGION, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

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**ABSTRACT**: *In this article, the authors discuss the role of social youth clubs in reducing terrorism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as applied to Tabuk region. Therefore, this paper tries to achieve these objectives: first, identify the role of social youth clubs in reducing terrorism among youth, second, identify statistical differences of said role according to the residence variable. A descriptive study through a social survey via questionnaire for 450 youth at seven local clubs: Alwattany, Alsqoor, Alhawraa, Alkhalidy, Diabaa, Haqle and Temaa, divided into 312 in the city and 128 in villages in Tabuk region in the Kingdom. The research used the simple random sample technique, by applying SPSS software which was then verified to test the indications of reliability and validity. It concluded that social youth clubs contribute to thereinforcement of relationship bonds among youth and to a positive change in intellectual, cultural, social and economic conditions through filled leisure time and free work that help achieve a sense of loyalty and belonging and therefore a reduction of terrorism.*

**KEYWORDS:** Social Youth Clubs, Belonging, Leisure Time, Free Work, Social Inclusion, Terrorism

## INTRODUCTION

Young people issues in contemporary society are one of the most important issues that attract interest on global and local levels. Each society should confront its problems and needs through study and research, instead of using power, control, and oppression (Fahmi, 1999, p. 17).

Contemplating the current conditions of society, it finds that it is undergoing enormous social, cultural and economic changes; it has changed its structure and extended its members to various age groups, especially the youth. These changes are characterized by their rapid and consequential occurrence. During the past 10 years, young people have faced a number of challenges and changes that have had a significant impact on their thinking and behavior. (Felman, 2006).

According to UNESCO world statistics (2013), 10.6% of young people worldwide are illiterate, lacking basic numerical and reading skills, and thus do not have the means to sustain a living through full, decent employment. Youth unemployment and underemployment levels are persistently high worldwide, with many working poor lacking even primary-level education. These unemployment and underemployment rates act to jeopardize social inclusion, cohesion, and stability. (UNESCO institute for statistics, 2013)

In 2015, Saudi youth between the ages of 15 and 24 made up approximately 19% of the Kingdom's population of 27 million. Some of the Tenth Saudi Development Plan's objectives address ways in which youth can become involved in the development of the country (Tenth

Saudi Development Plan and its objectives 1436 H) .

This, in turn, is expected to improve the youths' capabilities and to enable their pursuit of their aspirations so they can contribute to and benefit from economic development, strengthen their sense of belonging, and be kept far away from terrorism (USAID 2012).

Globally, terrorist activity has centered primarily on only five countries: Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria and Syria. However, another 55 countries have recorded at least one terrorist-related death. The phenomenon increased s u b s t a n t i a l l y in 2013, with the total number of deaths rising from 11,133 in 2012 to 17,958, a 61% increase. Over the same period, the number of countries that experienced more than 50 terrorism-related deaths rose from 15 to 24 This highlights that not only is the intensity of terrorism increasing, but its breadth is also expanding. Furthermore, most terrorist acts are claimed by only four organizations (GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX ,2014) : ISIL, Boko Haram, the Taliban and al-Qa'ida and its affiliates. Various religious ideologies based on extreme interpretations of Islam are the key commonality across all four groups. However, their strategic goals are not necessarily the same. To counteract the rise of religious extremism, moderate Sunni theologies need to be cultivated by credible forces within Islam(GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX ,2015) .

The experience of intellectual advice and care in Saudi Arabia is one of the referential models for fighting intellectual extremism programs throughout the region. On April 2003, Mohammed bin Naif, when he was the minister of security, initiated and guided the idea of advice and care. In 2006 he developed the work of the center to include all those involved in extreme thought and reintegrate them into society through correcting their concepts by taking advantage of the various programs provided at the center. The program focuses on psychological, religious, intellectual and social dimensions, so that passing the program is a condition for releasing those charged of extremism and participation in terrorist organizations (Abu Rumman 2016 , p. 39).

Countries and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia pay aspecial attention to young people; because they quickly interact and influenced by destructive and deviated ideas. They represent the highest percentage of the community formation, the basic pole of the nation and the future of its development, progress, and religion and land protection. Therefore, all physical and human potentials should be utilized to accommodate youthful energies in this giving homeland. Among these potentials is young people, sports clubs and its beneficial programs that present helpful aspects for protecting their though, mind and body (Al-Ajlan, 2011, p. 2)

Therefore, this study conducted in Tabuk on a random sample representing the original community to know the role of youth social clubs in reducing terrorism and extremism. However, the results of this study can be applied not only on Tabuk, but on all the regions of Saudi Arabia as well, especially at this sensitive stage that rocking the Arab nation.

