

Al-Shabaab and the sources of its resilience and resurgence: Cold War legacies and Jihadism in Somalia.

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Abstract

This study examines the continued development and survival of the group, Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahidin, commonly known as al-Shabaab – which emerged in 2006 as the militant wing of Somalia's Islamic Courts Union and became an independent group in 2007. The group has survived in spite of the fact that it has endured significant losses of personnel, resources and territory in Somalia. The study examines al-Shabaab's sources of resilience, resurgence and diversity. To achieve this, the study focused on the narratives of nine Somali nationals living and working in Durban, Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth, who fled their home country as a result of the ongoing violence and instability. Through understanding war as experience and placing the individual and community at the center of analysis, a people-centered approach is developed in understanding the organisation. This allows the study to challenge the state centered approaches to security and International Relations (IR) theory, which is important in the case of an armed, transnational, non-state actor such as al-Shabaab, whose operation and mobilisation requires no territorial base. The study makes use of social constructivism as a theoretical lens, as it provides an alternative way of analysing a non-state actor, specifically within an African context. The study argues that al-Shabaab's war within Somalia and East Africa is a territorial manifestation of a global phenomenon which highlights the importance of understanding its unique history within Somalia and East Africa. Importantly, the study also shows that veterans of the Afghan-Soviet war brought back ideas and tactics which have played a central part in shaping al-Shabaab's ideology and tactics. It is argued that al-Shabaab's process of decentralisation has ensured their survival but also alienated them from the Somali population. It is demonstrated that their insurgent tactics and process of intelligence gathering means that they operate in the shadows, making it difficult to locate them. Furthermore, the study shows that the role of regional actors and the presence of African Union peacekeepers have ensured that they have a constant enemy which provides a sense of cohesion and drive. The study concludes that al-Shabaab exists at a nexus of factors; its survival has and will depend on both domestic and transnational factors. Without the transnational nature of the organisation, al-Shabaab would not have become the organisation it is today. However, the future of al-Shabaab is heavily dependent on the security situation within Somalia. The immediate objectives of the group are focused within Somalia. Therefore, if the state institutions are consolidated within the country and human security levels improve, the organisation will struggle to operate with the same freedom it currently enjoys.

Dedication

For my mother Gaynor and my late father, Alan.

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Acronyms

AIAI- Al-Ittihad Al-Islamiya

AMISOM- African Union Mission in Somalia

ANC- African National Congress

AQAP- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

ASNE- Al-Shabaab North East

AU- African Union

CIA- Central Intelligence Agency

DEA- Drug Enforcement Administration

DRC- Democratic Republic of Congo

GSPC- Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et le Combat

ICU- Islamic Courts Union

IGAD- Intergovernmental Authority on Development

ISIS- Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

ISS- Institute for Security Studies

IR- International Relations

MK- Umkhonto We Sizwe

MPLA- The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola

RENAMO- The Mozambican National Resistance

SFG- Somali federal Government

SILCA- Staten Island Liberian Community Association

SNA- Somali National Alliance

SSA- Somalia Salvation Alliance

TFG-Transitional Federal Government

UN-United Nations

UNDP-United Nations Development Programme

UNISOM 1- United Nations Operation in Somalia

UNITA- The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

USA- United State of America

Chapter 1:

Introduction

1.1.1 The domestic and transnational roots of al-Shabaab

The Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahidin, or the Movement of the Striving Youth - commonly known as al-Shabaab - emerged in 2006 as the militant wing of Somalia's Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and became an independent group in 2007. The armed "Islamist" group's initial goal was to oust the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) from power, which had been established in November 2004 as a western backed regime, with Ethiopian military support. Because of this, al-Shabaab viewed the TFG as a "puppet regime" and its Ethiopian allies as an invading force of infidels in Somalia (Ali, 2008 and Kisiangani, 2009). In 2012, al-Shabaab pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda, the world's largest and most connected militant political-Islamist organization. With al-Qaeda's support, al-Shabaab has embarked on a brutal insurgency on the internationally recognised Somali Federal Government (SFG), based in Mogadishu. The primary aim of al-Shabaab has been to develop an Islamic state within Somalia and to "establish a regional presence and recruit fighters from across countries in eastern Africa who have an understanding of their respective countries' vulnerabilities" (Ndung'u, Salifu & Sigsworth, 2017: 3). Furthermore, al-Shabaab's base of operations has traditionally been in the South of the country allowing it to conduct operations in both Kenya and Uganda (Bryden, 2015).

Recently the organisation has focused its efforts primarily within Somalia. On the 14th of October 2017, more than 350 people were killed in Mogadishu in what was Somalia's deadliest terror attack in history. The death toll was so great that even al-Shabaab were surprised at the extent of the damage that they had caused, despite all signs pointing to the group being responsible for the attack they are yet to claim responsibility. This attack highlights al-Shabaab's continuing capacity to carry out attacks even though renewed promises were made to defeat the group by Somalia's recently elected president Mohammed Abdullahi Mohammed as well as the Trump administration. Furthermore, the continued losses of territory and personnel to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) highlight the pressure the organisation operates under. However, recent months have shown, that, if anything, the group is becoming more dangerous with attacks becoming more frequent and more lethal. Bryden (2015), writing about al-Shabaab in the aftermath of the Mo

University College attack in Garissa argued that the operation was “a manifestation of the group's resilience, adaptability and strategic continuity” (2015: 4). More than two years later, it appears that little has changed, the ongoing efforts to defeat al-Shabaab have struggled to curb the group’s momentum and negate their potency. Ever since the groups inception it has faced continued pressure whether it be from Ethiopian or AMISOM forces as well American drone strikes. In 2007 and 2010, al-Shabaab looked to be on the brink of defeat, however, it has proven that every time it reaches the point of near collapse it adapts and diversifies and returns in a different form, even more determined to continue its fight. This aim of this study, therefore, is to examine how al-Shabaab continually reinvents itself and why it continues to be so difficult to defeat. This study will focus on al-Shabaab's sources of resilience and resurgence.

As previously mentioned, recent al-Shabaab attacks and operations were mostly carried out within Somalia and this reflects the continued violence and political instability that exists in the country. However, it is only in the last twelve to thirteen years that this violence has taken on a political-Islamist agenda. Before 2004, Somalia had endured 13 years of civil war, largely fought along clan-divisions in the aftermath of the collapse of Siad Barre's regime. The last 26 years were characterised by eroding state structures and institutions, which contributed to the sense of insecurity that Somalis now face on a day-to-day basis. The inter-clan hostility that characterised the 1990's was largely born out of the policies of the Barre regime. Barre manipulated and oppressed certain clans while protecting and favouring others. The result was devastating, while the Marehan, Ogaden and Dhulbante were heavily favoured in terms of political power; others such as the Majerteen clan were marginalised (Nafziger & Auviner, 2003: 85). Throughout the duration of Barre's regime the divisions between clans were continually reinforced and tensions grew. Once Barre fled the country there was little commitment to a nationalist agenda because Somali society had splintered into different factions all vying for power. This paved the way for a number of different warlords and clan-based militias to compete for control of the capital.

Although the politico-religious element of violence in Somalia only became the defining feature after 2004, there is a history of political-Islamist movements in Somalia dating back to the 1980's. The Al- Ittihad Al- Islamiya (AIAI) first came to prominence in 1983; initially the organisation was not militant and adopted a more aggressive approach with the influx of returning veterans from the Afghan-Soviet war in the early 1990's. Those returning from

Afghanistan saw themselves as part of a defensive jihad which protected the *Ummah* regardless of state boundaries (Hansen, 2013: 3). This attitude came to define the AIAI and soon they called for an Islamic state which protected Muslim interests from the infidels or non-believers. In essence the ideas and thoughts coming back from Afghanistan called for a sense of Pan-Islamic unity that transcended the boundaries of Somalia. In 1991, the AIAI had very limited resources and for the next seven years struggled to gain a foothold in the ongoing civil war, by 1998 it had virtually collapsed (Hansen, 2013:17). However, although the AIAI had failed as an organisation, the foundations for jihadist movements based on political-Islam were laid and the core group of AIAI were highly influential in the development of al-Shabaab.

In the late 1990's, Mogadishu was a city with virtually no rule or authority. Crime and violence were rampant and government institutions simply did not exist. This led to the development of the Sharia courts, a collective arrangement of clan based individual courts who took it upon themselves to implement justice within the city and stand up for the citizens of Mogadishu (Hansen, 2013: 22). With the courts accepting the core group of the failed AIAI, they suddenly had a group of individuals with military training from Afghanistan who could enforce the courts decisions. At this stage, support for the warlords waned, they could no longer provide protection for citizens and businesses in Mogadishu. Something the Sharia courts now provided, and their popularity increased dramatically. However, the support for the courts had very little to do with their ideology and more to do with the basic protection and security they could provide (Hansen, 2013: 24). By 2005 the courts system had developed into the ICU who at this stage held a great deal of authority within Mogadishu. Combined with a young, emerging al-Shabaab that identified with the ICU's strict adherence to Sharia law, a symbiotic relationship was born. Al-Shabaab gained access to the resources of the ICU, while al-Shabaab provided the military capacity to enforce the decisions of the court. Although al-Shabaab was officially founded in 2006, the relationship formed with the ICU in 2005 was a key moment in the organisations development.

The late 1990's and early 2000's also marked the introduction of al-Qaeda into East Africa. It was in this period that Somalia gained strategic importance for al-Qaeda in East Africa. In the pre-9/11 era, when al-Qaeda was more of a centralised organisation, Somalia was of little strategic importance to the organisation (Hansen, 2013: 25). The attacks on US embassies in Mombasa and Dar es Salaam in 1998 for example, were conducted by al-Qaeda operatives

from outside of Africa and the explosives used in the attack were sourced in Luanda, Angola. However, after 9/11 this changed drastically. With new, rigorous policing and surveillance methods, al-Qaeda's ability to operate as a centralised organisation, transporting resources and personnel across borders was greatly reduced (Hansen, 2013: 25). In 2002, al-Qaeda attacked Mombasa again but this time there was a greater emphasis on using local, East African operatives and resources. The attacks were planned within Somalia and Kenya and the attackers were brought in to Kenya by boat from Somalia (Hansen, 2013: 25). There were also a number of safe houses within Somalia used for smuggling arms and personnel into Kenya. Lastly, Somalia was also used as a gateway to escape from Africa after the attacks. In the post 9/11 era Somalia's lawlessness and weak state institutions meant that groups such as al-Qaeda could operate in such areas without being hassled by local security and armed forces (Hansen, 2013: 26). It was this affiliation with al-Qaeda's East African branch that would be so crucial in the development of early al-Shabaab.

Therefore, al-Shabaab's roots, and how the organisation exists, are a result of both domestic factors within Somalia and external influences from Afghanistan and East Africa. This thesis will show that these dynamic roots have set the tone for al-Shabaab's mandate and modus operandi. The study asserts that an analysis of this group must take into consideration the domestic and transnational foundations of the organisation. The fact that it exists within an internal and transnational context has undoubtedly contributed to its resilience and resurgence. This thesis, will therefore, provide a multi-layered approach that encompasses al-Shabaab's local, regional and global elements.

1.1.2 Non-state actors, identity and political Islam

The fact that al-Shabaab has proven itself to be a fluid and dynamic organisation that exists within both domestic and transnational spaces at the same time, complicates our ability to locate and analyse the group as an actor and its practice in International Relations (IR) theory. One of the dominant themes of this thesis is the contested nature of the state, particularly in the post-Cold War era. Authors, such as Booth (1991), Hendricks (2011) and Hopf (1998), contend that state-centric approaches to IR and security are no longer sufficient in providing a rich account of the multiple actors, domestic and transnational, that shape the security dilemma that preoccupies the discipline of IR. The study of IR, particularly realism, came under heavy scrutiny at the end of the Cold War, because it failed to predict such a defining

moment in political history. Furthermore, state-centric approaches could not account for the influx of non-state actors that flourished post-1991. Wendt (2004: 8) states that the “‘states systemic project’ reflects one set of choices within a broader field of possibilities. Its units are states, as opposed to non-state actors like individuals, transnational social movements, or multi-national corporations”. The key to understanding IR in the twenty-first century is, therefore, to move beyond the state as the primary form of analysis.

Booth (1991) quotes Rosenau when he described the post-Cold War era as 'post-international politics'. He elaborates further by stating that there is a “decline of long-standing patterns, as more and more of the interactions that sustain world politics do not directly involve states” (Booth, 1991: 314). During the Cold War, discussions on security were confined to the military capacities of the dominant states of the United States of America (USA) and the Soviet Union. Neorealist conceptions of IR, which define the state as the primary unit of analysis, were able to account for the inter-state insecurity. However, the issue with this outlook is neorealism's fundamental premise of state self-interest. Hopf (1998) argues that “in other words, the state in international politics, across time and space, is assumed to have a single eternal meaning.” (Hopf, 1998: 176). This lack of flexibility, in the primacy of the state and the changing nature of international politics, was highlighted at the end of the Cold War and the subsequent period of 'post-international politics' that Rosenau mentions. As such, state centric approaches of IR theory have struggled to account for certain characteristics that have defined the post-Cold War era such as the 'erosion of sovereignty' or 'the growing scope for non-state actors' (Booth, 1991: 314). Booth, goes so far as to say that we are witnessing an end point in a 350 year old period in history which was “dominated by the military competition between technologically advanced states of the north, with realist outlooks, Machiavellian ethics and a Clausewitzian philosophy of war” (Booth, 1991: 316).

This study will adopt social constructivism as its theoretical grounding. Rather than focusing on the state as its primary unit of analysis, social constructivism invites us to rethink central concepts in IR, such as anarchy, it reimagines the state as an actor with identity and norms that either facilitate or reproduce conditions of insecurity in IR. Hopf (1998), highlights how constructivists differ from neorealists by suggesting that “constructivism treats identity as an empirical question to be theorized within a historical context, neorealism assumes that all units in global politics have only one meaningful identity, that of self-interested states” (Hopf, 1998: 175). Identity in a neorealist sense is constant and restricted to inter-state

dealings, however, as Hopf shows, constructivists show that identity is a fluid and contested subject which is dependent on history, culture and ideas. Identity takes on a renewed significance because shared identities have the ability to define interactions within the global sphere. The socially constructed nature of identity highlights the relevance of people in the study of IR and thus human experience is given legitimacy.

This thesis will assert that identity is important when examining al-Shabaab. The study will argue that it is the presence of shared identity that allows al-Shabaab to identify with groups such as al-Qaeda. Authors such as Burke (2007) and Lynch (2006) highlight the ways in which al-Qaeda does not need a territorial base to achieve its objectives; rather, its success is measured on its ability to spread the ideas of its political interpretation of Islam. The radical form of political-Islam that groups such as al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab mobilise their identity on, has also caused a redefinition of the term jihad. According to the Koran, “a Muslim’s first duty is to create a just and egalitarian society in which poor people are treated with respect. This demands a jihad (literally, effort or struggle) on all fronts: spiritual and social, personal and political” (Mamdani, 2004: 50). There are two broad categories of jihad: greater and lesser. The greater jihad refers to an internal struggle with oneself to become a better person, however, the lesser jihad is more of an outward struggle and “is about self-preservation and self-defence (Mamdani, 2004: 50). It is the lesser jihad which has led to the political mobilisation to overthrow an unjust form of authority which essentially marginalises Muslim interests. There have been examples since the eleventh century of jihads being waged for the sake of Muslim interests throughout the Middle Eastern region (Mamdani, 2004: 50). However, it was the armed Afghan Jihad in the 1980s’ which led to the contribution of the more contemporary understanding of jihadism. This form of jihadism refers to the idea of a holy war fought by Muslims against non-believers or infidels. It is dependent on the internalisation of an identity which positions Muslims in direct contact with those who seek to destroy Islam. Therefore, jihadism is the manifestation of a particular interpretation of Islam, which for the remainder of this thesis will be referred to as political-Islam. What political-Islam has shown is that it has the ability to transcend time and space and has come to define al-Shabaab's objectives both within Somalia and throughout East Africa. Constructivism is, therefore, a useful theory in coming to terms with the value of identity for jihadist networks and organisations.

Furthermore, and importantly, this thesis will show the need for understanding war and

conflict as a human experience. Dominant IR theories, such as neorealism, have viewed war as a manifestation of tensions between self-interested states. In this Hobbesian conception, war is, therefore, a rational, calculated event that serves a purpose in order to restore the equilibrium of the international system. Feminist theorists in IR have challenged the discipline that war needs to be studied from below. Specifically, feminist scholars have argued that to fully comprehend the nature of war, “human bodies [must] come into focus as units that have war agency and are also prime targets of war violence and war enthusiasms” (Sylvester, 2012: 1). As argued by Hendricks (2011), feminists challenged “neorealist representations of war as partial, that is, predominantly representing the experiences of men, and contended that IR assumptions were grounded in an increasingly unviable assertion of the state as protector” (Hendricks, 2011: 5). By trying to bring out the role gender has played in conflicts and in an attempt to challenge the idea that “war is largely fought by men”, feminists call for the centring of the individual and community in our analysis of war and security (Hendricks, 2011: 6).

The most profound impact of al-Shabaab is in the lives of the people in Somalia, and broader East Africa. The tactics and methods of fighting that are used by the organisation rely on the voluntary and forced participation of ordinary people. Their lives and futures, inside and outside Somalia, have been reconfigured by the evolution of al-Shabaab, within a long context of Somali insecurity and instability. As shown in Chapter Three, Somali people living in South Africa, “have brought war with them, in their mental lives, [and] in their strange manners” (Steinberg, 2011: 28).

Therefore, in examining al-Shabaab’s sources of resilience and resurgence, this study locates it within the unique domestic context of Somalia. Al-Shabaab’s transnational nature is shaped by the legacies of the Afghan-Soviet war and the post-9/11 reconfiguration of Islam, which is a political identity and al-Shabaab’s tool of mobilisation. The study will examine al-Shabaab through the experience of Somalis, whose lives have been affected by the evolution, tactics and resilience of al-Shabaab.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to examine the sources of al-Shabaab's resilience and resurgence. The sub-goals of the study are as follows:

- To evaluate al-Shabaab, through a constructivist lens, in order to account for its non-state, armed and transnational evolution.
- To develop a people-centred perspective of the group by gaining a deeper understanding of how the organisation has affected Somali nationals in South Africa.
- To analyse how domestic, regional and global factors have contributed to al-Shabaab's multi-layered nature.

1.3 Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into six chapters. This introductory chapter has provided a brief historical context of al-Shabaab and has shown how it has proven itself to be a resilient organisation capable of withstanding immense pressure and the loss of territory and personnel. This history of al-Shabaab has shown the path that led to its development which highlights the domestic and transnational nature of the organisation. It has also introduced the theory of social constructivism in IR. When it comes to transnational, non-state armed actors such as al-Shabaab, that use political Islam as a mobilizing ideology, constructivism is the best equipped IR theory to deal with the organisations heavy reliance on norms and political identities that transcend the confines of state boundaries. This chapter has also argued the importance of understanding war from a people-centred perspective and how the study of war through experience provides an analysis that gives priority to the human element.

Chapter Two will argue that al-Shabaab's African roots must be taken into account. The ongoing violence in Somalia is first and foremost a product of the domestic environment, it is only in the last decade with the development of al-Shabaab has the global jihadist agenda come to prominence in Somalia. Therefore, Chapter Two will highlight the characteristics of African insurgencies in an attempt to locate al-Shabaab within an African context. It will also highlight how warfare is conducted in the Global South and will attempt to explain unconventional tactics of groups such as al-Shabaab. One of the key themes running through this study is the contested nature of the Somali state and Chapter Two will demonstrate the importance of rethinking African International Relations, as well as the concept of statehood in an African context. As Brown (2006) argues the aim is not to critique the entirety of IR theory but to highlight the need to look at units of analysis other than the state in an African context. This rejection of state-centric analysis is also relevant in rethinking the concept of security in a 'post-international' world (Booth, 1991: 314). Instead of understanding security

as something that exists between states, Chapter Two, will highlight how the needs of individuals and communities should be the primary consideration of security studies. By doing so the concept of 'security' becomes more holistic and encompasses a whole range of factors in the political, economic, social, environmental and military spheres. This is an important step in the case of al-Shabaab because they have managed to exploit and manipulate the insecurities present at so many levels in Somalia to their advantage. Chapter Two will also introduce the concept of social constructivism in IR, and will show the socially constructed nature of the international system which is relevant in al-Shabaab's case as it exists on the basis of shared norms and identities. This chapter will also argue how al-Shabaab, like so many other jihadist groups, was heavily influenced by the Soviet-Afghan war and how the ideologies and tactics that returned to Somalia set the template for al-Shabaab's make up. Lastly, the chapter will highlight how unique, Somali grievances and issues have been framed in the jihadist narrative, showing the global and domestic nexus that al-Shabaab exists in.

Chapter Three will argue for the use of a narrative approach in understanding warfare, largely because this study seeks to understand warfare from a people-centric perspective. Furthermore, this chapter will highlight the importance of understanding 'war as experience' (Sylvester, 2012). It will highlight the importance of understanding bodies as having war agency which in turn gives legitimacy to the voices of those directly affected by war. Asserting that people are credible units of analysis within the study of IR and security studies, Chapter Three will introduce the research and fieldwork process of the study. Nine Somali nationals who fled Somalia were interviewed in Durban, Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth. In addition to this a senior researcher from the Institute for Security Studies was also interviewed. The chapter will demonstrate how al-Shabaab was studied through the experiences of the diaspora, thus an argument is made to justify studying conflicts from different parts of the world. By highlighting factors such as the interconnected nature of the Somali diaspora, the nature of violence as well as the phenomena of displaced peoples in contemporary wars, Chapter Three will argue how it is possible to effectively analyse al-Shabaab from South Africa.

Chapter Four will introduce the findings of this study and provides an early form of analysis of the narratives provided by the research participants. By including the thoughts and experiences of the participants, Chapter Four will seek to identify patterns within the data in

order to develop themes surrounding the resilience of al-Shabaab. Firstly, the themes will show that al-Shabaab is a product of the ongoing domestic strife within Somalia and the decay of state institutions and structures has allowed the group to develop and flourish. The second theme will provide an understanding of how al-Shabaab has politically interpreted Islam, it shows how this strain of political-Islam is by no means inherent in Somali culture but rather an ideology that has been imported and adapted to a Somali context. Thirdly, the chapter will argue that one of the main reasons for al-Shabaab's longevity is ironically AMISOM. Participants explained how the presence of the continental peacekeeping force is seen as a foreign presence, which provides al-Shabaab with a common enemy to galvanise the public around. The violent actions of AMISOM peacekeepers towards the Somali people have led them to be viewed with a great deal of suspicion; this is then used in al-Shabaab's propaganda campaign. Chapter Four will also highlight the theme of decentralisation: the organisations process of decentralisation have allowed them to become virtually invisible and incredibly difficult to locate. It will show the complicated nature of countering al-Shabaab, however, it also highlights that the process of decentralisation now means that Somalis no longer know what the organisation is fighting for. Their lack of territory and ongoing violence means they are seen as an obstacle in the road to peace. Lastly, the chapter will look at al-Shabaab's sources of funding.

Chapter five places the themes and patterns developed in Chapter Four within the broader conceptual framework discussed in Chapter Two. It will demonstrate how the ongoing domestic instability and turmoil in Somalia is a result of poor human security within Somalia and until these factors are addressed they will continue to trigger violence. The chapter will detail how the formation of a political identity based on Islam has managed to transcend time and space and become very influential in a Somali context; and will explain how political-Islam has been used as a mobilising ideology in Somalia. Chapter Five, will also explore the limits of al-Shabaab's decentralisation process and attempts to predict the future of al-Shabaab's objectives outside of Somalia's borders, as well as its relationship with al-Qaeda. Leading on from the process of decentralisation the chapter will provide a deeper insight into the specific tactics used by al-Shabaab, with specific reference to the role women and children have played in al-Shabaab's operations.

The concluding chapter will highlight that al-Shabaab is indeed an organisation that has developed as a result of domestic and transnational influences, however, the key to

countering al-Shabaab lies in strengthening Somalia's security sector. This will involve a holistic approach that attempts to address these issues from a political, economic, social and military point of view. An improved sense of security would most likely slow down al-Shabaab's momentum. However, this chapter will also demonstrate that the process of improving Somalia's security situation must be accompanied by an improvement in regional security in order to stop al-Shabaab from joining affiliates in neighbouring countries.

Chapter Two:

Contested states, Security and War Theorisations

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to form the conceptual basis for the study of al-Shabaab's sources of resilience. In order to do this a thorough analysis will be conducted on existing literature to show how a multitude of factors have contributed to the group's unique composition. The chapter highlights the unique combination of factors that allow al-shabaab to exist and thrive.

Although al-Shabaab is now a full blown jihadist group it is still an African organisation in the sense it was founded within Somalia and conducts its operations within Somalia and East Africa. Because of this, it must be analysed from an African point of view and so authors such as Clapham (1998) and Mkandawire (2002) are consulted in shedding light on al-Shabaab's African roots. Furthermore, the evolution of warfare in the global south will also be analysed to show why groups such as al-Shabaab consistently use such brutal tactics. Secondly, this chapter will argue for a rethink on how certain mainstream IR theories have approached the African continent and contemporary non-state actors. In addition to the failure of dominant IR theories to explain Africa's place in the international system, it is also important to argue the re-conceptualisation of 'security'. By moving towards a human based, holistic security analysis it will be possible to look at the myriad of factors contributing to the ongoing security crisis in Somalia and not just the military capabilities of the different armed actors.

