A Strategic Analysis of Al Shabaab

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Abstract

This thesis makes an original contribution to the body of literature by applying strategic theory to the Somali militant group al Shabaab. By tracing the line of thinking of the organisation, I endeavour to more fully comprehend the group's strategic objective(s).

The U.S. State Department designated al Shabaab a terrorist organization in February 2008 (Shinn 2011), but has the group been engaged in terrorism or should it more accurately be labeled an insurgent group? The answer to this question is not as straight forward as it may seem because the group has gone through a number of transitions in which its ideology and tactical operations have changed considerably. In fact, I argue that even its strategic goals appear to have changed. Therefore, we need more than a superficial understanding of the organization and what it hopes to achieve through violence.

The first order of business is to clearly define what we mean by "terrorism" and what we understand an "insurgent" to be. While the definition of terrorism is a hotly debated subject, this thesis employs the definition articulated by Neumann and Smith.

According to Neumann and Smith (2005, p. 574), terrorism is "the deliberate creation of fear, usually by the use or threat of the use of symbolic acts of physical violence, to influence the behavior of a given target group." Furthermore, while conventional warfare seeks to conquer the enemy, terrorism merely seeks to manipulate political change through terror (Ruby 2002; Neumann and Smith 2005).

In the most generic sense, we can differentiate between conventional warfare (which seeks to conquer the enemy) and terrorism (which aims to manipulate political change through terror). However, because the decision to employ terrorist violence is strategic, we can also distinguish between groups that employ terrorist violence as simply part of an overall strategy and those that rely solely on terrorist violence to achieve their goals. By employing this three-part typology, we are left with three basic categories of militant violence: (1) military violence intended to overthrow a regime, (2) terrorist violence employed along with a number of other tactics intended to coerce political concessions from a regime, and (3) terrorist violence employed as the sole means for obtaining political concessions. Neumann and Smith refer to this third category of violence as strategic terrorism, and they define it as the attempt to obtain political objectives through the use of primarily terrorist activity rather than through some other means.

The main focus of this thesis is to determine al Shabaab's strategic goal(s), and therefore, whether it is an insurgent group or a terrorist organization. After tracing al Shabaab's ideological underpinnings back through its predecessors, I examine the various phases the organization has passed through and attempt to determine what its strategic objective is and whether it has changed from one phase to another. I conclude that al Shabaab has passed through three phases and is currently in phase four. While the organization began as an insurgent group, it has since altered its strategic goal from overthrowing the Somali government to the use of violence to coerce political concessions from foreign governments. It has also adopted strategic terrorism.

A component of this analysis is the theory of perception of the other. Perception plays a huge role in both the decision to engage in terrorist violence and in

the way target governments respond. Strategy is the use of one's resources towards the attainment of one's goals. Therefore, how an actor perceives its own resources vis-a-vis the resources of another plays as large a role as the strategic goal itself. Furthermore, because al Shabaab has adopted the *takfiri* doctrine—which dramatically affects its tactical operations—perception of the other is indispensable for understanding how to interpret the group's actions as a means for obtaining its respective goals. Perception of the other is also critical for comprehending both who al Shabaab directs its acts of symbolic violence towards and why this audience has changed over time.

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Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge Professor Barry Richards and Dr. Roman Gerodimos for their invaluable guidance in this research. As a political scientist trained in the United States, I am very much a product of the empirical school. However, I am very fortunate to have spent the past three years on a very different epistemological journey. As a result, I feel uniquely qualified to approach this study from both positivist and interpretivist perspectives (although the positivist approach still tends to dominate at times).

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Jan Lewis who has been a *constant* source of assistance for the past three years and to Dr. Nait-Charif, Dr. Sreedharan and Dr. McQueen for serving on my transfer panel. I am grateful to Dr. Lyndsey Harris and Professor Jonathan Parker for their depth of expertise and copious feedback on my first draft; and also to Dr. Dan Jackson for his role as chair in the viva process.

Sometimes (if we are extremely fortunate), we not only get to stand on the shoulders of giants, they give us a leg up. I am deeply honored to have received positive and encouraging feedback from MLR Smith, without whose seminal work this research would not be possible, and from the great Gus Martin, whose scholarship has been a source of inspiration and guidance for terrorism and security professionals alike. Last, but certainly not least, I am indebted to the legendary Arend Lijphart for both his professional advice and his personal kindness. A friend is someone who is there when you need them. I am both humbled and delighted to call Arend my friend.

Author's Declaration

I declare that all work presented in this research project is original and that I am the

sole contributor.

List of Acronyms

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
AI	Amnesty International
AU	African Union
AIAI	Al Ittihad al Islamiyya (The Islamic Union)
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AQAP	Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
ARPCT	Alliance for Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism
ARS	Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia
ARS-A	Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (Asmara Wing)
ASWJ	Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a
CBW	Chemical and Biological Weapons
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CTS	Critical Terrorism Studies
DHS	United States Department of Homeland Security
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defense Force
EU	European Union
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FTO	Foreign Terrorist Organization
GIA	Armed Islamic Group
GWOT	Global War on Terror
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICC	International Criminal Court

ICU	Islamic Courts Union (Union of Islamic Courts)
IED	Improvised Explosive Devices
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IIRO	International Islamic Relief Organization
IS	Islamic State
ISI	Islamic State of Iraq
LIFG	Libyan Islamic Fighting Group
LWOT	Long War on Terror
MYC	Muslim Youth Center
NFDLA	Northern Frontier District Liberation Army
NSC	National Salvation Council
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PNR	Passenger Name Record
RPG	Rocket-propelled Grenade
SIT	Social Identity Theory
SNA	Somali National Army
SNF	Somali National Front
SRRC	Somali Restoration and Reconciliation Council
SSDF	Somalia Salvation Democratic Front
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TNG	Transitional National Government
UN	United Nations
UNITAF	United Task Force Somalia
UNOSOM-I	The First United Nations Operation in Somalia
UNOSOM-II	The Second United Nations Operation in Somalia

UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolutions
U.S.	United States
VBIED	Vehicle-born Improvised Explosive Device
WAMY	World Assembly for Muslim Youth
WWI	World War One
WWII	World War Two

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Foreword

When the Boston Marathon Bombings occurred in April 2013, I was the Director of International Relations at a university in Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan. The two brothers who committed the attacks had gone to elementary school at a "madrasa" right down the road from my office. Madrasa, of course, is simply the Arabic word for school (in Russian, "schkola"). However, after 9/11 the word has taken on a diabolical connotation as a breeding center for Islamic terrorists.

For the first few weeks after the attacks, the community expressed genuine fear that the United States (U.S.) would retaliate with a drone strike against the school. In their eyes, America was the real threat, not the two Tsarnaev boys that most still remembered as children who grew up among them.

One of my students at the university had a sister who worked for an NGO in Afghanistan. He was all too familiar with the reality (and frequency) of U.S. drone strikes against civilian targets.

That very same month, Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) entered Syria and changed its name to Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). ISIS changed its name again to Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and on 29 June, 2014, the group officially changed its name again to Islamic State (IS) after announcing the establishment of a new *caliphate*.

Given these events, the world largely forgot about the Boston Marathon Bombings, but I never forgot the feeling of living and working so close to ground zero of a potential U.S. target. Every day as I walked past Schkola #1 before and after work, the school-age children would run up to me, laughing and wanting to practice their English. My wife and I knew many of them personally as we used to give free

English lessons at the library every Saturday. I tried not to think about the fact that the entire school and surrounding blocks could be eliminated, in the blink of an eye, by someone sitting behind a simulator with a cup of coffee 7,000 miles away. But I knew better.

The single most common question I'm always asked is, "Why do you study terrorism?" I guess the best response is that I don't study terrorism. I study people. After all, it's not the violence per se that's interesting (although violence certainly attracts the media), it's the people behind the violence that fascinate me.

I had originally thought that I wanted to study literature. After enrolling in a PhD program, I quickly realized that reading about other people's experiences would never be enough. I needed my own adventures. You know what they say though…be careful what you wish for.

Studying people is a lot like walking on the beach, you never know what's going to wash up. I learned this lesson during my first ethnographic study, when I lived with David Koresh and the Branch Davidians.

Two friends of mine had joined the sect a few months earlier. Moved by Koresh's charisma, they exclaimed, "We have found the Messiah! David Koresh from Waco, Texas."

"Can any good thing come from Waco?" I replied skeptically.

"Come and see!"

The next thing I knew, I was on a plane. At that time, the Branch Davidians had three compounds: one in Waco, one in Los Angeles and one in Honolulu. My two friends invited me to come and stay with them in Honolulu. Little did I realize that they had over a dozen roommates (and another dozen or so sect members lived in the apartment next door).

At first the sect seemed like a tight-knit group, all true believers and fiercely loyal to Koresh. But things are not always as they seem. It turned out that one of the "members" was only staying there for the cheap rent. He was not at all convinced by Koresh and his message concerning the soon approaching apocalypse. This particular individual was quite well-informed regarding Koresh's plans, however.

He revealed to me that the groups in L.A. and Honolulu were planning to move to Waco where the sect would prepare for the end. The Branch Davidians believed that, like the Levites in the days of Moses, God was about to command them to slay the wicked- beginning with the members of the Christian churches. He also told me that I should get out of there before I got killed.

"Some of these nutcases are just itching to start killing."

I decided to take his advice seriously, but there was someone I needed to take with me. Another member, a young Samoan woman in her late teens, who had recently joined the group. She confided in me that she had been trying to contact her father because she was scared and wanted to go home. The newer members were all monitored very closely, however, and no one was allowed to leave.

We plotted our escape, and the next day we simply ran away. Several sect members chased us, but we were able to dodge them in the crowded streets. We ducked inside a busy pizza parlor, ordered a pie and called her father. The group packed up and moved to Waco soon after, and the rest is history. To the best of my knowledge, everyone in the Honolulu group, except the two members mentioned above, died at Waco. It still makes me sad.

Were they terrorists? No. They had no political aspirations. They weren't attempting to obtain concessions from the government or provoke a reaction. They simply believed that they were 'wave sheaves'- first fruits of God- and that they

would be instrumental in ushering in the Apocalypse. They were no more terrorists than the school shooter at Northern Illinois University who killed himself along with five others and wounded 21 more.

I was on campus that day. The scene was surreal. First the gunshots, then the screaming and then the helicopters. The entire campus was on lock-down for over a week- held under siege by police investigators and news helicopters.

The shooter wasn't a terrorist. Whatever he wanted, it wasn't political concessions. If it was attention he craved, he certainly received it. It's truly unfortunate that the media is so willing to make such people into instant celebrities. Some of our young people are literally dying for attention.

The recent shooting at a nightclub in Orlando is a case in point. Because it was the worst mass shooting in U.S. history, the media milked all the hype it could get out of the story (which in today's currency is headlines for a few days). This was not a terrorist attack, however. What concessions were demanded? Besides, no true IS operative calls 911 and confesses to be a member *during* an attack. This was clearly a case of a disturbed young man seeking his five minutes of fame. Again, the media was more than happy to oblige. Sigh…

The second most common question I'm asked is, "Why Africa?" My response is usually similar, "I don't study Africa." It's a fair enough question, though. Especially since I grew up in a small Midwestern town in the United States- just about as far from Africa as you can imagine (in every conceivable way). So I normally qualify my answer by adding that I've been fortunate to travel extensively and meet many wonderful people from all over the world.

Oddly enough, I met Da'uud (David), my first Somali friend, in the same small town that I grew up in. I was a freshman at university, working the overnight

shift at a local Kinkos copy shop- trying to make ends meet. The fall semester had barely begun. In the wee hours of the morning, a dark, thin man with bloodshot eyes entered the lobby and moved slowly toward the counter. Articulate and soft-spoken with a flat affect, Da'uud appeared to be in his mid-forties. He handed me a thick packet and inquired about sending a fax.

I opened the envelope routinely and began to flip through the pages. "You want to fax *all* of this?" I questioned, glancing up as I passed him a cover sheet.

"Yes," he replied quietly. "I need to fax it to this number here."

The number Da'uud gave me belonged to the U.S. Embassy in Kenya. The document contained over 150 pages of names, dates and facts as well as photos of charred corpses and bodies that had been hacked to pieces. At first I was afraid to ask, but the fax was taking so long that the silence started to feel awkward.

"What happened?" I mumbled under my breath, not realizing that he could hear me.

The pain in his eyes spoke volumes. In a thick Somali accent, he explained that his family had been attacked in their home while they were sleeping. The attackers raped his sisters and brutally hacked several of his brothers to death before moving on to the next house. Those who managed to escape were scattered and fled on foot to Kenya. One by one, the survivors found each other in the huge refugee camp that would become their home for nearly a year.

This had all happened while Da'uud was attending university in the States. Forced to drop out of school, he'd been working three jobs for the past six months. One job to provide for his wife and two children in America. A second job to support his parents and surviving siblings and their children in Kenya. And a third job to pay for the daily faxes.

Da'uud had been applying for refugee status for his family so that they could come to the U.S. and live with him. But the red tape was such that after faxing the documents every day for six months, he'd gotten nowhere.

When the fax finally transmitted, Da'uud reached for his wallet. "$78.50?" he confirmed with the confidence of someone who'd done this many times before.

"No, please," I insisted, pretending to have an employee discount. "Let me take care of it."

An expression that faintly resembled a smile appeared on his face. "You would do that?"

I tried to answer, but the words got stuck in my throat. So I just nodded in the affirmative. Offering a reciprocal nod, he turned to leave. Suddenly a wave of compassion mixed with outrage washed over me.

"W-why don't I just fax the document every night when I come in to work?" The words didn't come out as smoothly as I would have liked, but at least this time I managed to say something.

Da'uud looked stunned. He didn't say a word. I didn't know him and he didn't know me, but at that very moment we became brothers and we both knew it. Feeling the need to lighten the mood, I quipped, "Besides, you need to start saving your money for airline tickets."

"Yes," he exhaled, and I finally saw him smile.

Hope is an amazingly powerful force. For the next six months, I actually looked forward to going to work. During that time I poured over the report of his family, staring at their photos and reading the details of their lives until I felt as though I knew them personally.

On a particularly cold February morning around 3 am, an entourage of eight colorfully-dressed Somalis passed in front of the store window. As they approached the entrance, a strangely familiar young man in his mid-twenties emerged through the door.

"Da'uud?" The words had hardly escaped my lips when his father and mother entered behind him followed by six others. Da'uud's father stepped towards me, and grasping both of my arms, he squeezed them as tightly as he could.

"*Mahadsanid…*" He spoke warmly, in a voice that sounded like it was coming from somewhere else. I had never seen a human being so thin and frail, and yet so dignified, in all my life.

These eight people had made it through one of the worst humanitarian crises in modern history- something my sheltered American mind couldn't even begin to comprehend. They were survivors. But others wouldn't be so fortunate.

On 12 May, 2003, a suicide bomber entered an American military compound in Riyadh and exploded his vehicle near a huge gas tank before going on to paradise. In his wake, he left behind a graveyard of sand and ashes. One survivor—who had been far enough away to only be injured—described the attack as "unreal." The huge scar it left on his face and the limp it gave him are nevertheless quite real, and he will live with them for the rest of his life (Munson 2014).

For more than a decade, huge chunks of concrete block served as tombstones- silently standing watch around the perimeter of the blast. As I approached the site, the mid-day sun was scorching hot. Like a laser, it penetrated the desert sky and created a glare so bright that I could barely keep my eyes open. My retinas literally felt like they were melting. I had entered a restricted area. Like the chocolate factory

in Willie Wonka, no one ever went in and no one ever came out. But on that particular day, I decided that this would change.