**Social youth clubs in Saudi Arabia**

Sports clubs is one of the most important institutions concerned with youth that affect community and contribute to the preparation of good citizen. Sports clubs should have a profound and effective role in social communication and community service that distinguishes it from other institutions. This requires the organization of various events where social communication and community service, whether sports, artistic, cultural or educational,

is one of its priorities and concerns directed to serve the community.

The use of sport as a tool for development and peace is not a new phenomenon. Different development actors have used sport to contribute to development issues for a long time. Over the last two decades, the recognition of sport as a tool for development has increased rapidly, with an improved public profile and greater credibility. Sport is an inherently social process that can bring people together and unite them through a common interest. Sport contributes to the healthy and holistic development of its participants, as well as entire communities. This is why sport should be available for all, and should be seen as an effective tool for achieving broader development and peace objectives. (Sport for Development and Peace Youth Advocacy Toolkit. (2015

In addition to the sportive and recreational role of youth clubs and sports centers, they play a vital role in consolidating and promoting real citizenship values among young people by holding seminars, meetings, intellectual and political programs. In addition to increasing youth awareness about putting the interest of motherland before personal interest and encouraging participation in social activities and festivals which reinforce national unit, other roles include getting rid of intellectual intolerance and religious extremism (Al-Rawahi, 2017, p. 4).

Al-Alula (2007, p.12) supports the same notion, since Sports programs represent a means for fighting terrorism by immunization young people against danger seduction and deviation. They are the most social category exposed and targeted through their exposure to extremists who subject them to brain washing operations and misinformation about the truth.

The role of social programs in protecting youth from intellectual deviations appears clearly through establishing organized and purposeful social programs and social institutions visits. These social activities help homeland and citizens to achieve the highest degree of glory and honor. In addition to repudiating blind intolerance, increasing adherence to the truth and make our Muslim community an ideal paradigm of good behavior and discipline. (Al-Ajlan, 2011, p.73).

They are the biggest investment for the future. Therefore, countries expect from them a lot of achievements and glories (Ghazi, 1983, p.46) .Studies revealed that "young people do not perform their expected social roles; instead they perform other roles that serve no purpose"(Al-Juweir, 1415H, p.8).

Social programs play a vital basic role in achieving intellectual security and eliminating intellectual extremism and deviation. They support the role of social clubs to clarify the danger of extremist thought and to established social centers at all clubs to hold interviews to enlighten individuals about the hazards of intellectual extremism. Moreover, they provide places to organize sports activities in the different regions of the kingdom to get rid of the social isolation of some areas in which there are growing extreme speech in a closed social environment with poor data. Extreme speech and closed social environment are two poles feeding each other and brought together by borderline thinking, simplified solutions for complex issues, weak dialogue, and refusing diversity, broad thinking and different experiences as well as unilateral life style and pattern of living (Al-Uthaymeen, 2006, p.72).

Citizenship education is the highest target of every educational system, as it represents the center of planting the spirit of the homeland at the character and behavior of the individual. Childhood is the most suitable stage to acquire this spirit since children are flexible and fast

absorbing to ideas, principles and concepts. Citizenship objectives can be achieved by activating cultural, sports and social club activities in order to consolidate civil behavior about citizenship culture and human rights education  - citizen (Awad, 2015, p . 2).

When the concept of citizenship is planted in individual, he feels that he is an integral part of the whole represented by the motherland. The relationship between them becomes mutual as the country provides its people with good living and security, in return the citizen protects his homeland as a national duty. So, his own interest engaged with the public Interest forming a protective and deterrent in the face of any terrorist action. Accordingly, he refuses the temptations of belonging to any terrorist organization that harm his country. Patriotism and terrorism are contradicted as terrorism arises as a result of real citizenship and homeland belonging sense absence (Awad, 2015, p. 9).

Our leadership sought to pay a special attention to youth within comprehensive development plans. It has provided all physical and human potentials and established playgrounds and youth utilities including sports clubs. It has approved purposeful programs represented in public presidency of young people caring representing sports, cultural and social values to contain young people, occupy their leisure time and not engage in extremism groups, and deviate at the road of crime which leads to demolishing society (Al-Ajlan, 2011, p . 5)

All clubs in the kingdom participated officially in the national campaign to fight terrorism 2006. They also take part in all activities and programs and organized competitions and courses covered by media. (Al-Ajlan, 2011, p. 49).