This chapter will then make the case for Constructivism and how it is the most appropriate form of analysis when dealing with an African non-state actor such as al-Shabaab. This chapter will seek to shed light on the links between the Cold War and the 'War on Terror'. This will be achieved by highlighting how there are definite similarities in terms of the narratives these geopolitical phenomena have created but also the direct links created by the Afghan-Soviet war. This chapter will also investigate the idea of war as a 'network enterprise', jihadist organisations have become experts at operating through unorthodox channels created because of rapid globalisation. These networks are an integral part of the modern day conflict and cannot be underestimated in terms of the effect they have on warfare in the contemporary

era. Lastly, this chapter will demonstrate how the Somali Jihad against the Ethiopian invasion of 2006 is a nexus of different factors, which highlight the unique nature of al-Shabaab

2.2 Al-Shabaab: an African organisation?



Figure 1: Political map of Somalia, UN Geospatial Information Section

Much has been written on the nature of African insurgencies and guerrilla forces in the cold war and post-cold war era. Mkandawire (2002), Clapham (1998) in particular have made meaningful contributions to the literature on the different types of insurgency on the continent and the different reasons for taking up arms. Crucially an attempt is made to show how warfare has changed in the post-cold war era in terms of tactics and motives. Insurgencies and guerrilla warfare have played a substantial role in Africa's post-colonial history; the tactics used by al-Shabaab in many cases emulate a number of its continental predecessors, barring suicide attacks. However, in the past there has often been a tendency to link al-Shabaab to movements and organisations such as the Taliban of Afghanistan and little attention given to the fact that it is still an organisation based within Africa. It still has strong roots to the continent. This is the first step in achieving a deeper understanding of the group itself. The global narrative created by the 'war on terror' has meant that groups such as al-Shabaab, the Taliban, Boko Haram are all viewed in the same light, however “what is required is historically contextualised analysis” (Mkandawire, 2002: 208). This does not

mean that the jihadist influence in al-Shabaab can be ignored, however by first understanding al-Shabaab from an African perspective it is easier to see how the group developed within an African setting. It has only been in the last decade that Somalia's security situation was linked to factors outside of the continent. The significance of highlighting the African roots of al-Shabaab cannot be overstated.

Clapham (1998) argues that there are four main types of insurgencies within Africa. Liberation insurgencies set out to achieve independence from colonial or minority rule; they were typified by movements in countries such as Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa (Clapham, 1998; 6). Separatist insurgencies harbour “the aspirations and identities of particular ethnicities or regions within an existing state, either by seceding from that state altogether, or else by pressing for some special autonomous status”, the Somali irredentist movements in Ethiopia and Kenya are a good example of such insurgencies (Clapham, 1998; 6). Thirdly, reform insurgencies seek to radically reform the national government based on a revolutionary ideology. Clapham points out that these types of insurgencies were not as popular in Africa as they were in South-East Asia or Latin America (Clapham, 1998: 6). Lastly, warlord insurgencies attempt to overthrow or change the leadership of a certain country yet do not offer any noticeable change from the government they seek to overthrow. Clapham suggests that in certain cases the incoming ruler tries to create a “personal territorial fiefdom”. He points out that in Somalia itself Mahamed Faarah Aidid’s Somali National Alliance (SNA) did not differ Ali Mahdi Mahamed's Somalia Salvation Alliance (SSA) (Clapham, 1998: 6). The warlord insurgency, which Clapham discusses, is fascinating in that it does highlight the state of Somali politics between 1991 and 2004. During the turmoil of the 1990's, Somali politics became more and more clan based. This was also caused by Barre's manipulation and oppression of certain clans while protecting and favouring others (Anderson & McKnight, 2015: 538). The result was devastating and while the Marehan, Ogaden and Dhulbante clans were heavily favoured, others such as the Majerteen clan were severely marginalised. Throughout the duration of Barre's regime, the divisions between clan were continually reinforced and animosity between different clans grew. Once Barre had fallen there was very little desire for a collective effort to develop Somali interests amongst different factions of society, rather it was a fractured state in disarray and this paved the way for a number of different warlords and clan-based militias competing for power within Mogadishu and surrounding areas (Anderson & McKnight, 2015; 538).

Anderson & McKnight (2015) suggest that the violence that dominated the 1990's and early 2000's in no way represented the pre-colonial system of governance. Quoting Abdi Samatar they suggest that many groups and clans particularly in Southern Somalia “shared an agro-pastoralist lifestyle that necessitated they work together to combat the harsh conditions which could randomly befall any individual or group working alone” (Anderson & McKnight; 2015; 539). In essence then the situation that prevailed in the 1990's did not reflect what Samatar suggests was “traditional Somali culture”. It seems that clans became political entities most notably in the 1950's, these new politicised entities were all anti-colonialist and nationalist in the sense that they wanted the liberation of the Somali state. Once independence was gained though they formed the building blocks of the Somali state, by this I mean there was no other form of organisation or constituency (Anderson & McKnight, 2015: 539). This meant that as Siad Barre embarked on his nationalisation campaign the allocation of state resources was largely organised along clan lines. This cemented the political nature of the clan system, which meant instead of working together, as was the case in pre-colonial times, they were now competing for state resources from the government in Mogadishu (Anderson & McKnight, 2015: 539). Once Barre's regime collapsed and centralised authority declined, the response was for clans to compete for the control of local economic sources as well as external sources of funding (Anderson & McKnight, 2015: 539). This set the tone for clan hostilities and more specifically the warlord styled insurgency that Clapham highlights.

Mkandawire (2002) offers a different insight into the nature and dynamic of Africa insurgencies. He suggests that there are three main types of post-colonial rebel movements in Africa. “The first are the secessionist/regionalist movements, or those seeking greater autonomy for a particular (often ethnically specific) area. The second are those, which have become rurally based following defeat in urban confrontations. The third are externally supported movements returning from exile, and passing through the countryside on their way to the urban areas” (Mkandawire, 2002: 191). He also makes the point that rebel movements in Africa have encountered difficulties when it comes to convincing the peasantry to take up arms. This is based on the fact that they often have access to land which makes it difficult for leaders to mobilise people who already have a sense of independence and livelihood (Mkandawire, 2002; 194). The second insurgency Mkandawire mentions is particularly relevant in the case of al-Shabaab, the movement was born in the urban environment of Mogadishu, when the Islamic courts took control of parts of the city .The group also had the

backing of business militias who had banded together to challenge the waning authority of the warlords within the capital. These militias within the Courts union were particularly powerful. They were also crucial for the courts, as not only did they provide military support they were also major financial supporters. Adane's militia, as well as other militias within the courts managed to gain control of the two major ports in Mogadishu as well as the Easley airport (Hansen, 2013: 35). Secondly, throughout the decade long existence of al-Shabaab the strategic importance of Kismayo in Southern Somalia has been pivotal. Largely, because Kismayo provided a great deal of the group's financial resources through its control of the port. Thus al-Shabaab's move into the rural areas of al-Shabaab was not by choice but because it had no other option. AMISOM's forces had taken control of the urban areas in which al-Shabaab was initially based. This shows that al-Shabaab were forced to adapt to their new rural base, which ironically has contributed to their longevity mainly because AMISOM's reach into the countryside is limited.

2.3 Unconventional War in the Global South

One of the most noteworthy characteristics of Kaldor's 'new wars' thesis is the changing mode of warfare- "the means through which the new wars are fought" (Kaldor, 2012: 9). She suggests that guerrilla warfare as theorised by Che Guevara and Mao Tse-tung sought to control the population through political means, in other words, there was a real attempt to win the hearts and minds of the people they were fighting for. Jian (2001), suggests that when Mao seized control of China it was hugely symbolic for oppressed peoples throughout the world (Jian, 2001; 5). Essentially, the communist revolution in China also championed anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movements throughout the world and thus post-colonial movements were inspired by China's communist Cold War discourse (Jian, 2001: 5). With the emphasis on class struggles and "the proletariat world revolution", it is possible to see why the template for post-colonial movements placed such great emphasis on gaining the support of the oppressed population.

Guevara (1961) states that "guerrilla warfare is a war of the masses, a war of the people" and that in order to be successful the "guerrilla fighter needs the full help from the people of the area. This is an indispensable condition" (Guevara, 1961; 3). Because of guerrilla combatants' inferior fire power they could not take control of territory through large-scale military advances, thus capturing the support of the population is therefore the best way in which to

achieve legitimacy and gain support from the local population (Kaldor, 2012: 9). Kaldor (2012) suggests that the new wars differ from guerrilla warfare because they “borrow from counter-insurgency techniques of destabilisation aimed at sowing 'fear and hatred'. As opposed to guerrilla warfare, new warfare targets those who differ in terms of ethnic, religious and political identity. Instead of trying to garner the support of the people they operate amongst and set the conditions for change, they actively target those who oppose them. The objective is to rid the area or region of those at odds with the identity or belief system of those inciting violence. According to Kaldor (2012), this is the reason that new wars are characterised by such large numbers of displaced people, this sense of hatred instilled creates gross atrocities and the fear associated with this causes a great number of refugees and displaced persons. Kaldor, highlights that the new form of international terrorism seen in European cities is indicative of the new form of warfare which actively tries to create a sense of fear and instability. There is a psychological component to the new wars which causes individuals and communities to feel insecure (Kaldor, 2012: 9).

Kaldor undoubtedly provides useful insights into the way in which wars in the post-cold war era are fought, her reflections on the methods and tactics of new warfare are helpful in understanding al-Shabaab's modus operandi. However, Kaldor has come under criticism for her belief that 'new wars' are a new phenomenon. Authors such as Ellis (2003) and Kalyvas (2001) argue that wars in contemporary Africa in fact began before the end of the Cold War (Ellis, 2003: 30). Ellis argues:

“the point of the argument is rather to place some of the most striking features of so-called ‘new ‘wars’ in deeper historical context, showing that, in Africa as in many other cases, these have deeper roots than is sometimes implied.”
(Ellis, 2003: 30).

One of the issues with the 'new wars' thesis is that by suggesting they are based on pre-colonial differences and explaining them through identity politics, one denies warring groups and organisations of any political convictions. Kalyvas (2001), writing on the findings of Peters and Richards in Sierra Leone suggest that “many rank-and-file members of the African rebel movements that have been stigmatised as lacking ideology appear in fact to have had a sophisticated political understanding of their own participation” (2001: 104). As this study

shows, the roots of Somalia's internal conflict go back further than 1991, and thus to suggest al-Shabaab is a manifestation of a new war would be inaccurate.

Lastly, the new wars thesis leads us to believe that violence in contemporary warfare is particularly "horrific and senseless" and carried out by "assorted militia and paramilitaries" with no sense of political conviction (Kalyvas, 2001: 113). Kalyvas, on the other hand, highlights that throughout history, civil wars, have more or less been similar in terms of their levels of violence. The 'old' civil wars in Spain and Russia were characterised by extreme violence throughout (Kalyvas, 2001: 113). al-Shabaab have undoubtedly used brutal, violent tactics but suggesting al-Shabaab commits "wanton" and "incomprehensible" acts, void of any ideological foundation is a dangerous statement. Kalyvas (2001) argues the violence caused by organisations such as al-Shabaab is no less brutal than civil wars in the past and ongoing conflicts in the present. By accepting that al-Shabaab is a particularly brutal and violent actor robs the group of an accurate historical analysis.

2.4.1 Rethinking African International Relations

al-Shabaab poses a difficult task for the classic IR theorist because not only was it born within a state that lacks a number of key state institutions but it is also a transnational, non-state actor that has created allegiances with a network (al-Qaeda) that has proven to be an organisation which requires no territorial base. Having said this, the group is both international and domestic and thus both these levels and aspects require the appropriate analysis. It is not only that traditional IR theories such as Neorealism that are inappropriate for analysing groups such as al-Shabaab, but rather they lack relevance when it comes to understanding the African state system as a whole. Dunn (2001) suggests that "neorealism, unabashedly focuses on the so-called 'great' powers of IR. Africa and the Third World have no place in their systemic analysis" (Dunn, 2001: 2). He goes on to argue that Africa is relatively invisible in International Theory and instead of reshaping existing main stream theories based on African experiences, theorists rather ignore the continent. Thus, concepts such as "anarchy, sovereignty, the market, the international/domestic dichotomy" which form the basis of traditional IR theories lack relevance in an African context (Dunn, 2001: 4). Malaquais (2001:13) explains how modern state development occurred in Europe and in fact, the entity that is the state was the final step in a unifying, nationalisation process. The state formed naturally in a desirable manner in that the citizens were enthusiastic about the state

development project. They were content to transfer their loyalty from “nation to the secular state”

African states by comparison were created in a completely different manner. Firstly, pre-colonial societies in Africa had a different trajectory to those in Europe and thus the modern African state does not bear the same characteristics to the modern European state. Rather states in Africa have been imposed by former colonial powers to serve their own interests. Malaquias, goes so far as to say that “with few exceptions, African states remain pre-industrial, having not yet crossed the technological threshold of the industrial revolution, let alone the information/knowledge revolution” (Malaquias, 2001: 13). Thus International Relations theories which are based on the Westphalian system which take the relationship between nation and state as given struggle to accurately define the African state which is still at odds with the notion of a collective, unified nation (Malaquias, 2001: 14). Malaquias suggests “Africans had to adapt their political systems, some of which embodied a full range of democratic practices, to the realities of a colonial existence” (Malaquias, 2001: 14). In the context of Somalia, this is a vital point to take into consideration because the politicisation of the clan system only occurred because of the social change caused by the colonial and subsequent post-colonial forms of governance. In addition to this, the colonial borders that are still in existence today did not take into consideration the “ethnic and national situation on the ground” (Malaquias, 2001: 13). This is also relevant in the Somali case because people living in countries such as Kenya identify as Somalis but are technically Kenyan citizens. This disparity has proven to be a key dynamic in terms of recruitment for al-Shabaab (Anderson & McKnight, 2015; 539).

2.4.2 States as out-dated units

What authors such as Dunn and Malaquias suggest is rethinking traditional IR theories by placing Africa at the centre of a new IR debate, placing aside mainstream thought and providing an alternative. In essence by highlighting fundamental flaws in the approach of IR, they do not demand “more space in IR but a better IR” (Dunn, 2001: 5). Concepts, which these authors consider deeply problematic, such as security, power, states, nations and sovereignty, are taken apart in order to create a theory more befitting of Africa's history. William Brown (2006), however, takes issue with this complete onslaught of International

Relations theory, he suggests that to dismiss mainstream theory because it does not work in an African context but works in the developed world, ironically undermines the argument of those critical of mainstream IR theory (Brown, 2006: 122). By suggesting that IR theory is not applicable in an African context only serves to isolate and marginalise the continent further, according to Brown (Brown, 2006: 122). He goes on to make the point that it is not necessary to challenge the entirety of mainstream IR theory but only certain aspects, most specifically neorealism. As highlighted above one of the main critiques of International Relations is its focus on states, the basis of which is at odds with the African experience. However, instead of working around this fact, critics dismiss IR theory entirely when in fact it is neorealism and its obsession with states as the only units of analysis that they are really taking issue with. Brown (2006: 122) argues that by believing neorealism covers the entirety of IR theory “other theoretical approaches in the IR canon which question some or all of these dimensions of realism” are ignored. Brown (2006) makes a strong point that discussions about IR theory and Africa are often quick to highlight IR theory as one singular body of work and fail to point out the different canons of thought it entails.

2.5 Rethinking security

As argued in Chapter One, dominant IR theories have not only struggled to deal with the notion of African statehood, it also appears that since the end of the Cold War, state-centric approaches have struggled to keep up with the rapidly changing nature of the global sphere. The end of the Cold War marked a substantial broadening of the study of security because authors such as Buzan (1991) suggest that traditional conceptions of security were (and in many minds still are) too narrowly founded (Buzan, 1991: 14). Buzan, goes on to make the point that the broadening of the study did not provide a clear and definite outline of what the study of security should entail but rather that it is a contested subject (Buzan, 1991: 15). This creates a relatively large scope and asks many questions about what to include and what not to include when discussing the nature of security. Questions arise regarding the relationship between individual security and international security, not to mention considerations outside of the military sector such as the “political, economic, environmental and societal” (Buzan, 1991: 15). What this shift in approach really signified was the nature of the state and its significance in the post-international order. If the anarchy and insecurity existing between states was no longer the defining concept of security, what was? Booth suggests that the “daily threat to lives and well-being of most people and most nations is different from that

suggested by the traditional military perspective” and that when it comes to issues of “economic collapse, political oppression, ethnic rivalry, terrorism and crime people are in fact more threatened by the policies and inadequacies of their own government” (Booth, 1991: 318).

This re-conceptualisation of security is particularly vital in studying the ongoing security crisis in Somalia because the nature of the violence extends so much further than the armed operations carried out by al-Shabaab. The dire state of the political institutions and national economy for example, highlight how solutions to combating al-Shabaab exist in understanding Somali security from a more holistic, human centred approach. This shift in approach, which centres humans in the conceptions of security certain consequences of war, are no longer seen as collateral or anomalies, but rather specific tools of warfare. Nordstrom suggests that there “remains a tendency to see a soldier shooting at another soldier as constituting war's violence, while the shooting of a civilian or the rape of a woman as a soldier returns to the barracks, is seen as peripheral” (Nordstrom, 2008: 58). By understanding such actions as constituent parts of war, it is possible to see how acts of war are no longer confined to heroic acts committed by men in uniforms but are rather acts committed by a range of different actors that are sometimes not soldiers nor civilians. The lines are often blurred and by rethinking security, the different forms of violence that make up war are more appropriately analysed.

2.6 The case for constructivism

The new form of 'post international' politics as well as the rethinking of Africa's position highlights the need for a shift in the way international non-state actors such as al-Shabaab are analysed. The failure of neorealism to effectively explain the fall of the cold war and the subsequent political systems that no longer confine themselves to the constraints of the state system, has paved the way for alternative theories in IR. Liberalism and neo-liberalism have also shown inadequacies when it comes to analysing groups such as al-Shabaab because organisations are at odds with the values that define theories such as liberalism. The liberal peace theory, for example, suggests that countries that share liberal values such as “democracy, capitalism and secularism” are unlikely to go to war with each other because of these shared values (Dunne, 2008: 112). Furthermore, with the increasing phenomenon of transnationalism and globalisation the shared liberal values of states have also translated into

neo-liberal institutions. This has resulted in non-state actors, such transnational corporations and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), enhancing cooperation within the international, liberal and capitalist community. These institutions lead to the creation of international regimes which “facilitate cooperation by sharing information, reinforcing reciprocity, and making defection from norms easier to punish” (Dunne, 2008: 107). However, the issue with liberalism and neo-liberalism is that “while liberal values and institutions have become deeply embedded in Europe and North America, the same values and institutions lack legitimacy worldwide” (Dunne, 2008: 102). What is even more problematic is that liberalism is focused on preserving this order and when it comes under threat, as it did after 9/11, liberalism was used as a tool to defeat groups such as al-Qaeda and the Taliban rather than to understand them. George Bush referred to the 2003 war against Iraq as “freedom’s war” (Dunne, 2008: 109.) Therefore, the liberal discourses place groups such as al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab in direct conflict with the liberal values espoused by the West.

Furthermore, the legitimisation of the US use of torture in places such as Abu Ghraib in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay detention camp in Cuba, and across several countries in the Middle East, redefined Jeremy Bentham’s utilitarian defence of torture by arguing that “torture is permissible when cost-benefit analysis reveals that more lives are likely to be saved by resorting to torture than by choosing not to do so” (Bellamy, 2006: 132). As Luban (2005:1450) argues, torture not only “strip[s] away from its victim all the qualities of human dignity that liberalism prizes”, the pervasive use of torture in the war on terror has led to the criminalisation of Islam and all Muslims, who are automatic suspects in “ticking time bomb” scenario that was used by the US to legitimise torture use. In this frame, groups like al-Shabaab are narrowly understood to be the enemies of liberalism, thereby robbing them of a nuanced historical and theoretical complexity that allows us to understand the context of their rise, evolution and resilience.

Constructivism provides an alternative way of analysing a non-state actor specifically within an African context. Constructivism differs from substantive theories of IR such as neorealism and neo-liberalism in that it is a social theory of international politics. Barnett (2008), quoting Ruggie (1998), argues that “constructivism is about human consciousness and its role in international life” (Barnett, 2008: 155). Constructivism, therefore, argues for the importance of ideas in world politics and how these ideas are not only on an individual basis but are rather “collectively held” (Barnett, 2008: 155) These collective ideas have the power to

influence international structures, and thus constructivists argue for the social constructed nature of IR. This is important because it means constructivism has the capacity to include units of analysis other than states. It provides a more holistic approach in contemporary IR as it has the flexibility to account for the operations and motives of non-state actors that are driven by factors outside of purely state-to-state dealings (Schild, 2011). The importance of history, culture, shared ideas, and norms that are highlighted in Constructivism show that relations between actors, whether they be interactions between states and states or states and non-state actors, are entirely constructed (Wendt, 2004:1). This allows us to account for shifts in terms of the nature of the interactions but also shifts in what specific actors want or need because these social constructions are fluid and dynamic and react to the status quo. In particular, the link can be made to show that al-Shabaab's motives are based on shared ideas, norms and identity and because of this, the group is dynamic and flexible (Wendt, 2004). The fact that the highly complex group exists as a social construction and is not a given can be used as a premise to account for the groups resilience and diversification. Furthermore, it has also changed its approach and tactics over the years and it seems a constructivist analysis is the best-equipped framework to deal with these nuances in the operations of the group.

From an African perspective, Constructivism is an attractive alternative to neorealism because it has the theoretical capacity to account for the diversity of culture and politics that exists on the continent and outside of the traditional state system. Brown is right to criticise scholars that lump all contemporary IR theories in one basket as Malaquias does by saying that “contemporary IR theory cannot adequately explain the 'historic meeting, collision, and dialectic between the project of nation-state making and the counter-claims of ethno nationalism (Malaquias, 2001: 14). Rather, the qualm is with neorealism as constructivism's emphasis on the socially constructed nature of the world provides the necessary tools to challenge the apparently fixed nature of neorealism.

Constructivism is not only appropriate to analyse African international relations but it is perhaps the best-suited theory for trying to understand the global jihadist network of al-Qaeda. The network which does not have a territorial base relies on the spread of its potent ideology to incite attack throughout the world. Trying to analyse al-Qaeda from a neorealist perspective would be nearly impossible, however, constructivism is well placed to offer an assessment of the group because al-Qaeda has made a name for itself on the construction of an identity and normative framework. Marc Lynch's article “al-Qaeda's constructivist turn”

provides a convincing argument for the case of constructivism as a theoretical tool for analysing transnational jihadist networks and organisations. Lynch, suggests that any war of ideas automatically brings in Constructivism, which is interested in the formations of norms, socialisation and discourse rather than “questions of material power, economic rationality, or formal international institutions” (Lynch, 2006: 2). According to Lynch, al-Qaeda's constructivist turn took place after the loss of its territorial base in Afghanistan. Once the organisations leaders, Bin Laden and Zawahiri had fled through Tora Bora, al-Qaeda completely changed its makeup. Rather than a centralised, organisation it became more of a decentralised network that was more interested in inspiring Islamic agency throughout the world. In other words, a “skeleton of an organisation...reduced to an ideological label, a state of mind, and a mobilisational outreach program to incite attacks worldwide”. The point was to inspire groups around the world and act on al-Qaeda's message, this meant that al-Qaeda no longer relied on operatives within the organisation itself to carry out attacks but rather new organisations and groups to carry them out independently or with the assistance of al-Qaeda (Lynch, 2006: 8).

The ideology behind al-Qaeda is an identity that transcends nations and states, rather it is a normative framework based in Islam which aims to establish a “logic of appropriateness, governing Muslim life” (Lynch, 2006: 8). By creating this distinctive framework, the barrier between local, domestic, transnational and global is broken down because through this transnational identity, barriers and borders of the traditional state system no longer exist. Al-Qaeda revolutionised the way in which Islamic agency was promoted around the world, more moderate organisations such as the Muslim Brotherhood tried to work within the system by reforming the states they operated within. However, al-Qaeda took political Islam to the next level; Bin Laden stated, “This battle is not between al-Qaeda and the US. This is a battle of Muslims against the global crusaders” (Lynch, 2006: 8). However, although this plan quite clearly disregards the entire state system, one of the central tenets of al-Qaeda's plan was to take control of a state in which it would then be able to establish its own caliphate. The location of the state was not important because in the bigger scheme of al-Qaeda's jihad it did not matter, all it needed was to provide a launch-pad to propel its agenda of setting the Islamic world at odds with the west. What al-Qaeda have attempted to do is restructure the political reality of the Islamic world, al-Qaeda although based on a religious ideology are a political organisation and have politicised religion to the extreme (Lynch, 2006: 12). What Lynch shows is that al-Qaeda is an organisation based on ideas and norms; it is a socially

constructed organisation, if it can even be labelled as an organisation because it is really a network that uses the internet, media outlets etc to spread its message.

2.7.1 Al-Shabaab's Cold War roots

If one is to place al-Shabaab within an international context, it is vital to discuss the shift in geopolitical contexts from the Cold War to the 'war on terror'. Perhaps the most interesting part about the shift in geopolitical trends is the way in which African guerrillas are viewed. Boas and Dunn (2007) argue, “the fall of the Soviet bloc meant the end of external backing for numerous guerrillas” (Boas & Dunn, 2007: 18). During the Cold War the core objective of liberation groups was to push forward an anti-colonial agenda in order to achieve independence, according to Clapham although there was an explicit commitment to Marxism-Leninism in the cases of Angola and Mozambique the central goal was still “colonial liberation and not domestic revolution” (Clapham, 1998: 7). With the conclusion of the Cold War African guerrilla movements no longer had the support of the Americans or Soviets, groups such as UNITA in Angola and RENAMO in Mozambique could no longer rely on unquestioned support from the USA in their quest against the Soviet-Cuban backed movements such as the MPLA (Berdal, 2003: 485). Once the Cold War ceased the ideologies of armed groups in Africa were no longer framed within the Cold War narrative, there was simply no relevance in pro/anti soviet dichotomy. However, what this does show is that the political situations in African countries are often simplified to the greatest extent in order to fit in with the dominant narrative of the time. Over the last 15 years the dominant global narrative regarding international security has been the 'war on terror', the USA is no longer concerned with Marxist revolutionaries in African countries but rather the threat that 'failed states' pose in the post-cold war era.