The scene evoked images of a fierce future slaughter in which ancient hatreds would clash with apocalyptic fury. Faithful blades of rebar impaled the enemies of Allah. Like ten thousand arrows in the quiver of al Qadir, they had all found their mark. Carnage and obliteration defeated the forces of the enemy. Together they laid siege to the former haunt of the Great Satan, now a mere skeleton of warped metal, dust and shattered glass.[1]

The sight reminded me of endless Saturday mornings I'd spent at catechism in the church basement. And now, the dark fears that haunted me as a boy- purgatory, everlasting punishment, hellfire and brimstone- all returned at once… and with a vengeance.

My eyes watered and stung as I squinted through the sandy wind- hunting for something that might have survived the intense heat- anything…a watch, a coin, a set of keys. But there was nothing. An eerie realization crept up my spine… that was the point.

I once interviewed Richard Behal, a former member of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) who had become somewhat of a local celebrity after escaping from Limerick Prison in 1966. Behal had been imprisoned for attacking a British naval vessel (the HMS Brave Borderer) in Waterford in 1965. Originally authorized to use a bazooka in the attack, he used an anti-tank rifle instead so as not to hurt anyone. As someone who took pride in fighting for Ireland's freedom, Behal insisted that his

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[1] Al Qadir is Arabic for "the All Powerful One."

intent was to coerce the British government to change their Ireland policy- *never* to

hurt anyone. He was emphatic about this point throughout the entire three-hour

interview (Behal, 2011).

Four decades later and some seven thousand kilometers to the East, collateral

damage was no longer a problem. If this were an isolated incident, we could consider

it a hate crime or the realization of a sick fantasy played out by a deranged lunatic

(like the many school shooters we've encountered). However, attacks such as these

have become commonplace, routine... almost clockwork.

If these atrocities were all perpetrated by a unitary actor (or even a coalition

of actors) with an identifiable goal, then like the Bush administration, we could call

them an act of war. But if this is a war, who's the enemy? The Global War on

Terrorism (GWOT) implies that terrorism itself is the enemy. But how can terrorism

be the enemy? Terrorist violence is merely a tactic- employed by virtually anyone- as

part of an overall strategy to obtain a particular goal.

So who's the enemy? Is it the militants that attacked Da'uud's family? Is it

the IRA or the British government? Is it al Qaeda or the American servicemen that

regularly consume alcohol, pork and pornography in the land of the two holy

mosques? Is it the Tsarnaev brothers or the children from Schkola #1?

The short answer is, there are many enemies. There are literally dozens of

conflicts raging at any given moment with both sides routinely denouncing each

other as "terrorists."

The long answer?

As a graduate student, I was taught to view terrorism as an abstract

phenomenon. Inside the classroom, terrorism is explained via theories and models

and causal variables. We're taught not to be too descriptive in our approach and not

to base our conclusions on single case study analyses because they're not generalizable enough.

But here I was, standing on the unmarked graves of the people who had once lived and worked here. Their memories, their hopes and their dreams- their plans for the future- everything was gone. For them, and for their loved ones (indeed for the suicide bomber and his loved ones as well), there was nothing abstract about it.

I realized that, in order to truly understand terrorist violence, I needed a more *realistic* conceptual framework through which to view it. I set off on a quest for illumination. My journey has taken me to more than a dozen countries around the world, to hotspots and cold (both literally and figuratively), and this research is largely the result.

Introduction

This thesis makes an original contribution to the body of literature by applying strategic theory to the Somali militant group al Shabaab. Strategic theory (Schelling 1966 & 1980; Liddell Hart 1967; Summers 1985; Berry 1987; Hughes 1989; Smith 1991, 1997, 2003 & 2005; Cohen 1996; Gray 1999; Neumann 2002; Neumann and Smith 2005 & 2007; Waldmann 2005; Harris 2006; Strachan 2005 & 2008; Rousseau 2012) examines *how* political actors perceive their immediate reality and *how effectively* they respond to that perception toward the achievement of their strategic goals. Put more simply, strategic theory allows scholars to evaluate the effectiveness of terrorist violence as a means to a desired end. By tracing the line of thinking of the organisation, I endeavour to more fully comprehend the group's strategic objective(s).

The U.S. State Department designated al Shabaab a terrorist organization in February 2008 (Shinn 2011), but has the group been engaged in terrorism or should it more accurately be labeled an insurgent group? The answer to this question is not as straightforward as it may seem. The first order of business is to clearly define what we mean by "terrorism" and what we understand an "insurgent" to be.

While the definition of terrorism is a hotly debated subject (including those who suggest that we either cannot arrive at an agreed upon definition or that we should not even try, e.g. Ramsay 2015), this thesis employs the definition articulated by Neumann and Smith (2005).

According to Neumann and Smith (2005, p. 574), terrorism is "the deliberate creation of fear, usually by the use or threat of the use of symbolic acts of physical violence, to influence the behavior of a given target group." Terrorism is, therefore, a

tactic (Halliday 2004). As James S. Albritton (2006, p.6) argues, "terrorism is a means to an end—i.e., a technique that is used by terrorists to achieve a calculated objective by applying a variety of deliberately violent means and methods to that specific goal." Furthermore, while conventional warfare seeks to conquer the enemy, terrorism merely seeks to manipulate political change through terror (Ruby 2002; Neumann and Smith 2005).

Thus, in the most generic sense, we can differentiate between conventional warfare and terrorism. However, because the decision to employ terrorist violence is strategic, we can also distinguish between groups that employ terrorist violence as simply part of an overall strategy and those that rely solely on terrorist violence to achieve their goals. Neumann and Smith (2005) refer to this third category of violence as strategic terrorism, and they define it as the attempt to obtain political objectives through the use of primarily terrorist activity rather than through some other means.

By employing this three-part typology, we are left with three basic categories of militant violence: (1) military violence intended to overthrow a regime, (2) terrorist violence employed along with a number of other tactics intended to coerce political concessions from a regime, and (3) terrorist violence employed as the sole means for obtaining political concessions. Still, even with this simple trichotomy, the inquiry is not as clear-cut as it may appear because al Shabaab has gone through a number of transitions in which its ideology and tactical operations have changed considerably. In fact, I argue that even its strategic goals appear to have changed. Therefore, we need more than a superficial understanding of this organization and what it hopes to achieve through its tactical use of violence.

After tracing al Shabaab's ideological underpinnings back through its predecessors, I examine the various phases the organization has passed through and

attempt to determine what its strategic objective(s) are and whether they have changed from one phase to another.

I identify four distinct phases through which the group has transitioned. For each phase, I question whether al Shabaab's strategic goal has been to overthrow the government or to coerce political concessions. I conclude that for the first two phases, al Shabaab's strategic objective was to drive out the Ethiopian military and to overthrow the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). However, after the group's leadership changed, al Shabaab's ideology and tactical operations also changed—as did the audience toward which it directed its violence. Strategic analysis suggests that the organization's strategic objective was also changing at this time, but what was its new goal?

I conclude that al Shabaab's strategic objective changed from replacing the government in Somalia to destabilizing the entire region. During the third phase, the group gradually (and seemingly voluntarily) engaged in governance less and less while adopting terrorist violence more and more. By stage four, al Shabaab was utilizing violence exclusively as a means to achieving its goal.

A component of this analysis is the theory of perception of the other (Garfinkel 1952; Merleau-Ponty 1973; Abdallah-Pretceille 1983; Kornprobst 2002; Castano et al. 2003; Crozier 1998; Millas 2004). Perception plays a huge role in both the decision to engage in terrorist violence (Laqueur 1977b; Crenshaw 1981) and in the way that target governments respond (Berry 1987).

Since "counterinsurgency warfare is fought among the people, it is ultimately won or lost through human interaction and perceptions" (Mansoor 2008, p. 346). For instance, Solomon (2015) points to the Bush administration as an example. By characterizing the war on terror as one between good and evil, Bush glorified one side

and dehumanized the other. The administration thus attempted to justify its actions by manipulating the public's perception of the threat.

Strategy is the use of one's resources towards the attainment of one's goals (see section 1.3). Therefore, how an actor perceives its own resources vis-a-vis the resources of another plays as large a role as the strategic goal itself. Furthermore, because al Shabaab has adopted the *takfiri* doctrine which dramatically affects its tactical operations, perception of the other is indispensable for understanding how to interpret the group's actions as a means for obtaining its respective goals.

I employ strategic theory rather than the traditional deductive approach used by most terrorism scholars as it allows me to analyze al Shabaab's violence within its historical and socio-economic context rather than forcing me to strip away most of these details as theoretical models often do. Furthermore, strategic theory enables me to consider the utility of al Shabaab's terrorist violence rather than simply attempt to identify its "causes." Most importantly, strategic theory makes it possible to trace the line of thinking between an actor and the violence that actor employs—thus making it possible to determine al Shabaab's strategic goal and apply that knowledge toward a better understanding of its tactical use of violence.

Because al Shabaab did not emerge in a vacuum, it's critical to understand its historical and ideological roots. Given that al Shabaab has pledged *bay'ah* (allegiance) to al Qaeda it's important to assess the nature of this alliance and to determine whether it has had an impact on the group's strategic objective(s) or tactical operations.

Because many of the actors involved in the study are either dead or in hiding, the primary sources that I employ are a combination of media statements, video releases and correspondence between these actors as well as my own field research

and interviews with locals who have first-hand experience with the groups examined. However, even much of the original correspondence has been translated into English, and so I take advantage of secondary sources for their linguistic expertise.

Furthermore, because many of the original social media accounts through which the key actors communicated have since been deactivated, much of this material has also been gleaned from secondary sources. Given that my analysis of al Shabaab is based upon its strategic objective(s), I utilize the sources available to determine (as best as possible) what the group's strategic objectives are and to what extent they might have changed over time.

Since no actor is a true utility maximizer in the strict economic sense of the word, it is impossible to fully understand the decision-making of any entity without first comprehending the values to which it subscribes. Therefore, I explore the extent to which ideological, tribal and religious factors influence and shape al Shabaab's strategic goals and tactical use of violence.

First, I consider the social context, analyzing relevant historical and contemporary details that shed light upon the organization's stated political goals. Second, I examine predecessor groups and look for similarities and differences in their strategic goals and the tactics they employed. Finally, after tracing the group's ideological underpinnings back through its respective predecessors, I examine the various phases it has transitioned through and analyze each phase to determine whether its strategic goals have remained consistent and if not, I note how they have changed and evolved since inception.

It is important to note that I do not attempt to establish causation. Also, since strategic theory is not a theoretical model per se, but more a level of analysis, there are no independent or dependent variables to speak of. Rather, I employ a

combination of assumption, observation and deduction in order to determine al Shabaab's preferences. My endeavor is to trace the group's line of thinking in order to determine (1) what its strategic objectives are at any given stage, and (2) whether its use of violence has been successful.

This inquiry reflects an important distinction between strategy and tactics. Strategy entails an actor's ultimate purpose while tactics are merely techniques employed to obtain that purpose. Actors engage in violence in order to attain a specific goal. The main focus of this thesis is to determine what al Shabaab's strategic goal(s) are, and therefore, whether it is an insurgent group or a terrorist organization.

My training as a terrorism scholar was not unlike most others who study in the United States (U.S.). I was educated in the deductive use of theoretical models and tested on most of the normal and customary explanations for terrorism. When I first acquired an academic interest in al Shabaab, I applied a variety of systemic and lower-level theories in an effort to better understand the organization. However, I always came up with more questions than answers because of the inherent limitations of these approaches.

Concluding that all of the various theories and levels of analysis are needed to arrive at a comprehensive understanding, I eventually came to realize why the Foucauldian battle for truth raging within terrorism studies has been so unfruitful. The only agreement among most scholars is that terrorism consists of "violence of which we do not approve" (Jongman 1988, p. 3).

Since people all approve and disapprove of different things, at different times and places, under different circumstances and for different reasons, many who analyze the same data arrive at wildly different conclusions. In other words, the concept of terrorism (and therefore, the discipline of terrorism studies itself) is highly

subjective. Given that some of the greatest minds in the field (at least in the U.S.) have endeavored to gain an objective understanding of the phenomenon, one has to wonder how the discipline arrived at such a state.

Neumann and Smith (2007) argue that much of the conceptual ambiguity surrounding terrorism stems from the academic tradition of separating terrorist violence and all other forms of low-intensity conflict from interstate war. Given that my justification for employing strategic terrorism is based upon the limitations of systemic and lower-level models, it is necessary to not only argue the strengths of the strategic approach but also to expose the weaknesses of the many causal approaches in use today. Therefore chapters one through three are theoretical while chapters four and five are substantive.

Outline of Chapters

In Chapter One, I discuss how the strategic study of war fell from its original state of purity. War, in all its various manifestations, has historically been understood as a tool in the hands of rational actors; used as a means to obtain a desired political outcome. However, in the wake of World War Two (WWII), the academic field of strategic studies artificially separated the study of conventional (interstate) war from most other forms of political violence. The main reasons for prioritizing the study of interstate war were: (1) the potential for a nuclear confrontation between the two superpowers took precedence over the relatively less important skirmishes breaking out around the planet and, (2) it was conceptually easier to count and compare military assets in the form of warheads and ballistic missiles than it was to assess the

less quantifiable strength of will. As a consequence, strategic theorists largely ignored what they referred to as "irregular war."

Another heresy crept in during the Cold War era that would have an even more long-term effect on the future study of unconventional warfare- the equating of all non-Western insurgencies with the global threat of Communism. As a result, the residual category of previously non-related conflicts took on a shared identity and came to be viewed as irrational, senseless, psychotic, and even evil (Frum and Perle 2003). Consequently, those who did study these "lesser wars" tended not to apply the same Clausewitzian logic as they would to interstate wars.

In the case of terrorism studies, efforts to be more scientific led to the use of theoretical models that were then devised to determine the "causes" of terrorism. Countless books and journal articles in every academic discipline imaginable have been published since, associating terrorism with a myriad of causes including poverty, illiteracy, inequality, democracy, authoritarianism and mental illness- to name just a few.

After defining key terms such as "strategy," "terrorism" and "strategic terrorism," I discuss the *takfiri* doctrine. I then explore the utility of perception of the other as a lens for understanding how the group's tactics serve its strategic objectives. In the remainder of the chapter, I articulate the main inquiry of the research project and discuss the methodology employed.

Chapter Two elaborates upon the foundation laid in Chapter One by illustrating the conceptual apparatus used to construct what I metaphorically refer to as the Tower of Babel. I lay out a blueprint of the theoretical edifice that terrorism scholars have erected, largely upon the erroneous foundational beliefs that (1) terrorism is a separate category of political violence that can be identified by the

ideology, the deed or the actor involved, and (2) that terrorism is, for the most part,

irrational at best- or at the very worst- engaged in by only the deranged and

psychotic.[2]

By accepting the artificial separation of interstate war from all other types of

political conflict, terrorism scholars have become so focused on the tactics employed

in terrorist violence that they have stripped away all other relevant details. Without

the benefit of strategic theory as the basis of their analysis, many have adopted a

largely deductive approach. Terrorism scholars now rely heavily upon the use of

oversimplified models that "test" theories but largely ignore reality. In the quest for

enlightenment, terrorism scholars have attempted to reach the heavens. Ironically, this

endeavor takes us further and further from the phenomenon we seek to understand. As

we specify our models with ever more abstract variables, our edifice penetrates the

clouds and increasingly obscures our vision of reality. In this chapter, I discuss the

limitations of theoretical models in terrorism studies and offer examples of how

academics and policymakers can both benefit from the strategic approach.