**Terrorism on an international and local level**:

Today's terrorist threat environment is dynamic and dangerous, as are the wide array of terrorist actors driving it. They are located across a wide swath of Africa, Asia and the Middle East with the ability to reach into the West, and even the United States. (Nicholas J. Rasmussen, 2015, p.2). The continuous threat of terrorism has thrust domestic preparedness obligations to the very top of the law enforcement agenda, along with essential components of risk assessment and management.

Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassination – the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. (The Definition of Terrorism, 2007, p.7).

Arab Convention defines terrorism as any act or threat of violence, whatever its motives or purposes, that occurs for the advancement of an individual or collective criminal agenda, causing terror among people, causing fear by harming them, or placing their lives, liberty or security in danger, or aiming to cause damage to the environment or to public or private installations or property or to occupy or to seize them, or aiming to jeopardize a national resource (Muammar, 2010, p.311).

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in Washington D.C, New York City, and Pennsylvania were acts of war against the United States of America and its allies and against the very idea of civilized society. (Janet A. McDonnell,2004). We believe that no cause justifies terrorism; that the world must respond and fight this evil that seems to be intent on threatening and destroying our basic freedoms and our way of life. In a sense, freedom and fear are at war .

According to the NAT I O N A L STRATEGY FOR COMBAT I N G TERRORISM (2003) the war on terrorism is asymmetric in nature. We will fight this campaign using our strengths against the enemy's weaknesses. We will use the power of our values to shape a free and more prosperous world. We will employ the legitimacy of our government and our cause to craft strong and agile partnerships. Our economic strength will help failing states and assist weak countries in ridding themselves of terrorism.

Michael Judy (2011) confirms that As a result of freer, more open borders, this environment has unwittingly facilitated terrorists' access to havens, the improvement of their capabilities, and other forms of support. However, access alone is not enough; terrorists must have a physical base from which to operate. Whether through ignorance, inability, or intent, states around the world still offer havens—both physical (e.g., safe houses and training grounds) and virtual (e.g., reliable communication and financial networks)—that terrorists need to plan, organize, train, and conduct their operations.


**METHODOLOGY**

A survey was applied to 450 members of Youth Clubs in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia, all male. They are randomly selected from (7) social youth clubs in Tabuk: Alwattany, Alsqoor, Alhawraa, Alkhalidy, Diabaa, Haqlea and Temaa. The questionnaire distributed personally by hand. The study included (312, 96.33%) participants from the city and (138, 30.67%) participants from the villages of Tabuk. The survey lasted from 25/11/2015 to 20/2/2016.

The researchers utilized a questionnaire about the role of social youth clubs in reducing terrorism in Saudi Arabia, as a tool for data collection. The questionnaire is designed according to the following steps:

- Identify the objective of the search tool which is the role of social youth clubs in reducing terrorism in Saudi Arabia, from the point of view of its goers.

- Review of the literature and previous studies related to the subject of the research

- Identify the domains of the questionnaire; three domains:

  1. A review of the educational goals for youth clubs

  2. The creative of new mechanisms for real citizenship values in Social Youth Clubs

  3. The trend towards becoming sports clubs and youth centres as institution for changing of cultural, social and economic thinking.

- Preliminary preparation of the study tool included (36) paragraphs evenly distributed to the previous domains, each one included 12 sub-paragraph.

- The researchers used the Likert scale (three-level and five-level), where response and score ranged according to the degree of agreement as follows: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), Neutral (3), agree (4) and strongly agree (1).

- The research tool presented to some experienced and competent arbitrators in order to verify the validity of the tool. The arbitrators unanimously agreed on the paragraphs of measure as valid and proper, while modifying certain paragraphs.

- To ensure the stationarity of the questionnaire, a survey is conducted on a sample consisted of (15) members of the social youth clubs in Tabuk. The coefficient of stationarity of Cronbach's Alpha (0.79). It is an acceptable stationarity coefficient that satisfies the research objectives.