2.7.2 Afghanistan: a transition point?

One of the primary reasons for the current obsession for 'failed states' and their link to terror is due to Afghanistan and its links between the Cold War and the 'war on terror'. The Afghan-Soviet War was one of the bloodiest conflicts of the 20th century and was fought on a massive scale for a decade. Mamdani (2004: 120) suggests that at the height of the war there were over 100 000 Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan. The US saw this as an opportunity to hand the Soviet Union “its own Vietnam”. Mamdani (2004) provides evidence to suggest there is a direct link between the American backed Mujahadeen and al-Qaeda. He suggests that what

the USA did in Afghanistan was create a proxy war that would become the template for al-Qaeda's ideology. Hoodbhoy (2005), suggests that “given the highly conservative nature of Afghan society and the spontaneous resistance to the Afghan communist resistance, it did not need a genius to suggest that Islamic international solidarity could be used as a powerful weapon” (Hoodbhoy, 2005: 20). So instead of encouraging a nationalist movement against the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul and the Soviet invading force, the Mujahadeen resistance was framed as an international jihad, a stand against foreign invaders on Muslim lands. This automatically increased the Mujahadeen's support base and saw a number of “volunteers coming from Muslim populations all over the globe”. Hoodbhoy suggests that the CIA actively advertised in newspapers and magazines, which sought to entice the most “hardened and ideologically dedicated men” to Afghanistan. It was thought that if they were committed to the cause, they would make better fighters. This obviously included volunteers from Somalia's first Islamist based movement the Al Ittihad Al Islamiyah (AIAI), which was officially founded in 1983 (Marchal, 2011: 12).

The US were highly involved in terms of training and providing weapons and support, but from lessons learned in Vietnam and Southern Africa they were particularly wary of coming into direct contact with the conflict itself (Mamdani, 2004: 125). This meant they subcontracted the training, intelligence gathering and supplying to other parties such as Pakistan's ISI, other intelligence services from Egypt, Britain and Israel (Mamdani, 2004: 132). This decentralisation process meant that the subcontractors often bypassed the American administration and dealt directly with agencies such as the CIA and DEA. This resulted in a lack of cohesion in American policy and gave the situation a level of freedom, which would soon go out of control. The CIA provided the necessary resources to carry out training which “ranged from infiltration techniques to ways of extracting prisoners or weapons from behind enemy lines to more than sixty assorted “deadly skills”(Mamdani, 2004: 138). The skills passed on by trainers to fighters included “the use of sophisticated fuses, timers and explosives; automatic weapons with armour piercing ammunition, remote controlled devices for triggering mines and bombs” (Mamdani, 2004: 138).

In addition to this influx of skills and weapons was the role that Afghan madrassahs or religious schools played, they essentially evolved into “politico-military training schools” (Mamdani, 2004: 136). They attracted and welcomed radical Islamists from the global Muslim population and this played a vital role in framing the Afghan Jihad as a defensive war

in the name of Islam against the Soviet threat (Mamdani, 2004: 136). The intention was that the Islamic revolution in Afghanistan would lay the blueprint for future revolutions in Muslim dominated countries, specifically in South Asia. However, during the 1990's it became clear that the blueprint was to be used for a more global agenda. Lastly, the Soviet-Afghan war brought Osama bin Laden to the fore largely because of the major role Saudi Arabia played in the conflict. Burke suggests that there were a number of regional dynamics at play, the Islamic revolution of Iran was celebrated throughout the Muslim world by both Shia and Sunni. It showed that “tyrannical kings could be ended and an egalitarian social and economic order created” (Burke, 2007; 60). Saudi Arabia felt this pressure from the Shia dominated Islamic republic and the Afghan Jihad allowed them to reassert their influence. The Saudi's saw themselves as the guardians of the Sunni Ummah and encroaching Shia dominance could undoubtedly harm Saudi interests (Burke, 2007; 60). Burke suggests it was not only massive oil money that flooded into Afghanistan but also a wahhabist, highly conservative form of Islam that was “defined by Quranic literalism and profound hostility to all other forms of Islamic worship, let alone other religions” (Burke, 2007: 60).

The Central Intelligence Agency essentially left the task of setting the ideological grounds for the jihad to Saudi Arabia as the Arab nation, which saw itself as promoter of Sunni interests was perfectly placed for the task. The USA initially wanted a Saudi prince to lead the crusade against the Soviets but could not find one. However, the Bin Laden family had connections to the Saudi royal house and Osama Bin Laden took the lead in the Afghan Jihad, which was the next best alternative for the CIA (Mamdani, 2004; 132). After settling in Peshawar in Pakistan, Bin Laden travelled to Afghanistan a number of times in the 1980's with Saudi donations to the cause. As Bin Laden became more involved in the Afghan Jihad he began to develop plans that would see the continuation of the jihadist ideology and “envisioned an all-Arab legion, which eventually could be used to wage jihad in Saudi Arabia and Egypt” (Mamdani, 2004: 133). It was this thinking that saw the formation of a new organisation called the base or al-Qaeda (Mamdani, 2004: 133).

Thus the indirect and implicit American support for the Afghan Jihad and subsequent development of al-Qaeda has clearly had a large impact in the development of other Radical Islamist groups around the world. However, at the time it appears the USA were entirely unaware of the consequences of their actions. Ali (2003) highlights in his book, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms*, how committed the American's were to setting the trap for the Soviet

Union. He includes the proceedings of an interview conducted in 1998 by Jimmy Carter's former National Security Chief Zbigniew Brzezinski. There appears to be very little regret for the way in which the American's handled the situation and when asked if he regretted supporting "Islamic fundamentalism" and giving arms and "advice to future terrorists". He replied by asking "what is more important to the history of the world? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? A few crazed Muslims or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the Cold War?" (Ali, 2003: 208).

2.7.3 Lessons from the Sahel

A good example of how Africa has been effected by the 'war on terror' is the manner in which the USA involved itself within the Sahel region. The new Saharan front in the 'war on terror' caught the attention of the world's media when 32 German-speaking tourists were kidnapped by the Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et le Combat (GSPC) in the south-central Algerian region between Illizi and Amguid (Keenan, 2007: 32). After several weeks of searching by approximately 5000 Algerian soldiers, the tourists and their kidnappers were located. However, there is some confusion as to what happened next, it turned out the tourists were not rescued and the kidnappers had escaped. Eventually the tourists were released after it was believed a 5 million Euro ransom was paid by the German government, although they deny this happened.

This incident fed into the global 'war on terror' narrative apparently the Sahara was becoming the new battleground, US officials went so far as to say that the region had become a "Swamp or Terror" and it had a "terrorist infestation". The GSPC's leader, El Para became known as 'Bin Laden's man in the Sahel', once captured he was "convicted in an Algerian court of creating an armed terrorist group and spreading terror among the population, and sentenced to life imprisonment." (Keenan, 2007: 32).

However, Keenan suggests there is an alternative truth, he suggests that seven years of continuous research undertaken by local researchers suggests that the "entire war on terror in the Sahara-Sahel region has been fabricated by the military intelligence services of the US and Algeria" (Keenan, 2007: 36). Firstly, the local Tuaregs were also suspicious of the fact that there had never been any sign of Islamist activity in the region before this incident. The region had been considered one of the safest regions in the world for tourists and in fact

Islamist activity was condemned by the local population because they saw it as an obstacle in the tourist industry (Keenan, 2007: 36). According to Keenan, the “Algerian security forces (the DRS) and US intelligence had precise knowledge of the hostage locations almost from the outset, “the Algerian assault which liberated the first group of hostages was 'a piece of theatre': there were almost certainly no fatalities and all the captors were allowed to escape, regroup and be taken to Mali” (Keenan, 2007; 39).

Keenan shows that there were motivations for both the USA and Algeria to develop the narrative that Algeria was indeed a hotspot of global jihadism. Firstly, the presence of American troops and subsequent militarisation of the Sahel region meant that resources such as Oil would be secured. In 2001, a report released by National Energy Policy Development group suggested that by 2015, 25% of US imported gas would come from Africa (Keenan, 2007 ;43). Algeria also had much to gain from the US involvement within the country because it meant the continuation of weapons and resources from the superpower (Keenan, 2007: 43).

What this example shows is that the different way in which different armed groups are framed. Essentially El Para was given global jihadist status when in fact this was simply not true. On top of this, local factors meant Islamist activity in the Southern part of Algeria was highly unlikely, yet the unique historical facts particular to Algeria were completely overlooked in the development of a truth which needed to fit the 'war on terror' narrative. In applying this logic to Somalia, the fact that it is viewed as a failed state home to an Islamist group such as al-Shabaab meant that it would always be thrust into the 'war on terror' narrative, even if the group had no intention of pursuing global jihadist objectives. This is not to say that the group did not have these objectives, but rather the 'war on terror' narrative thrusts domestic scenarios into a global narrative. It can be argued that this move is dangerous because the unique and nuanced nature of each specific scenario crammed into this narrative is lost and creates a skewed analysis of the situation on the ground.

2.8 Jihadist networks and shadows of war

The fact that al-Qaeda has developed as a network is no surprise according to Duffield, in his article “War as a Network Enterprise: The New Security Terrain and its Implications”, he suggests that in a globalised modern world it is only natural that war would adapt to the

contemporary environment. He suggests that throughout history the nature of organised violence has reflected the status quo, he states that the “formation of the nation-state, colonial expansion and the advent of industrial mass production, for example, were intimately connected with the changing nature of organised violence” (Duffield, 2002: 154). Similarly, in the 21st century processes of globalisation have allowed non-state actors to proliferate and transcend traditional state boundaries in their dealings. With increased access to information and resources because of advances in technology, the reliance on state resources has dwindled. On top of this, Globalisation has also meant a dramatic rise in the influence of media within conflicts, not only does the media play a big part in the way conflicts are portrayed but the agents or actors themselves have been effective at using the channels created by media and more specifically social media to further their interests. This may include funding through global organisations or trying to attract new recruits through sophisticated propaganda campaigns (Kaldor, 2012: 8). The shadows and networks of war have also provided opportunities for diaspora networks to become heavily involved in conflicts in their homelands. Through the developments in technology “diaspora groups provide ideas, money, arms and know-how, often with disproportionate effects” (Kaldor, 2012: 88). Kaldor explains that these type of networks are well documented when it comes to religious grouping and specifically “Islamic connections”, highlighting how diaspora groups have played their role in Islamist activities around the world (Kaldor, 2012: 89).

Nordstrom, writes extensively about the *shadows* of war as the “complex sets of cross-state economic and political linkages that move outside *formally* recognised state-based channels” (Nordstrom, 2008: 106). She explains that they are not completely illegal and are a complex and far reaching mix of “legal, quasi-legal and downright illegal activities” (Nordstrom, 2008: 106). She makes the point that these vast networks, which include so many actors often, move more goods and resources than more traditional, formal state channels. She mentions that these networks become evident in warzones where there is almost no need to hide the morally questionable nature of these networks. Nordstrom shows this by sharing her experience of meeting a small boy who told her that he was selling cigarettes on the street. He said to Nordstorm, that if he did not share his profits with the 'businessman' that initially loaned him the cigarettes “his life [would] be short, like in the war”. In peacetime, such exploitation of children’s rights would be morally reprehensible, yet in war zones, the difference between right and wrong is not so clear-cut. However, although they may be particularly evident in conflict zones it does not mean they exist purely in conflict zones. She

suggests that they exist as transnational networks and “extend across war and peace and across all the world's countries” (Nordstrom, 2008: 107). Burke, highlights that during the Afghan-Soviet war, the Mujahadeen received funds through companies and bank accounts in middle eastern countries such as the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait (Burke, 2007; 60).

The networks and shadows that Duffield, Kaldor and Nordstrom theorise are systems that challenge notions of sovereignty and state power. They facilitate the emergence of non-state, transnational actors by allowing them access to resources, information and personnel. The previous boundaries created by state borders are no longer rigid but rather malleable and workable to a point where the shadow networks of war exist in a parallel sphere to the international system. These networks have created spaces for groups such as al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab to exist, because there are a combination of factors, which contribute to their survival and development, much like the networks themselves. These factors are at a local, national and global level, which shows the number of different layers that constitute such organisations. Duffield includes a statement from Donald Rumsfeld, the former US defence secretary, which highlights how groups such as al-Qaeda operate. Duffield suggests that if one substitutes the word “countries” with “terrorist cells” in the statement below you reach a good understanding of how a jihadist network operates (Duffield, 2002: 156).

. . . “It will involve floating coalitions of countries, which may change and evolve. Countries will have different roles and contribute in different ways. Some will provide diplomatic support, others financial, still others logistical or military. Some will help us publicly, while others because of their circumstances may help us privately and secretly. In this war, the mission will define the coalition not the other way around “(Rumsfeld 2001).

This statement shows how al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda are different nodes in the global jihadist network, al-Shabaab's war within Somalia and East Africa is a territorial manifestation of a global phenomenon. This emphasises how understanding the unique history within Somalia and East Africa is just as important as understanding how the transnational jihadist networks operate.

2.9.1 Somalia and Islamism

With all that has been argued in the chapter it is now possible to look at how Islamist activities have developed within Somalia. In order to do this it is necessary to look at the first Somali Islamist movement the AIAI, which was officially founded in 1983. This, marks a significant point in Somali history because it provided the foundation for the Islamist project in Somalia. It is important to make mention of a specific sub-group of the AIAI which was largely made up of returning veterans from the Afghan war in the early 1990's (Hansen, 2013: 3). Those returning from Afghanistan saw themselves as part of a defensive jihad which protected the *Ummah* regardless of state boundaries (Hansen, 2013: 3). The core group of AIAI's founding members called for a caliphate that of Islamic state which protected Muslim interests from the infidels or non-believers. In essence, the ideas and thoughts coming back from Afghanistan called for a sense of Pan-Islamic unity that transcended the boundaries of Somalia. It must be made clear that at this stage, the AIAI had very limited resources or power but the foundations for jihadist movements within Somalia had been set.

According to Marchal, once the Civil War had started in 1991 the AIAI evolved into an organisation with an emphasis on military strength in an attempt to compete for power against the various militias (Marchal, 2011: 13). However, the AIAI quickly realised that although members claimed to be committed Islamists the draw and appeal of their own clan still superseded any Islamist tendencies. Hansen suggests that in the battle of Arrare in April 1991 the AIAI were involved but largely to protect the interests of the Darod clan, suggesting that clannism was still highly prevalent within the group (Hansen, 2013: 17). By 1998, the AIAI had virtually collapsed, however; there had been a few key developments, which must be noted. According to Hansen a small sub-group of the AIAI had formed that included Aden Hashi Ayro and Muktar Robow who would become integral in the development of al-Shabaab (Hansen, 2013: 17). This group existed outside of the deep-seated clan based system and fought the foreign presence of (UNISOM 11) as part of their defensive jihad to protect the *Ummah*. Although the AIAI folded in 1998, the networks and connections that had been formed because of the group were to become crucial in the development of al-Shabaab (Hansen, 2013: 22). According to Hansen, within the small, core group of radical AIAI veterans there was a specific interest in the idea of a pan-Islamic reform within Somalia in addition the older members spoke about the respect and importance of the training camps

within Afghanistan (Hansen, 2013: 22). This prompted a new generation of Somali's to travel to Afghanistan for ideological and military training. One of the key leadership figures in al-Shabaab, Aden Hashi Ayro, travelled to Afghanistan in 1998 and was said to have met Osama bin Laden. It becomes clear that the contacts made in Afghanistan would become key to the development of al-Shabaab's jihadist agenda in the future (Hansen, 2013: 22).

2.9.2 A Somali Jihad

There are undoubtedly similarities between the Afghan-Soviet war and al-Shabaab's response to the Ethiopian invasion of 2006. The Ethiopian forces were seen as a foreign infidel force on Islamic lands, what added fuel to this theory was that the Ethiopians had the support of the USA even though this was denied by Condoleeza Rice, the US secretary of State at the time (Bamfo 2010: 60). As previously mentioned in the section describing the 'war on terror' narrative, it offered new opportunities for certain African countries to gain support from the USA. Ethiopia was perfectly placed in this respect; Bamfo (2010) suggests that the fact that it was a pro-Christian nation meant it was an automatic ally to the USA in this war of civilisations (Bamfo, 2010: 60). Ethiopia and Somalia historically have engaged in a number of conflicts and it is no secret that there is open hostility between the two states. One of the main causes is the continued dispute over the Ogaden region, which straddles the Ethiopian-Somali border. History suggests that a weak Somali state is desirable for Ethiopian interests (Bamfo, 2010: 60). It becomes clear that Ethiopian and American security interests were very much one in the same albeit for different reasons. This created an issue in that prudent, rational security decisions were not made and this “probably short-circuited any thoughtful analysis of the ramifications on politics and security arising from Ethiopian troops crossing the border” (Bamfo, 2010: 60).

The template that al-Shabaab used in their resistance to the Ethiopian invasion bore a striking resemblance to the way in which the Mujahadeen framed and fought their holy war against the Soviets. What al-Shabaab also managed to do was align their jihadist agenda with the nationalist sentiment that comes to the surface in Somalia when foreign influences are present within the Somali state. Ethiopia's intervention and subsequent occupation in Somalia was a blessing for al-Shabaab. The fact that foreign boots were on the ground within Somalia was also greeted with a great deal of hostility from Somalis (Hansen, 2013: 49). This fitted in perfectly with al-Shabaab's rhetoric of the time, which called on Somali Muslims to oust the

foreign infidel presence. The Ethiopians also made a serious mistake in terms of the military tactics they used against al-Shabaab and ICU forces. By using old methods of Soviet warfare, large-scale artillery barrages were implemented which created widespread collateral damage and a number of civilian deaths which created further hostility to their presence (Hansen, 2013: 49). All in all, al-Shabaab's response showed how regional and domestic factors were merged into the jihadist template and this created a unique form of resistance to the Ethiopian presence that to this date is also used against AMISOM forces within Somalia

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed a number of different strands of literature, which set the tone for the rest of the study. What it has sought to achieve is to highlight how a number of different theoretical perspectives must be included to provide an effective, appropriate and current analysis of al-Shabaab's sources of resilience and diversity.

The chapter began by analysing the African roots of al-Shabaab, asserting that the fact that it was born within an African state cannot be overlooked. By framing the group within an African context, one can effectively include a number of historically unique factors, which have caused the conflict in Somalia. Furthermore, the African nature of al-Shabaab also sheds light on how it resembles other African organisations and insurgencies in the 21st century. What this does is highlight the fact that one cannot place all jihadist groups in the same category, the African roots of al-Shabaab give it a unique identity, which must be understood if one is to realise how the group has evolved within Somalia and East Africa. Furthermore, an analysis was provided on the changing nature of warfare and how new methods of new warfare are extremely violent often without the popular mandate of the people as was the case in liberation guerrilla wars fought by Guevara and Mao. This is important to consider when trying to understand the nature of al-Shabaab's methods.

Secondly, this chapter has argued that African non-state actors must be analysed through an appropriate theoretical lens. It highlighted how neorealism in particular is ill suited to not only al-Shabaab but International relations as a whole on the African continent. This shift in away from placing states in global politics also allows a re-conceptualisation of security, which is vital in understanding modern day warfare. With an emphasis placed on human security which broadens what was traditionally a narrow scope based on military capabilities,

one can understand conflict from the bottom-up. This allows the multitude of factors, which have contributed to Somalia's ongoing crisis to be appropriately analysed. This paves the way for constructivism to be used as a more appropriate method of analysis in an African context but also from a global jihadist point of view. The first step in trying to get to grips with al-Shabaab's sources of resilience is an appropriate understanding of what the group stands for and how it operates and constructivism provides the best opportunity to achieve that.

Thirdly, this chapter has shown how changes in geopolitical narratives have shaped the way we understand and frame armed groups in regions such as Africa, Asia and the Middle East. With the dominant narratives shifting from the Cold War to the 'War on Terror' the way in which armed groups were viewed has shifted dramatically during the Cold War anti-colonial struggles were often veiled in with leftist ideologies, however after 1991 this viewpoint simply did not hold sway. In the post 9/11 era though there is more of a preoccupation with the idea that failed states now offer a safe haven for terrorism. However, the danger with this global narrative is that the unique nature of each individual conflict is often lost with the overarching power that the discourse on the 'War on Terror' has created. This point was highlighted by Jeremy Keenan's article on the Saharan front of the 'War on Terror'. This section also attempted to highlight how there are also direct links between the proxy Afghan-Soviet war (1979-1989) and the subsequent formation of al-Qaeda. With the Afghan Jihad against the Soviets actively encouraged and supported by the American's, the template was created for future jihadist movements including al-Shabaab.

A discussion was also led on whether or not there is any weight in the argument that state failure creates terrorism. It shows that there are conditions that lead certain states to being good bases for groups such as al-Shabaab. It shows that the weak institutions in Somalia provided a good environment for al-Shabaab to develop. However, the common link between failed states and terrorist activity is the presence of jihadist groups, this is largely related to the template that the Soviet-Afghan war provided. The tactics and methods used by these groups mimics the way in which the Mujahadeen fought the war against the Soviets. This creates an interesting meeting point for al-Shabaab because not only must their African roots be given due consideration but their jihadist credentials cannot be discounted either. Both have been pivotal in their development and subsequent resilience.

This chapter also highlights how networks of shadows of war are a fundamental component

of warfare in the post-cold war era. These legal/semi-legal/illegal networks provide resources, information and personnel to armed, non-state actors and it is fair to say that jihadist organisations are particularly competent in utilising these networks to their benefit.

The last part of this chapter highlights the similarities between the way in which the Mujahadeen fought the Soviets and how al-Shabaab framed their resistance against the US backed Ethiopian led intervention in Somalia. It shows how the 'war on terror' narrative reared its head within the horn of Africa and shows how the template of jihad was developed in Afghanistan and transferred into a Somali context.

The aim of this chapter was to form the basis for further discussion on the multitude of factors that have contributed to al-Shabaab's sources of resilience and diversity and serve as a conceptual launch point for a more thorough analysis.

Chapter Three:

“They have brought war with them”: Studying al-Shabaab from South Africa

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight how the research in this thesis was conducted. As will be shown, the way in which we study war is important because different methodologies provide different results. The overarching theme in this chapter will be the importance of emphasising human experience in war and how the views and opinions of ordinary people affected by war shape our understanding. In essence, this chapter seeks to justify a bottom-up, inductive approach to the study of war, and more specifically al-Shabaab, which is vital in coming to terms with the complex and nuanced make-up of the organisation.

Firstly, this chapter will argue the importance of using a narrative approach in the research conducted. This will place the emphasis on understanding different individuals' experiences and stories of war, which places an emphasis on using the individual as the primary unit of analysis in the study of war and IR, breaking away from more dominant IR theories. This leads on to the next section on 'war as experience' and is based on Sylvester's (2012) feminist challenge to IR, which sees individuals, and more specifically women, as bodies with war agency. This is a challenge to the socially-constructed gender hierarchies that exist within the study of IR. By employing a bottom-up approach, Sylvester uses the experience of women in war to challenge these existing structures. Sylvester shows the importance of studying war as experience because it gives voice to those who have traditionally been excluded from IR. In the context of this research, this idea is of vital importance because it gives legitimacy to the thoughts and opinions of ordinary Somalis who have fled to South Africa as a result of the ongoing violence within Somalia.

Thirdly, this study will research al-Shabaab through the eyes of the Somali diaspora in South Africa and so this chapter provides an argument as to how and why it is appropriate to study a conflict in a foreign country. An in-depth analysis of the Somali diaspora's connection to the 'homeland' will be given which will show why it is possible to study al-Shabaab from South Africa. It is also necessary to discuss the nature of the Somali diaspora and how their experience within South Africa over the years may influence the information gathered throughout the fieldwork process.

Lastly, this chapter will look at the process of data collection and how the interview process was carried out in terms of where interviews were conducted; the reasoning behind the use of pseudonyms; and lastly the justification for employing a thematic analysis in analysing the data collected.

3.1 Narrative approach

For the purposes of this study, a qualitative approach is utilised “in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e., the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed with an intent of developing theory or pattern)” (Cresswell, 2003: 18). In doing so, the researcher intends to create themes by collecting “open-ended, emerging data” (Cresswell, 2003: 18). By using a narrative approach, I was able to collect this open-ended data in a way that gave participants a chance to tell their story from their perspective, which places emphasis on their experience and voice. Connelly and Clandin (1990) suggest that “humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives” (1990; 2). In other words, “narratives attempt to *explain* or *normalise* what has occurred; they lay out why things are the way they are or have become the way they are” (Bamberg, 2010: 1). Therefore, in the context of this research, the participants will lay out how they have experienced al-Shabaab and what al-Shabaab means to them, through this process they ascribe meaning to it (Bamberg, 2010: 1).