Chapter Three carries the metaphor one step further by comparing the

enormous and contradictory body of terrorism literature to the story in the Tanakh

which recounts how God confused the languages of the people of the earth.[3] The

chapter enumerates the various definitions of terrorism, analyzes the more popular

typologies employed in terrorism studies, examines the traditionally accepted causes

of terrorism and considers potential solutions.

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[22] There are, of course, scholars who argue that terrorism is rational (e.g. (Crenshaw 1998; Anderton and Carter 2006; Caplan 2006; Kidd and Walter 2006; Neumann and Smith 2007; Ayres 2015). The rational argument is discussed in Chapter Three.

[3] The title also aptly refers to Upton Sinclair's classic 1906 novel depicting the harsh economic, cultural and institutional realities of life for immigrants in Chicago at the turn of the century.

The first three chapters comprise a literature review of sorts. Of course, the sheer magnitude of the scholarship renders it virtually impossible to offer more than a representative sampling in a work of this size and limited scope.

Because the strategic goals of al Shabaab cannot be fully understood without a minimal knowledge of the region's colonial and modern history, Chapter Four begins by discussing the history of Somalia and exploring how the Somali population became so fragmented. Second, the chapter examines the various groups that have appeared in Somalia since independence and analyzes their strategic objectives in an effort to demonstrate the continuity between them.

Chapter Five identifies al Shabaab's theoretical underpinnings, traces any influences the group may have adopted from its predecessors and explores the practical implications of these influences on the group's strategic goals and tactical use of violence. The chapter concludes that al Shabaab has thus far gone through three phases (from inception to December 2007, January 2008 to April 2008, May 2008 to July 2011) and is now in phase four (August 2011 to the present). In the first two phases, al Shabaab was a *jihadist* group, and in the last two phases it has been a *takfiri* group.[4]

In the first three phases, the organization's activity more closely resembled a guerrilla insurgency than strategic terrorism as two of its strategic objectives were to

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[4] To the vast majority of Muslims, the word *jihadist* signifies the struggle to be a good Muslim. However, in the mainstream media, *jihadist* is synonymous with terrorist. In this research, I employ a threefold typology consisting of *Islamist*, *jihadist* and *takfiri* groups. All three wish to establish *sharia*. While *Islamists* are willing to contest in democratic elections, *jihadist* reject democracy as an usurpation of the sovereignty of Allah and therefore are willing to employ violence to impose *sharia*. *Jihadist* organizations such as al Qaeda, however, following al-Banna's more conciliatory bottom-up approach, believe that the *ummah* (Muslim community) should be taught the true way of Islam from the *ulama* (Muslim scholars). *Takfiri* groups such as Islamic State on the other hand, following Qutb's authoritarian top-down approach, believe that apostate Muslims should be killed, not as a means to an end but as an end in itself (Husain 1995; Zollner 2007).

overthrow and replace the enemy, rather than merely manipulate political change through terror. Furthermore, while al Shabaab possessed very limited military and administrative capability in phase one, by phase two it had managed to incorporate both the political organization of the masses and the eventual use of conventional military force. By phase three, al Shabaab had gained control of eight regions in south central Somalia (Marchal 2011).

Chapter Six offers concluding remarks and establishes the importance of strategic theory for both understanding terrorist violence and devising sound strategy to deal with it.

Why is this research important? Beyond the conceptual clarity that the strategic approach provides, there is also the practical policy application from which everyone can benefit. For example, counterterrorism—one of the most popular responses to terrorism— often utilizes harsh retaliatory measures that can be manipulated by organizations to increase popular support for their cause (Kydd and Walter 2006; Tsoukala 2006; Bueno de Mesquita and Dickson 2007; LaFree et al. 2009; Silke 2010; Choudhury and Fenwick 2011; Solomon 2015). As Etzioni (2015, p. 346) puts it, the essence of counterterrorism is "brute force."

As Robison et al. (2006) suggest, organizations that engage in terrorism rely on popular support to succeed. Cronin (2006b) further distinguishes between active support (providing a safe haven for operatives, recruits and donations) and passive support (refusal to cooperate with the group's opponents). Both types of popular support equate to an overall reduction in the cost of engaging in terrorist violence, making future acts of terrorism even more feasible.

While tactical counterterrorism is necessary, it often exacerbates terrorist violence when it is not part of an overall strategy. Knowledge of the strategic goals of

actors who engage in terrorism allows us to more successfully respond to tactical violence in ways that both protect our immediate interests and address the actors' long-term strategic goals. "Terrorism wins only if you respond to it in the way the terrorists want you to; which means that its fate is in your hands and not in theirs" (Fromkin 1975, p. 697).

Furthermore, the quality and sheer quantity of usable intelligence needed concerning the nature, location, and timing of future terrorist attacks— as well as the identity of the perpetrators— is simply not readily available *and shared* in most situations to render antiterrorism effective (Coaffee 2016). A more fruitful approach, both academically and from a policy perspective, would be to improve our understanding of the strategic goals that al Shabaab hopes to achieve. This increased understanding will afford academics and policymakers alike a more objective perspective and the ability to respond to acts of violence more strategically.

Chapter One: The Fall
Strategic Studies since World War Two

1:1: Introduction

In this chapter, I address the overall trajectory of strategic studies since the end of the Second World War. I also consider the influence of the scientific method- and particularly the adoption of theoretical models- on the field of terrorism studies. I discuss the strategic approach, define the term "strategy," and detail how strategic studies have changed since WWII. I then propose a definition of terrorism, clarify what is meant by strategic terrorism and introduce the *takfiri* doctrine. Finally, I explore the utility of perception of the other as a lens for understanding how the *takfiri* doctrine allows us to understand al Shabaab's tactics and how they serve the group's strategic objectives. I round out the chapter with a discussion of the research question and the methodology employed.

1:2: The Strategic Approach

While terrorism literature is replete with studies attributing violence to either various widespread systemic factors at the societal, national, or international levels of analysis or to individual decision makers at the individual and group levels of analysis, strategic theory considers the utility of violence as a military strategy (Neumann and Smith 2007). While most terrorism literature is concerned with *why* terrorist violence occurs, strategic theory seeks to "examine how political actors

define the circumstances around them and how they react to those circumstances to achieve their objectives" (Smith 1991, p. 17).

In other words, strategic theory examines *how* political actors perceive their immediate reality and *how effectively* they respond to that perception toward the achievement of their goals. Put more simply, strategic theory allows scholars to evaluate the effectiveness of terrorist violence as a means to a desired end. In the cases of al Shabaab and Boko Haram, the strategic approach sheds considerable light on the *why* question as well.

Of course, one major drawback of the strategic approach (for most terrorism scholars) is its limited ability to produce generalizable results. This is largely because strategic theory is not a theoretical model per se, but more a level of analysis (Neumann 2002).

The scientific method involves both induction and deduction. Induction is the collection of data from a specific phenomenon under analysis. From this data, scholars hope to produce generalizations or theories that they can then apply to other similar phenomena. The application of these theories is known as deduction. Scholars apply theories to test them and determine whether their descriptive, explanatory and predictive power holds true within the light of each new analysis.

Terrorism scholarship seeks to compare similar types of conflict based upon their common use of tactical violence. On the one hand, this approach is beneficial as (theoretically) it allows scholars to differentiate between different categories of violence such as war, terrorism and crime (albeit somewhat artificially). Through the use of theoretical models, scholars can then apply systemic-level and individual-level theories more generally by specifying a particular cause as the independent variable and terrorism as the dependent variable. However, this approach largely strips away

the unique historical and cultural context in which conflict occurs. The result is inevitably more focus upon the independent variable that supposedly caused the violence than the conflict itself.

Alternatively, strategic theory "enables contexts to develop whilst preserving an overarching rationale that organises the content in a systematic fashion" (Neumann 2002). This overarching rationale is comprised of three primary assumptions: (1) military force is a dimension of power exercised toward political goals, (2) politics is a game of thrones in which each actors strives to maximize its own power in relation to other actors, and (3) all actors act rationally (Smith 1991).

To elaborate on the first assumption, Clausewitz viewed war as an extension of policy. In other words, violence is just one way to enforce policy. However, the opposite side of the coin is also true. In fact, Clausewitzian logic demands that force *only* be used as an instrument of policy. Therefore, strategic theory evaluates the use of violence as a tactic according to its efficacy in serving the policy that guides it, not according to moral or ethical sensibilities (Rousseau 2012).

As for the second assumption, it is important to clarify that strategic theory considers all actors as unitary, an assumption that is borrowed from realism (Neumann 2002). Therefore, even though individual differences among members of an entity are acknowledged in the overall evaluation of whether the use of violence is strategic, the decision to employ violence is analyzed via the perspective of a unitary decision maker.

Regarding assumption three, strategic theory assumes that all actors are rational, an assumption borrowed from economics (Neumann 2002). One definition of rationality is "the endeavour to relate means to ends as efficiently as possible" (Lopez-Alves 1989, p. 204). However, rather than simply assuming unbounded

rationality (a condition in which actors possess full knowledge and perfect objectivity), strategic theory also acknowledges the various limitations on actors' knowledge, capacity, time and resources. Garnett (1987, p. 19) addresses these two levels of rationality as the difference between "cold calculation" and "complexity."

Aside from these three assumptions, the strategic approach is largely an inductive process which requires an analysis of both the conflict and the context in which it occurs to determine whether the use of violence was strategic or not. "Because each situation varies so enormously in both time and place, it is impossible to elaborate durable and all-embracing strategic models. Strategic theory can only delineate norms of expected logical behaviour within any specific situation" (Smith 1991, p. 20).

Consequently, the strategic approach places much more emphasis upon the conflict itself and the context in which it occurs than the traditional theoretical models employed by most terrorism scholars. This largely inductive nature of the strategic approach is perfectly acceptable, given the goal of the strategic theorist. However, it flies in the face of the heavily deductive approach employed by most terrorism scholars, requiring that they put aside their cherished theories and let the data speak for itself.

1.3: Strategy

So what is meant by strategic? Strategy is defined as "a plan, method, or series of maneuvers or stratagems for obtaining a specific goal or result" (Andrews and Roland 1987, p. 77). Still, the term has been use in such a vast number of contexts as

to almost render it a cliché (Strachan 2005). A Google Scholar keyword search using the term produces 5,000,000 results.

If the first page is indicative of its most popular use, then one could say that strategy is a business term, or perhaps an organizational term. Of the ten results on the first page, five are related to business, three are related to organizational theory, one is related to preventative medicine and one is related to the theory of evolution. On the second page, seven results were business-related, one dealt with preventing substance abuse and two were social science-related (an article by Rosenthal (1973) on game theory and Satterthwaite's (1975) confirmation of Kenneth Arrow's conditions for voting behavior).

Not one in the first twenty results were related to military or war. It is only on page three that T.C. Schelling's 1980 book, "The Strategy of Conflict," appears nestled in with nine more non-related results. Pages four through twelve are all non-related results. Finally again, on page thirteen, the United States National Security Strategy appears (Bush 2002). Of the first 130 academic publications listed in a Google Scholar keyword search for the term 'strategy,' just two military-related sources appeared.

Yet the origin of the word is the Greek *strategos*, meaning general or military commander. *Strategos* is a derivative of the word *stratos*, which literally means something that lies beneath (figuratively, it can refer to an army or a camp), and *egos*, which means to lead (Andrews and Roland 1987, p. 77). So the term is militant in both origin and connotation. As Clausewitz (1976, p.128) famously defined it, strategy is "the use of engagements for the object of war."

Elaborating on Clausewitz, Gray (1999, p.17) distinguishes strategy from tactics. "Armed forces in action, indeed any instrument of power in action, is the

realm of tactics. Strategy, in contrast, seeks to direct and relate the use of those instruments to policy goals." In other words, "you have a strategy, but you do tactics" (Hughes 1989, p.54).[5] As Clausewitz (1976) reminds us, the aim of war is not to break the enemy, but to force it to bend to your will.

Eliot Cohen (1996) explains strategy via the metaphor of a bridge that connects military capability with political policy. Of course, this explanation of strategy focuses on its military aspects. Another way to look at strategy would be to consider it as the use of all an actor's assets toward the fulfillment of a political end, what might be referred to as grand strategy (Liddell Hart 1967). Again, the key focus is on the instrumental relationship between the assets at an actor's disposal and the policy outcome the actor wishes to achieve.

Hew Strachan (2005) makes a valid point concerning this relationship in his discussion of the Global War on Terror (GWOT). In addition to several other problems (i.e., the lack of an identifiable enemy and the lack of a clearly demarcated theatre of war), the U.S. lacked a strategy in 2003 because the war it hoped to win was not compatible with the war its military was prepared to fight.

Neumann (2002) alludes to this same idea by defining strategy as the employment of means to obtain a particular end. He goes on to stipulate that strategic thinking "assumes that means are subordinate to ends, that is, in strategy, social actors take autonomous decisions on how to employ the tools at their disposal in order to realise their objectives" (p.15). In other words, policy should drive strategy and not

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[5]Kydd and Walter (2006) discuss five principal goals of actors that engage in terrorist violence (regime change, changes in territorial boundaries, specific changes in policy, social control, and maintaining the status quo) and five enduring strategies employed to achieve those goals: (1) attrition- wherein an actor attempts to demonstrate its capability to the target, (2) intimidation of the public, (3) attempts at provoking the target to react, (4) attempts at spoiling a peace settlement, and (5) outbidding wherein one actor attempts to gain greater recognition over other actors in the eyes of the public.

the other way around. However, one could argue that Neumann also implies sound strategy requires an actor to employ the means at its disposal *in such a way* as to achieve its policy objectives. Going back to Strachan's observation of the GWOT, one could argue that strategy drove policy because the U.S. initiated the war with the military it had rather than the military required to achieve its goals.

Likewise, Smith (1997) further clarifies the strategic approach as the tracing of "the line of thinking of a particular political entity in order to comprehend how it proposes to achieve its objectives; and also to look at the ideological assumptions and values that underlie that entity's thinking and how this informs the way it formulates its strategy" (p. 4). Put more simply, one could say that sound strategy is the shortest available line between two points: an actor's current reality and the reality that actor hopes to secure. However, *reality* is an important factor in the equation. If an actor's means are insufficient, ill-equipped or ill-adapted to achieve its political goals, then its strategy is not sound. Thus, as Waldmann (2005) concludes, not only is the decision to engage in political violence strategic, but the decision as to what type of political violence to engage in (whether traditional warfare, guerrilla warfare, terrorism, etc.) is also strategic.

Additionally, to act strategically assumes the involvement of two or more actors because strategy involves the anticipation of what another actor will do. As T. C. Schelling (1966, p.2) puts it, strategic analysis is "the art of looking at the problem from the other person's point of view, identifying his opportunities and his interests." Or as Winston Churchill quipped, "it is sometimes necessary to take the enemy into account" (quoted in Medby and Glenn 2002, p. 89).

Just as strategy can entail the use of any means available to achieve a desired end, power entails more than mere military might. There are many types of power:

coercive or military (hard power), persuasive, seductive or diplomatic (soft power) and various combinations of the two, commonly referred to as smart power (Nye 2006; Armitage & Nye 2007; Wilson 2008). Given that the strategic approach is morally neutral regarding the type of power used, actors are scrutinized vis a vis their actions, their desired outcome and the options available to them. In other words, strategic theorists evaluate the use of political violence according to its efficacy, not its morality.

An obvious question emerges at this point. If the strategic approach to studying all types of political violence is basically the same, why is such a huge distinction made between terrorism studies and the study of conventional (interstate) war? I will address this question in the next section.