- After verifying the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the questionnaire is completed as shown in the following table:

| Domains | No of paragraphs |
|---|---|
| A review of the educational goals for youth clubs | 12 |
| The creation of new mechanisms for real citizenship values in Social Youth Clubs | 12 |
| titude towards becoming sports clubs and youth centres as institutions for changing of cultural, social and economic thinking | 12 |

1. Applying the scale to the research sample.

2. Correction of questionnaire paragraphs

3. Processing data statistically where duplicates and arithmetic averages of the responses of the research sample calculated to identify the significance of differences according to the research variables.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

To answer the main question of the study about the role of social youth clubs in reducing terrorism in Saudi Arabia from youth perspective, 450 young people from the goers of social clubs in seven clubs in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia surveyed through a three-domain questionnaire. The first domain is to identify the educational goals of youth clubs in relation to reducing terrorism, such as the role of social clubs in reducing social deviation, encouraging youth to defend society and clarifying the importance of social stability and security. The second domain coverst mechanisms for real citizenship values in social youth clubs, such as inviting young people to join a political party to express their views, youth awareness away from religious intolerance in various elections, educating young people to accept the other and deal with them in a proper manner and guiding young people to express themselves peacefully and establishing Crisis Management Center to correct young people misconceptions.

The third domain addresses the attitude towards becoming sports clubs and youth centers as

institutions for changing cultural, social and economic thinking, such as their opinion about preparing youth clubs to exercise their constitutional right to democratic programs and activities and provide an opportunity to train young people to take responsibility within the community through the performing social activities. All of these practices can constrain the ideas of terrorism and extremism.

The frequency and proportion of the sample response to each of the questionnaire paragraphs and domains are shown in the following tables:

1- A review of the educational goals for youth clubs

- From the point of view of club goers, the objectives of the current youth clubs contribute to the reduction of terrorism, (M = 3.78). The most important one of these objectives is organizing and implementing celebrations in national events in society (M = 4). Also, they encourage social competition for a good lifestyle (M = 3.91) and reduce the problems of social deviation and guide youth to public interest (M =3.91), table (2).

2- The creation of new mechanisms for real citizenship values in Social Youth Clubs

- The results showed that youth clubs in Tabuk utilizes new mechanisms to consolidate real citizenship values (M = 3.53), such as inviting young people to join a political party to express their views (M = 3.92), educating young people to avoid religious intolerance (M = 3.91) and educating young people to accept others and deal with them in a proper manner (M =3.79), table (3).

3- The attitude towards becoming sports clubs and youth centres as institutions for changing of cultural, social and economic thinking

- As for the trend of the research sample towards the transformation of sports clubs and youth centres as institutions for changing cultural, social and economic thinking, the results indicated a positive trend (M = 3.60). They feel the importance of clubs in training young people to invest leisure time in business activities (M = 3.79), the development of youth motivation to pay taxes to contribute to economic reform (M = 3.76) and the importance of caring for talented and creative young people, especially the vanguard (M = 3.65), table (4).

4- statistical differences between social youth clubs' roles in reducing terrorism among youths, based on location the results indicates to statistical differences between social youth clubs' roles in reducing terrorism among youths in Tabuk, table (4)

**Table 2 Responses to questions regarding prioritizing of a review of the educational goals for youth clubs**

| Paragraphs | Mean | SD | Ranking |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| The formation and implementation of programs for festivals, | 4.00 | 0.97 | 1 |
| Young people encourage to social competition to achieve live style is good | 3.91 | 1.00 | 2 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reducing social deviation problems and guidance of young people for the public interest | 3.91 | 1.00 | 3 |
| Organizing and investment of leisure time programs for young people that develop the personal and helping on belonging | 3.86 | 1.05 | 4 |
| Increasing of young people's awareness of the importance of work and tender | 3.84 | 0.99 | 5 |
| Discovering of capabilities and capacities of members and investment of community development projects | 3.84 | 1.17 | 6 |
| Adoption of preparing the leaders of the young people and push them to positions of responsibility program | 3.80 | 1.08 | 7 |
| Guiding of young people towards respect for the instruction and rules in social institutions | 3.73 | 1.15 | 8 |
| Illustrate the importance of a feeling of stability and a sense of security in society | 3.66 | 1.10 | 9 |
| Encouraging young people to excellence and rapid achievement of societal goals | 3.61 | 1.11 | 10 |
| Development of young people feeling to the proud and national political trends | 3.59 | 1.07 | 11 |
| Young people encourage the importance of defending the Society | 3.59 | 1.03 | 12 |
| **Total** | **3.78** | **0.76** | |