Narrative research places strong emphasis on reflection and interpretation on the part of the researcher, which some may criticise because of the lack of understanding of the specific culture they are studying. However, Druckman suggests that this should not discourage a researcher from continuing their analysis, but one must be acutely aware of their position within the narrative and how the researcher’s cultural background plays its role in the study (Druckman, 2005: 282). Narrative research essentially places the researcher within the narrative and it is clear that the researcher's own historical and cultural experiences will come through within the analysis. This simply fits in with the idea that narrative research is an interaction between researcher and participant and this two-way interaction is an essential part of developing meaning. The approach allows participants to essentially be the master of their own stories: they are not forced into answering questions, which allows them to respond on their own accord. It is up to the researcher to pick up trends and threads from the

responses given (Druckman, 2005: 278). There is an emphasis on going to deeper into what was said, why it was said, and who said it. This allows the researcher to pick up on nuances and the unique responses of participants. In essence, one encompasses much more than just the responses themselves. With this in mind, there is room to include emotions and non-verbal behaviour within the analysis (Druckman, 2005: 278).

It is also important to note that narratives are not perfect and change through time and space. Druckman suggests that it is not the job of the researcher to necessarily check the accuracy of interviewees story but rather to discover the impact and meaning the experiences of conflict have had on the participant (Druckman, 2005: 282). Human experience shapes our stories, which means that narratives are subjective in nature. This is an important point because there are circumstances in which an individual's reflection of events will change over time. If one were to interview a Somali national who had just left Somalia while fleeing al-Shabaab and then interview that same individual 10 years later, their perspectives and the way they understand what happened to them would have undoubtedly changed. For instance, Magadla (2016) highlights this by showing how Thandi Modise provides different narratives of her time spent as a combatant of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the military wing of the ANC, in Angola. In an interview in 1991, she suggested that men and women were treated equally in MK. However, a decade later, she was interviewed about her experience and provides a different account of her experience as she argues that there was a highly patriarchal culture within MK (Magadla, 2016: 115). As Magadla highlights, the political contexts in which these interviews with Modise were conducted were very different (2016: 116). In 1991, the ANC needed to appear as a cohesive "united front", within the context of fragile political negotiations with the National Party government. However, in 2000, the ANC had risen to power and consolidated its position in post-apartheid South Africa. Her different narratives make sense when placed within these different contexts. Therefore, narratives are constantly in a state of flux because they exist within different contexts which allow for specific accounts to be shared and for others to remain unsaid.

This section highlights how narratives allow us to rethink dominant theories and concepts because it requires taking the thoughts of ordinary people seriously. Narrative research is important because it can pick up on the everydayness of war; how war effects the psyche of individuals and communities. Through the process of storytelling, a bottom-up approach is built and this gives new insight into the way we analyse issues of security and violence. As

the next section shows, understanding war as a human experience is a vital step in understanding al-Shabaab's sources of resilience and resurgence.

3.2.1 Bodies with war agency: “They have brought war with them”

Sylvester’s (2012) article, *War Experiences/War Practices/War Theory*, is part of a burgeoning feminist contribution to IR. Feminists have highlighted “gender and bodies” are continually left out of IR and security studies, mostly “because they are not seen as key stakeholders” (Sylvester, 2012). This lack of human experience in the study of war, has, as Sylvester puts it, left “the door wide open to assumptions that the warrior is ‘he’ and his victims are ‘she’” (Sylvester, 2012: 3). This highlights the need for the ordinary person affected by war on a day-to-day basis to be given relevance. Feminists highlight the only way to include gender in IR is by studying war as experience and employing a bottom-up approach.

Dominant IR theories have traditionally been preoccupied with “states, fundamentalist organisations, strategies, conventional security issues and a weapons system”, however little attention is paid to the human element of war and thus they reduce war to a calculated, rational phenomena which Sylvester argues is not the case (Sylvester, 2012: 1). Nordstrom (2004) makes a similar point to Sylvester and includes Alfred Vagts's claim that military history is consistently written with “polemic purpose for the justification of individuals or armies and with small regard for socially relevant facts” (Nordstrom, 2004: 46). Nordstrom and Sylvester highlight how the exclusion of opinions and thoughts of those impacted by war contribute to a gross misunderstanding of conflict.

Chapter 2 discussed how Constructivism came to prominence in the aftermath of the Cold War and was a reaction to the fact that rationalist theories such as neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism struggled to account for the shift in the world order. This shift in approach towards studying IR has also provided a new approach to the study of war. Sylvester suggests that much of IR has “been operating comfortably in a world of theoretical abstractions” and “tacitly leaving people and war to journalists, novelists, memoirists, relief workers, anthropologists, women’s studies and social history to flesh out.” (Sylvester, 2012: 484).

The issue is that with a great deal of IR theory, emphasis is placed on states as the primary

units of interaction, which includes warfare. This means the presence of ordinary people and the influence and power they hold is largely ignored. It was Kaldor (2012) and her 'New Wars' theory that began to highlight the importance of social relations within the context of warfare. Although she was criticised in her differentiation between 'old' and 'new' war, she does at least draw one's attention to the human element of warfare. She accounts for differences in identities whether it be based on religious, cultural or ethnic differences. She also speaks to the presence of human emotions and the psychological aspects of warfare when she talks about "extremist politics based on fear and hatred" (Kaldor, 2012: 8). Kaldor, therefore, highlights not only a change in the nature of warfare but also places highlights the importance of including the human element when analysing war. This highlights the intersection between feminism and constructivism because they both highlight the social construction of structures within IR. Feminists go further by specifically asking questions of the socially constructed "gender hierarchies and the implications of these gender hierarchies for the behaviour of states and the functioning of the global economy" (Tickner, 2005: 1). Tickner highlights that "rather than uncritically assume the state as a given unit of analysis, IR feminists have investigated the constitutive features of 'gendered states'" (Tickner, 2005: 6). Therefore, like constructivism, feminism takes issue with the rational, given nature of the state as is the case in dominant IR theories. By questioning the state as the primary unit of analysis, constructivists and feminists allow the individual into the fray which is an important step in understanding war as experience.

Sylvester and Nordstrom seek their understanding of war by arguing for a bottom-up approach which prioritises the voices of war. This suddenly opens up different sources of information that are so often ignored by rationalist approaches to the study of war. Nordstrom asks: where do we locate the study of war? At first, this may seem like a simple question. One could say that it is the soldiers and civilians, which need to be prioritised if one is to use the premise that war is viewed as an experience. However it is not as simple as that because, particularly in the New Wars era, warfare is not so clearly defined. Nordstrom highlights this point by including a story of when she was travelling in Mozambique. A woman in the party she was travelling with, was approached by a man who whispered something into her ear. This caused her to break down into tears (Nordstrom, 2004; 50). The man had killed her brother and a fellow Mozambican companion explained to Nordstrom that:

"the man is not a soldier, but he is not really not a soldier

either. He is not in government, but in a way, he is. You see, while he isn't in uniform-maybe he once, or maybe still, it really doesn't matter...He's a petty thug, he works the war" (Nordstrom, 2004: 50).

This example highlights the blurring of boundaries in terms of where warfare takes place. It shows there is no longer a clear battlefield/home front. The spaces of war are not neatly divided, which complicates the task of locating war. Bonnini (2000) highlights how Mpumalanga, a township in Kwa-Zulu Natal, was caught in the midst of ANC-Inkatha based violence. She suggests this started a process of "re-territorialising the spaces of everyday life". In other words, the violence crept into the everydayness of life. Schools, for example, suddenly became a theatre of war with schoolboys of different political affiliations kidnapped or executed (Bonnini, 2000: 317). Girls were often accosted and raped, and drive-by shootings suddenly became the norm. This was all in a space that was historically safe and hospitable and thus shows how war infiltrates all aspects of life: society comes to be defined by violence (Bonnini, 2000: 317). These two examples highlight the spaces and places of war do not fall into clear categories and thus trying to dichotomise peace and violence becomes virtually impossible.

3.2.2 What is the 'experience' of war?

Firstly, it is important to understand the nature of violence specifically in the 21st century and this will provide the foundation of how this study will be constructed. The key questions are: where is war studied? And who do we study to understand war? There are such a number of different aspects and actors that need to be considered that these questions become increasingly complex. The idea or term of "violence" needs to be discussed because it is a word that takes on a great deal of meaning in the context of people experiencing war. In other words, there is no clear line between peace and violence. Violence is not only something observable it exists in the mind of those exposed to it and hence the effects of war are not confined to conflict zones.

Nordstrom makes the point that the study of different wars will account for different strategies, different armies, and different technologies, but does not necessarily include how the violence of the war has changed (Nordstrom, 2004: 58). This can be highlighted in how war has been reported over the centuries. During the American Civil War, reporters would go

out to the battlefield from a safe distance and watch soldiers line up, fire at each other, and observe the consequences (Nordstrom, 2004: 58). There was very little risk to themselves because civilians were not targeted in such a conflict. However, in modern warfare the same cannot be said as reporters are often targeted and, for the most part, it is civilians who make up the majority of casualties. Thus if violence is considered as a tool of war or a way in which to defeat an enemy then it is possible to see the similarities between say the American Civil War and the ongoing conflict in Somalia. They are both violent situations in which people are killed through violent means. However, violence is something more. It is psychological and subjective. It is experienced rather than observed. Nordstrom makes a key point when she talks about what death and violence “feel” like (Nordstrom, 2004: 59). Death is meaningful because we ascribe a certain meaning to it. She suggests that death as a fact is relatively meaningless. It is only once we process the emotional and psychological effects of death do we understand the gravity of the way it makes us feel (Nordstrom, 2004: 59). In essence, the physical act of violence is the start of a much larger process that has the ability to deeply affect an individual but also an entire group or identity. Thus those who have seen or felt the direct impact of physical violence do not simply forget about this experience if they leave the conflict zone. They leave because of it and carry this emotional torment with them. They carry the emotional consequences of violence wherever they go.

Fierke (2004) provides an insightful view into the emotional effects of warfare and how trauma and grief affect individuals and collective groups. She cites Martha Nussbaum who suggests, “emotions are appraisals or value judgements which ascribe to things and persons outside the person’s own control great importance for that person’s own flourishing” (Fierke, 2004: 473). This statement shows how the loss of something or someone valuable can prove to be devastating because of the emotional impact it may have. Thus, the death, destruction and widespread loss that occurs within warfare can create deep emotional scars on an individual’s psyche that will most likely affect them for the rest of their life. Fierke also suggests that through compassion and a common understanding of each other’s suffering, within the context of warfare, the experience of war and violence is shared (Fierke, 2004: 491). The trauma one experiences by the loss of a loved one or the forced displacement from one’s home is therefore felt throughout the community. It is not only the psychological trauma that one must deal with in war but also the political trauma. Acts of war are experienced on an individual basis, in other words they are experienced by individual people, however, it is not the individual that is the target of the attack but rather a broader political or

social group (Fierke, 2004: 482). Thus, the identity of a certain group is deeply impacted by acts of war and the violence experienced by individuals reverberates through the specific group as a whole.

Hence, it becomes clear that if a researcher is trying to gain an understanding of a particular conflict they need to understand that there are many more pieces to the puzzle than simply analysing the elements of the direct, physical violence. The conflict zone itself is not necessarily the key to understanding the associated violence. Nordstrom talks about the “war story” and how different elements constitute this story, with one such element being refugees (Nordstrom, 2004: 58). Refugees fleeing a conflict are leaving as a direct result of violence and they carry this burden with them into their place of refuge. Thus, they can provide a key insight into a conflict even if they are thousands of kilometres from the direct conflict itself. The point has been argued that once violence is seen as something psychological and emotional it becomes easier to understand that violence transcends state boundaries because it is not something observed but felt, experienced, and never forgotten.

3.2.3 Post-colonial wars and displaced populations

One of the defining features of Kaldor’s (2012) New Wars thesis is the mass displacement of people and alarming number of refugees forced to resettle outside of the conflict zone. Kaldor states that:

The strategic goal of these wars is to mobilise extremist politics based on fear and hatred. This often involves population expulsion through various means such as mass killing and forcible resettlement, as well as a range of political, psychological and economic techniques of intimidation. This is why all these are characterised by high levels of refugees and displaced persons and why most violence is directed against civilians (2012: 9)

The process of displacement has been a defining factor in a number of African conflicts and contributed to vast numbers of refugees forced to resettle within and outside of the continent. One of the most in-depth analysis of an African diaspora is Steinberg's “Little Liberia: An African Odyssey in New York” (2011). It highlights how the Liberian diaspora have coped with settling in a new country all the while dealing with the memories and legacies of their

violent and turbulent past caused by the civil war in the 1980s and 1990s which resulted in approximately 2.5 million people displaced and 160 000 people killed (Nmoma, 1997).

Liberia was founded in 1822 in order to relocate ex-slaves returning from America. The settlers, who were known as Americo-Liberians, effectively ruled the indigenous population as second-class citizens and implemented policies that led to the discrimination of the different ethnic identities residing in the newly-formed state. This situation continued until 1980 and was why Samuel Doe's coup received so much support from the ethnic groups oppressed for so long. However, once Doe had overthrown William Tolbert his paranoia resulted in the suppression of the opposition (Nmoma, 1997). This resulted in a subsequent coup by Thomas Quiwonkpa, made up of members from the Gio and Mano ethnic groups. The failure of the coup saw these groups being the subject of state-led violence. Thus, when Charles Taylor entered the country with his force of 100 rebels he quickly gained support from these groups (Nmoma, 1997). From then on, the conflict was deeply divided along ethnic lines and resulted in violence directed at civilians who identified with groups such as the Krahn, Gio and Mano (Nmoma, 1997). This targeting of civilians led to the mass resettlement of Liberians throughout the West African region and further afield in the USA.

In many ways, this mass migration to the USA simply transferred the difficulties faced in their home country to the host country. Rufus, one of Steinberg's participants, tried to help young men coming from Liberia by involving them in sport, specifically soccer. Steinberg analysis of Rufus' sports programs is particularly relevant to this study. He states:

“Some of the shrapnel turns up here in Staten Island, in the form of troubled young men, men who are recognisably Liberian, but something else too, something he has never seen. They have brought war with them, in their mental lives, in their strange manners. He puts down what he is doing, and decides to live his life among them” (Steinberg, 2011; 28).

This statement highlights how difficult it is to rid oneself of their experiences and how, unfortunately, with the influence of globalisation the impacts of conflicts with highly localised roots can be felt across the world. Steinberg suggests that “it was as if Park Hill and

Liberia were twin voodoo dolls, every pinprick felt here drawing blood there, every stab back home wounding somebody in this exile” (Steinberg, 2011: 30). Steinberg highlights how when elections were held for the Staten Island Liberian Community Association (SILCA) the political dynamics observed in Liberia began to play out in New York. The struggle for power within the community between Jacob and Rufus (the two influential Liberian figures of Steinberg's book) often turned into “threats, accusations and finger waving” (Steinberg, 2011: 206). In 2008, Jacob's old allies accused him of rigging the voters roll and Jacob's image within the community at this point in time was particularly negative. However, the insults he received were largely based on the community's suspicions of the role he played in the Liberian civil war. Thus the community's frustration with Jacob manifested itself as a throwback to Liberia and he experienced comments such as “there are a quarter of million Liberians dead, Jacob, because of people like you” (Steinberg, 2011: 206). This highlights how post-colonial diasporas are continually dealing with the legacies of their past in the context of their new surroundings. Bhatia and Ram (2001) suggest post-colonial research places “emphasis on understanding the construction of self and identity in terms of colonial histories and present day transnational migration, has tremendous relevance for understanding issues related to acculturation and immigrant identities in the field of human development” (2001: 2). This is an important point in understanding diasporas in a post-colonial world because the construction of their place in the host country is greatly influenced by their experiences of the home country and thus the legacies of civil war and internal strife are constituent parts of diasporic identities. These identities thus provide a unique and important insight into these conflicts and as this research shows must be given due consideration.

3.4 Al-Shabaab through the Somali diaspora's eyes

This research attempts to understand the violence caused by the ongoing conflict in Somalia through lived experiences of Somali nationals. The idea that violence transcends time and space means that as the researcher one does not necessarily have to travel to Somalia or East Africa to gain an understanding of the situation on the ground.

In the context of this research, Steinberg's account of Liberian migrants in New York highlights how in a globalised and interconnected world it is possible to study war worlds apart from the conflict zone itself. Thus, this study attempts to study al-Shabaab and its sources of resilience and diversity from the Somali diaspora's point of view in South Africa. However, it is first necessary to briefly discuss the nature of Diasporas and how they cannot

be ignored, specifically within an African context. Pirkkalainen and Abdile (2009) suggest that the term diaspora “has traditionally been connected to the dispersal of Jews and thereby carrying with it a strong connotation of suffering, loss and return” (Pirkkalainen & Abdile, 2009: 7). However, over time the term has been used to describe other displaced groups throughout the world. According to Pirkkalainen and Abdile the majority of theoretical definitions of Diaspora come down to three fundamental aspects, “dispersal, settlement in multiple locations; and, the idea of a 'homeland'” (Pirkkalainen & Abdile, 2009: 7). The idea of a 'homeland' is crucial in distinguishing Diasporas from migrant groups who have lost the strong connection to their home country. Members of diasporas are deeply connected to their home country and their primary desire is the re-establishment of the 'homeland' they once knew.

Pirkkalainen and Abdile (2009) suggest that one of the major hallmarks of conflicts in the post-Cold War era is the large number of refugees that are forced to cross international borders in order to escape conflict in their home country (Pirkkalainen & Abdile, 2009: 11). Mass displacement is a key aspect of the 'New Wars' thesis and with this increased flow of refugees and asylum seekers, diaspora groups inevitably grow as a result. In conjunction with the increased flow of people between countries, perhaps one of the most important things to consider when studying diaspora groups in the 21st century is the ever-increasing interconnectedness associated with globalisation. This means the flow of resources and financial assistance between members of the diaspora and relatives in the home state is greatly increased (Pirkkalainen & Abdile, 2009: 8). However, it also means there is an increased flow of information. Modern technology means that relatives are a phone call away and thus members of the diaspora are not only interested in the state of affairs at home they are also highly informed as a result of this constant communication (Pirkkalainen & Abdile, 2009: 8). This level of connection between diasporas and their homelands is acknowledged by the African Union and they “consider diasporas as the sixth region of Africa” (Pirkkalainen & Abdile, 2009: 7.) Diasporas therefore cannot be overlooked because their connection to their homeland is only becoming stronger with the ever-improving communication networks that exist in the 21st century.

The Somali diaspora is one of the largest in the world in terms of the percentage the group comprises of the Somali population. According to the UNDP report on the Somali diaspora, as much as 14% of the population live outside of the country's borders (Sheikh & Healy,

2009). The large majority of them have moved within the Horn region, the Middle East or Europe. However, a number have made their way down to South Africa, as many as 8000, as of 2009 (Sheikh & Healy, 2009). The group has been described as “very intimately connected with the homeland. Many members of the Somali diaspora with right to abode elsewhere continue to live, work and invest in Somalia” (Sheikh & Healy, 2009). According to Horst, this particularly strong bond developed as a result of the “nomadic heritage” of Somalis (Horst, 2002: 4). Horst conducts research amongst Somali refugees in the Dadaab refugee camp which is the largest in the world and home to approximately 400 000 people (Rawlence, 2014). Horst attempts to make sense of how Somalis appear to adapt to the conditions relatively well despite the severe shortage of aid distributed throughout the camp. She suggests that the 'nomadic heritage' of Somalis have created a “strong obligation to assist each other in surviving” (Horst, 2002: 4). Furthermore, she makes the point that there are well-developed informal networks “of communication and banking that are only used by Somalis. It is called xawilaad in the Somali language, ‘xawil’ meaning ‘transfer’; usually of money or responsibility” (Horst, 2002: 4). The UNDP report suggests that the nomadic pastoralism that existed in pre-colonial times which was defined by mobility has been reinvented in the post-Cold War era that makes use of sophisticated communication networks. This has subsequently seen the development of the 'transnational nomad' (Sheikh & Healy, 2009).

As previously mentioned, diasporas in the 21st century are deeply connected with their home countries but in the case of Somalia, this connection runs deeper than others for two reasons. Firstly, the sense of community and shared responsibility is described by Horst as a fundamental aspect of nomadic customs (Horst, 2002: 4). Therefore breaking ties with the home country appears to be highly unlikely because it would betray the sense of shared responsibility. Secondly, the Somali way of life is highly adapted to mobility, as 'nomadic pastoralists' they were accustomed to moving throughout the country side in search of pasture, water etc., however, there was always a desire to return to their original territory (Sheikh & Healy, 2009). In many, this attitude has been reconfigured within the 21st century. The large scale migrations of Somali nationals is not out of choice, however through the extensive informal transfer networks and shared sense of responsibility they have managed to adapt to their new reality. The diaspora is motivated to assist those still in their home country and ultimately to return home. It is, thus, inevitable that they remain deeply connected to Somalia. Although they live outside Somali borders, their obligation to relatives remains the

same and thus the networks of responsibility that have always been present now exist at a transnational level.

In the context of this study, this deep connection with Somalia is vital because it means that there is a constant flow of information between home and host country. It means that the diaspora is in a position to comment on the resilience and diversity of al-Shabaab despite not currently living in Somalia or East Africa. Their intimate knowledge of Somali society and culture coupled with their ongoing communication with relatives means they are highly informed concerning the current political situation in Somalia.

However, the diaspora's positionality must also be considered and the ontological and epistemological basis for their knowledge must be interrogated. It has been argued that Diasporas tend to have warped and tainted views on the situation at home. Their idea of the 'homeland' can influence their understanding of the situation at home and according to Sorensen (1992), cited in Pirkkalainen and Abdile (2009), can result in “particularly fertile breeding grounds for the *social* construction of nationalist mythologies” (Pirkkalainen & Abdile, 2009: 19). By studying al-Shabaab through the diaspora's eyes and within a transnational context it is up to me, the researcher, to understand that the group's commitment to the idea of the homeland can affect the way they view certain actors. Al-Shabaab, for example, was initially well-received by the diaspora because it was seen as the beacon of the Nationalist sentiment felt strongly in the presence of the foreign Ethiopian forces (Bamfo, 2010: 63). However, with al-Shabaab's changing nature since 2006, it is possible that the attitude of the diaspora towards al-Shabaab has also changed. Secondly, the fact that information is passed on through mediums such as fax, phone and email suggests there is room for the storyteller to include or omit certain facts so even members of the diaspora are receiving subjective truths (Pirkkalainen & Abdile, 2009: 19). It is thus imperative to consider these aspects and be highly aware of who is being studied and what they are saying in relation to the context in Somalia and East Africa.

Paul Stoller perhaps sums up the best approach to studying diaspora groups by suggesting that “the key to doing research in complex transnational spaces devolves less from methods, multidisciplinary teams, or theoretical frameworks – although these are, of course, important – than from the suppleness of imagination” (Stoller , 1997: 91). Thus, the method and approach of the researcher is hugely influential in contributing to the understanding and

analysis of the information provided by the research participants in the diaspora.

3.5 The Precarious nature of Somali society in South Africa

There is a need to understand how Somali nationals exist within South Africa because their place within this country has undoubtedly played a role in my dealings with them as a researcher. Mothibi, Roelofse and Tshivase's (2015) study highlight how the xenophobic attacks in 2008 and 2015 in South Africa have deeply affected migrants living and working in the country. The verbal and physical abuse, which in some cases led to the death of foreign nationals, has created a sense of fear and suspicion amongst migrant workers in South Africa. Their study states that in Milnerton...

“in 2004, a Somali shop owner was shot dead in broad daylight in his own shop on Christmas day. Nothing was stolen; as a result, xenophobia was thought to be the motive. In 2005, three Somali refugees were stabbed to death outside their shop. The attacks were thought to be motivated by Xenophobia and resentment of their successful businesses.” (Mothibi, Roelofse and Tshivase's, 2015: 153)

There is also an argument that suggests in certain areas Somali shopkeepers are attacked not necessarily based on xenophobia but rather because of their success as business owners. Charman and Piper (2012), who conduct research within Delft-South and Eindhoven in Cape Town, highlight that there is a culture of violence and criminality within these areas. They suggest that both South African and Somali shopkeepers have been targeted simply because of the profitability of local *spazas* (Charman & Piper, 2012: 100). Their financial success is set within an environment of abject poverty and coupled with the culture of violence the authors speak of, the actions taken against shopkeepers are sometimes particularly brutal.

In either cases it appears that Somali shopkeepers have been targeted in violent attacks within South Africa and as one of the research participants suggests “no matter where we go we are victimised, we stay in Somalia we live in fear of al-Shabaab, we come to South Africa we are targeted in xenophobic attacks, we go to Europe we aren't welcome”. This highlights how the

Somali diaspora is characterised by a sense of insecurity and unease, which has been a constant consideration throughout this research.

The victimisation of participants and their families by al-Shabaab means that they will, whether they are conscious of it or not, provide biased responses. This is something which has been noted throughout the interviewing process and their responses are understood within their specific context: as victims of violence. Their understanding and interpretation of events will undoubtedly be based in certain beliefs and values that reflect their subjectivity as victims and survivors of al-Shabaab violence. As argued earlier in this chapter, *all* narratives are shaped by positionality, context and time.

3.6 Interviews

This section outlines the way in which data was collected for this research. It seeks to highlight exactly where interviews were conducted and the reason for using three different sites. It also explains why the names of participants were changed and the logic behind the pseudonyms chosen. Lastly, this section shows why a thematic form of analysis was used in bringing out themes and patterns from the data.