1.4: Strategic Studies since World War Two

Neumann and Smith (2007) argue that much of the conceptual ambiguity surrounding terrorism stems from the academic tradition of separating terrorism and all other forms of low-intensity conflict from interstate war. As a result, strategic analysts failed to apply the same Clausewitzian logic and methodology to the former as they did to the latter (Summers 1985; Smith 2003).[6]

The use of strategy in war is as old as warfare itself. However, the academic study of strategy can be dated to the post- World War II era when weapons technology eventually led to the bipolar nuclear stalemate between the two

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[6] Eckstein (1965) also points out that scholars studying intra-state war tended to focus on insurgents and ignore regimes involved in the conflict.

superpowers of the Cold War. During this era, strategic analysts focused solely on conventional inter-state warfare and potential scenarios involving the U. S. and the Soviet Union. All other classes of political violence were categorized together under vague terms such as liberation wars, low-intensity conflicts, insurgencies or terrorism (Smith 2005). One reason for this distinction was that unconventional war was taken to mean intra-state war, and that form of war clearly took the back seat to conventional (inter-state) war given the high stakes of a nuclear exchange between the two super-powers. A second reason why strategic theorists focused solely on conventional war was that it was easier to engage in quantitative analyses based on troops, tanks and missiles than it was to navigate the murky waters of political will in distant third world capitals (Neumann and Smith 2007).

Furthermore, the threat of global communism inspired policy-makers in the West to view basically all anti-Western insurgents as terrorists (Smith 2005). Hence, the tactic itself became the object of focus rather than the strategic goals of the insurgents. This largely remains the case today. Rather than accept the analytical weakness inherent in lumping all these various forms of violence together into one residual category, strategic theorists continue to isolate their field from the study of insurgent warfare considering it more a matter for law enforcement. Consequently, they largely ignore terrorism as a focus of analysis altogether.

Meanwhile both terrorism scholars and policy-makers continue to focus on the tactic rather than the strategic goals of individual actors, and so they tend to lump actors all together based on their modus operandi and ignore other critically relevant distinctions between them. Likewise, most terrorism scholars today confuse the

description of terrorism with a moral judgment of its use and the objectives of those who employ it (Neumann and Smith 2007).[7]

Of course, the synonymous use of terms such as low-intensity conflict, insurgency, guerrilla warfare and terrorism to refer to all political violence falling outside the category of inter-state war is a misnomer at best. More importantly, it creates a number of analytical problems. First, terrorism is "the use of violence to instill fear for political ends" (Neumann and Smith 2007, p 13). Therefore, since there is no single act or set of actions that constitute terrorist violence per se, it cannot be categorically differentiated from other acts of political violence.[8] Second, this tactic (whatever one labels it) can be employed by virtually any actor, whether individual, organizational or state (Corbett 1986; Jarvis 2009).[9] Hence, the term "terrorist" is a misleading one.

Despite the fact that more than 80 percent of all military conflicts since 1945 constitute non-conventional engagements (Holsti 1995), the separate treatment of interstate war and the arbitrary categorization of all other forms of conflict continues. As the collapse of the Soviet Union brought still more international challenges, the concept of 'new war' entered the discussion with several scholars debating whether Clausewitz was still even relevant to modern warfare (Stueck, et al. 1989; Keegan

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[7] See also Shanahan (2010) who contends that the morality of terrorism should be judged on a case-by-case bases and not categorically, and Teichman (1989) who explores whether and when acts of terrorism can be justified.

[8] Neumann and Smith (2005) do, however, distinguish the strategy of terrorism from other forms of irregular warfare. For instance, guerrilla warfare incorporates both the political organization of the masses and the eventual use of conventional military force while strategic terrorism relies solely on acts of political violence to achieve its desired end.

[9] Solomon (2015) points out that states are particularly culpable in Africa where regimes tend to prey upon their own citizens.

1997; Lambeth 1997; Gat 2001; Ignatief 2001; Wilkinson 2003; Gray 2005; Smith 2005; Fleming 2009; Kaldor 2013).

1.5: Terrorism

According to Neumann and Smith (2005, p. 574), terrorism is "the deliberate creation of fear, usually by the use or threat of the use of symbolic acts of physical violence, to influence the behavior of a given target group." Terrorism is, therefore, a tactic (Halliday 2004). As James S. Albritton (2006, p.6) argues, "terrorism is a *means* to an end—i.e., a technique that is used by terrorists to achieve a calculated objective by applying a variety of deliberately violent means and methods to that specific goal." Furthermore, while conventional warfare seeks to conquer the enemy, terrorism merely seeks to manipulate political change through terror (Ruby 2002; Neumann and Smith 2005).

In order to be analytically useful, however, the use of terrorist violence should be understood as the rational decision of a unitary actor[10] rather than either an immoral act or the result of some external cause (Crenshaw 1998; Anderton and Carter 2006; Caplan 2006; Neumann and Smith 2007).

On the one hand, the assumption that terrorism is immoral leads to efforts to prevent and punish it. The current Global War on Terror (GWOT) is a classic example. The political climate created by the GWOT has allowed political actors to

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[10] A unitary actor can be an individual, an organization or a state.

abuse the concept, each labeling their enemies as terrorists and thus stripping the term of any true conceptual value.

On the other hand, Neumann and Smith (2007, P. 5) contend that defining terrorism as the result of a grievance, injustice or inequality is "logically redundant" as root causes are "infinitely divisible and therefore inherently contestable." Both approaches subject the term to value-laden interpretations and rob the analyst of an objective position from which to begin his or his examination.

Alternatively, strategic theory seeks to understand the decisions of an actor via the relationship between means and ends as well as through any system of values that expands our understanding of the actor's decisions. That is to say, strategic theorists recognize that actors are impacted by the strategic environment. Harris (2006, p. 542) defines the strategic environment as the "determinant of the information that is available to an actor and the structure within which actors operate. The environment determines what the actors think they know for sure and what they have to infer, if possible, from the behaviour of others." To sum it up, strategic theorists view terrorist violence as the result of a rational decision made by a unitary actor who, after weighing the various options available, believes that the use of terrorism offers the most successful means to a desired end (Crenshaw 1998).[11]

Nearly twenty years ago, Richard Betts (1997, p.8) wrote that strategic studies "focuses on the essential Clausewitzian problem: how to make force a rational instrument of policy rather than mindless murder." In a sense, this is also the task of the terrorism scholar.

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[11] See also Abrahms (2008) who argues that terrorism is not a rational act.

However, Neumann (2002) correctly points out that terrorism scholars tend to categorize violence according to common tactical uses rather than employ clearly-articulated definitions. The result has been a blurred understanding of what is sometimes referred to as low-intensity conflict, insurgency, guerrilla warfare or terrorism. A wide variety of terminology has been employed to address a common tactical use of violence. These terms include, but are in no way limited to: unconventional war (Janos 1963); non-trinitarian war (van Creveld 1991); small wars (Beaumont 1995); wars of the third kind (Holsti 1996); uncivil wars (Snow 1996); ethnic conflict (Kaufmann 1996); complex emergencies (Maynard 1999); virtual war (Ignatieff 2001); new war (Kaldor 2013) and internal war (Manwarring 2001).

So how does one differentiate terrorism from other types of political violence?

1.6: Strategic Terrorism

Neumann and Smith (2005) define strategic terrorism as the attempt to obtain political objectives through the use of primarily terrorist activity rather than through some other means. They distinguish between terrorism and other forms of irregular warfare such as guerrilla war by noting that terrorism bypasses the need to mobilize the masses or introduce conventional military force. It is solely reliant upon terror alone to achieve its political ends. Strategic terrorism involves three stages: (1) disorientation, (2) target response and (3) gaining legitimacy.

In the first stage, an actor tries to erode the security of the people in order to make the government look incapable of maintaining order and stability. This is typically attempted through a series of random violent attacks. Neumann and Smith

(2005) are careful to point out that the primary focus of this stage is disorientation, not winning hearts and minds. Therefore, rational actors face a dilemma. They must make the violence threatening enough and destabilizing enough to render the general public open to accepting the political concessions demanded without tipping the scales of public opinion against the perpetrators of the violence.

In the second stage, an actor attempts to provoke a reaction from the target. Neumann and Smith discuss four potential responses proposed by N.O. Berry (1987). First, a target could potentially overreact by engaging in extra-legal responses and thereby discrediting its own legitimacy. Alternatively, a target could impose a number of security features which ultimately inconvenience the public enough to lose popular support.

Another possible reaction is that the target fails to react sufficiently to demonstrate that it is capable of dealing with the threat. Berry (1987, p.10) calls this reaction "power deflation." This is a common problem for regimes that attempt to balance the need to maintain security with principles of civil liberty and basic human rights. By deliberately attempting not to over-react, the target errors on the side of caution.

A third potential reaction is that a target attempts to crush moderate opposition for fear that they may form a coalition with the extremists. Berry warns that unless totally successful, the target risks radicalizing the moderate opposition rather than eliminating them.

Finally, the fourth potential reaction is for the target to appease the moderates among the political opposition with political reform in an attempt to isolate and weaken the extremist faction. Berry warns that there are a number of risks involved in this option. (1) Reform will be viewed as weakness on the part of the target

government, and will invite more terrorist violence, and/or (2) traditional supporters of the target government will interpret reforms as appeasing the terrorists, which could diminish political support for the regime.[12]

In the third and final stage of strategic terrorism, an actor attempts to gain legitimacy through either extensive media coverage or through grassroots methods of mobilizing public support. The latter has been employed by many organizations such as Hamas and others that have not only created legitimate political parties but also hospitals, schools and various other charitable organizations.

The third stage is critical in tipping public approval in favor of the perpetrators. However, Neumann and Smith (2005) argue that such grassroots methods defy the defining tenet of strategic terrorism: namely that terrorist violence alone can bring about the political changes desired. Therefore, they propose that strategic terrorism is "a potentially flawed strategy, which- except in the most favorable circumstances- is unlikely to achieve the political ends for which it is used" (Neumann and Smith 2007, p. 10). The most favorable circumstance is one of foreign occupation as foreign authorities generally lack legitimacy in the eyes of the population they control (Neumann and Smith 2005).[13]

Strategic terrorism is based upon two main assumptions: (1) that a target government's resolve can be eroded by persistent terrorist violence, and (2) that terrorist violence will create sufficient fear within the target population to undermine

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[12] Berry (1987) discusses five possible reactions: (1) overreaction; (2) power deflation; (3) failed repression of moderates; (4) appeasement of moderates; and (5) massive intimidation.

[13] Crozier (1960) argues that terrorist violence in general is most likely to succeed during conditions of foreign occupation.

its trust in the government's ability (or desire) to protect its citizens (Neumann and Smith 2005).

The first assumption is based largely upon the success of terrorist campaigns to drive out colonial occupiers such as the British in Palestine in the 1940s (Hoffman 2011). However, foreign occupation by colonial powers represented the most favorable circumstance for strategic terrorism. Whether strategic terrorism can be as successful in less favorable circumstances is debatable. Politics is the "act of seeking to fulfill one's will through violence or other means" (Neumann and Smith 2007, p. 17). If a target government is already enjoying a measure of legitimacy, and its desire is to protect that legitimacy as well as its citizens, it has a wide range of policy choices at its disposal.

The second assumption of strategic terrorism has a number of caveats. The first is that the campaign of violence could possibly backfire and generate support for the target government rather than undermine it. A second caveat is that, rather than creating a destabilizing atmosphere of panic and fear, a campaign of protracted violence may become normalized. The people may simply accept it as a part of their daily lives.

I recall a conversation that I had with a Serbian man who was a young boy in Bosnia in the early 1990s. He told me that the war became so commonplace that when he would ask his mother if he could go outside and play, she would reply, "watch out for the snipers" (Nišić 2010).

Beyond simply normalizing violence, societies may even learn to capitalize on it (Keen 1997; Kaldor 2013). In Somalia, for example, warlords profit from the violence. And since many individuals are employed by the warlords, irregular

warfare has become an economic opportunity (Menkhaus 2004a; Bakonyi and Stuvøy 2005).

To instill (and maintain) the necessary fear and climate of insecurity, terrorist violence needs to be "sudden, brutal, unpredictable and indiscriminate" (Neumann and Smith 2005, p. 588). However, maintaining violence of this magnitude poses a number of challenges. The first is the sheer difficulty of orchestrating repeated attacks and evading the authorities. A high degree of technical ability, accessibility, personnel and financial support are necessary, not to mention dedication and personal resolve among the members.

The second challenge involves balancing the need to shock and awe the public into a state of fear and instability without turning the tide of public opinion against the group and increasing support for the target government. Finally, while the group seeks to provoke a reaction from the target government, it risks annihilation should the target government elect to react with overwhelming force (Berry 1987).

The need to provoke a target government into sufficiently reacting without overreacting requires a group to engage in a number of carefully calculated chess moves: How much violence is a target government willing to withstand? How will political supporters react? How much domestic and political support can the target regime expect should they elect to overreact? What options are available to the group should the target government decide to escalate its own counterterrorist campaign? Can the organization alter its strategy? Is the group willing to compromise? How might the organization's supporters react if it did? Navigating through this minefield of decisions is difficult at best, and most likely impossible.

Neumann and Smith (2005) contend that most religious groups that employ strategic terrorism are not willing to compromise. Therefore, one of two options is

probable: (1) the group will either fail to sufficiently escalate the violence to the necessary level to provoke a reaction, or (2) if it is successful in provoking a reaction, the group will lose the support of the people, disintegrate into splinter factions and/or be annihilated by the target government. The likelihood that it will succeed in provoking just the right response so as to cost the target government a sufficient measure of legitimacy and also garner a measure of legitimacy for itself is highly unlikely. In fact, Neumann and Smith (2007) argue that it is precisely this limited efficacy of strategic terrorism that explains why many groups choose to employ other tactics in addition to political violence to achieve their goals.

1.7: The *Takfiri* Doctrine

The *takfiri* doctrine is a radical *Sunni* interpretation allowing the accusation of a fellow Muslim of major unbelief (which is punishable by death) based on deed alone (Stanley 2005; Lahoud 2010). Typically, moderates acknowledge certain acts to be sufficient for the pronouncement of *takfir* (major unbelief). These include denouncing the faith, throwing the *Quran* in filth or wailing over the dead.[14] Other acts, such as a ruler not adhering strictly to *sharia* or an individual Muslim not fulfilling a particular obligation of the faith, are held by moderates to be minor unbelief and require that they be declared "permissible" by the actor before they constitute major unbelief (Al-Rasheed 2006; Crooke 2015). The radical interpretation, on the other hand, is that any Muslim who believes differently than the *takfiri* (the one

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[14] See also for example, a *fatwa* issued in 1982 by Shaykh Jadd al-Haqq (*mufti* al-Azhar University in Cairo) stating that only the refusal to profess *tawhid* (the unity of God) could justify the pronouncement of *takfir* upon a Muslim (Calvert 2009).

pronouncing *takfir*) is automatically guilty of major unbelief and therefore subject to immediate execution (Paz 2005; Wood 2015).

While *jihadists* maintain that violence against the apostate regime is necessary for instituting *sharia*, *takfiri* groups do not distinguish between the government and the governed (Podeh 1996). The *takfiri* doctrine is the cornerstone of much of the violence committed by *jihadist* groups today (Lahoud 2010; Crooke 2015).[15]

1.8: Perception of the Other

A component of this analysis is the theory of perception of the other (Garfinkel 1952; Merleau-Ponty 1973; Abdallah-Pretceille 1983; Kornprobst 2002; Castano et al. 2003; Crozier 1998; Millas 2004). As discussed in section 1.3, strategy is the use of one's resources towards the attainment of one's goals. Precisely because both al Shabaab and Boko Haram have adopted the *takfiri* doctrine which dramatically affected their tactical operations, perception of the other is indispensable for understanding how to interpret each group's actions as a means for obtaining their respective goals.