**Table 3 Responses to questions regarding the creation of new mechanisms for real citizenship values in social youth clubs.**

| Paragraph | Mean | SD | Ranking |
|---|---|---|---|
| An invitation to young people to join for a political party to express their opinions | 3.92 | 1.10 | 1 |
| Awareness for young people away from religious intolerance in various elections | 3.91 | 0.97 | 2 |
| Socialization for young people on the acceptance of others and dealing with others is good | 3.79 | 1.20 | 3 |
| Guiding young people towards non-violence and non-use of force when expressing themselves | 3.76 | 1.01 | 4 |
| Establishment of crises administration center to correct misconceptions among youth | 3.70 | 1.05 | 5 |
| Wide-spreading for citizenship culture and human rights in society | 3.84 | 1.17 | 6 |
| Increasing for youth awareness of front the national interest to personal interest | 3.51 | 1.11 | 7 |

| Paragraph | Mean | SD | | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Developing for beliefs of young people to acceptance multi political and cultural ideas | 3.49 | 1.29 | | 8 |
| Deepen and establishment for the practice of democracy and citizenship | 3.49 | 1.14 | | 9 |
| Instilling for positive religious concepts among young people, that related to freedom of belief | 3.45 | 1.28 | | 10 |
| Instilling the modeling for young people in interreligious dialogue programs | 3.03 | 1.36 | | 11 |
| Encouraging for young people to participate in national unity activities | 2.76 | 1.36 | | 12 |
| Total | 3.53 | | 0.79 | |

**Table (4): Responses to questions regarding the trend towards becoming sports clubs and youth centers as institutions for changing cultural, social and economic thinking.**

| Paragraph | Mean | SD | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Training of young people on how to investment leisure time in the business and useful activities | 3.79 | 1.09 | 1 |
| Motivation of young people to pay taxes for contribute economic reform | 3.76 | 1.09 | 2 |
| Interesting of young people talented and creative care, especially Vanguard | 3.65 | 1.14 | 3 |
| Preparing of young people to practice their constitutional right in democracy programs and activities | 3.63 | 1.17 | 4 |
| Availability of the opportunity to train young people to take responsibility within the community through of activities practice it | 3.62 | 1.05 | 5 |
| Increasing of young people awareness that the volunteering is not a waste of time | 3.61 | 1.19 | 6 |
| Guiding of young people to the faraway and they don't at least mediation and favoritism | 3.58 | 1.15 | 7 |
| Contributing of young people to the discovery of abilities and tendencies for choosing the major | 3.58 | 1.13 | 8 |
| Guiding of young people for the free work neither nor waiting public job | 3.50 | 1.18 | 9 |
| Preparing of young people to literature dialogue Workshops | 3.49 | 1.16 | 10 |
| Participating of young people in public services like painting and signboard | 3.47 | 1.23 | 12 |

**Table (5):  Independent samples test for the study tool dimensions with  residence variable.**

| Domain | Residence | Mean | SD | T | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A review of the educational goals for youth clubs | City | 3.88 | .67 | 4.25 | .00 |
| | Village | 3.55 | .89 | | |
| The creation of new mechanisms for real citizenship values in Social Youth Clubs | City | 3.67 | .71 | 5.56 | .00 |
| | Village | 3.23 | .86 | | |
| The attitude towards becoming sports clubs and youth centers as institutions for changing of cultural, social and economic thinking | City | 3.67 | .85 | 2.72 | .00 |
| | Village | 3.42 | .98 | | |
| Total | City | 3.74 | .66 | 4.51 | .00 |
| | Village | 3.40 | .85 | | |

**CONCLUSION**

The present study, which examined the role of social clubs in reducing terrorism from the point of view of the goers of seven youth clubs in Tabuk, concluded that the educational goals of these clubs contribute to the reduction of terrorism. They also adopt new creative mechanisms to consolidate the real citizenship values in social clubs. Their trends are positive towards the transformation of sports clubs and youth centers as institutions for changing cultural, social and economic thinking.

The previous results show that the role of social clubs in reducing terrorism should be strengthened through fighting terrorism with appropriate thought. This can be done by reviewing the educational goals of these youth clubs. Achieving societal goals and developing their sense of pride and patriotism encourage young people to defend society. As well as developing new mechanisms to consolidate the real citizenship values, such as instilling positive religious concepts among young people related to freedom of belief, youth participation in interfaith dialogue programs and encouraging young people to participate in the activities of national unity. Moreover, these clubs should a center for intellectual and cultural, social and economic change.

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