Table 1: Information of Somali national participants

Name	Year of departure from Somalia	Home Region/Town	Occupation in South Africa	Location of Interview
Tawfiiq (M)	2010	Mogadishu	Student	Durban
Erasto (M)	2001	Gedo Region	Shop assistant	Grahamstown
Abdullahi (M)	2010	Kenya-Somali border region	Shop owner	Durban
Asad (M)	2005	Kismayo	Shop manager	Grahamstown
Daahir (M)	2009	Kismayo	Shop manager	Grahamstown
Suleymaan (M)	2002	Mogadishu	Shop manager	Port Elizabeth
Caaisho (F)	2001	Mogadishu	Interpreter	Port Elizabeth
Khadra (F)	2013	Kismayo	Unemployed	Port Elizabeth
Fowsio (F)	2015	Mogadishu	Unemployed	Port Elizabeth

(All names are pseudonyms)

(M-Male; F-Female)

Table 2 Information of Academic participant

Name	Occupation	Location of Interview
Andrews Atta-Asamoah	Senior Researcher at Institute for Security Studies (ISS)	Skype Interview

3.6.1. The Interview process: Sites and Names

Initially there were two sites for data collection of this study; however, as the fieldwork process unfolded it became clear that it would not be possible to interview enough participants at just two sites. For this reason I decided to conduct interviews in Durban, as well as Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth. This ultimately provided enough data and resulted in a good cross-section of Somali nationals living in South Africa.

3.6.1.1 Durban

Interviews conducted in Durban were conducted in two different locations but were organised from the same location on Inguce Road, where the majority of Somali nationals work and socialise in Durban. Contact was made initially through the help of an employee of the Dennis Hurley Centre, an NGO based in Durban, offering pastoral care to refugees. Once contact was made, interviews were organised independently. The two interviews conducted in Durban were undoubtedly my most uncomfortable moments in the fieldwork process. This was for two reasons: firstly the interviews conducted in Durban were at the beginning of my time in the field which meant I still had reservations and apprehension about asking uncomfortable questions to people who had experienced a great deal of hardship. Secondly, the sheer number of Somalis on Inguce road initially overwhelmed me as I felt out of place and in a sense, intruding. However, these feelings did subside as the fieldwork process unfolded. The two interviews conducted in Durban were organised by meeting people on the street and after outlining the plans for my research, they were enthusiastic about telling me their story.

3.6.1.2 Grahamstown

The interview process in Grahamstown differed from Durban in that the Somali community in Grahamstown is much smaller. I did not feel overwhelmed as I had in Durban, which gave

me the confidence to venture out into the Grahamstown community without the aid and direction of an NGO. Having found a shop on African Street run by Bangladeshi nationals they told me there was a clothing and shoe shop run by Somalis on Bathurst Street. Having made contact with the manager of the shop on Bathurst Street, three interviews were organised from this location. Conducted in different shops, all of the participants knew each other. Two participants were, in fact, related. The fact that the Somali community is so small in Grahamstown meant that once initial contact was made it was relatively to organise interviews through word of mouth.

3.6.1.3 Port Elizabeth

The third site used in the interview process was the Nelson Mandela University Refugee Rights Centre. The reason for going to Port Elizabeth was largely born out of the need to include interviews with female participants. The perspective of women was important in this research because gender is something that has not necessarily been included in previous studies of al-Shabaab. Nelson Mandela University provided a great deal of assistance in putting me in touch with three female and one male research participant. All interviews were conducted at the Centre itself.

3.6.1.4 Names

The names of all research participants were replaced with pseudonyms in order to protect their identities. The questions asked were often of a sensitive nature about a particularly violent organisation. This meant ensuring the participants protection was of the utmost importance. With that being said, this thesis is intended for all those who wish to read it and so this exposure places the participants in the public eye, reinforcing the point that their confidentiality is vital. The fact that their name would be changed was made clear at the beginning of each interview and this was important because it also provided them with a sense of comfort. They knew I would be the only person who heard their thoughts and opinions which meant they could talk freely, comforted by the knowledge that everything they said was confidential.

The pseudonyms chosen are all Somali names. Each name was allocated based on the particular participant's characteristics and how this related to the interpretation of the

pseudonym. The names chosen are representative of the personalities that came through from the narratives of the participants. This section highlights the process of choosing each name and the rationale behind it. Tawfiiq, which means ‘success’ in Somali, describes the first participant. In spite of his hardship, both within Somalia and South Africa, he is currently studying towards his honours degree at Durban University of Technology. He struck me as someone who was ambitious and driven to succeed. The second participant, Erasto, which means ‘peace’ came across as a gentle person who was scarred by the ongoing conflict in Somalia. He had lost his brother to al-Shabaab. Despite this, he had a calm demeanour about him. Abdullahi, which means ‘servant of god’ is a reflection of participant three. He was highly intelligent and perhaps the most articulate out of all of the participants. He had lost five of his siblings to al-Shabaab, yet showed an unwavering commitment to his faith and this seemed to give him a sense of optimism for his future in South Africa. Asad, which means ‘lion’ in Arabic describes the fourth participant’s role within the Somali community. He was clearly a leader and it was instantly clear that those working for him respected him and relied on him. Daahir, meaning ‘religiously pure’ was similar to Abdullahi, in that he took his faith very seriously. It showed in his commitment to his family and spoke extensively of how he would always be willing to send money back home to friends and relatives in difficult times. Suleymaan, meaning ‘peace’ is was similar to Erasto in that one felt instantly at ease in his presence. He was softly-spoken and a gentle individual whose primary concern was the wellbeing of his family in South Africa. Caaisho, which means ‘long-living’ was the first female participant I spoke to and, although she was the oldest of the participants, this was not the reason for her name choice. Caasiho was chosen because of the way she had lived her life. Having lived and worked in a number of different countries, she has now settled in Port Elizabeth and made it her mission to help other younger Somalis. Khadra, which means ‘fortunate’, and Fowsio, which means ‘success’, were the youngest participants and had both left Somalia recently. They came across as individuals who were particularly angry at what al-Shabaab and AMISOM had done to their homeland, and for this reason, felt fortunate they were no longer exposed to the hardships they had endured within Somalia.

3.7 The inspiration behind this study

On the 11th of September, 2001, I was just nine years old. I vividly remember the images of the two planes striking the twin towers of the World Trade Centre. At the time, I had little

understanding of what the attack meant and who was behind it, but from that point, it fuelled an interest in me that still exists to this day. I took a gap year after finishing high school and spent 5 months working and travelling in the Middle East. I found the people living in Jordan, Oman and Turkey to be warm and hospitable and showed steadfast dedication to their faith. I struggled to understand how the same religion could be manipulated into an ideology that could incite such violence. In many ways, this experience led to more questions that form the backdrop of my intellectual interest about the politicisation of Islam.

Having travelled back to South Africa, I began my politics degree at Rhodes University, which developed and refined my keen interest in African politics and IR. This study is, therefore, a culmination of a long term interest in jihadist ideology and a fast-growing passion for African security.

3.8 Thematic analysis

The mode of analysis for this research is based on thematic analysis which according to Attride- Sterling (2001) “seeks to unearth the themes salient in a text at different levels, and thematic networks aim to facilitate structuring and depiction of these themes” (2001: 387). This highlights how the research will be interpreted and analysed which, as Attride-Sterling shows, is something that has lacked attention in the social sciences. In essence, there needs to be a methodical manner when it comes to analysing data collected. However, historically there have been few tools in which the social scientist can use to effectively analyse material. In other words, the question of 'how' to go about data analysis has not been adequately addressed (Attride-Sterling, 2001: 386). Thematic analysis therefore offers an effective way of making sense of the material collected through the interview process.

Braun and Clarke (2006) state that thematic analysis “is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail” (2006: 6). This highlights that, in order to draw themes from the data, there needs to be a process in which the data is ordered and structured in such a way that patterns develop. These patterns are then analysed by the researcher resulting in the development of themes. Braun and Clarke also make the point that this process relies on the active role of the researcher. The idea that themes 'emerge' or 'rise' from the data is not entirely accurate because it places the researcher outside of the process. Rather the themes

emerge or rise because of the researcher's reflections and understanding of the patterns in the data.

Braun and Clarke (2006) also highlight the two different ways themes are identified, either, "in an inductive or 'bottom up' way (e.g., see Frith & Gleeson, 2004), or in a theoretical or deductive or 'top down' way (e.g., see Boyatzis, 1998; Hayes, 1997)." (2006: 12). This research makes use of the inductive approach as the themes provided are strongly tied to the data, there were no preconceived ideas of what themes would develop through the data analysis. This does not imply that my role as the researcher has been removed, but rather the intentions at the beginning of the data analysis were to draw dominant patterns from the data instead of being "driven by the researcher's theoretical or analytic interest in the area" as is the case in a deductive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 12).

In essence, the inductive thematic analysis combines well with the narrative approach adopted in this research. Thematic analysis provides a necessary link and important step in processing the substantial amounts of data collected from the narratives of the research participants.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to lay out an effective methodology in trying to gain a deeper understanding of al-Shabaab's sources of resilience and diversity. Firstly, through the use of narratives of people effected by war, this chapter has shown the importance of employing a bottom-up approach in the study of war. It has shown how studying warfare cannot be reduced to rational, calculated conflicts between states and that human emotions deeply impact the way in which wars are fought, experienced and recounted. This emphasis on the experience of warfare is vital in justifying the research conducted amongst the Somali diaspora. By interviewing Somali nationals displaced by the ongoing security crisis one can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the situation on the ground.

This chapter has also sought to argue how studying a conflict through a diaspora group is appropriate. Critics suggest that it is simply impossible to achieve an acceptable level of understanding without travelling to the conflict zone itself. However, this chapter has shown that this is not necessarily the case. In such a globalised connected world, diaspora groups are closer than ever to their 'homelands' and are still well-informed of the political situation at

home. However, the researcher must exercise caution and understand that the subjectivity of participants will influence their views and opinions. Their perception of the 'homeland', the prejudice of stories told by their relatives and their environment within South Africa are all considerations, which must be accounted for during the fieldwork process in order to keep the opinions of the diaspora relevant and appropriate.

Lastly, this chapter has also outlined how the data collection process was carried out. It has also shown how the use of thematic analysis is the most appropriate way of understanding the narratives of al-Shabaab. It has shown that through the process of finding patterns within the open-ended data collected, one can build an effective bottom-up approach in studying the nature of a complex and unique organisation.

Chapter Four:

“They don’t have a desire”: Understanding al-Shabaab’s foundations, objectives and tactics

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an initial analysis of the data collected during the interview process. In Chapter Three it was argued that one of the issues associated with the study of warfare and conflict is the constant top-down approach adopted. This approach continually silences and excludes individuals experiences and perceptions of war, as well as their understanding of violence. Sylvester’s (2012) feminist challenge to IR sets the foundation for a bottom-up approach in the study of war and the importance of bringing the voices of those affected and damaged by war to the fore.

This chapter will attempt to understand al-Shabaab and the security crisis of Somalia from a Somali perspective. The security situation in Somalia has been particularly precarious for over 25 years now and as seen in Chapter Two argued through the arguments of Buzan (1991), Booth (1991) and Hendricks (2011), to fully comprehend a state or regions security, a holistic approach must be adopted. In other words, an understanding of al-Shabaab's sources of resilience and diversity cannot be achieved by studying their military and strategic capacity alone. Rather, their existence is intrinsically linked to a range of historic, political, cultural and religious factors both within Somalia and further afield. For example, the research participants did not have an in depth understanding of al-Shabaab's tactics and strategy. But they did have an acute understanding of the nature of violence within Somalia and provided an astute assessment of Somalia's weak state structures and institutions. This is important to take into consideration because al-Shabaab’s survival is contingent on the insecurity at different levels within Somali society.

This chapter will highlight the personal experiences of Somali's living within South Africa and seeks to draw out the dominant themes from the narratives they provided. By conducting semi-structured interviews, topics other than al-Shabaab were discussed. While this may seem counter-productive, the participants’ knowledge and understanding of Somali culture, history and politics far surpasses my own. As has been argued extensively the key to understanding al-Shabaab includes a broad range of influences and factors. For example, one

of the themes that came out in every single one of the interviews was the effects the violence of the 1990's and early 2000's has had on Somali society and how this period laid the foundations for al-Shabaab. Therefore, the dominant themes that have developed from the narratives can be understood as different pathways that contribute to a greater understanding of al-Shabaab's sources of resilience and diversity.

The first theme alluded to by all of the Somali participants was the fact that the last 26 years of continued violence and insecurity has led to the development of al-Shabaab and one of the primary reasons why they have become so difficult to defeat. They suggested that al-Shabaab is merely a different manifestation of continued violence in a desperately weak society.

The second dominant theme is the way in which al-Shabaab have politicised Islam as a mobilising ideology. The participants were highly aware of how al-Shabaab has manipulated religion for their own agenda and there was a sense of embarrassment and anger as a result. The Radical interpretation of Islam is by no means an inherent or intrinsic part of Somali history and culture and the lack of understanding displayed by the participants is by no means a surprise.

The third theme is the negative attitude displayed towards AMISOM and their role in prolonging the conflict. A senior researcher at the ISS mentioned that the presence of AMISOM in fact provides a common enemy for al-Shabaab, ironically, their very presence provides a sense of cohesion and direction for the organisation. Furthermore, the Somali participants were more scathing of AMISOM and the way they conduct themselves within Somalia. Firstly, they believe African Union soldiers are there primarily because of the increased salary they receive as part of an international peacekeeping force. In other words, the participants see the well-being and security of Somalia as of secondary importance to the AMISOM soldiers and is ultimately hindering the response to al-Shabaab. There is also a sense that the AMISOM soldiers treat the Somali people poorly, with participants suggesting that peacekeepers have been guilty of sexual exploitation, playing directly into the hands of al-Shabaab's recruitment drive.

The fourth theme is the emphasis on al-Shabaab's goals and objectives and also their tactics of recruitment and intelligence gathering. A number of the participants could not understand what al-Shabaab are still fighting for, they said that they no longer knew what their objectives

were and the Somali population are tired of the continued insecurity. It appears that al-Shabaab's decentralisation process has ensured their survival while further alienating them from the population. The participants also noted that since al-Shabaab have gone underground they have stepped up their intelligence gathering operations, to the point where it is extremely difficult to know who to trust. Furthermore, it appears that in their recruitment drive for spies and combatants they have used young women and children who are viewed as less of a threat, making them highly valuable to al-Shabaab.

4.2 Post 1991 Somali politics: “Al-Shabaab is just a different way of fighting the same problem”

Anderson and McKnight (2015), describe how the decay of Somali society and the subsequent insecurity that prevailed after the fall of the Barre campaign led to many different factions vying for power within Mogadishu. This has created what many scholars describe as a failed state and in the post 9/11 era much has been written on the danger of failed states and their link with terrorism. Coggins (2015) suggests that collapsed states do provide good bases for groups such as al-Shabaab to develop. However, the failed state-terrorism discourse offers little for the Somali people because to them violence and insecurity is not a new phenomenon that simply developed following 9/11. Rather it is something that has dominated the landscape for decades. Al-Shabaab is a different manifestation of violence within Somalia, which requires going deeper into the fabric of Somali political history to understand. Chapter Two highlights that Buzan (1991), Booth (1991) and Hendricks (2011) argue for the importance of rethinking security in the post-cold war era and the need to move away from the narrow state-centric military based approach toward a more human centred approach. This concept is relevant in the case of al-Shabaab and Somalia because it allows one to go deeper into the roots and foundations of al-Shabaab and avoids being preoccupied with their military and strategic capabilities. Obtaining an understanding and rethinking the nature of violence and security in Somalia is the first step in the analysis of al-Shabaab.

One of the constant themes throughout the interviews was that al-Shabaab is undoubtedly a product of its environment. The long, violent past of Somalia has created an environment in which al-Shabaab have developed and thrived. For the most part, participants agreed with this theory and suggested that Siad Barre's collapsed regime and the subsequent decay of state

institutions have created a perfect breeding ground for an insurgency such as al-Shabaab, which challenges the founding tenets of the traditional state system. With that being said the religious element to the violence in Somalia is not something that is intrinsically linked with the conflict. Although there have been a number of Islamist groups in Somalia over the years such as the AIAI their relevance and popularity only came to the fore with the development of the Islamic Courts Union which coincided with the decline of the warlords and clan militias that dominated the Somali landscape in the 1990's. Of those interviewed, a number suggested that al-Shabaab is simply a continuation of a Somali problem but with a different face. While its ideology may be different from the dominant groups of the 1990's it is still a result of a broken system within Somalia. Khadra and Fowsio made this point clear by saying:

al-Shabaab is just a different way of fighting the same problem. The situation now is no different to 20 years ago; it is just fought in a different way.

In fact, in some cases, there was little knowledge of Islamist groups existing in Somalia before al-Shabaab. When asked about the AIAI and other Islamist groups in Somalia during the 1980's and 1990's Suleymaan said:

No I don't know about them, the only one I know about is al-Shabaab, we didn't worry about those other groups.

There is definitely a sense that religious extremism does not have a long, deep-seated history within Somalia and has only emerged because of a nexus of certain factors. The majority of participants did not have a particularly good understanding of how al-Shabaab had used religion as a mobilising factor but were keenly aware of how Somalia's domestic history had provided the foundation for a new violent actor to develop within the country. In the opinion of Caaisho the continued lack of government has allowed al-Shabaab to survive despite the challenges the group faces. She expressed:

When Siad Barre fled the country I wept for Somalia, I knew that there would be no peace. Even though Barre did a lot of bad things to the country it was still better off with him there. Bad government is better than no government.

Would you rather have bad parents or no parents at all? Bad parents will still provide some things for you, but with no parents there is not control!

She went on to say that, one of the biggest problems that plagued Somalia in the post 1991 era was the fact that the inter-clan hostilities damaged any chances of cohesion. With the bigger clans, such as the Aawiye and Darod clans fighting between one another the smaller minorities were caught between the bigger, more dominant clans and paid the ultimate price. This was one of the legacies of Siad Barre's government. This centralised form of government gave preferential treatment to certain clans namely the Marehan, Ogaden, and Dulbahante creating hostility because of the treatment of excluded clans from this three-way alliance. The way power was centralised created a recipe for widespread conflict once the vacuum of power developed when Barre fled the country. Abdullahi echoed these sentiments by saying that the post 1991 era:

Was dominated by warlords and clan militias because of Siad Barre. The fighting between clans after 1991 was much worse than before because Barre protected his clans but treated other clans badly. After the Barre regime collapsed this system carried on and some clans and sub-clans were targeted. Al-Shabaab though were clever, they realised what was going on and used these tensions to their advantage.

These comments highlight how al-Shabaab has become ingrained within Somali history, politics and culture. An analysis of al-Shabaab's resilience that excludes a thorough account of Somalia's political history would lack context, because the group simply would not exist had it not been for the last 26 years of ongoing internal conflict. This ongoing conflict appears to have had a lasting effect on the psyche and feeling of the Somali people. As Asad told me that:

In the time before the Islamic courts and al-Shabaab there were many different warlords and clan militias and this ripped the Somali community and nation apart, the problems from the Barre regime got worse and created a broken society, which made the government's position

weaker.

Asad's thoughts show that the Somali people are not used to a cohesive nation-state and as I will point out later, have only ever experience a nationalist feeling when it comes to foreign actors. The result of Barre's regime has created a fractured society that is still deeply divided along clan lines. This would make the task of a well-resourced and functional government exceedingly difficult. However, what makes the situation worse for Somalia is that the government has been ineffective at best. Asad continues:

The problem is there is no strong working government in Somalia and there are no state institutions so a group such as al-Shabaab can develop because there is no pressure coming from the government

After I had concluded my interview with Caaisho we continued to chat about Somalia and she explained to me that the problem lies in the fact that the clan tensions from the past 26 years are still so evident in Somali politics today. She mentioned that tribalism is still prevalent within domestic politics and for as long as this continues, progress will be stifled because it is incredibly difficult for any momentum to build when there is little commitment to the national cause. What must be made clear though, is that the Somali people by 2004 had grown tired of the warlords dominating the Somali political landscape, yet there was little alternative at that point in time and no real actor or group to rally the Somali people. It shows the predicament that faced Somalia because there was undoubtedly a desire and need for change but no one had the resources or ability to challenge the status quo.

4.3 Political Islam in Somalia: “If they wanted to build an Islamic state they did it the wrong way”

Mamdani (2004), Hoodbhoy (2005) and Burke (2007) highlight the links between political Islam and the Afghan-Soviet war. The radical and extremist ideology, not to mention the tactics and strategy used by al-Shabaab are largely an import from Afghanistan, as highlighted by participants. This also speaks to Hehir's (2007) contribution to the failed state-terror discourse in which he emphasises how failed states are more likely to produce terrorism when “Islamic peoples are involved” (Hehir, 2007: 321). This by no means suggests that Muslims are more prone to violence, but rather as highlighted in Chapter Two, the way in

which Political Islam was used as a powerful weapon in Afghanistan now means that a specific aspect of jihadism is the use of particularly violent and divisive methods of warfare. By divisive, I mean the implementation of a politically constructed religious identity which Kaldor (2012) suggests has the propensity to create extreme violence. In other words, if one does not conform to the rules of Sharia law and accept the ideology espoused by al-Shabaab the consequences could be fatal. This theme explores the way in which Somali's viewed the ideology of the ICU and al-Shabaab and the participants show that it was by no means an inherent part of Somali history and culture but rather a new and untested ideology.

Despite their strict adoption of Sharia law, the Islamic Courts Union, which slowly started to develop momentum in 2004 and 2005, did offer an alternative approach to what was a desperate situation in Somalia. What played in the Islamic courts favour was that, although Sharia law was radical in its nature, it still offered a sense of law and order which had not been present in Somalia for over a decade. Despite the somewhat draconian measures the Courts were willing to take, there was still a sense that certain people within Somalia were willing to give them a chance. Tawfiq told me a story, which highlighted this point well, he said:

We were playing football after mosque, we had already prayed and while playing football one of the guys from mosque came down and told us to stop. You know I thought we had done the important things, we had already prayed but they didn't want to listen. So they told us we had to kill the sports, we could no longer play. The guys from the Islamic courts went to the Imam of the Mosque and told him that he needed to arrest all the boys that were playing soccer. He told him that all the boys' fathers needed to bring their sons forward. That morning though my father didn't wake me up for mosque. But every other son was there and there were guys there who were armed with machine guns, they brought the boys forward and said the boys were infidels. We used to cut our hair and shave our hair in the style of our favourite footballers, maybe like Christiano Ronaldo. We called each other different names of football players. I used to be called Lampard. When they said that the boys were infidels some of the fathers got irritated

because they said 'our sons are not infidels'. However, the boys' heads were shaved as punishment for playing football because this was going against Islam. In 2004, people were very tired with the warlords, but there were also some extremist people amongst Somali's. But mainly people were tired of the warlords and wanted the country to be ruled by the book of god, so people welcomed the change and gave these guys a chance in the name of Islam

This point demonstrates how political Islam gained popularity in Somalia not because of a long relationship or commitment to the ideology but because it offered a degree of stability and safety in stark contrast to the relative lawlessness and anarchy that prevailed when the warlords and clan militias dominated. Thus political-Islam came into public spotlight in Somalia at the perfect time and what only served to strengthen its position within Somalia was the U.S backed Ethiopian invasion, which marched into Somalia to prop up the Transitional Federal Government. As mentioned in previous chapters once the majority of the Islamic Courts Union had fled in the wake of this invasion, all that was left was the armed wing, al-Shabaab to defend Somalia and defend Muslim lands from the invading 'infidel' force. This was a powerful message because it allied the nationalist agenda to the ideology of political Islam. With the Somali nationalist sentiment stirred by the Ethiopian invasion, al-Shabaab gained a great deal of popularity as the defenders of the Somali situation and with the alternative way of life political Islam provided within Somalia, Somali's became sympathetic to their cause.

The politicisation of Islam was a powerful mobilising factor in Somalia and this is highlighted by the fact that it is a relatively new, popular phenomenon. As mentioned in previous chapters the roots of al-Shabaab can be traced primarily back to the AIAI with its core group of leaders travelling to Afghanistan and then coming back to Somalia with the intention of waging jihad in the Horn region. Tawfiq acknowledges this and says:

We have different opinions about the way they came from. First of all let me tell you where they say they come from. They say their leader was killed in 2008 or 2009, if I'm not mistaken Aden Ayro. He and other al-Shabaab leaders went to Afghanistan and he met Osama Bin Alden and some of

the leaders of al-Qaeda and they give him training. And he sent some of his followers to Afghanistan again and when they came back down here to Somalia they started al-ittihad and eventually Islamic courts. These leaders of al-ittihad, some of them were elders and some of them come from the Somali government or the previous Somali government military. So just before al-Shabaab start they all know each other, the leaders, so they sit and say let's make our own recruitment, because their perception of religion is different.

To a large degree those interviewed displayed limited knowledge of political Islam within Somalia. For the most part as soon as I mentioned the religious element of al-Shabaab they instantly dismissed the idea and stated that what they were doing in no way represented their religion and they appeared to be embarrassed by al-Shabaab. As soon as I posed the idea to Khadra that al-Shabaab were perhaps trying to set the scene for an Islamic state within the horn of Africa she replied in an almost angry manner and said:

If they wanted to build an Islamic state they did it the wrong way, you will lose supporters if the state you are building is based on fear, killing etc. It goes against Islam and the peace it promotes

Both Khadra and Fowsio went on to tell me that for the most part they believe the Somali's that join al-Shabaab join largely out of fear. However, they also spoke about non-Somali's within the group and they said they were different because they came to Somalia for a specific reason, and they would not travel over the border unless they were committed to al-Shabaab and what it stood for.