Perception of the other is an intuitively satisfying theoretical construct that has been around for some time. In short, the theory suggests that actors possess multiple identities based on religion, class, ethnicity, citizenship, gender, profession, political affiliation, etc. (Gopin 2000). Some identities are salient in given situations while others are not because identity is relational (Reis & Shaver 1988; Hazan & Shaver

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[15] The *takfiri* doctrine is discussed in somewhat greater length in Chapter Four.

1994; Brewer & Gardner 1996; Tice and Baumeister 2001). In other words, identity is constructed by our perception of others.

Perception of the other agrees with the basic tenets of Social Identity Theory which proposes that social identity is derived from perceived membership in certain in-groups and the perception of others in certain out-groups (Van Walraven and Leiden 1999). It is also in harmony with the psycho-sociological approach that suggests that individual actors shape their perception of others based upon social influences (Wilkinson 1987; Crenshaw 1990b; Post 1990, 2005a & 2005b; Horgan 2008). Elements of perception of the other are even visible in systemic studies such as Waldmann (2005) who concludes that subjective factors (generational differences, limited career opportunities, perceived status inequality, etc.) are far better indicators of potential terrorist violence than objective factors such as poverty, low literacy rates, high unemployment, etc.

According to Katzenstein (1996, p.5), norms are "collective expectations about the proper behavior of actors with a given identity." Norms then determine acceptable and unacceptable interaction within and between groups of various identities (Rogers 1996). On the micro level, individuals interact with one another for a variety of reasons such as personal interest, attraction, necessity, etc. However, perception of the other maintains that it is an actor's conceptual placement of others (either within or without a particular identity or group) that determines which norms of behavior apply (Schwartz et al. 2009). One can, therefore, define perception of the other as the information upon which decision-makers discern which category of norms apply to specific parties in any given situation.

For instance, on the micro level, individuals who owned slaves clearly distinguished between slaves and freemen and treated them accordingly- as did

virtually everyone else in societies that permitted slavery. On the macro level, due to the principle of self-determination, the West European powers were willing to grant autonomy to certain Central and East Europeans following World War One (WWI), but they were not willing to grant autonomy to Africans and Asians. The decision to grant autonomy to one group but not the other was based on the West European perception of Central and East Europeans on the one hand and their very different perception of Africans and Asians on the other. A similar perceptual distinction can be seen behind America's long-time support for Israel over Palestine. Likewise, the perception of Western Europe as imperial and colonizing determined the norms that applied in several African struggles for liberation and the eventual decision to resort to force (Van Walraven and Leiden 1999).

The decision to go to war or engage in armed conflict would seem to involve a perceptual process (Castano et al. 2003; Jackson 2005b). For conflict to occur between two or more groups, each participant must first assume an identity for itself and assign an identity to its opponent(s). An interesting example of armed conflict research that employs perception of the other as an independent variable is Markus Kornprobst's (2002) study of border disputes in Africa, in which he compares the sub-regions of West Africa and the Horn. He finds that of the ten border disputes he investigated in West Africa, none escalated into war while two of the four border disputes in the Horn escalated into intractable conflicts.

Kornprobst's research questions how one can account for such a remarkable difference between the two sub-regions' willingness and ability to resolve interstate conflicts. He concludes that the low level of cooperation among the members of the Horn sub-region may be due to their perception of Ethiopia as a colonial and predatory state. Therefore, the importance of maintaining territorial integrity in the

Horn is trumped by the perceived need to resist Ethiopian neo-colonialism by any means available.

As the substantive chapters demonstrate, perception of the other also offers considerable insight into how the tactics of al Shabaab and Boko Haram serve their respective strategic objectives in ways that might not otherwise be discernable. This insight leads us to an important question regarding the very nature of the groups themselves.

1.9: Research Question

The U.S. State Department designated al Shabaab a terrorist organization in February 2008 (Shinn 2011), but is al Shabaab a "terrorist" organization? Furthermore, if it is engaged in terrorism, has it always been? Or has the organization's strategic goal(s) changed since inception? Finally, if it is determined that al Shabaab is engaged in terrorism, to what extent is the group reliant upon terrorist violence as a part of its overall strategy? In other words, has al Shabaab engaged in strategic terrorism? If so, how successful has this strategy been?

1.10: Methodology

In this project, I employ a strategic analysis of al Shabaab. Strategic theory considers the utility of violence as a military strategy (Neumann and Smith 2007). While most terrorism literature is concerned with *why* terrorist violence occurs or its causes, strategic theory seeks to "examine how political actors define the circumstances around them and how they react to those circumstances to achieve their

objectives" (Smith 1991, p. 17). By tracing the line of thinking of the organization, I strive to understand what al Shabaab's strategic objective is, whether it has changed over the years since the group's inception and to measure how successful al Shabaab's use of violence has been toward the achievement of its strategic goals.

I employ a qualitative case study design as it allows for a wide variety of approaches to the phenomenon under analysis. The basic structure of a case study contains a detailed and in-depth analysis of the entity being examined (Yin 1981). Its strength is that it captures the complexity of the particular case in the study- what Geertz (1994) calls "thick description." One major weakness of the case study design is that such specificity limits the generalizability of the findings (Bryman and Bell 2003). However, because I will not be attempting to generalize my results, this approach is preferable for its depth of focus and flexibility.

My primary reason for choosing al Shabaab is that the group is one of the deadliest organizations on the continent of Africa, making this study salient to scholars and policy makers alike (Kelley 2014). First, I will discuss the group's social context and analyze relevant historical and contemporary details that shed light on the organizations' stated political goals. Second, I will examine al Shabaab's predecessor groups and look for similarities and differences in the strategic goals and tactics that each has employed.

Given that no actor is a true utility maximizer in the strict economic sense of the word, it is impossible to fully understand the decision-making of any entity without first comprehending the values to which it subscribes. Therefore, I explore the extent that ideological, tribal and religious factors influence and shape al Shabaab's goals. Finally, after tracing the group's ideological underpinnings back through its respective predecessors, I examine the various phases the group has transitioned

through and analyze each phase to determine whether al Shabaab's strategic goals have remained consistent—and if not, I note how they have changed and evolved since inception.

It is important to note that I am not attempting to establish causation. Also, since strategic theory is not a theoretical model per se, but more a level of analysis (Neumann 2002), there are no independent or dependent variables to speak of. Rather, I employ a combination of assumption, observation and deduction in order to determine al Shabaab's preferences (Frieden 1999). It is dangerous to rely on just one method alone for reasons that I will discuss below. My endeavor is to trace al Shabaab's line of thinking to determine the group's strategic objective(s) since inception and whether its use of violence has been successful in achieving that goal.

Assumption is the first factor in the equation. It is important to be aware of any assumptions one is making when analyzing a group such as al Shabaab. The assumptions one makes regarding an actor's use of violence will be informed by the preference structure that actor is believed to possess at any given time. In this respect, changing preferences create somewhat of a moving target. Fortunately the theoretical framework one uses can help to stabilize the analysis by providing a consistent set of assumptions. For example, the rational framework assumes that actors will seek the most efficient alternative in an effort to maximize their utility. As mentioned above, the overarching rationale of strategic theory is comprised of three primary assumptions: (1) military force is a dimension of power exercised toward political goals, (2) politics is a game of thrones in which each actors strives to maximize its own power in relation to other actors, and (3) all actors act rationally (Smith 1991). The danger in relying on assumption alone is that one can never be 100% certain that their assumptions are correct.

Observation is the second element in the analysis. The observation involved in this analysis entailed studying al Shabaab's radio broadcasts, videos, media releases and various correspondence (e.g. bin Laden 2009; Hammami 2012;). Much of this material, while originally in the public domain, is now only available through secondary sources as the original accounts have been deactivated (e.g. Bakier 2008; Grace 2008b; NEFA 2008; Menkhaus 2013a; Moore 2016). For instance, al Shabaab's English language Twitter account, (HSM Press) was deactivated in January 2013 after only having been active for two years (Anzalone 2013, BBC 2013, Hodge 2014). At least six other Twitter accounts operated by al Shabaab were also suspended in September 2013 (Hamza 2013). Likewise, the various branches of the group's Radio al Andalus and multiple relay stations were also shut down as the group lost territory. Another major challenge has been collecting data from within the conservative Gulf countries where I reside as al Shabaab media announcements—such as those released by the organization's media arm, al-Kataib Media—are heavily censored in this region.

Initially the group employed YouTube, websites and chat rooms to raise finances and recruit members. However, al Shabaab has since evolved into a sophisticated user of social media. The group's real-time tweets during the Westgate Shopping Mall attacks generated almost as much media attention as the attack itself (Menkhaus 2013a). Likewise, in 2014 the organization's leadership issued a directive that all members change their mobile phone numbers to prevent messages from being intercepted. The leadership also placed a ban on the use of smart phones among members (Hodge 2014).

Ironically, while al Shabaab has mastered the use of modern media, it has also attempted to prohibit (or at least restrict) the use of most other forms of modern

technology in areas under its influence or direct control (Mohamed 2014). This move to prohibit the use of communication technology by the civilian population, along with the fact that many of its more recent media releases have been in Swahili, Arabic and English, support the suggestion that the groups is increasingly reaching out to foreigners (Vidino 2010).

In addition to these various media releases, I also rely upon personal interviews with individuals who have witnessed these groups and the effects they have had upon Somali society. The main problem with relying on observation alone—or even personal interviews—is that observed behavior may not necessarily reflect one's true preferences. In fact, the second assumption of strategic theory suggests that actors will base their behavior upon their expectation of what other actors will or will not do—not upon their true preferences. So, actions can be misleading.

The third tool I employ is deduction. As discussed in Section 1:2, deduction involves the application of pre-existing theories to test them and determine whether their descriptive, explanatory and predictive power holds true within the light of each new analysis. For example, there are many theories regarding the causes of terrorism (e.g. systemic, psychological, psycho-social, etc.). However, if we were to apply such theories to the violence of al Shabaab or Boko Haram, we would quickly realize that these explanations are inadequate. We need a broader approach to understanding these militant organizations—one that considers their strategic objects as well as their motives. In other words, it is necessary to know *what* actors want before we can attempt to understand *why* they want it.

This inquiry reflects an important distinction between strategy and tactics. Strategy entails an actor's plan to achieve its ultimate purpose while tactics are

merely techniques employed to implement a strategy. Unfortunately, counterterrorism often is so focused on an actor's use of tactical violence that it fails to consider the strategic goal behind the violence. This failure leads to highly ineffective measures that often produce disastrous results.

In order to ascertain the goal of a particular actor, one must employ all the tools at his or her disposal— assumption, observation and deduction—to avoid confusing tactics with strategic objective(s). Likewise, one should not confuse ideology (e.g. *Islamism, jihadism or takfiri*) with strategic objectives (e.g. obtaining political concessions versus overthrowing the regime). An actor's strategic objective is the end result the actor hopes to achieve. An actor's ideology dictates to a large extent 1) the strategy that an actor will employ (i.e. how that actor will use its resources toward the achievement of its goals), and 2) which tactics will be acceptable (targeting corrupt governments or killing apostate Muslims). Hence, ideology is not the same as an actor's strategic goal(s).

For instance, al Qaeda shared the same strategic objectives as al Qaeda in Iraq (the expulsion of the U.S. and its allies from the Middle East, the overthrow of Western puppet regimes in the Muslim world and the eventual establishment of an Islamic *caliphate* based on *sharia*). However, Zarqawi embraced the *takfiri* doctrine and, as a result, employed tactics that greatly alarmed bin Laden and Zawahiri. The two groups eventually split.

Zarqawi's vision was the exact opposite of bin Laden's (Fishman 2006). Bin Laden, following al-Banna's more conciliatory bottom-up approach, believed that the *ummah* (Muslim community) should be taught the true way of Islam from the *ulama* (Muslim scholars). Bin Laden was convinced that the establishment of the *caliphate* had to wait until America was driven out of the Middle East and the corrupt puppet

regimes in the Muslim world were overthrown. Only then would Muslims be strong enough to establish the *caliphate*.

Zarqawi, following Qutb's authoritarian top-down approach, insisted that Muslims were only as strong as their leaders. He wanted to set up an Islamic state immediately. Rather than attempt to win the hearts and minds of the majority of Muslims as bin Laden wanted to do, Zarqawi wanted to wage a brutal campaign that would instill fear, not win popular support (McCants 2015). Even though the two had virtually the same strategic objectives, their strategies and hence their tactics, were very different from one another.

It is also important to point out that, while the reasons for an actor to adopt the *takfiri* doctrine are no doubt complex and fascinating, such an inquiry is beyond the scope of this project. It could well be a project in itself—one that I am not qualified to embark upon.

Silke (2003) points out that despite the growing multidisciplinary body of literature on terrorism, only one fifth of research published on the subject produces substantially new findings. This research makes an original contribution to the body of literature on al Shabaab in that there is currently no other strategic analysis of the group that also applies the threefold application of violence employed here or the framework of strategic terrorism.

Menkhaus has written extensively on al Shabaab, and he is clearly one of the world's leading experts on the group. Menkhaus is an area specialist. As such, his approach is largely systemic. Menkhaus focuses on the emergence and continued existence of al Shabaab as a result of the historical and political context of Somalia, rather than applying the more rational lens of strategic theory to explain the group's tactical use of violence. Hence, while Menkhaus offers considerable insight into al

Shabaab's tactical use of violence in light of current systemic realities, he does not apply the strategic terrorism framework in order to better understand the organization's strategic objective(s).

Gartenstein-Ross (2009) also takes a systemic approach by attributing many of al Shabaab's changing tactics to the external influence of al Qaeda rather than to internal changes in the group's leadership, ideology or strategic objective(s). For example, Gartenstein-Ross points to the fact that Godane increased the number of foreign fighters, adopted the tactic of suicide attacks (which were previously unacceptable in Somalia), and upgraded the quality and sheer quantity of the group's media releases as indications of al Shabaab's ideological connection to al Qaeda while completely ignoring more strategic explanations.

Wise (2011) concludes that al Shabaab has gone through two phases (phase one: December 2006- early 2008 and phase two: early 2008-2011). However, his analysis is largely based upon al Shabaab's increased military capacity in the second phase rather than the changing strategic objective(s) of the organization. Wise's dichotomy is also outdated as the groups has since gone through a number of setbacks in its military capacity.

Wise also takes a systemic approach, attributing al Shabaab's emergence and initial success to the Ethiopian invasion. According to Wise, Ethiopia was largely responsible for both radicalizing al Shabaab and transforming it into the most lethal militia in Somalia—dramatically increasing the group's membership from about 400 initially to several thousand. Like Gartenstein-Ross (2009), however, Wise completely ignores more strategic explanations for al Shabaab's use of tactical violence and views it instead as a reaction to outside forces.

Hansen (2013) offers an extremely detailed discussion of al Shabaab's membership and organizational structure, including an in-depth accounting of the group's finances and even records of payments to its militants (e.g. $20/per hand grenade attack, $30/per soldier killed, etc.). Hanson's approach is also largely systemic rather than strategic, however. While Hansen also divides the history of al Shabaab into four distinct phases (phase one: 2005-06, phase two: 2007-08, phase three: 2009-10, phase four: 2010- 2013), his phases are mainly focused on changing external pressures (such as the group's changing enemies and the influence of al Qaeda) rather than changes in the group's leadership, ideology and the evolution of the organization's strategic objective(s). Thus, Hansen largely neglects a strategic analysis of the organization as well.