It can therefore be argued that the rise of political Islam within Somalia was greatly fuelled by external influences. Not only did ideas about jihadism flood back into the country after the AIAI travelled back into the country, the post 9/11 era also thrust global jihadism into action. Dr Atta-Asamoah suggests that:

al-Shabaab popped up as a youth wing, rallying people around them and the inclusion of people who had combat

experience from the Middle East and Afghanistan etc, with the likes of Godane at the helm. There was also aid coming in from the diaspora and these factors shaped al-Shabaab into something that we know today.

He then makes a crucial point about the influence of external influences on al-Shabaab by saying:

The series of factors that formed al-Shabaab would be regional politics, domestic fundamentalism, international jihadis who had a taste of war elsewhere, but also the fundamental context and shift of fundamentalism, which in the post 9/11 world became something of a norm and became a threat across the world. Al-Shabaab does exist on its own, it has always got alliances with the likes of al-Qaeda and the rest. Al-Shabaab then sits at a nexus of all these things put together.

These comments suggest that the Islamist ideology within Somalia was adopted from outside the country and then adapted to suit the Somali scenario. This would suggest why a number of the research participants were not familiar with the intricacies and specifics of political Islam in Somalia. Though what is quite remarkable, is the potency of political Islam as a mobilisation factor. Dr Atta-Asamoah suggests:

The motivating factor is not just Somali domestic politics but really a global agenda of jihad which is what has kept them moving and kept a continuing supply of fresh blood despite the massive losses they encounter each time.

It becomes clear that al-Shabaab was created and exists as a result of domestic and global factors, the absence of one would undoubtedly have effected it's development in the first place and subsequent success within Somalia and East Africa as a whole. Over the last decade, Somalia has been a refuge for political Islam and foreign jihadists. Political Islam in this sense refers to how the weak state structures have allowed proponents to challenge the traditional state system with the goal of establishing a caliphate within the horn region. Al-Shabaab has also provided a haven for foreign jihadists that do not acknowledge state boundaries and instead see the ongoing conflict in Somalia as another front in the global

jihad. Asad explained the similarities between groups such as the Taliban, Boko Haram, ISIS and al-Shabaab; he suggested that the similarities lie within the countries they base themselves. He suggested that they exist where there is a safe haven for those trying to start their own system i.e. a caliphate. He mentioned that weak countries and regions, such as Somalia, Afghanistan and Northern Nigeria, provide a solid platform to launch an alternative to western modernity.

These thoughts provide further basis for suggesting that al-Shabaab's existence is balanced by its domestic and international influences. What this also shows is that there are certain preconditions, which need to be met in order for a jihadist insurgency to really take hold. The import of a global jihadist agenda can only be truly successful if the domestic government and institutions of that particular state are weak, enough to provide a foundation for a project that challenges the basic notion of the state.

4.3 Regional and continental actors: “AMISOM are worse than al-Shabaab”

Right from their inception al-Shabaab have constantly framed themselves as protectors of Muslim lands against invading infidel forces. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Hansen (2013) suggests that the foreign intervention of Ethiopia and the subsequent AMISOM peacekeeping force has constantly provided al-Shabaab an opportunity to drum-up the nationalist Somali sentiment by framing it as a religious battle. The participants constantly mentioned their disdain and lack of trust in AMISOM and Ethiopia in general. However, this was not because of any religious conviction but rather because of their suspicion of foreign hands interfering in Somali matters. This provides yet another example of al-Shabaab's uncanny ability to play domestic and local dynamics into their broader agenda. What AMISOM have provided in particular, is a constant, common enemy. This common enemy provides a sense of unity because there is a cause that al-Shabaab can rally behind. Dr Atta-Asamoah explains:

When AMISOM approach, they shoot or attack whoever comes across as al-Shabaab, they don't really give a damn who you are, so in that sense they have a common enemy so it makes them organise together. The true measure of al-Shabaab's unity cannot be reflected on now, it can only be reflected on once there ceases to be a common enemy that is when perhaps different leaders in al-Shabaab will turn on

themselves.

It is interesting to note that not one of the research participants from Somalia spoke positively about AMISOM and said the feeling towards AMISOM within Somalia was negative at best and openly hostile at worst. The fact that AMISOM is so unpopular with Somalis has undoubtedly played into al-Shabaab's hands. One of the reasons why Somalis take such issue with AMISOM is because of the way they have gone about trying to secure the situation in Somalia. They have criticised the peacekeeping force for having little control and although they may exercise a certain degree of authority in urban areas, they are virtually non-existent in the countryside. What is even more worrying is that the participants commented on the large number of troops within AMISOM yet they have not been able to stamp al-Shabaab out in the 10 years they have been in Somalia. Abdullahi explains how dynamics of authority work in and around Kismayo and he suggests that:

Once Kismayo was lost, al-Shabaab have had to resort to more of guerrilla style warfare, which means anything that leaves Kismayo is vulnerable to attack, it's not good that AMISOM have very little control outside the towns in Somalia like Kismayo and so the routes going out of Kismayo are targeted

This is an important point because it seems that once al-Shabaab lost territory and personnel after 2010, there was a noticeable shift in tactics and the way they fought AMISOM. What has become common over the last six years is a more insurgency styled force that has the ability to dance around the larger, traditional styled force of AMISOM. What does not help AMISOM is the fact that domestic security forces have not been able to exercise any real authority in the countryside. This has meant that despite the heavy pressure al-Shabaab have felt from AMISOM, there is always a safe location they retreat to where they can regroup and appear in a different location. It appears that the ineffectiveness of AMISOM has contributed to al-Shabaab's success and their apparent resilience. AMISOM's limited reach and authority have allowed al-Shabaab to adapt to the threat that AMISOM. Daahir elaborated on this point and said:

You know what is important is, that this military they take down the big cities and they make base. Look when you have a base it's like you're in this room and when you are in

this room you are safe and you defend yourselves in this room. But outside in the surroundings they [al-Shabaab] are ruling, they have a chance of movement, they have a chance of connecting, they have a chance of securing but you are in base, you are not moving around. But they are just moving around they have a chance to move around they can come from that area or province, they connect. But you, you don't have any movement, you stay at that base and when you go to the town they wait for you. You are staying at this base every day every time but they have their own movements so can put things like road side bombs, and they have one of their spies watching you so if you want to go and attack one of al-Shabaab's camps by the time you get to the camp all of the equipment has gone and there is no one there, they've already moved from there. Then they hit you from where you are not expecting them, so there is no way. In my opinion the only way that Shabaab can be defeated is to build up the Somali military, but the foreign troops, they only wasting time, prolonging the conflict, so if they stay I don't expect Shabaab will be defeated sooner or later.

However, it must be noted that the research participants suggested that it was not only the tactics and methods of AMISOM that had caused issues. Some had different views on why AMISOM have not been successful. Erasto's English is not strong but he still managed to explain that:

They [AMISOM] are coming, staying and not attacking, they are not moving towards al-Shabaab. They just defend themselves sitting there for a long time and just taking a salary. Each soldier they are taking 1200, 1200 US dollars, so they don't want to finish, because if they leave Somali that money will finish. So they want to stay longer, longer to make bigger profit.

Asad alluded to the fact that AMISOM soldiers had little motivation to defeat al-Shabaab because they were there to enrich themselves and are receiving decent salaries to be there,

more than they would earn under their national service. He went on further to say that for a force as big as AMISOM to be there for as long as they have and achieve so little, something is very wrong. It appears that the way AMISOM soldiers treat the Somali people is also cause for concern. When I asked Khadra and Fowsio about the way AMISOM were viewed in Somalia, Fowsio gave an ironic laugh and said:

Forget about AMISOM to help the people. They even kill civilians. AMISOM rape people. Arrest them. AMISOM are worse than al-Shabaab.

Khadra continues by saying:

AMISOM, they may say they are killing al-Shabaab but they are really killing civilians and saying they are al-Shabaab. The Somali community don't trust AMISOM.

There has been a history of suspicion when it comes to foreign peacekeepers within Somalia. In 1992, UN peacekeepers were the object of attack. Agada (2008) highlights that Somalis initially welcomed the US-led multinational operation tagged Operation “RESTORE HOPE” in Somalia in 1992. However, the size of the force and their heavy handed style of peace enforcement quickly raised suspicions amongst warlords and Somali people who saw the foreign contingent as an occupational force (Agada, 2008: 49). It can also be argued the actions of AMISOM peacekeepers are by no means isolated instances. There have been similar reports coming from other African countries where UN peacekeepers have been accused of sexual exploitation. For example a recent independent report for the UN on sexual assault in the Central African Republic highlighted that “when peacekeepers exploit the vulnerability of the people they have been sent to protect, it is a fundamental betrayal of trust” (Deschamps, Jallow & Sooka, 2015; 2). This further highlights how the environments of conflict exist at many different levels. The betrayal of trust which the authors talk about is a powerful weapon that al-Shabaab have utilised in their recruitment drive against AMISOM. By placing issues such as sexual exploitation by AMISOM peacekeepers as an integral part of the ongoing security crisis in Somalia, one develops a more encompassing and enlightened understanding of the political terrain al-Shabaab operates within.

4.4 Al-Shabaab's decentralisation and the changing political terrain

The previous themes have focused on the conditions and circumstances that al-Shabaab have found themselves in which have contributed to their longevity. These conditions have allowed them to diversify and become resilient to the threats they face. The next theme to be discussed focuses on the tactics and modus operandi of al-Shabaab. Authors such as Bryden (2015) and Menkhaus (2014) have highlighted that the manner in which the group has evolved over the years has undoubtedly played a key role in their survival and the continued threat they pose. What has become clear is that al-Shabaab, particularly after 2010 when Godane's leadership became dominant has gone through a process of decentralisation. There is no central command, which issues orders or exerts authority over the whole organisation. This decentralised structure allows the group to endure serious losses to their leadership yet still carry out attacks and operations because of the independence and autonomy of the lower ranks. Dr Atta-Aasamoah explains that:

In the past, what we've seen of al-Shabaab is not necessarily a homogenous and coherent organisation. Look at those based in the Somaliland mountain area. They seem to have different commands and areas of control. There seems to be some decentralisation of control. How come under Godane they had this Shura council of these leaders to make decisions. So that kind of spread gives room for a bit of innovation. So you need to look at the structures and see how that has contributed to the resilience of the group. If you are a guerrilla force and your leader is taken out, chances are the rest of the force will collapse. But if it is a decentralised form of command you have a better chance of surviving

This decentralised method of operation coupled with the underground nature of al-Shabaab has placed the group in a peculiar position. On the one hand, it has undoubtedly ensured their survival but at the same time, it has also left many questioning their future goals, which now means they are seen as an obstacle to peace and no longer gain the sympathy they did in 2006. Dr Atta-Asamoah continues:

I think the dynamics changed with the gradual stabilisation of the political landscape in Somalia. If you look at those who supported al-Shabaab it was those progressive Somali's that saw there was no recognised Somali government and al-Shabaab was virtually fighting off Ethiopian invasion single handedly, it made it easier for those that did not agree with them at an Ideological level to practically understand them. But with the Somali government and the anti-government role that al-Shabaab is playing they are now almost seen as a spoiler to state formation, so the level of popularity from the nationalists which was so high a decade ago has not remained the same. If they were smart enough to scale down in response to the strengthening government in Mogadishu and other parts of the country they would've been seen as heroes and the one who held on to the nationalist agenda and helped the formation of the state but they've held on and fought the state in a way that has become completely counter-productive.

Fowsio echoed this sentiment and said that the Somali people are tired of fighting. She said she would be prepared to even forgive al-Shabaab if it mean them putting their arms down and entering peace talks. She continued to explain that the Somali government would accept this simply because they have no energy left to fight. It seems the attitude towards al-Shabaab is that there is some confusion as to what they are fighting for as Daahir, tells me:

Al-Shabaab I don't think they have specific things that they are after, they don't have specific things that they are saying. Al-Shabaab they don't have a desire. They don't really have an objective that they are trying to achieve. They are a bit like the Taliban, no one knows what Taliban are looking for. What are Taliban looking for, no one knows.

4.5 A crumbling society: “It’s much easier to use the girls”

Booth (1991) argues that, “‘security’ means the absence of threats. Emancipation is the

freeing of people (as individuals and groups) from those physical and human constraints which stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do” (Booth, 1991; 319). This definition of 'security' is perhaps the most appropriate way to highlight the 'insecurity' experienced on a day-to-day basis by the Somali population. Al-Shabaab's infiltration of Somali society has broken down societal norms to the point where one constantly experiences a sense of unease. Ironically, al-Shabaab's tactics have ensured their longevity but have alienated them further from the Somali community. It is not only the fact that they continue to fight that makes them unpopular, but some of the specific tactics they have employed have had devastating effects on the Somali mind-set. For one, their intelligence arm while incredibly effective has created a great sense of mistrust amongst Somalis. Nearly all of the participants told me of stories in which family members no longer trust each other because they simply don't know if their brother, sister or son has been turned by al-Shabaab. Daahir told me that it is an impossible situation to find yourself in if you...

...keep a low profile, you don't have friends. Because today this person is your friend, in two days it changes. It gets to a stage where two brothers don't even talk, two brothers! Because one day he is your brother and he is normal, then he disappears, you don't know where he's gone and then after two months he comes back. He won't tell you where he's gone, maybe training? But you can see this guy has changed. It might be that you want to smoke and you smoke with your brother but then suddenly you get caught for smoking by al-Shabaab, it's illegal. Your brother did this.

Although al-Shabaab's methods of gathering intelligence may be detrimental to Somali society it is a highly effective practice because it allows them to operate in the shadows. They do not come out into the public eye, which makes them almost impossible to track. Tawfiq tells me that:

It is difficult to identify al-Shabaab members, you can identify a government soldier, the way they dress the way they smoke, but al-Shabaab they look like civilians. They are very cool and you don't know them, a lot of them are trained in intelligence

In addition to their sophisticated intelligence arm, their methods of recruitment have shown to be highly attuned to the domestic situation within Somalia. In particular, they have targeted the country's youth, which as Abdullahi explains, are highly susceptible to the ideas spouted by al-Shabaab propaganda. He explains that it is the young males of Somalia that are the targets of al-Shabaab recruitment and he suggested that if you're a teenage boy who has not had any education and is extremely poor, the likelihood of you turning down the chance of wealth and power that is associated with joining al-Shabaab is very slim. They are also more susceptible to radicalisation because the lack of education means that minds are easily influenced. Peters and Richards (1998) have highlighted how Africa is not only the poorest continent in the world, but it is also the youngest and so "militia life offers training and a livelihood in countries where poverty and numbers overwhelm education and jobs" (Peters & Richards, 1998; 183). As authors such as Boas (2007) and Hoffman (2003) show, the use of children in conflict in Africa is a common method that has proven to be particularly effective.

This is not to say that all teenage boys in Somalia are convinced by the lure of al-Shabaab recruitment methods. However, if they do refuse to join they are sometimes forced into the group regardless. It is not only young boys that are the targets of the group's recruitment methods, it seems that al-Shabaab have identified that security forces let their guard down when dealing with women and do not view them with the same degree of suspicion as men. Daahir explains:

Women as well, women as well, they are soft targets. They are not fighting in combat. They are using them as spies. What was unacceptable is there was one girl, her uncle was I think a government man she was young they tell her the ideology, they say something, then she comes, comes to her uncle, she stays with him. You see you don't expect your daughter, you niece staying with you and you see he was one of the high targets (to al-Shabaab) that guy. That's the guy she killed. So this guy had a lot of bodyguards and he wasn't even expecting it, he was staying in what we say a green area a safer area where government stays, but once she had a chance, she killed. It's much easier to use the girls.

4.6 The sources of funding: “money talks”

Finally, a small number of the participants made mention of the way al-Shabaab fund themselves, which goes without saying is a vital aspect of the group’s operations. It seems Somalia's weak state institutions have created a space for al-Shabaab to impose their own form of religious taxation or zaqat. Asad said he thought that even though al-Shabaab had lost a large portion of its territory it was still being funded by tax collection. He suggested that the group earned money through charity zaqat, taxes on livestock, transport, salaries etc. He said that often the government has no clue this is even taking place and even if they did, there is little they can do about it. He also said that there is a strong possibility that there is money and resources coming from outside the country. Abdullahi told me that he did not know how they funded themselves but thought that perhaps they must have co-financiers from somewhere and that when it comes down to it, al-Shabaab is essentially an organised crime network. He also explained how crucial Kismayo had been in financing al-Shabaab, with the group running the taxation system on the charcoal trade they brought in good revenue. However, the fact that they lost the port in 2012 was a big hit for al-Shabaab and will continue to be a key site strategically in the ongoing conflict. Dr Atta-Asamoah also mentioned that groups such as al-Shabaab are well connected and that one must...

... You also have to look at global jihad more generally and how the exchange of ideology, tactics, motivation and resources have meant that groups such as al-Shabaab and Boko Haram are quite connected.

This point shows the importance of al-Shabaab maintaining their global jihadist agenda as well as their domestic agenda because it guarantees the longevity and reciprocal relationship with jihadist networks such as al-Qaeda.

It is also important to mention the strategic importance of the port of Kismayo. Kismayo was a great financial resource for al-Shabaab before they lost it to AMISOM in 2012. Although they lost a key source of wealth, they have still managed to fund the movement through alternative methods. However, what must be pointed out is that both Kenya and Ethiopia have been highly involved in the administration of Kismayo and Abdullahi suggests that it is one of the main reasons why Kenya has been targeted by al-Shabaab. Kenyan troops and personnel have made up the majority of those guarding and administering the port of

Kismayo since it was reclaimed from al-Shabaab. Abdullahi mentioned that al-Shabaab have tried to further antagonise Kenya by saying they are essentially invading Muslim lands as well as appealing to Muslim Kenyans to turn on their own government. He also said that corruption is rife within the Kenyan government and that the way the borders are run between Somalia and Kenya means it is not difficult for al-Shabaab to operate over the border. He said that 'money talks', bribes, and blackmail are a regular problem when it comes to border guards. Thus he said it makes planning attacks in Garissa and Nairobi that much easier. Furthermore, he mentioned the possibility of Kenyans being paid off by al-Shabaab operatives in Kismayo. Abdullahi said that if Kenya wants to be truly safe they have to move their contingent out of Somalia otherwise they will be a constant target. The fact that they hold Kismayo is a constant thorn in the side of al-Shabaab.

Lastly, Daahir spoke about how he has come to accept his role in his family which is to provide financial support to his friends and relatives. He explains that...

Sometimes I get a phone call, my friend will say "hello brother, I'm in trouble", and I help them, which is the Somali way we help each other.

Daahir says that he is continually sending money back home to make sure his friends and family survive and this is by no means an isolated case. In Chapter Two I highlighted how Horst (2002) emphasises the importance the xaawilad network and how Somali's use it to send money back to the homeland. While Daahir was very clear in his motivations for sending money home, however Marchal (2011) has mentioned that the diaspora played a vital role in funding and supporting al-Shabaab. The example provided by Daahir merely highlights the obligation they feel to support those at home and the ease in which this is achieved. Therefore, as Pirkkalainen & Abdile (2009) suggest, the diaspora can simultaneously contribute and erode peace-building efforts in the homeland. The comparison between Daahir's goodwill and the support al-Shabaab receive from the diaspora is perhaps a good example of this.

4.7 Conclusion

The narratives of the Somali nationals living in South Africa have presented a number of themes which show how al-Shabaab have come to be the resilient and resurgent organisation they are today. What these themes show is that al-Shabaab have managed to survive for different reasons, which can in many ways, be divided into two categories. Firstly, there are

circumstantial reasons, which show that the violent political landscape allowed al-Shabaab to develop and survive because of the weak non-existent state institutions within Somalia. The influx of political Islam and jihadism have undoubtedly played their part as well. Veterans from the Afghan-Soviet war brought with them a new and untested ideology which was viewed with reserved enthusiasm by parts of the Somalia population when the power of the warlords waned in 2004. The actions of AMISOM have also been capitalised as the nature of the peacekeeping force and the way in which they have conducted themselves has allowed the organisation to adopt an insurgent style of warfare while simultaneously taking advantage of the negative image AMISOM have created for themselves in the Somali public eye.

Secondly, al-Shabaab's longevity also comes down to their tactics and decisions they have made which in many respects have made them virtually invisible. The process of decentralisation provides them with a degree of autonomy, meaning if parts of the leadership are killed, the operational capacity of the organisation is not compromised. They are also structured in such a way that they do not need large amounts of territory to survive. However, this places them in a rather ironic position because their shift in strategy ensures their survival, but is at odds with their founding objective of developing a caliphate within the horn of Africa. This irony is further illustrated by the sense of frustration and despair Somali's feel because they do not understand why al-Shabaab keep fighting. Al-Shabaab have also been extremely effective at manipulating and using civilians to the point they are no longer civilians but not quite combatants either. Through intimidation or genuine recruitment, the more vulnerable parts of society are often used to the strategic advantage of al-Shabaab. Women and children are often used in terms of the gathering of intelligence or as transport for bombs because they do not raise as much suspicion as fighting aged male. This is not to say it is only young children and women used in the gathering of intelligence, the participants highlighted that anyone can be intimidated to the point where they may even turn on their family if it ensures their survival. Essentially this shows how al-Shabaab have been incredibly effective at infiltrating Somali society and creating a sense of distrust and insecurity. Lastly, the group have been particularly resourceful in terms of their funding and made use of both domestic and external sources of funding. By implementing their own taxation systems in the territory they still controlled but also receiving funds from outside the country through the diaspora and other jihadist networks

Chapter Five

Beyond state failure: al-Shabaab's crafting of identity and the limits of transnationalism

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a deeper analysis of the themes presented in Chapter Four. By combining these themes with broader narratives discussed in Chapter Two, it will be possible to provide a comprehensive analysis of the sources of al-Shabaab's resilience. Firstly, one of the dominant themes in Chapter Four was the role the weak Somali state has played in the ongoing violence in the country. Since 9/11, weak or 'failed' states such as Somalia have come under much scrutiny for their role in harbouring and exporting terrorism. This chapter will highlight the need to go beyond state failure and investigate a broader array of variables that have contributed to the consistently high levels of insecurity experienced in Somalia. By focusing on the human security of Somalis, the chapter will offer a more comprehensive understanding of why and how Somalia's long and violent history has contributed to al-Shabaab's resilience and longevity.

One of the common reactions displayed by participants during the interview process was a sense of anger and embarrassment at the way al-Shabaab have interpreted Islam. However, they have still managed to use political Islam as a powerful mobilising ideology. This chapter will therefore look at the way in which they have used political Islam to their advantage and will make sense of the limited knowledge of political Islam displayed by the participants. I will also discuss the process of decentralisation al-Shabaab has gone under and how this has placed them in a difficult position, as it ensures their survival, but is at odds with their founding objectives and agenda. This section will also show the transnational aspect of al-Shabaab and how the relationship between regional affiliates is structured and how they are vital in al-Shabaab's transnational goals. It will also be necessary to look at al-Shabaab's link with al-Qaeda – this will demonstrate how the nature of al-Shabaab has changed over the years and how there is no longer the same reliance on the global jihadist organisation. Al-Shabaab's methods, tactics and funding will also be discussed as well as how effective they have been at operating underground and making themselves invisible. The role of women and children in these operations will be explored which will show how they have made a substantial contribution to al-Shabaab being so difficult to locate. Lastly, the group's finances

will also be analysed in order to understand the domestic and foreign sources of funding and how they have managed to sustain themselves in the face of such adversity and continued pressure.

5.2 Insecurity and the violence it creates

The purpose of this section is to highlight how the lack of security (as defined in Chapter Two) has greatly contributed to the ongoing conflict that has plagued Somalia since 1991. The data suggests that the Somali state has been virtually non-existent since the fall of the Barre regime inviting further analysis into how the lack of human security can contribute to the development, survival and resilience of terrorist groups such as al-Shabaab. Virtually all those interviewed mentioned that the continued violence in Somalia is a result of the state's continued inability to provide political goods for its citizens. The lack of governance, according to the participants, has contributed greatly to the development and longevity of al-Shabaab. Furthermore the group is a different manifestation of the violence and turmoil that has plagued the country since 1991.

The dominant counter-terrorism narrative since 9/11 has focused on the idea that failed states are 'breeding grounds' and 'safe havens' for international terrorist groups to plan and carry out attacks on a domestic and international scale (Hehir, 2007). In response to this theory, emphasis has been placed on the need for state building and development in failed states. When Condoleezza Rice was the Secretary of State under the Bush administration she said that "weak and failing states serve as global pathways that facilitate...the movement of criminals and terrorists" (Simmons & Tucker, 2007: 387). Furthermore, the 2004 Commission on Weak States and US National Security suggests that: "Weak and failed governments generate instability, which harms their citizens, drags down their neighbours and ultimately threatens US interest in building an effective international system, providing the foundation for continued prosperity, and, not least, protecting Americans from external threats to our security" (Hehir, 2007: 310). Hence, it is clear that failed states have been in the spot light for a number of years for the role they have seemingly played in the development of international terrorism.

However, there are certain issues with the state failure-terrorism discourse. Firstly, the assumption that all failed states are likely to experience and produce terrorism is simply not

true. Hehir suggests that on his index of failed states, countries high up on the list such as the DRC, Zimbabwe or Chad are unlikely to experience domestic terror related incidents or export terrorism on an international scale (Hehir, 2007: 318). This shows the danger of making generalisations by suggesting that all failed states produce terrorism because there a range of factors and variables that will invariably differ from state to state. As highlighted in Chapter Two, there are fundamental flaws in using the state as the base unit of security analysis in the post-Cold War or 'post-international' period, particularly in the global south. Authors such as Booth (1991), Buzan (1991) and Hendricks (2011) have all argued extensively for the need to go beyond the narrow confines of a state centric analysis of security and place the needs and experiences of individuals at the centre of security analysis. Booth, uses the Kantian idea that “we should treat people as ends and not means. States, however, should be treated as means and not ends” (Booth, 391: 319).

This re-conceptualisation of analysing security is important in the Somali context. The suggestion that state-failure has been the fundamental cause of terrorism limits the analysis to when the Somali state collapsed in 1991. However it is quite clear that the roots of Somali violence and insecurity go back to the Barre-era policies. Siad Barre undoubtedly contributed to the clan tensions and hostility within Somalia but in some respects, his regime did hold the country together because there was a semblance of authority, as warped as it may have been. Caaisho says she would rather have a bad government than no government at all because she knew what would happen in the absence of authority. However when she wept over the departure of Barre, it was not because she had any great affiliation to the deposed leader, but rather it was the impending vacuum of authority that scared Caaisho. While it was Barre who had created the clan tensions and hostility that would turn into open conflict post-1991, he also kept the tense and fragile situation from turning violent. This highlights the importance of looking beyond state-failure because Somalia's sources of insecurity go further than the last 26 years. Caaisho's sentiment that bad government is better than no government is understandable, however it is quite clear that the 'bad' government created the intense fighting over the control of Somalia. Caaisho admitted as much and mentioned the Marehan, Ogaden and Dulbahante clans had been favoured for so long, other clans not only didn't support Barre's regime but were openly hostile toward it. Once he left the country, there was always going to be a challenge for power. This highlights that although internal conflict was more prevalent in the post-Barre era, Somalis did not enjoy a secure society during his regime. The seeds of the contemporary security crisis in Somalia were planted during Barre's regime.

By re-conceptualising the study of security and positioning the individual at the centre of analysis, one may focus on issues that would be overlooked if state failure was the only contributing factor to terrorism. In Chapter Four, one of the themes discussed was the sexual exploitation of women by AMISOM peacekeepers. In addition to this, a number of participants spoke about the generally poor treatment Somalis experience at the hands by AMISOM. In essence this shows how it is not only al-Shabaab that poses a threat to Somalis, but also the people that are supposedly protecting them. This has also provided further fuel to al-Shabaab's propaganda campaign because it provides them with an opportunity to sow the seed of doubt in the minds of Somalis. It demonstrates how al-Shabaab thrive on the insecurities that exist within Somalia and it is not only the failure of the Somali state that contribute to this insecurity but also the presence of foreign troops from the AU who are tasked with trying to secure the Somali state.

Thus, when Fowsio suggested that “al-Shabaab is just a different way of fighting the same problem. The situation now is no different to 20 years ago, it is just fought in a different way”, she is highlighting how the constant insecurity in Somalia will consistently manifest itself in violent ways until the factors causing the insecurity have been addressed.

5.3.1 Constructivism and the radicalisation of Islamic Agency

From the data it is possible to see that the jihadist ideology was imported into Somalia and this created a more complex nuanced group. With this in mind it is now possible to begin the analysis of al-Shabaab's ideological foundations within a constructivist framework. The issue with analysing the al-Shabaab of today, as purely a product of state failure, is that it uses the state as the base unit for analysis. Mamdani (2004) makes an interesting point when he suggests that the way the Bush administration addressed the post-9/11 threat is a similar way that past presidents addressed the threat posed by the Soviet empire during the Cold War. According to Mamdani, “9/11 offered a rare historical opportunity to turn a widespread social concern for security in the face of terrorism into an opportunity to pursue a factional neo-Reaganite agenda-to settle unfinished business from the Cold War” (Mamdani, 2004: 231). The 'axis of evil' suggested the current threat was based in countries such as Iraq, Iran and North Korea. It meant that al-Qaeda was shaped into a threat that people were familiar with and people had seen before. Unfortunately such an interpretation completely missed the point

of al-Qaeda and what such an organisation stands for.

Al-Shabaab's specific use of terror as a tactic has undoubtedly contributed to their resilience. According to the participants, the fact that the group is so difficult to locate is precisely why they are so difficult to defeat. Their use of improvised explosive devices, insurgent attacks on military bases, transport routes etc. and finally suicide bombs has meant they have been able to dodge and evade a larger, traditional styled force that is AMISOM. The question is why these tactics are so popular within jihadist groups. For this question to be answered one needs to retrace the roots of terrorism as a tactic for a specific objective. Daahir spoke of the fact that he had heard the news about suicide bomb attacks in Afghanistan and Iraq and then suddenly they were carried out within Somalia. Mamdani explains that the most famous CIA-funded terrorist was none other than Osama bin Laden. He suggests that one the costs of the Afghan-Soviet war...

...arose because the United States and its allies created, trained, and sustained an infrastructure of terror, international in scope, free of any effective state control, and wrapped up in the language of religious war. Official America learned to distinguish between two types of terrorism – “theirs” and “ours” – and cultivated an increasingly benign attitude to ours. But then it turned out that their terrorism was born out of ours. (Mamdani, 2004: 234).

Mamdani states that the two perpetrators of the 1993 World Trade Centre bomb were veterans of the Afghan Jihad and used “ammonium nitrate and fuel oil – a formula taught in CIA manuals” (Mamdani, 2004: 235). It becomes clear that the tactics used by al-Qaeda and subsequently al-Shabaab are not based in some ideological conviction but are instead a relic of the Cold War. The ideas brought back from Afghanistan were not only based on ideas of how to politicise the *Ummah* in East Africa, but the links were also used to pass on practical and technical knowledge of methods used to further the agenda of al-Shabaab. Thus, one must be very careful in suggesting that state-failure will always lead to terrorism. In fact there needs to be a presence of other specific variables that will result in terrorist methods being employed by certain groups. It is why before al-Shabaab, Somalia saw 15 years of civil war but terror tactics were not used. Al-Shabaab reconfigured the way warfare was conducted

within Somalia. It is therefore not surprising that participants have intimated that al-Shabaab is simply a different way of fighting the same problem. For them, they are still experiencing violence but in this case the violence has a different face.

According to Wendt (2004), the appeal of Constructivism as a method of analysis is that “the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces and that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature” (Wendt, 2004: 1). Constructivism invites us to look further than the 'states systemic project'. It suggests that there are units of analysis other than states when it comes to international theory. Individuals or transnational movements are equally as capable of influencing international relations and behaviour. Perhaps the relevance of Constructivism when analysing groups such as al-Shabaab or al-Qaeda is that it can account for the unique nature of these organisations, i.e. their simultaneous, domestic and transnational objectives and make up. The emphasis on shared ideas, norms and beliefs means that Constructivism is not as rigid as the more materialist theories of IR such as realism. Instead Constructivism argues that “actions continually produce and reproduce conceptions of Self and other, and as such identities and interests are always in process, even if those processes are sometimes stable enough that-for certain purposes-we plausibly can take them as given” (Wendt, 2004: 36). This means that Constructivism can account for the fluid and dynamic nature of a group such as al-Shabaab. Lynch (2006) provides a particularly relevant article on “al-Qaeda's constructivist turn”, which looks at how al-Qaeda is most accurately analysed through the scope of Constructivism. Lynch suggests that any war of ideas automatically brings in Constructivism which is interested in the formations of norms, socialisation and discourse rather than “questions of material power, economic rationality, or formal international institutions” (Lynch, 2006: 2).

5.3.2 Foreign Invaders and Infidels: Religion or politics?

Now that Constructivism has been linked with political Islam and al-Qaeda, it is now possible to use Constructivism to effectively analyse the Islamist agenda of al-Shabaab and how the nature of al-Qaeda has shaped al-Shabaab into the group it is today. The ideas spoken about in the previous paragraph were well-known by key figures within the al-Shabaab leadership group, specifically Aden Hashi Ayro as mentioned in chapter 1 (Hansen, 2013: 22). Thus, the seeds of al-Qaeda had been planted before they fully decentralised into the current

Constructivist organisation. One can break down al-Shabaab's use of political Islam into key moments. Firstly, when Ethiopia initially invaded in 2006 and secondly, when it went through a complete restructuring of the organisation after 2010. This restructuring also included the group pledging allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2012. Al-Shabaab were particularly savvy in the way they allied their own Islamist agenda to the nationalist agenda within Somalia. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Somali nationalist sentiment is only seen in the face of a foreign force which in this case was the Ethiopian-led invasion. However, not only were they labelled as an unwanted foreign actor in Somalia, they were also considered as 'infidels' by al-Shabaab – non-believers coming to claim Muslim lands. Thus two different narratives were brought together to form a unique agenda inspired by the globalist ideology of al-Qaeda and combined with a Somali context. Somalia not only became a site for confrontation, in terms of Somalis trying to repel the Ethiopians, but essentially Muslims were fighting for a bigger goal or objective. Thus, even in 2006, al-Shabaab ideals were, to an extent, already in line with al-Qaeda's.

The fact that all of the participants had little to say about al-Shabaab's ideology is not surprising. Perhaps even more pertinent is the fact that some of them were embarrassed to talk about it. They have all fled Somalia because of the ongoing security situation and their disdain and fear for al-Shabaab is preventing them from venturing back. It becomes clear that their interpretation of Islam is very different from al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab. For them, Islam is their religion not their politics. It got to a point in the interviews where I could almost predict the response when I asked the participants about the group using religion as a mobilising ideology. It was always along the lines of “this is not our religion. Islam is about peace not this. What they are doing is wrong.” It seemed they could not comprehend how al-Shabaab were using their religion to form the basis of the group's agenda. However, this lack of comprehension is completely understandable because, for the participants, Islam was not politicised. They had experienced and embodied Islam but not political Islam. It is only possible to really come to grips with the more radical ideology of al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda if one can comprehend politicising a religion for a specific purpose.

Islam and political Islam are therefore two very different concepts and just because a Muslim individual does not automatically mean that they will understand how Islam has been politicised. This would risk falling into the trap outlined by Mamdani. By thinking that participants would have an understanding of political Islam, one automatically assumes the

religion of Islam is politicised in its entirety. Mamdani highlights that this belief was largely born out of the post-9/11 narrative when Muslims worldwide were challenged to prove themselves as 'good' and thus were considered 'bad' until proven otherwise (Mamdani, 2004: 15). In essence, an entire religion was stigmatised and thus it is important to not fall into the trap of generalising and viewing Islam and the political interpretation of Islam as one in the same. Therefore, the feelings of embarrassment, surprise, anger and shock expressed by participants when asked about al-Shabaab's interpretation of Islam is understandable because al-Shabaab have developed an exclusive identity that is rooted in Wahhabism. Ali (2003) suggests that Wahhabism came from a theologian son's disillusionment with Islam in the 1700s. Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab called for...

...a return to the 'pure beliefs' of olden times. He opposed the worship of the Prophet Muhammad, condemned Muslims who prayed at the shrines of holy men, criticised the custom of marking graves, stressed the 'unity of one God' and denounced all non-Sunni and even some Sunni groups (including the Sultan-Caliph in Istanbul) as heretics and hypocrites. All this provided a politico-religious justification for an ultra-sectarian jihad against other Muslims, especially the Shia 'heretics' and including the Ottoman Empire. (2003: 74)

The Wahhabi strain of Islam provided inspiration for groups such as al-Qaeda, and subsequently al-Shabaab, who strived to develop a world envisioned by Wahhab. However, what this shows is a political identity created by a very specific and highly divisive interpretation of Islam. This construction of identity has formed the basis of al-Shabaab's agenda and gives credence to Wendt's claim that "the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces" (Wendt, 2004: 1). The acceptance of norms espoused by Wahhabism highlight how political interpretations of Islam are based in rational, human thought processes and thus cannot be understood by Muslims who do not share the same ideas. Religion has been used as a mobilising force by al-Shabaab, but by doing so they have also alienated a large portion of Somali-Muslims because they do not identify with and recognise with al-Shabaab's norms and ideas. While al-Shabaab's identity is a complex mix of religion and politics, the very fact that it is an identity automatically suggests it has been constructed and accepted by its members and supporters.

It is now important to discuss how regional politics have shaped, and in many ways been a major driver in developing, the group's narrative. Al-Shabaab's objectives are driven by the presence of a common enemy on Muslim lands. As long as there are foreign troops within Somalia al-Shabaab will have a continued source of fuel for their propaganda campaign. What was evident in the participants' responses was a clear condemnation of what al-Shabaab was doing in Somalia. With the exception of Taawfiq, all the other Somali nationals displayed a degree of hostility to the presence of surrounding countries within Somalia. Ethiopia and Kenya, in particular, were highlighted as having no business in Somalia and that the solution to Somalia's problems needed to come from within Somalia and not via countries who have their own agenda. In addition, the general feeling towards AMISOM was incredibly negative, with the peacekeeping force being accused of rape and violence towards civilians by Khadra and Fowsio. They even made the surprising remark that AMISOM were worse than al-Shabaab. Whether or not these accusations made by the two women are true is not important. The importance is based in the fact that such hostility towards AMISOM exists. Dr Andrews Atta-Asamoah suggested that the true measure of al-Shabaab's unity will be when there ceases to be a common enemy. He suggested that it is possible the lack of a common objective will mean that there is no direction and could result on members of the group turning on themselves. Thus, in an ironic turn, one of the sources of al-Shabaab's resilience is the very presence of AMISOM, i.e. a common enemy. In addition to this, the presence of AMISOM will always be viewed by al-Shabaab as an invasion of Muslim lands and hence will attract foreign jihadists from outside the country because Somalia will be couched as a continued space for Islamic resistance against the foreign force. Again, the resistance towards AMISOM, and in particular Kenyan forces, is not purely based at an ideological level. Abdullahi also made mention of the fact that Kismayo used to be a key financial hub for al-Shabaab and with the strong Kenyan presence within the port town, cross-border attacks in Kenya can be expected to continue.

5.4.1 Decentralisation and the limits of transnationalism

The second important moment to discuss in terms of al-Shabaab becoming more closely associated with al-Qaeda was during 2009 – not long before al-Shabaab lost a substantial amount of territory, personnel and financial resources. What occurred was a major shift in the organisations structure. Firstly, the fact that the group had lost so much of its territory meant

that it had suffered a similar fate to al-Qaeda and, like al-Qaeda, it went under a major process of decentralisation. Bryden (2015) suggests that this decentralisation process allowed the group to spread itself within Somalia and East Africa to a point where “a successful strike against one branch of the movement does not necessarily impact its operations elsewhere” (Bryden, 2015: 4). In addition to these structural changes under Godane the nature of the group changed. Not only did al-Shabaab pledge allegiance to al-Qaeda, it also merged with its Kenyan affiliate al-Hijra. The nature of al-Shabaab's jihad now transcended its Somali origins. It had partnered with a global jihadist network and was now in a position to collaborate with a jihadist group within the East African region (Bryden, 2015: 5).

Menkhaus also suggests that al-Shabaab's media wing al-Kataib Media Foundation was also effective in creating a global awareness of the organisation throughout the Muslim world. Perhaps one of the most famous occasions al-Shabaab used its online presence was during the Westgate Shopping Mall attack in 2013. The group was reporting events on the ground in real time through their Twitter account. It also used its media wing to appeal to Muslims around the world as well as within the East African region. Menkhaus suggests that al-Shabaab portrayed themselves as an “icon of armed Islamic resistance with considerable appeal to a wide cross-section of Muslims, so much so that the group name and identity successfully franchised into neighbouring Kenya and Tanzania” (Menkhaus, 2014: 312). Al-Shabaab were also quick to pick up on the fact that there were groups of Muslims within East Africa that felt disenfranchised and they adapted their propaganda campaign accordingly. Their merger with al-Hijra provided great traction within Kenya, but, because they also produced online movies in Arabic, English and Swahili, their message became more available to those outside Somalia. One such movie was called “Mpeketoni: Reclaiming back Muslim lands under Kenyan occupation”. This was a direct appeal to marginalised Muslims within Kenya to rise up against the government and take part in al-Shabaab-inspired jihad. Haynes, writing in 2005, wrote an eerily accurate prediction of the dangers of Islamic militancy within East Africa. Before al-Shabaab came into existence, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda had experienced issues of political repression, economic marginalisation and rapid social change (Haynes, 2005: 1321). He makes the point that in these countries, it was often the Muslim communities that were in the minority that bore the brunt of these crises and changes. In fact, Haynes argues they were “at or near the bottom of the economic and political hierarchy, and some harbour deep feelings of disappointment and disillusionment in relation to economic and political outcomes” (Haynes, 2005: 1322). Haynes shows that there were undoubtedly

serious issues at play within East Africa and this created a situation in which “Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda are targets for the expansion of transnational Islamic militancy, seeking to exploit novel spaces for growth” (Haynes, 2005: 1322).

Al-Shabaab’s transnationalism is also multifaceted in that it also attracts a number of foreign fighters that are able to travel through the Somali border, to fight the Somalia jihad. Fowsio and Khadra both mentioned that there are a number of foreign fighters in al-Shabaab specifically from surrounding countries. They did not articulate exactly what they were doing in Somalia but suggested they must be there for a specific reason. Rather than being a training ground or 'breeding place' for terrorism, Somalia is in fact a destination for foreign fighters looking to take up arms in the name of jihad. With the relative porous nature of Somalia's borders, particularly with Kenya, al-Shabaab has seen a good flow of foreign recruits. This has most definitely sustained their fighting force despite the heavy losses they have endured. This also means that because of Somalia's inability to patrol its borders effectively, al-Shabaab has taken on a transnational presence because the task of moving personnel and resources between neighbouring countries is made that much easier. Not only does it make it easier for those travelling to Somalia but it also makes it easier for the group to plan operations and attacks across the border in countries such as Kenya and Uganda.

With the online propaganda campaign of al-Shabaab targeting these marginalised Muslim communities, the link between al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab becomes clearer. Al-Shabaab not only intended to continue its operations within Somalia but inspire Muslims throughout East Africa to fight their own jihad. The only way to do this was espousing new ideas and norms based on the politicised version of Islam that al-Shabaab was generating.

The question that needs to be asked is: if al-Shabaab was so concerned with creating a presence within East Africa, why has it not been responsible for more attacks throughout the region? Over the last two years in particular the majority of al-Shabaab's operations have been in Southern and Central Somalia – the Southern operations conducted mostly by its brutal wing *Jaysh Ayman*. However, there have been very few conducted throughout East Africa. Throughout the middle period of 2017, there have been a handful of attacks in the North Eastern areas of Kenya such as Lamu, where in July, 9 villagers were beheaded (Kimani, 2017). Even so, these attacks over the border in Kenya did not quite live up to the attacks carried out in Nairobi and Garissa. From 2012 to 2014, it looked as though al-

Shabaab were on the cusp of being a truly transnational threat. However, if anything al-Shabaab's operations have become more domestic with the large majority of attacks coming from within Somalia itself. It is important to analyse this further because it highlights an important aspect of the organisation. One needs to accept that the organisation does not have some form of centralised form of command and authority outside Somalia. The decentralised structure is not only limited within the Somali borders. The Constructivist nature of al-Shabaab suggests that the group will rely on the spread of its ideas and norms to other groups and individuals within the region to pursue jihad in East Africa. Al-Shabaab's regional objectives will have to rely greatly on the strength of its regional partners and affiliates if its transnational objectives are to be realised. It is only in recent years that al-Shabaab has truly accepted its regional affiliate's goals and objectives as its own. However, although they may exist under the same banner, the decentralised nature of al-Shabaab is still evident and thus one cannot be surprised if al-Shabaab's regional objectives are not carried out if its partners don't have the capacity to do so.

It is not only within East Africa that al-Shabaab has partners and affiliates. Somalia is a large country and al-Shabaab's has different wings rather than affiliates within the state itself. As mentioned earlier, many of the operations in the Southern part of the country have been carried out by *Jaysh Ayman*: a commando unit which essentially specialises in cross-border raids into Kenya. According to Bryden, it is a "combination of Somali and East African fighters, *Jaysh Ayman* has been linked by some close observers to the Mpeketoni operation, and has subsequently been accused of planning terrorist attacks further south in the tourist destinations of Malindi and Mombassa" (Bryden, 2015: 9). Thus, if *Jaysh Ayman* continues to be a well-resourced and motivated wing of al-Shabaab, the border areas of Somalia will continue to be targeted.

All of the participants interviewed were from the central and southern areas of Somalia, largely from the more traditional base of al-Shabaab's activities. However, there is another wing of the organisation in the North East of the country: Al-Shabaab North East (ASNE). This wing in the northern part of the country is mainly active within the semi-autonomous region of Puntland and operates within the region mountainous terrain, carrying out raids and engaging in "fitful skirmishes with Puntland military forces" (Bryden, 2015: 7). For the most part the group is made up of a mixture of "clan militias and committed jihadists". In June this year ASNE carried out one of the deadliest attacks in al-Shabaab's decade long history by

killing 70 people in an attack on the Af-Urur army base within Puntland. Perhaps what is most interesting is that ASNE first developed as a “community-based revolt against the Puntland administration’s plans for mineral exploitation in the Majiyahan area of eastern Sanaag” (Bryden, 2015; 7). However, now it is carrying out attacks in a more mainstream al-Shabaab manner. Such is the potency of al-Shabaab’s jihadist ideology.

5.4.2 Al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda: What does the future hold?

Al-Shabaab’s move to pledge allegiance to al-Qaeda could also be considered a tactical move as much as it was an ideological move. What Lynch points out is that al-Qaeda invested heavily in raising funds and resources and spent a great amount of time and energy in recruiting personnel. In this sense, al-Qaeda showed a combination of hard and soft power (Lynch, 2006: 10). The organisation characterised itself as a promoter of ideas and norms, but this is not to suggest it did not have some form of material capacity. If the opportunity arose to gain control of a territorial base, Lynch argues that al-Qaeda would take it (Lynch, 2006: 10). Al-Qaeda would both inspire but also support Islamist groups and al-Shabaab was a good example of this. Two of the participants mentioned the direct links between al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda. What they suggested is that al-Shabaab does not exist on its own: the links between them and al-Qaeda were established at least two decades ago. Al-Shabaab would undoubtedly realise the benefits of pledging full allegiance to al-Qaeda, in a time where the group had lost territory resources etc, the support al-Qaeda could offer would have been attractive.

The relationship between al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda is complex because in it is an undeniably important link but at the same time, it is decentralised in that al-Shabaab's leadership do not answer directly to al-Qaeda. In many ways al-Shabaab are a franchise of al-Qaeda in which they exist independently but simultaneously adopt the identity of al-Qaeda and are part of the broader, global struggle for the *ummah* and developing a single caliphate for Muslims around the world (Agbibo, 2014: 30). Whether or not al-Shabaab would be able to exist without the global jihadist network is an important question because it is a good measure of how resilient and independent the Somali-based organisation is. Al-Qaeda have undoubtedly provided invaluable assistance to al-Shabaab especially when they lost territory, resources and personnel in 2010. The direction and leadership provided by foreign al-Qaeda operatives in the wake of the death of Aden Ayrow possibly saved al-Shabaab. However, the group has evolved quite drastically in the last seven years and there is an argument to suggest that they

are no longer as reliant on al-Qaeda as they once were. The 2015 IGAD report on al-Shabaab suggests that there is a rift in the organisation between those loyal to al-Qaeda and those who wish to join ISIS. It seems that this division is rooted in “Al-Shabaab figures [being] resentful of the new leadership, as well as a historical schism between elements of the Al-Shabaab leadership and the muhaajiriin (foreign fighters) who have long felt marginalised and insecure” (IGAD, 2016: 12). These rifts between foreign fighters and Somali elements, not to mention the difference of opinion on al-Qaeda and ISIS, show that al-Shabaab is not the cohesive organisation it once was. However, it also indicates that the influence and power of al-Qaeda is not what it once was either. The IGAD report released in 2016 was compiled during the height of ISIS’s powers and in all likelihood was the reason for al-Shabaab members looking towards the Iraq-Syria based organisation. Agbiboa also makes the point that al-Qaeda affiliates are also encouraged to make a point of carrying out attacks against Western targets that create worldwide media coverage (Agbiboa, 2013: 32). In recent years, Al-Shabaab have, if anything, become more Somali-based and their attacks are predominantly on AMSIOM bases and personnel as well as Somali government officials and civilians. This suggests the links between al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda are not as strong as they once were and going forward al-Shabaab will not rely on al-Qaeda as they did in the early years of the alliance.

5.5.1 Evolving structure, strategy and methods

It must also be mentioned that al-Shabaab's mass decentralisation strategy even within Somalia is best analysed through a Constructivist lens. All of the participants spoke of the fact that al-Shabaab was virtually invisible – they operated in the shadows. There was no sign of the organisation in day-to-day life and their intelligence network under the Aminyaad (the branch of al-Shabaab responsible for intelligence, counter-intelligence and special operations) is particularly effective at operating out of public sight. Their independent cells carry out insurgent style attacks and suicide bombs make them exceedingly difficult to locate. Their autonomous and decentralised nature relied on a key premise: a common understanding of the group’s ideology. In order to empower local commanders and 'regional' governors as Bryden suggests Godane did in the 2013-2014 period, it is vital that they understand what the group is trying to achieve (Bryden, 2015: 7). Essentially, if the group had continued to operate on the basis that the Shura Council would be the centralised base handing down orders all that would be required of the commander and governors is an understanding of the

command and them acting on it. However, with the Constructivist nature of al-Shabaab over recent years, the lower level operatives are required to have an acute understanding of the group's ideology as they must embody the norms of the group and act with conviction. Bryden mentions that Diiriye is inclined to decentralise the group further which would create a truly multi-polar organisation. He also makes the point that this will test the group's cohesion and unity (Bryden 2015: 7). He is right to make this point as there is a definite possibility that al-Shabaab could become a fractured group lacking direction looking forward. Alternatively, there is also the possibility that under the continued pressure of AMISOM, further decentralisation is necessary for the group's survival. Instead of becoming a less cohesive group, it will continue to be a threat simply because of the embodiment of the group's ideas and norms by the independent cells acting within al-Shabaab's skeletal structure.