Finally, Marchal has written extensively on al Shabaab's resilience in the face of its many enemies. However, Marchal largely attributes the organization's success to exogenous factors such as questionable policies on the part of the United States and its allies in the region, Somali nationalism, the perceived illegitimacy of the Somali government and financial support from conservative Gulf States.

Anzalone (2016) stands apart from the rest in that his primary focus is on al Shabaab's strategic use of violence. However, Anzalone argues that the organization's tactics have not changed in any significant way—certainly not enough to suggest a change in the group's strategic objective(s).

While I necessarily discuss the organizational structure of al Shabaab as well as the historical, political and socio-economic context in which al Shabaab emerged— unlike Menkhaus, Gartenstein-Ross, Wise, Hansen and Marchal—my approach is strategic rather than systemic. Furthermore (unlike Anzalone), my emphasis is on the group's leadership and how its changing ideology impacted the organization's

strategic objectives and tactical use of violence. For example, I draw a stark distinction between the strategic objective(s) of Ayro and the nationalists and those of Godane (and later Umar). The former targeted its perceived enemies largely within the borders of Somalia, while the latter adopted a very different strategy of attacking mainly foreign targets outside the borders of Somalia. The two groups employed radically different tactics which, when understood in light of their respective ideologies, speak volumes concerning the group's transforming strategic objective(s).

Furthermore, while scholars such as Gartenstein-Ross (2009) and Hansen (2013), clearly identify al Shabaab as an al Qaeda affiliate, my analysis suggests that al Shabaab's ideology is much more in line with Islamic State than al Qaeda.

Finally, my analysis differs from the leading scholars in the way that I slice the data. The distinction is more than merely a different set of dates. My analysis reflects an emphasis on strategic objective(s) rather than military capacity or changing external pressures.

The United States designated al Shabaab as a terrorist organization in 2008 (Menkhaus 2013b), however, the violence in Somalia represents ongoing conflict that is much older than al Shabaab. I argue that the decision to designate this group as a terrorist organization was politically motivated rather than based upon sound analysis. Since The U.S. refuses to negotiate with terrorists as a matter of policy, but has on several occasions backed insurgents, the designation has long-term implications as it has set U.S. foreign policy regarding al Shabaab in stone. This designation also directly affects the extent of military intervention involved in the region.

Unfortunately, America's involvement in Somalia has only served to exacerbate the violence. The policy prescriptions in this thesis could make all the difference between success and failure for the incoming Trump administration as it

attempts to address the challenges that al Shabaab continues to present. As I also briefly discuss, the application of the strategic terrorism framework sheds considerable light upon the similarities and differences between groups such as al Qaeda and Islamic State as well as their affiliates. Thus, a proper understanding of these groups is essential as their potential impact on the world is immense. To date, no work has applied either strategic theory or Neumann and Smith's (2005) framework of strategic terrorism to al Shabaab.

Another strength of this thesis is that, in the course of gathering data, I have visited blast sites and interviewed survivors and witnesses whenever possible, rather than relying solely upon secondary sources. Dolnik (2013) argues that the best way to increase the current output of new information is for terrorism scholars to rely less on secondary sources and to rely more on theory-driven approaches to field research.

In this chapter, I have discussed the fall of strategic studies from its original state, defined the relevant terms in the study (strategy, terrorism and strategic terrorism) and introduced the *takfiri* doctrine and perception of the other. I have also laid out the basic plan of the research project (the research question, the methodology and justification for employing strategic theory). In Chapter Two, I will address the limitations of theoretical models in terrorism studies.

Chapter Two: The Tower of Babel
Limitations of Theoretical Models in Terrorism Studies

2.1: Introduction

In this chapter, I lay out a blueprint of the theoretical edifice that terrorism scholars have erected, largely upon the erroneous foundational beliefs that (1) terrorism is a separate category of political violence that can be identified by the ideology, the deed or the actor involved, and (2) that terrorism is, for the most part, irrational at best- or at the very worst- engaged in by only the deranged and psychotic.

There is, as I will discuss in Chapter Three, a substantial body of literature that argues that "terrorists" are rational as well as a number of studies that conclude that "terrorists" are perfectly normal human beings (Silke 2014). However, these approaches still, to varying degrees, define terrorism by the act itself, the ideology behind it, or by those who perpetrate it rather than as a tactical means to a desired end that can be comprised of any number of acts, employed even for legitimate reasons by any actor.

I begin with a discussion of the limitations of systemic and lower levels of analysis when used in isolation. From there, I progress to a generic examination of theoretical models.

2.2: Limitations of Systemic Levels of Analysis

One body of terrorism scholarship focuses on large systemic causes such as structural, cultural or institutional factors (e.g. Piazza 2006; Wilkinson 1997; Krueger

and Laitin 2008). The level of analysis in this approach is most often national, societal, or larger. Therefore, scholars in this category specify one or more broad systemic factors such as economic conditions, culture, religion, and various political and/or social institutions as the independent variable. While such factors certainly must play a role, as individuals are affected by their environment (Hays 1994), these systemic forces are extremely common and widespread.

It is, therefore, very difficult to establish a consistent correlation between such prevalent systemic forces and the fairly irregular phenomenon known as terrorism. As Laqueur (1977a, p. 15) puts it, trying to "unravel the mysterious character of terrorist movements with reference to general economic trends is like using a giant nut-cracker to crack a very tiny object, which might not even be a nut."

To make this task a bit less arduous, systemic terrorism literature is further divided by the type of systemic factor being examined (e.g. structural, cultural or institutional). This artificial dissection of the data allows scholars to be more precise in the specific variable that they are attempting to measure. Still, it is generally accepted that rather than any one systemic condition alone, a combination of systemic factors is likely culpable.

On the continent of Africa, for instance, one might point to the combination of Islamic extremism and weak governments as contributing factors to terrorism. For example, the governments in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Democratic Republic of Congo have been incapable of preventing groups such as Hezbollah from exploiting blood diamonds to finance acts of terrorism. This systemic approach combines cultural and institutional explanations as the independent variables. While this model lends to our understanding of *how* such groups are able to support their illicit endeavors, it leaves unanswered questions regarding *why* the Islamic extremist groups

involved have chosen terrorism over the status quo in the first place. Not to mention, it tells us nothing regarding strategic objective.

Certainly not all Muslims who adhere to a strict interpretation of Islam support or engage in violence (Zaidi 2008). Nor do all weak governments experience terrorism within their borders. Therefore, systemic explanations alone leave us with as many questions as they do answers. Again, a more promising approach would be to trace these groups' tactical use of violence to their strategic goals. This approach would (1) allow us to determine the strategic value of their use of violence and, (2) shed light on their decision to employ terrorism as a means of achieving their goal in the first place.

2.2.1: The Big Bang?

Other terrorism scholars in the systemic category, while acknowledging that systemic factors do sometimes change very quickly, point out that these broad realities usually tend to change rather slowly. Hence it is difficult to demonstrate a correlation between such normally stable systemic factors and the fairly erratic phenomenon known as terrorism. This second category of scholarship suggests that, like the Big Bang Theory, there is a triggering event or precipitating factor that sparks the nebulous gasses into flame to produce terrorist violence. Such triggers could be anything from famine or drought to election fraud scandals and full-scale civil war. Therefore, scholars in this category specify systemic forces and triggering events as the independent variable (Crenshaw 1981; Ehrlich and Liu 2002; Bjørgo 2004; Shrivastava 2005; Newman 2006; Noricks 2009).

This, of course, is an oversimplification. Some of the models in this body of literature are actually quite elaborate. For example, Crenshaw (1981) distinguishes between preconditions and precipitants. According to Crenshaw, preconditions are long-term conditions that "make terrorism more likely" to occur over decades and generations (such as racial inequality/discrimination against specific sub-groups or a lack of opportunity for political participation) while precipitants are events that spark individual acts of terrorism (p. 380). Precipitants can be further divided into permissive factors (such as modernization, urbanization, social facilitation and the inability or unwillingness of a regime to prevent terrorism) and direct causes (such as grievances on the part of a subgroup, the lack of opportunity for political participation and the most immediate precipitant, harsh repression on the part of the regime which sparks a retaliatory response).

Crenshaw maintains, however, that terrorism arises primarily from elite disaffection (and most probably from a combination of elite disaffection and mass passivity) which helps to explain why such a relatively small percentage of the population choose to engage in terrorist violence in the first place. Therefore, according to Crenshaw, the decision to engage in terrorism is made by rational actors when (1) preconditions create grievances, (2) material circumstances are such that terrorism is possible and (3) due to urbanization, it's likely to have an impact, (4) permissive factors are in the actors' favor and (5) some direct cause sparks the flame of terrorist violence. However, if this is true, then why don't Native Americans commit acts of terrorism? Or Eskimos for that matter? Once again, when we focus on the "why" question, we're left with more questions than answers.

Like Crenshaw, Gupta (2005) argues that root causes are merely rallying points around which leaders can spark dissatisfaction and possibly even violence.

Gupta further argues that there are three main categories of actors who participate in terrorist violence: (1) true believers who are in it for the cause, (2) mercenaries who are in it for the money, and (3) captive participants who are coerced into it out of pressure from family, friends or some other influential group.

Ross (1993) offers a similar typology of permissive and precipitant causes. However, Ross suggests that three permissive causes (geographic location, regime type, and level of modernization) are necessary but not sufficient factors that "prestructure and facilitate the presence of the precipitants" (p. 5). In addition, Ross argues that systemic models need to be specifically conceptualized regarding the scope, frequency and intensity of the terrorism being examined as well as the type of terrorism be it domestic, international or state-sponsored.

Bjørgo (2004, p.3) distinguishes between root causes of terrorism (systemic-level causes), facilitator causes (factors that may accelerate terrorism such as modern technology or mass media), motivational causes (actual grievances) and what he refers to as "trigger causes," which he defines as the "immediate circumstances and events" that spark acts of political violence. Trigger causes may be any precipitating event that spark acts of terrorism. Bjørgo lists three examples: the slaying of a student by police in West Berlin in 1967 which led to the founding of the Red Army Faction; the 1972 'Bloody Sunday' massacre in Belfast which invited a slew of Irish Republican Army retaliations; and the 2000 visit of Ariel Sharon to the al-Aqsa Mosque which triggered the Second Intifada.

Newman (2006) also employs this approach. He refers to root causes as indirect and/or underlying causes and concludes that root causes are only useful for understanding terrorism when studied in tandem with precipitant factors. A variety of terminology has been used to express this concept (e.g., root; primary; permissive;

proximate; precipitant; catalyst and trigger causes). Regardless of the terminology one uses, the prevailing wisdom in this body of terrorism literature suggests that a combination of both long-term systemic factors and more immediate causes is necessary to produce the decision to engage in terrorism.

2.2.2: Weak States?

While the systemic body of terrorism scholarship contributes much to our understanding regarding some cases of terrorist violence, terrorism is a beast of many stripes. So, the focus on systemic conditions alone (or even a combination of systemic conditions and precipitating factors) simply does not tell us the entire story. Like the proverbial blind men describing an elephant (Silke 1996), each approach is incomplete in itself.

For example, in Africa poverty produces vulnerability as millions of young, uneducated males with little or no economic opportunity live in politically unstable conditions under corrupt governments that are willing to host and sponsor militant organizations. Still the majority of African states fail to experience the terrorism one might expect from these conditions (Ehrlich and Liu 2002). Why?

Piombo (2007) argues that one explanation is that most terror organizations require a fairly stable and reliable infrastructure in which to operate. Therefore, while some indigenous terrorist groups do exist in politically unstable states such as Liberia and Somalia, terrorism is a substantially greater problem in more advanced African states such as Kenya and South Africa. According to Piombo, political instability and poor infrastructure serve as barriers to terrorist activity.

On the other hand, it is also widely acknowledged that weak states are often ill-equipped to prevent terrorist attacks, apprehend suspects, and secure their borders. So-called "weak states" are also considered a threat to the national security of their neighbors. Rice (2006) warns that spillover from weak states can include conflict, terrorism, disease and environmental degradation.[16] Furthermore, the informal economies in these states offer excellent opportunities for money laundering and various trafficking enterprises that can be used to finance terrorist operations (Takeyh and Gvosdev 2002; Mair 2003; Piazza 2008). Failed and failing states are also often either incapable or unwilling to provide basic public goods for their citizens, making it easier for terrorist organizations to secure popular support through humanitarian programs (Ehrlich and Liu 2002).

Supportive of this second view, Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, al Qaeda's well-known strategist, specifically noted that Somalia and other chaotic places are well-suited for hosting terrorist organizations and *jihadist* training camps (Lia 2008; Cruickshank and Ali 2007). Such statements also tend to resonate well with Lia and Skjolberg (2000) who argue that, rather than less terrorism, there is simply less reporting of terrorist activity in developing states.

In Somalia for example, al Shabaab takes full advantage of the chaos (Wise 2011). The group's operatives move freely among the state's millions of refugees and displaced persons, and the incompetence and corruption of government forces have allowed al Shabaab to capture towns and launch countless deadly attacks including

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[16] Rice (2006, p. 4) defines weak states as, "poor states that lack the capacity to fulfill essential government functions, chiefly: 1) to secure their population from violent conflict; 2) to competently meet the basic human needs of their population (i.e. food, health, education), and; 3) to govern legitimately with the acceptance of a majority of their population."

several trans-border attacks (Ali 2008). Of course, al Shabaab has since forfeited much of its territory, but the chaos persists nonetheless.

Which theoretical approach is correct? Do poor economic conditions and political instability empower those who would engage in terrorist violence or restrict them? Both approaches employ systemic models, yet they make contradictory assumptions. While theory should inform the model, theory itself also needs to be informed by the unique context in which the violence occurs- the very data that is so readily stripped away in order to make the analyses more generalizable.

The basic assumption behind systemic explanations is that there is a direct correlation between the degree or intensity of systemic causes and the resulting number of terrorist incidents. Therefore, conventional wisdom suggests that by identifying systemic causes of terrorism, scholars can both predict future acts of terrorism and prevent them from occurring (e.g. Hopple 1982; Ackoff and Strumpfer 2003; Cronin 2006a).

It is beyond doubt that systemic realities shape and constrain our decisions and actions to a point. Kofi Annan (2003) made this very point in a speech to the heads of state, insisting that it is as big of a mistake to overlook systemic factors as it is to focus solely on them. Still, those who ultimately decide to engage in acts of terrorism comprise a very small percentage of the total human population (Richardson 2007). Therefore, one can rather easily conclude that the decision to engage in terrorist violence must be driven by more than just the prevailing systemic realities that affect us all.

2.3: Limitations of Lower Levels of Analysis

Individual and group levels of analysis focus on the actors themselves (e.g.

Post 1990, Hudson 1999, Sageman 2004). These lower levels of analysis often rest

upon psychological, socio-psychological or rational explanations. There are obvious

problems associated with these approaches as well. Psychological explanations can be

divided into two main approaches: psycho-pathological theories and psycho-

sociological theories.

2.3.1: The Psycho-pathological School

The first tradition attributes terrorist behavior to some type of abnormality or

deviant character trait (Hacker & Hacker 1976, Cooper 1978, Schmid and Jongman

1988, Taylor & Ryan 1988, Post 1990, Pearlstein 1991). For instance, McCauley et al.

(2013) have isolated four characteristics that are common to both school shooters and

assassins: both tend to suffer from depression, both have a perceived grievance of

some sort, both are going through some type of personal crisis and both groups have

experience with weapons outside of military duty. But even with these four

characteristics in common, McCauley et al. admit that there are many more individual

differences that make it nearly impossible to make meaningful comparisons.

For example, John Allen Muhammad was former military and a convert to

Islam, Ted Kaczynski was a professor of mathematics, Scott Roeder was a blue-collar

worker and anti-abortion activist who allegedly struggled with mental illness and

James von Brunn graduated from college and became a World War Two naval officer.

These individuals differed in age, race, level of education and socio-economic status.

One can imagine that they also held different religious, political and social views as

well. For instance, Muhammad resented the treatment of African Americans in the U.S. while von Brunn was a white supremacist.

The various individual differences among people who engage in acts of terrorism obviously creates an obstacle to establishing a single common trait that they all share. Adam Lankford (2014) sidesteps this problem of diversity altogether by focusing mainly on the psychiatric health of the perpetrators. Lankford suggests that there is a common psychological component behind both suicide terrorism and school shootings. His psychological autopsy of Mohamed Atta concludes that Atta demonstrated strong psychological similarities with school shooters and everyday suicides alike.

Lankford's work has been criticized on a variety of levels, however. For example, Qamar (2013) is critical of Lankford's use of a convenience sample, the subjective nature of his conclusions, and Lankford's criticism of other experts in the field. Atran (2012) also disagrees with Lankford's conclusions regarding the similarities in the psychiatric health of the perpetrators.

Meanwhile, the modern surge in suicide terrorism sparked an interest in whether suicide bombers were actually suicidal. Merari (2005) argues that acts of suicide terrorism cannot be compared to ordinary suicides. The former are most often carried out with the consent and knowledge of (and often as the result of coercion or manipulation by) significant others, while the latter are most often done in secret without the consent or knowledge of significant others.

Sosis and Alcorta (2008) suggest that organizations specifically target adolescents for suicide missions as the unique patterns of brain development at adolescence make them vulnerable to new ideas and willing to engage in high-risk behavior.

While the psychiatric health of individual perpetrators is relevant, two questions even more relevant to this study are (1) whether it is possible to profile individuals who engage in terrorist violence and, (2) if so, whether an individual's psychological profile can be generalized to a larger group.

Victoroff (2005) concludes that it is not possible to accurately profile the mind of a terrorist. However, Moghaddam (2005) insists that common psychological factors are identifiable. Other scholars agree, citing a feeling of humiliation as the most commonly occurring trait (Juergensmeyer 2003; Stern 2003b; Richardson 2007). According to Moghaddam, what is difficult is identifying the triggers that cause some individuals possessing these psychological factors to engage in acts of terrorism while millions of others, who also possess them, do not.

There are several other psychological studies that investigate personal motives for terrorism (McGeorge 1996; Parachini 2000; Moghadam 2003; McCauley et al. 2013). For example, Moghadam (2003) concludes that revenge often plays a powerful role in individual Palestinians' decisions to volunteer for suicide missions. Also, Parachini (2000) claims that Ramzi Yusef was driven by ego and rage rather than religious ideology. Likewise, McGeorge (1996) found that of 244 chemical and biological weapons (CBW) attacks, only 25 percent were perpetrated toward a political objective. The other 75 percent were committed by criminals, disgruntled employees or the mentally ill.

Aside from ignoring the socio-economic and political realities of terrorism, the psycho-pathological approach lacks empirical support. While conceding that mental illness may well be a contributing factor in isolated cases, the majority of research discounts a causal relationship between mental illness and individual acts of terrorism (Rasch 1979; Crenshaw 1981; della Porta 2006). The main problem is, unless there is

a clear history of mental illness prior to an actor's decision to engage in acts of terrorism, there is no way to be certain whether the psychological disorder caused the terrorism or whether the stress and strain of the terrorist lifestyle caused the mental illness (Weatherston and Moran 2003). No doubt the danger, isolation, fear of capture and perhaps even the tremendous guilt associated with such a lifestyle takes its toll.

However, even if it were possible to be certain that the mental illness preceded the decision to engage in terrorism, one could *not* be certain that the decision to engage in terrorism was influenced solely by the mental illness rather by than a host of other causes. Furthermore, if mental illness was a fundamental cause of terrorism, one could expect to see incidents of terrorism more evenly distributed to match the global occurrence of mental illness. Remarkably, however, the majority of scholars concur that most terrorists tend to be quite normal (Corrado 1981; Turco 1987; Ruby 2002a; Weatherston and Moran 2003; Silke 2004 & 2014).

2.3.2: The Psycho-sociological School

The second approach in the psychological camp is the psycho-sociological school which attempts to connect an actor's individual beliefs and ideologies to the broader social context (Wilkinson 1987; Crenshaw 1990b; Post 1990, 2005a & 2005b; Horgan 2008). For example, Post (2005a) argues that hatred toward an outside group (labeled the enemy) is often bred in childhood via the broader society. Therefore, efforts need to be made to combat this systemic hatred as well as lower-level sources of animosity. The problem with Post's theory is that while it accurately describes protracted conflicts such as the one between Israel and Palestine, it does little to either

explain the source of systemic hatred or predict future conflicts. The psycho-sociological school approach can be further broken down into a number of theories.

2.3.2.1: Relative Deprivation Theory

Relative deprivation theory attempts to address the source of systemic hatred by suggesting that violence is the result of long-standing grievances (Galtung 1964; Davies 1962 & 1973; Gurr 1970; Thompson 1989; Blomberg et al. 2004). Moghaddam (2005) suggests that perceived deprivation is critical to understanding this phenomenon. He specifically refers to the concept of fraternal deprivation (where a person feels deprived because of the position of his or her group within a larger social order) as a factor as opposed to egoistical deprivation (where an individual feels deprived due to his or her individual position within a group).

However, as Gross (1972) argues, actors must first perceive relative deprivation for it to become a potential factor. Furthermore, Lupsha (1971) contends that indignation over perceived unjust inequality trumps relative deprivation. Finally, as Laqueur (1977a) observes, even if it were possible to demonstrate that relative deprivation is widespread in any given society, it still would not establish a causal connection to terrorist violence.

2.3.2.2: Social Distance Theory

Social distance theory is similar to relative deprivation in that it considers social location between socio-economic classes as well as racial and gender inequality. However, social distance theory recognizes that grievances alone lack

sufficient explanatory power, and therefore also considers factors such as the level of sympathy one groups holds for another, how exclusive or inclusive the various classes and groups of people appear, and the level of interaction between groups (Senechal de la Roche 1996; Black 2004).

2.3.2.3: Contagion Theory

Contagion theory postulates that terrorism is contagious. Noting distinct trends or waves of terrorist activity, contagion theorists suggest that actors are influenced by one another, mimic one another and learn from each other's successes and failures. Modern mass media and the growing coverage of terrorist attacks is generally regarded as an enabling factor (Redlick 1979; Midlarsky et al. 1980; Nacos 1994; Hoffman 2013; Weimann and Brosius 1988; Bjørgo 1997; Hodgson 2002; Johnston 2004; Rapoport 2004).

2.3.2.4: Gender Relations Theory

Gender relations theory explores the impact of socially constructed gender roles, gender imbalances and the effect of changing gender relations on social issues such as hegemony, sexual repression and violence. Gender relations theory speaks to at least one aspect of the current clash between conservative Muslim migrants and the comparatively more liberal European societies receiving them. While the former are accustom to much more rigidly defined gender roles, the latter have largely softened or eliminated such distinctions (Lewis 1990; Buvinić and Morrison 2000; Hudson and Den Boer 2002; Baruch 2003; Kimmel 2003).

2.3.2.5: The Tactical Utility of Terrorism

An obvious outgrowth of the psycho-sociological school is the study of the tactical utility of terrorism as an effective means of achieving one's goals, whether these be more long-term strategic goals or short-term goals such as mobilizing supporters, spoiling peace negotiations or taking advantage of a temporary turn of events (Crenshaw 1990a; Milton-Edwards 1996; Stedman 1997; Atlas and Licklider 1999; Whittaker 2001; Kydd and Walter 2002; Ayres 2003).

The rationale behind this approach is precisely why we cannot define terrorism by the deed, the actor or the actor's ideology because the only way to evaluate the tactical utility of violence is to first identify the strategic objective of the actor.

For conceptual clarity, one can imagine the gamut of lower-level analyses extending along a continuum with the psycho-pathological school at one extreme, the rational approach at the other and the tactical utility of violence approach in the middle.

Of course, the use of terrorism as a tactic implies rational decision-making on the part of the actor. And while an understanding of the tactical utility of violence is necessary for the strategic theorist, the rational approach itself breaks with the psycho-sociological tradition altogether by assuming that all actors are utility maximizers who will *always* choose the most cost-effective solution (Enders and Sandler 2000; Berman 2003: Frey 2004). In other words, actors are impervious to any consideration beyond the pure logic of a cost-benefit analysis.

2.3.3: The Rational Approach

The rational approach (also known as the rational choice approach) assumes that actors possess *unbounded* rationality- a classical liberal economics term that

states actors possess (1) complete information, (2) sufficient time and intellectual capacity to understand that information and (3) perfect objectivity (Smith 1776).

There are several problems with this approach. First, while it addresses the role of human agency, the rational approach fails to acknowledge the myriad of emotions, values, traditions and beliefs that influence human agency (Soule 1990; Waldman 2001; Stern 2003a). Second, if actors are mere utility maximizers, they should only engage in terrorism when it is the most cost-effective alternative available to them. As the examination of al Shabaab demonstrates, this is not always the case.

A way around this second problem is to expect actors to engage in acts of terrorism when the *expected* gains exceed the *expected* losses, thereby, making terrorism *appear* to be more attractive than other forms of political action. I stress that the expected gains make terrorism appear to be more attractive than other alternatives because actors possess neither complete information nor perfect objectivity. This is known as bounded rationality which assumes that decision-makers are limited by the information available, their cognitive ability to understand the information available and the time available to make a decision (Simon 1972).

So, the assumption of bounded rationality helps to move rational choice theorists back toward the center of the continuum a bit. However, the effect is minimal because even with the assumption of bounded rationality, the rational approach is centered upon a cost-benefit analysis which often times simply is not relevant to an actor's decision to engage in violence.

The strategic approach bypasses these problems altogether by tracing the decision to engage in violence to an actor's strategic goals. What is more, while strategic theory assumes that actors act rationally, it recognizes both bounded and unbounded rationality (Garnet's two levels of cold calculation and complexity).

Finally, the strategic approach allows us to recognize that the decision to engage in terrorist violence is informed by both systemic-level realities and individual-level factors. (Smith 1991; Neumann 2002). Individually, each of these considerations are essential for determining the strategic value of violence as a means to an end. Combined, they also go a long way in explaining *why* a particular actor engaged in a particular act of violence in the first place.

The continent of Africa offers an excellent example. If systemic conditions told the whole story, then Africa should be a hotspot for terrorist activity. Groups such as al Shabaab should be springing up everywhere. Yet, this is not the case. Systemic explanations alone offer only a partial, and often misleading, understanding of the problem. What is worse, they lead to partial, and often counterproductive solutions. The same can be said of lower-level explanations. Each has its own individual approach which focuses on a single facet or dimension of the problem, but excludes other important considerations.

A more comprehensive understanding recognizes that the states that have experienced terrorism in Africa tend to be targeted by a handful of the same groups. For example, Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti all have Somali-speaking people within their borders. When one combines this information with the fact that al Shabaab is dedicated to uniting all Somali-speaking people, it suddenly becomes clear why al Shabaab is active in those states. In addition to enabling us to assess the strategic value of the group's tactical use of violence, this awareness also provides a clearer understanding of the group and its strategic objectives.

A clearer understanding of the strategic goals of those who engage in acts of terrorism affords us a broader understanding of their decision to use tactical violence in the first place. Once scholars understand what actors hope to achieve through

violence, they can assess the utility of that violence as a mean to an end rather than simply reacting to it as an end in itself. This broader understanding empowers everyone involved to act more strategically as well.

2.4: Limitations of Theoretical Models

Related to the limitations associated with systemic and lower-level explanations of terrorism is the limitations of the theoretical models use to test them. The phenomenon of terrorism is a very complex social issue. As social scientists, terrorism scholars utilize theoretical models which allow us to analyze data through a very narrow lens and examine a single facet or dimension at a time. The advantage of using theoretical models is that they often produce generalizable results. However, while theoretically beneficial, such results are not always useful in the real world because theoretical models tend to strip away most of the unique historical and/or cultural context in favor of a more uniform "cookie-cutter" approach. As Laqueur (1977a, p. 16) quips, the "conclusions may not be true but they are certainly stated in an orderly, unequivocal fashion…"

Ideally, theory should dictate which independent variable(s) to specify within a given model. However, just as terrorism literature is commonly divided by the independent variable employed (whether systemic or lower-level), many terrorism scholars have become known by the literature that they are associated with and tend to always view the phenomenon through the same theoretical lens.

Therefore, due to the widespread use of theoretical models that specify either systemic or lower-level factors as the independent variable (and the tendency of many scholars to rigidly adhere to either one or the other), the vast body of literature on

terrorism often appears to be disjointed, at odds and perhaps even a bit contentious.
Add to this scenario the myriad of definitions and typologies of terrorism- all of
which attempt to generalize and categorize the phenomenon (largely by stripping
away the relevant details such as the actor's strategic objective) - and the result is a
very artificial process (Easson and Schmid 2011). The well-known proverb is fitting:
"If all you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail."

But all terrorism is not the same, nor are all actors who employ terrorist
violence the same. The social realities of terrorism defy our efforts to sort it into neat
little packages. It is messy and arbitrary, and it rarely cooperates with our efforts to
label and theoretically contain it.

Take Boko Haram, for example. There is no doubt that Boko Haram leader,
Abubakar Shekau, appears to be insane in much of the video footage released by the
group. However, lower-level explanations are problematic. To attempt to condense
Boko Haram in all its complexity into the madness of Shekau is paramount to
consolidating the entire Third Reich into the despotism of Hitler. And while psycho-
sociological explanations shed considerable light on the group's decision to employ
violence against the government (and to a lesser extent, against Christians), they fall
far short of offering an acceptable explanation as to why Boko Haram has been so
intent on killing fellow Sunni Muslims. However, even a cursory understanding of the
group's *takfiri* doctrine adds considerable clarity.

Another example is al Shabaab's transnational attacks in Kenya and Uganda.
To suggest that systemic factors alone are behind these retaliatory attacks is absurd.
At the other extreme, to focus solely on a cost-benefit analysis of the tactical use of
violence is naïve at best. A target in Uganda is by no means the most cost-effective
option available to a group based in Somalia. Even though al Shabaab has been

actively recruiting and has cells operating in these countries, one has to question why it has gone to the considerable trouble and expense of doing so in the first place (Solomon 2015).

Rather than attempting to understand militant groups such as al Shabaab and Boko Haram via the suspected causes of terrorism, a more productive approach would be to consider the strategic value of terrorist violence in relation to the groups' respective long-term goals.

Still, most practitioners continue to ignore the many other tools available to them in favor of their cherished hammer with which they bludgeon the facts into conformity. Thus, reminding us of another proverb: "If you torture the data enough, it will confess to anything." And so it is. Despite the many different approaches to understanding terrorism which should be used to complement one another, the majority of literature on the subject treats these approaches as mutually exclusive and tends to apply one of two generic theoretical models: either a systemic-level model or a lower-level model.