This decentralised structure means that small groups of combatants will carry out attacks on AMISOM, because al-Shabaab simply doesn't exist as one large collection of combatants at one time. This has its advantages because it means they are much quicker in comparison to the more cumbersome AMISOM force. As Daahir highlighted in Chapter 4, this essentially means that they are able to attack and disappear before the peacekeepers have had time to react. These methods of attacks combined with the use of roadside improvised explosive devices and suicide bombs mean that al-Shabaab are a formidable fighting force even though they are greatly outnumbered by AMISOM and do not control swathes of territory. This reinforces Kaldor's point when she suggests that warfare in the global South is no longer governed by the guerrilla principles set out by Guavara and Mao. There is no longer the need or desire to secure popular support, rather the control is sourced through "sowing 'fear and hatred'" (Kaldor, 2012: 9).

5.5.2 Youth: victims or perpetrators?

It is also necessary to discuss al-Shabaab's recruitment methods because it has been successful in continually replenishing its ranks despite the heavy losses it has endured over the years. Abdullahi suggested that the group targeted young people in Somalia, and specifically young boys. He suggested that one of the biggest issues was that Somalia's education system is poor and that there are few opportunities for them. This has created a sense of anger and disillusionment which is taken advantage of by al-Shabaab. Peters and

Richards (1998) suggest that there are typically two main perspectives of child soldiers from the affected adult populations. Either they stigmatise youth combatants as evil (as 'bandits' and 'vermin') or they view the “young fighters as victims” (Peters & Richards, 1998: 183). Peters and Richards research was centred on youth combatants in Sierra Leone and they highlight that, despite what adults may think of them, their agency is often ignored. They are either victims of undemocratic practices carried out by 'warlords' and military regimes or they are almost dehumanised and labelled as 'barbarians' in which case their capacity to be considered as rational political subjects is cancelled out. However, Peters and Richards highlight that this not the case and that often youth combatants take up arms with their “eyes open, and defend their choice, sometimes proudly. Set against a background of destroyed families and failed educational systems, militia activity offers young people a chance to make their way in the world” (1998: 183). Boas (2007) makes a profound point by stating that “the only way to understand youth involvement in such processes is to take their own experiences seriously, even if the narratives presented by such youthful actors do not fit very well with existing categories of political behaviour and may also challenge our human rights ethics” (Boas, 2007; 40).

The Mercy Corps report on the link between youths and insurgency in Colombia, Afghanistan and Somalia suggests that another reason why al-Shabaab is attractive to the Somali youth is because the group rejects clannism (Mercy Corps, 2015). The violence that dominated the 1990s in Somalia was largely fought along clan lines and divisions, thus the refreshing ideology was attractive to young people. One has to remember that it is no coincidence that al-Shabaab have targeted the youth in Somalia. The population is incredibly young. According to the Mercy Corps report, nearly 63% of the population is below 24. What is even more alarming was that Somalia ranked 1st in the Child Soldiers index of 2014 (Mercy Corps, 2015). It is clear that al-Shabaab have made a concerted effort to influence the young, malleable minds of Somalia. The report also makes mentions of the fact that al-Shabaab managed to radicalise the education facilities in certain areas (Mercy Corps, 2015) This means they could kick their propaganda campaign into action by pointing out the faults of the Somali state which include rampant corruption, political instability, clannism within government, and poor or non-existent administration of state institutions including the education system. The report makes a good point by stating that when “progressive voices cede educational institutions to armed groups, they lose the opportunity to shape narratives and attitudes, or to provide a compelling source of meaning” (Mercy Corps, 2015). It is clear

is that al-Shabaab have tapped into Somalia's large youth population, their support is based on the premise that people accept the norms and ideas they promote. The portion of the population most likely to hear and accept what they have to say is the youth of the country and the fact that they make up such a large section of the population plays into al-Shabaab's hands.

5.5.3 Women's agency and terrorism

One of the reasons youth involvement in African warfare is sometimes misunderstood is the failure to accept that the nature of warfare has changed and that “our understanding of war is still cloaked both in the contemporary understanding of war emerging out of the European nation-state system” (2007: 40). In many ways, this also highlights why the roles of women are not given the consideration they deserve in terms of their agency and contribution in war efforts. A report by the Centre of Global Counter-Terrorism Cooperation on *The Roles of Women in Terrorism, Conflict, and Violent Extremism* (2013) highlights that women play multiple roles in the “terrorism realm” and can be highly influential whether it be aiding or defying insurgent and terrorist activities (Fink, Harakat & Shetret, 2013: 7). Modise and Curnow (2000), highlight Modise's experience as woman combatant and the role she played as an Umkhonto we Sizwe operative in the ANC's liberation struggle. There is a sense that stories of the liberation are largely told from a male-centric perspective and that there is an unease and unwillingness to acknowledge the role women played. While it is quite clear that women played a crucial role in the fight against apartheid, their agency is often ignored and downplayed by patriarchal perspectives of warfare. This point is highly relevant when it comes to understanding the role of women in al-Shabaab. Daahir suggests that women have been specifically recruited for intelligence purposes. He suggested that women are viewed with less suspicion which creates a false sense of security amongst male targets. This makes intelligence gathering or access to certain government officials or military personnel that much easier. A recent study conducted by the Institute for Security Studies reaffirms this point:

Cachalia, Salifu and Ndung'u report that al-Shabaab recruit through social media and mosque outreach. They explain that Somali women are particularly vulnerable to recruitment because of high levels of illiteracy, 'combined

with the lack of real alternatives to make a livelihood, particularly in areas controlled by al-Shabaab'. Female recruits' roles in al-Shabaab include fundraising, cooking, and working as intelligence officers and suicide bombers. (N'dungu, Salifu & Sigsworth, 2017: 20)

This highlights how women play key roles in al-Shabaab's ongoing insurgency and thus must be considered as important constituents in the organisations resilience. It is yet another example of how al-Shabaab is heavily reliant on Somalia's weak state institutions and services. They have become remarkably adept at manipulating Somali men, women and children's desperation to their advantage.

The roles of the Somali youth and women reaffirm the need to be wary of falling into the trap of analysing warfare from Eurocentric and male-centric perspectives. Essentially, it challenges us to be mindful of authors such as Nordstrom (2008) and Hendricks (2011) who argue the changing nature of warfare particularly in the post-Cold War era. To ignore and side-line the role of youth and women combatants in al-Shabaab would create a skewed conception of what is a highly resourceful organisation.

5.5.3 Al-Shabaab and its sources of finance

Over the years al-Shabaab have had to be resourceful in terms of financing their operations. It appears they have managed to fund themselves through domestic and international sources. From a domestic point of view, they have managed to implement their own taxation system in areas that they control. From an international perspective, they have relied on foreign donations brought into the country through a complex system which has proven to be difficult to interdict by foreign security agencies. Highlighting, yet again, how al-Shabaab's existence and survival is so reliant on the combination of domestic and transnational factors.

As mentioned above, al-Shabaab have been effective at taking advantage of the lack of control the Somali government exercises over the taxation system within the country. Even now that the group has lost a substantial portion of its territory, it still manages to sustain itself from funds collected largely within the country. Fanusie and Entz (2017) provides a comprehensive analysis on the groups finances and suggests that until 2016, the majority of finances came from the charcoal trade. However in the last year this has decreased largely

because the United Arab Emirates have cracked down on charcoal imports from Somalia (Fanusie & Entz, 2017). As a result, the group has shifted its attention towards taxing sugar and livestock (Fanusie & Entz, 2017). The fact that al-Shabaab doesn't have a port makes it difficult for it to conduct smuggling operations, but as Abdullahi pointed out, there is often a great deal of corruption that takes place within the Kenyan army who control the Kismayo port, which means that al-Shabaab have continued with these operations. Other sources of finance which include kidnapping, particularly employees of aid agencies working in areas controlled by al-Shabaab. If the situation is to get worse and Somalia is plagued by famine like it was in 2011, al-Shabaab are likely to use kidnapping as viable fundraising option (Fanusie & Entz, 2017). The domestic financial resources of al-Shabaab is another example of how the groups relies on the weak state structure of Somalia for its continued survival

From an international perspective, a number of the participants expressed to me that they knew al-Shabaab were receiving money from outside of Somalia however they could not tell me where it was coming from. This is not surprising because of the lack of a formal banking system...

... in Somalia, the country receives many of its remittances in a circuitous manner involving international trade. Remittance agents in Somali diaspora communities instruct agents in Somalia to provide funds to local recipients, which the local agents do using cash on hand. But since the international agent cannot wire money directly to Somalia, they send funds to UAE-based money clearinghouses. The clearinghouses give loans to Somali traders for importing goods. When the traders sell those goods in Somalia, they reimburse the local remittance agent. This complex system makes it difficult to track the flow of remittances and identify recipients. (Fanusie & Entz, 2017: 10)

This highlights Nordstrom's point about the shadows of war and how the networks of war are “complex sets of cross-state economic and political linkages that move outside *formally* recognised state-based channels” (Nordstrom, 2007: 107). The external financial networks that al-Shabaab have tapped into are exceedingly difficult for law enforcement agencies to track because the lack of formalised banking means very little regulation. Traditionally al-

Shabaab have relied on donations from the diaspora. It is estimated that the diaspora have sent approximately \$1 billion a year home but it is not known how much of this is claimed by al-Shabaab (Fanusie & Entz, 2017: 10). As the data suggests, al-Shabaab's image is no longer seen as the beacon of national resistance it once was but rather as an obstacle in Somalia's path to peace. It is therefore likely that foreign donations will not be as forthcoming as they once were.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it appears the links between al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda are not as strong as they once were. This is evident in the financial support al-Shabaab receives from their senior partner. Fanusie and Entz suggest that at present there is very little, if any financial assistance provided by al-Qaeda. However, they do suggest that if al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula continue to gain strength in Yemen, this situation may change (Fanusie & Entz, 2017).

The funding of al-Shabaab highlights how it is reliant on both domestic and external sources of funding. With the decreasing support from the diaspora and waning influence of al-Qaeda it appears that for the foreseeable future al-Shabaab will be more reliant on its domestic sources of taxation and smuggling which will require continued cooperation with Kenyan personnel controlling Kismayo port. The participants all highlighted how al-Shabaab undoubtedly had received money from external sources however they constantly told me that al-Shabaab is primarily a Somali organisation in all respects and from a financial perspective this appears to be the case.

5.6 Conclusion

What this chapter has sought to achieve is a deeper analysis of the themes that were introduced in the previous chapter. The data provided some very clear trends and the preceding discussion has sought to give these themes meaning in a broader context. In other words, an attempt has been made to see how these trends fit in with the broader discussions taking place around issues such as the links between lack of human security and violence, the politicisation of Islam, the tactics employed by al-Shabaab and the political dynamics at play within the Horn and East African regions.

Firstly, the continued political instability and lack of security in Somalia was shown to be a

major factor in the ongoing violence in Somalia. Rather than analysing al-Shabaab through the state failure-terrorism discourse, this chapter has sought to show that the lack of human security has been a major contributor to violence in Somalia. This has shown that state failure does not automatically cause terrorism, but rather the lack of security associated with weak and failing states can lead to violence which in certain circumstances can result in terrorist activity. Following on from this point, the second part of this chapter provided an analysis of Islamic agency and how the politicisation of Islam has constructed an identity that has been embodied by al-Shabaab and utilised as a mobilising ideology. This has been effective at framing al-Shabaab's insurgency as defensive jihad of Muslim lands which has not only been effective in recruiting combatants in Somalia but from international sources as well. As this thesis has continually pointed out, the importance of the Afghan-Soviet war and the effect it has had on groups such as al-Shabaab cannot be emphasised enough. There has not only been a transfer of ideas and norms from Afghanistan but the tactics and methods used in the 10 year long war have also been highly influential and the main reason why al-Shabaab has employed terrorist tactics such as suicide attacks.

This chapter has also sought to show how the group's process of decentralisation has undoubtedly contributed to its survival and longevity. The group is incredibly hard to track and it is structured in such a way that the loss of senior leadership figure is not a fatal blow to the organisation. However, there are also limits to this process because, as a number of participants suggested, it is unclear what al-Shabaab are trying to achieve now that they have lost so much of their territory. In many ways, they are seen as an obstacle in Somalia's process. It is also clear that going forward al-Shabaab do have transnational objectives but this will greatly depend on their regional affiliates such as al-Hijra.

Lastly, this chapter has looked at al-Shabaab's methods of operations and sources of funding. They have been remarkably dynamic and flexible in terms of the way they have adapted to the nature of the threat posed by AMISOM. They have managed to restructure themselves in such a way that they are virtually invisible. They are hesitant to engage in open battle with AMISOM and prefer ambush and hit and run tactics, not to mention the use of suicide attacks in areas such as Mogadishu. They have also been resourceful in terms of their intelligence gathering operations and this chapter has highlighted how women and children have played an important role in al-Shabaab's strategy. They have also managed to use a combination of domestic and international sources of funding however it has become clear that, in recent

times, there is a heavier reliance on domestic sources of funding. This means they will have to reinforce their taxation system in the areas they control and ensure they are able to continue the bribery of Kenyan officials in the Kismayo port.

Chapter Six:

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to conduct an in depth analysis of al-Shabaab in order to gain a better understanding of the groups sources of resilience and resurgence. For the last decade, al-Shabaab have gone through quite dramatic transformations in terms of their leadership structure, strategy and tactics. They have endured continued pressure from the AMISOM peacekeeping force as well as continued American drone attacks which killed their leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane in 2014. Despite the loss of territory, personnel and financial resources, they have managed to carry out attacks within Somalia and throughout the East African region. In recent months they have carried out frequent operations, particularly within Mogadishu, and the frequency and potency of these attacks highlight how the group is becoming even more dangerous. This thesis has shown that al-Shabaab's ability to navigate around the threats it faces comes down to a number of factors that exist within local, regional and transnational layers. They are a combination of historical events which have come to define al-Shabaab as well as specific tactical and strategic steps the organisation have taken to ensure their longevity.

This thesis has shown that a lack of human security contributes to an extremely volatile environment which can result in different manifestations of violence. The ongoing internal conflict in Somalia which began in 1991 and was preceded by years of oppressive and divisive policies under the Barre regime, has contributed to weak state structures and a fractured Somali society. This has resulted in ongoing domestic tension not to mention widespread poverty, unemployment, lack of basic services such as an education system and weak armed security services. What this research has shown, is that al-Shabaab have taken advantage of Somalia's insecurities. The absence of an effective Somali military or police force, means that they have relative freedom to operate in areas not controlled by AMISOM, which for the most part is limited to urban areas. Al-Shabaab have been able to melt back into the rural countryside and regroup every time they come under pressure. The abject poverty and ongoing grievances of the Somali people has also meant a continuous flow of fresh blood into al-Shabaab despite the brutal, violent tactics of the organisation. The promise of a salary and protection, is often highly attractive in times of desperation and this has proven to be the case in the uneducated youth of Somalia. Lastly, this thesis has shown how the lack of state

financial services in large parts of southern and central Somalia has allowed al-Shabaab to run its own system of taxation on a wide array of services. This taxation has proven to be valuable in their ongoing efforts to finance their operations.

This study has also shown, that in addition to the domestic factors shown above, the politico-religious element of al-Shabaab is in fact an ideology that has been imported into Somalia and moulded and adapted to encompass Somali and East African issues. This thesis has shown that the Afghan-Soviet war was influential in the development of the jihadist ideology and that the politicisation of Islam, which became so aggressive and militant in the aftermath of the Afghan Jihad, has undoubtedly played a substantial role in defining al-Shabaab. This also highlights the transnational nature of jihadist networks which shows why constructivism is the most useful theory in explaining groups and organisations such as al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab. They exist on the basis of shared norms and constructed identities which have the ability to transcend state boundaries. Al-Shabaab have also shown how politically astute they are by merging the Somali nationalist agenda with their own political-Islamist agenda. Somali nationalist sentiment has shown that it only comes to prominence in times of foreign presence or invasion. This has particularly been the case when it comes to perceived Ethiopian interference in Somalia. Al-Shabaab have used this to their advantage and positioned Ethiopian and more recently AMISOM forces as foreign invaders and infidels on Muslims lands. This study has shown how adept al-Shabaab have proven themselves to be at crafting a very unique politico-religious identity within a Somali context. In essence, al-Shabaab has shown their ability to place unique, local Somali factors within a broader jihadist narrative.

This study has also shown, how al-Shabaab's process of decentralisation has undoubtedly contributed to its survival and longevity but has also served to alienate them from the Somali population. Al-Shabaab's loss of territory, personnel and resources means they can no longer engage with the larger, more powerful AMISOM forces in conventional warfare. Their insurgent tactics means al-Shabaab operate in the shadows of Somalia and, as many participants suggested, are virtually invisible. They have also decentralised their leadership structure which means the loss of key leadership figures does not mean the entire organisation suffers. The understanding of the organisations political and ideological foundations at lower leadership levels means that local and regional commanders can carry out operations independently. However, al-Shabaab's process of decentralisation which has

made them so hard to defeat is also at odds with their founding objectives which was to establish an Islamic state or caliphate throughout Somalia and East Africa, their current structure means developing this caliphate is not currently possible. This has placed the organisation in an awkward position because as the participants showed, the Somali population are now confused as to what al-Shabaab are fighting for. They carry out attacks but they don't understand why, thus instead of being viewed as the beacon of national resistance they are now seen as an obstacle in the road to Somali peace.

This study has also shown that in terms of its transnational presence, al-Shabaab will depend on the strength of its affiliates and armed wings such as *Jaysh Ayman*, al-hijra and ASNE to carry out its objectives within the region. This thesis has also shown how al-Shabaab has become more independent from al-Qaeda and although the global organisation played a vital role in the early years in terms of al-Shabaab leadership, training and resources it has now learnt to stand on its own two feet. The links between the two organisations cannot be discounted and going forward new ties may be forged if al-Qaeda continues to gain strength in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

This thesis demonstrates how the specific tactics employed by al-Shabaab have been key to their continued success. As already mentioned their use of insurgent tactics have been highly effective in fighting AMISOM. The use of improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks have proven to be devastating. Furthermore, ambushes and raids on AMISOM bases and encampments continue to produce high numbers of casualties. This study has also shown that al-Shabaab's intelligence service is highly adept at using the insecurity present in Somalia to their advantage. They have forced and recruited a number of Somalis, often women and children, into their intelligence service. They try to use individuals who do not raise suspicions with armed personnel and government officials. This has proven to be effective at gathering information without al-Shabaab ever showing their face. However, this has also created a degree of mistrust within Somalia and, as the participants suggested, you now never know if your friends and family have been compromised or not. This adds to the feeling of insecurity and tension associated to al-Shabaab and the ongoing security crisis in Somalia.

This study shows how al-Shabaab exists as a result of domestic and transnational factors. The development of al-Shabaab has undeniably been influenced by a complex mixture of influences from within and outside of Somalia. However, what this study has also shown is

that al-Shabaab is first and foremost reliant on the ongoing insecurity present within Somalia. If the state structures and institutions improve, the space for al-Shabaab to navigate and operate in Somalia will be greatly reduced. This does not suggest al-Shabaab has become a purely Somali organisation but rather, the first step in countering al-Shabaab needs to focus on the security situation within Somalia. A reduction in poverty and unemployment, for example, as well as an improvement in the education system would mean al-Shabaab's constant source of recruits would dry up as the grievances that al-Shabaab thrive on would no longer be such a deep seated issue in Somalia. A strengthened military would mean tighter control and more surveillance in rural areas where al-Shabaab consistently regroup. This would also mean less reliance on AMSIOM which would mean the removal of the common enemy which has provided a sense of cohesion for al-Shabaab. As the participants have shown the negative attitude towards AMISOM as a result of their violent actions and sexual exploitation of the Somali people would also remove another source of al-Shabaab's propaganda campaign. An improved security situation in Somalia would also see the flow of foreign recruits from within East Africa stop, as it would no longer be seen as a 'safe haven' for East African jihadists. Effective and consistent state control of the countries fiscal services and ports would also mean al-Shabaab's profits from taxation as well as smuggling would dry up, further hampering their efforts to raise funds for their operation. However, these efforts to improve Somalia's security situation could be in vain if there is not a collective regional effort to counter al-Shabaab. The danger is that if Somalia no longer becomes a viable base of operations for al-Shabaab, it will melt into its regional affiliates where it will continue its fight in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania or even Somaliland. This is the nature of jihadist groups, the specific territorial base is not important rather they will infiltrate areas where their ideology will gain traction. This is why countries such as Kenya and Tanzania must be wary of marginalising Muslim communities as these groups would become potential targets should al-Shabaab be forced out of Somalia. This shows that the multi-layered nature of al-Shabaab will require a collective effort to counter. With that said, this thesis hopes to have shown that the primary, initial focus must centre on the ongoing security crisis within Somalia.

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Appendix One

CONSENT FORM FOR SOMALI NATIONALS

My name is Richard Gardiner I am a student in the Political and International Studies Department at Rhodes University, and Principal Investigator of this project, entitled, **From local to global :Al-Shabaab's sources of resilience and resurgence from a constructivist perspective.**

This study is being conducted in order to understand al-Shabaab from a number of different aspects: what their roots are; how they have developed and evolved over the years; what setbacks they have faced; how they are perceived in Somalia; how they have treated people within Somalia and what strategies they have used to continue their operations within Somalia and within the region as a whole. From these interviews I hope to gain a deeper understanding of al-Shabaab and the way they have developed, evolved and diversified over the years.

In the interview, I will ask you questions regarding your encounters and understanding of al-Shabaab. This will include questions about how the group has effected your life and how these experiences have shaped your understanding of how the group operates, what their motives are and what their sources of resilience are in local, regional and global context

With your permission, I would like to audio-record this interview so I can capture the details accurately. The tapes will only be heard by me, my supervisor and the person who will transcribe the interviews. All information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I, and my advisor, will have access. At any time you can refuse to answer any questions or end this interview.

The risk involved in this study is that you may feel uncomfortable discussing some of your experiences during the interview, and should this happen; please know that you can stop at any time. The benefit of your participation is that what you share with me might help us understand how al-Shabaab operates and what has allowed them to survive and evolve over the years.

I may publish results of the study, if you wish for your identity to be anonymous, your names or any identifying characteristics, will not be used in any of the publications unless you do not have a problem with identifying yourself. If you would like a copy of the study, please provide me with your address and I will send you a copy in the future.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at 0789261124 [g12g04898@campus.ru.ac.za/](mailto:g12g04898@campus.ru.ac.za) gardinerrc@gmail.com ,or my advisor Ms Siphokazi Magadla, S.Magadla@ru.ac.za.

Thank you for your participation in the study. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

I agree to have this interview audio-recorded and (or) video recorded please [circle one]:

Yes No

By signing below, you are agreeing that:

- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
- you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand Rhodes University has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study
- you are 18 years of age or older
- your participation in this research is completely voluntary
- you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature_____ Date_____

Printed Name_____

Appendix Two

CONSENT FORM FOR ACADEMICS, IGAD AND AU REPRESENTATIVES

My name is Richard Gardiner I am a student in the Political and International Studies Department at Rhodes University, and Principal Investigator of this project, entitled, **From local to global :Al-Shabaab's sources of resilience and resurgence from a constructivist perspective.**

This study is being conducted in order to understand al-Shabaab from a number of different aspects: what their roots are; how they have developed and evolved over the years; what setbacks they have faced; how they are perceived in Somalia; how they have treated people within Somalia and what strategies they have used to continue their operations within Somalia and within the region as a whole. From these interviews I hope to gain a deeper understanding of al-Shabaab and the way they have developed, evolved and diversified over the years.

In the interview, I will ask you questions regarding your encounters and understanding of al-Shabaab. This will include questions about how your extensive research on the group or region has shaped your understanding of how the group operates, what their motives are and what their sources of resilience are in local, regional and global context

Skype Interview

With your permission, I would like to audio-record this interview so I can capture the details accurately. The tapes will only be heard by me, my supervisor and the person who will transcribe the interviews. All information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I, and my advisor, will have access. At any time you can refuse to answer any questions or end this interview.

Or Email interview

Your responses from the email interview will only be If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at 0789261124 [g12g04898@campus.ru.ac.za/](mailto:g12g04898@campus.ru.ac.za) gardinerrc@gmail.com ,or my advisor Ms Siphokazi Magadla, S.Magadla@ru.ac.za. seen my supervisor and me. All information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I, and my advisor, will have access. At any time you can refuse to answer any questions or end this interview.

The risk involved in this study is that you may feel uncomfortable discussing some of your experiences during the interview, and should this happen; please know that you can stop at any time. The benefit of your participation is that what you share with me might help us understand how al-Shabaab operates and what has allowed them to survive and evolve over the years.

I may publish results of the study, if you wish for your identity to be anonymous, your names

or any identifying characteristics, will not be used in any of the publications unless you do not have a problem with identifying yourself. If you would like a copy of the study, please provide me with your address and I will send you a copy in the future.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at 0789261124 [g12g04898@campus.ru.ac.za/](mailto:g12g04898@campus.ru.ac.za) gardinerrc@gmail.com ,or my advisor Ms Siphokazi Magadla, S.Magadla@ru.ac.za.

Thank you for your participation in the study. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

I agree to have this interview audio-recorded and (or) video recorded please [circle one]:
Yes No

By signing below, you are agreeing that:

- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
- you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand Rhodes University has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study
- you are 18 years of age or older
- your participation in this research is completely voluntary
- you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature_____ Date_____