2.5: Conclusion

In this section, I explored the limitations of both systemic and lower-level theories, as well as the limitations associated with the use of theoretical models. They are useful to a degree, as they allow analysts to parse out various facets of a phenomenon and examine them independently. However, this approach involves a trade-off, offering a measure of parsimony and greater generalizability at the expense of accuracy. For those who desire more accuracy, their models must be more

complex, and therefore, generate less generalizable results. What is more, the deductive process becomes increasingly more difficult as theoretical models increase in complexity.

Take systemic models, for instance. In their simplest form, systemic models specify a systemic factor (e.g. poverty) as the independent variable and a particular outcome (e.g. terrorist violence) as the dependent variable. However, such simplistic models rarely reflect reality in its fullness. Analysts can increase the accuracy of systemic models by arguing that systemic forces shape preferences which, in turn, influence actions. Such a model would be more elaborate, specifying systemic factors as the independent variable and preferences as the intervening variable. However, even this model would be incomplete as it would fail to address the impact that individual and collective choices have on the world around us. To address this deficiency, one could add a feedback loop to include the effects of human agency, but even this model would be insufficient to capture the complexity of the problem for it would lack other necessary considerations such as individual and group perceptions of reality, bounded versus unbounded rationality and real versus perceived preferences (to name just a few).

Put more simply, theoretical models are useful for measuring the relationship between a specific independent variable and the dependent variable under examination. However, they are not particularly useful for explaining a phenomenon such as terrorism in all its complexity. Nor are they the most efficient means of arriving at such an explanation even if they were able to produce such results.

The strategic approach offers a much more efficient process. Tracing the decision to engage in terrorism to an actor's strategic goals necessitates the inclusion of all these other considerations as well. Therefore, in addition to determining whether

the use of violence was strategic in relation to the actor's goals, strategic theorists also learn a great deal about *why* a particular actor engaged in certain acts of violence in the first place.

Perhaps systemic factors set the stage, and a grievance or social dislocation provides the impetus to act. It is possible that violence is the most cost-effective alternative available. Maybe the actor is insane or driven by moral deficiency. More likely, however, it is a combination of causes as in the case of al Shabaab's vision of Greater Somalia.

One thing is certain. Terrorist violence is never generic. There is always a unique context in which it occurs complete with actors, grievances (both imagined and real), emotions, ambitions, allies and enemies. Simply superimposing a generic theoretical model that is not theoretically informed by the data will invariably produce incorrect answers and lead to ineffective solutions.

I will now examine some of the many problems encountered when attempting to define and theoretically contain the phenomenon of terrorism via traditionally accepted explanations and models.

Chapter Three: Welcome to the Jungle
Definitions, Typologies, and Various Explanations for Terrorism

3.1: Introduction

This chapter addresses the many challenges faced by academics and policymakers alike when attempting to define terrorism, categorize it, and identify its causes. The title of the chapter refers to Upton Sinclair's classic 1906 novel depicting the harsh economic, cultural and institutional realities of life for immigrants in Chicago at the turn of the century. These same realities still exist on a global scale, and more often than not (particularly with the growing migrant crisis), they are cited as potential root causes of terrorism. While it is not possible to explicitly discuss every definition, typology and suggested cause of terrorism within the space allotted, the main theoretical constructs are represented.

3.2: Establishing a Working Definition of Terrorism

As Smith (2005 p.29) so aptly states, "if one cannot define and articulate precisely the object of one's inquiry, then plainly the effort to describe the essence of a particular kind of strategic practice is likely to be flawed." Speaking of terrorism, Stern (2000b, pp. 12-13) states that the "definition inevitably determines the kind of data we collect and analyze, which in turn influences our understanding of trends and our prediction about the future…How we define it profoundly influences how we respond to it." Therefore, it behooves us, whenever possible, to distinguish between terrorism and other types of violence.

Sánchez-Cuenca (2014) laments that scholars have collected more concrete knowledge about interstate war, civil war, genocide and ethnic conflict than they have about terrorism and blames this shortcoming on the ambiguity of the concept. Similarly, Wilkinson (1974) contends that there is not even a theory of political instability or civil violence, much less a theory of terrorism. Laqueur (1977a) goes even further to suggest that there is no reason to assume a connection between instability, civil violence and terrorism.

Levitt (1986) compares the endeavor to arrive at a common definition to the quest for the Holy Grail. The past four or five decades have witnessed an explosion of multidisciplinary literature in terrorism studies, spanning the fields of political science, criminology, sociology, media studies, history, psychology and many others.

Silke (2008) estimates that in the English language alone, a new book is published with terrorism in the title every six hours. Likewise, Neumann and Smith (2005, p. 571) observe that, particularly since September 11, 2001 (9/11), there has been a "flood of (often forgettable) books" on the subject. And yet very few of these publications agree as to what terrorism actually is.

Silke (2014) suggests that the concept of terrorism is so difficult to define because the term is so politically charged. However, given the political climate created by the U.S.-led Global War on Terror (GWOT), some basic international consensus concerning what constitutes terrorism versus other forms of violence would be extremely beneficial (Richards 2014). Unfortunately, no such consensus exists.

By relegating non-conventional war to the ungoverned spaces outside the civilized conventions of inter-state warfare, strategic theorists have clung to antiquated battle plans and outdated realities (Sitaraman 2009; Honig 2015). Meanwhile, terrorism scholars and policymakers alike have been busy creating a

preserve for the irrational, the unpredictable and the inhuman…a jungle where only the most marginalized, debased and immoral creatures dwell. In the remainder of this chapter, I will examine a representative sample of this vast body of literature.

3.3: Welcome to the Jungle

The explosion of multidisciplinary literature in terrorism studies, while positive in many respects, has also contributed to what appears at face value to be a very disjointed and chaotic body of literature- what Ramsay (2015, p. 212) calls a "cacophony of competing definitions." For example, there are over 200 definitions of terrorism currently in existence in the broader terrorism literature (Jackson 2010).

Jongman and Schmid (1988 & 2005) cite 109 definitions of terrorism obtained from surveying leading academics in the field. They came away with the following data: 83.5% of those surveyed included violence or force in their definition; 65% defined terror as a political act; 51% included fear or an emphasis on terror; 47% included threats as an act of terrorism; 41.5% considered the psychological impact of terrorism in their definition; 37.5% noted the difference between victims of terrorism and its intended target audience; 32% defined terrorism as planned, intentional, or otherwise organized and systematic; and 30.5% focused on methods of combat, tactics and strategies in their definition. This diverse assortment of definitions is an example par excellence of the blind men describing an elephant. All are basically correct. However, they differ according to the unique quality of the incidences they reflect.

Definitions of terrorism range from the minimalist, but highly-regarded characterization, "terrorism is theater," offered by Jenkins (1985) to the convoluted amalgamation of the 109 definitions referred to above:

> Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby—in contrast to assassination—the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human targets of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorists, (imperiled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience(s)), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion or propaganda is primarily sought (Badey 1998).[17]

From just these two extreme examples, one can see how arduous the effort to define terrorism has become. The United States, for example, faced tremendous opposition from several European states for its labeling of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization primarily because they insist on a more precise definition (Norton 2007b). Clearly, some universal definition that can be deductively applied is desirable. However, to date such a definition remains beyond our reach.

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[17] So many scholars have cited Jongman and Schmid's work that it has become both a scholarly necessity for any comprehensive literature review and redundant at the same time. See for example Ganor (2002); Crenshaw (2010); Chesney et al. (2011).

Interestingly, Ramsay (2015) argues that the scholarly debate over a lack of consensus on the definition of terrorism is largely exaggerated. According to Ramsay, the debate is "premised on unrealistic assumptions about what level of scholarly agreement can be expected on any key social or political concept." Similarly, Gibbs (1989, p. 330) reflects that, "it is inconsistent to grant that human behavior is complex and then demand simple definitions of behavioral types."

Most analysts agree that terrorism essentially consists of at least two distinct components: 1) terrorism targets civilians, and 2) the goal of terrorism is to instill fear in a target audience. Beyond these two basic characteristics, however, there is widespread disagreement over the specific components to be included in the definition of terrorism. For example, the European Union (EU) has established a rather comprehensive definition of terrorism while the United Nations (UN) has not (Tiefenbrun 2002; Rosand 2003; Keohane 2005; Saul 2005).[18]

Therefore, there is broad disagreement over what terrorism essentially is. For instance, terrorism is not explicitly listed as an offence under International Criminal Court (ICC) statutes (Sampson and Onuoha 2011). While many agree that a more coherent approach is needed, few are in agreement as to what that coherent approach should be.

The lack of consensus over what constitutes terrorism also causes discrepancies regarding data collection and contradictions in the actual number of terrorist incidents that have occurred. A quick look at the Global Terrorism Database, for instance, lists Burkina Faso as having had five separate incidents of terrorism

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[18] A 20-year-old draft of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism defines terrorism but has not been adopted (Hmoud 2006).

since independence with a total of three fatalities and two injuries (GTD 2016a), and

Ghana as having 25 separate incidents of terrorism since independence with a total of

31 fatalities and 25 injuries (GTD 2016b). Meanwhile, Rand's Database of

Worldwide Terrorism Incidents and Maplecroft's Terrorism Index both record zero

incidents for either country (RDWTI 2016; Maplecroft 2011).

Finally, this ambiguity leaves room for discrepancies when prosecuting acts of

terrorism. Amnesty International (AI) has criticized the United Kingdom's Terrorism

Act 2000; Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001; Prevention of Terrorism Act

2005; Terrorism Act 2006; and Counter-Terrorism Act 2008 on the basis that all

allow for potential human rights violations. For instance, AI claims that the definition

of terrorism in the Terrorism Act 2000 is too broad and potentially allows for the

prosecution of individuals who are merely exercising their rights as protected under

international law (AI 2010).

One response to these issues has been growing interest in the field of critical

terrorism studies (e.g. Chomsky and Herman 1979; George 1991; Zulaika and

Douglass 1996 & 2008; Jackson 2005b, 2007, 2008 & 2010; Blakeley 2007; Gunning

2007a; McDonald 2007; Booth 2008; Burke 2008; Hülsse and Spencer 2008; Jarvis

2009; Joseph 2009; Sluka 2009; Altheide 2010; Bryan 2012; Ramsay 2015; Solomon

2015) as well as reactions to it (e.g. Horgan & Boyle 2008; Weinberg and Eubank

2008; Egerton 2009; Jones and Smith 2009; Stokes 2009; Lutz 2011).[19]

Maintaining that terrorism is as much a social construct as it is a physical act,

critical terrorism studies (CTS) embraces terrorism from a much broader sociological

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[19] Lutz (2011) offers a balanced discussion regarding the claims made by critical terrorism scholars concerning the narrow, ethnocentric, non-state actor focus of traditional terrorism studies. See also Jones and Smith (2009) who conclude that the critical approach is obscure and pedantic.

and historical perspective than most mainstream orthodox approaches. Focusing on the unequal distribution of power and resources and the hegemony of the West, CTS explores the multi-causality of terrorism in all its complexity (Hocking 1984; Jackson 2007; Walklate and Mythen 2014; Solomon 2015).

CTS also challenges the epistemological and ontological assumptions made by orthodox terrorism scholars. Namely CTS opposes the state-centric perspective of most mainstream approaches to terrorism studies and instead advocates the emancipation of people from both physical and social constraints.[20] McDonald (2007) argues that by focusing on emancipation, CTS invites dialogue that has the potential to both minimize non-state actor violence as well as violent state responses.[21]

Furthermore, CTS generally insists that any discussion of terrorism must be interdisciplinary in scope, considering specific relevant social, political, historical and ideological power structures in order to truly understand why actors choose violence over the status quo (Gunning 2007a; Booth 2008). CTS also acknowledges the subjective nature of knowledge and rejects the default to superficial quick fixes in lieu of more lasting solutions.

Africa offers a classic example. As Solomon (2015, p. 224) observes, "the legitimacy of the political elites in Abuja, Bamako or Mogadishu never comes under scrutiny in traditional terrorism studies—rather the focus is on Boko Haram, Ansar Dine and Al Shabab entirely." However quick fixes do not address the underlying

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[20] See for example, Toros and Gunning (2009) who advocate a shift from focusing on the security of the state to the security of individuals, families and communities. See also Herring (2008) who in addition to advocating for a more emancipatory practice, calls for minimizing the use of knowledge to maintain the hegemony of powerful elites and therefore, the status quo.
[21] Buzan (2006) criticizes the Bush administration for its zero-sum approach to counterterrorism because it leaves no room for dialogue or positive-sum alternatives.

issues, which often times have as much to do with the regime as they do the actors opposing it.

Finally, CTS opposes any definition of terrorism that empowers elites, marginalizes women and other vulnerable populations, neglects key areas of study (such as states) and perpetuates Eurocentric or masculinized constructions of knowledge. For instance, Jackson (2005a) notes that the term, 'war on terror' is value-laden and frames war as something desirable.

As Gunning (2007b) puts it, "a critical turn within terrorism studies is necessary" because the orthodox approach often produces an "a-historical, de-politicized, state-centric account of 'terrorism' that relies heavily on secondary sources and replicates knowledge that by and large reinforces the status quo." In other words, CTS scrutinizes orthodox terrorism literature, the discourse it generates and the institutions that produce it (Joseph 2009). On the other hand, Gunning (2007b, p.237) also insists that CTS needs to acknowledge the expertise of many traditional terrorism scholars and, to be inclusive, it needs to converge with the "more rigorous traditional, problem-solving perspectives."

Richard Jackson (2010) is highly critical of the current state of terrorism studies, and he advocates (among other things) a less subjective definition. Observing that many common definitions of terrorism include components such as illegitimate violence committed against innocent civilians intended to terrify a group of people toward the advancement of a political goal, Jackson argues that the subjective nature of terms such as illegitimate, innocent, intended, and political perpetuate the conceptual incoherence so common among definitions of terrorism.

For example, Rapoport and Alexander (1982) define terrorism as the threat or use of violence intended to coerce a group toward a political, religious or ideological

end. This definition is one of the more objective descriptions of terrorism, but still it possesses ambiguous terminology.

The problem, as Jackson sees it, lays not in the definitions of terrorism but in the very nature of terrorism itself. Jackson argues that terrorism cannot be objectively defined as it is a socially constructed concept. To bolster his position, Jackson points to Nobel Peace Prize winners Nelson Mandela, Menachim Begin, Yassir Arafat, and Sean McBride—all once denounced as terrorists—as examples of the ontological instability of the phenomenon.

A similar point can be made concerning the Afghan *mujahidin*, who were widely described as freedom fighters in the 1980s, but later became known as Islamic terrorists (Livingston 1994).[22] Clearly, no group considers itself a terrorist organization, which is perhaps the best example of the subjectivity of the term. In the words of Eqbal Ahmad (2011, pp. 12-13), "The terrorist of yesterday is the hero of today, and the hero of yesterday becomes the terrorist of today." Of course, it is entirely possible to be both at the same time (Smith 2011).

3.3.1: Four Common Approaches to Defining Terrorism

Jackson (2010) identifies four common approaches used by scholars and policymakers when dealing with the conceptual quagmire known as terrorism. First, due to the negative connotation of the term, a growing number of scholars simply choose not to define terrorism at all. Second, it is popular among politicians and security professionals to refer to terrorism as an ideology. Third, terrorism is defined

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[22] Mujahidin (sometimes transliterated as mujahideen) is plural for mujahid, meaning one who struggles (Bassiouni 2007).

according to the parties that engage in it. And finally, a majority of scholars define terrorism by the deed itself. In the pages that follow, I will explore these concepts more fully.

3.3.1.1: To Define or Not to Define?

One issue that has emerged is whether to define terrorism or not. On the one hand, as noted earlier, a universal definition would aid in more accurate data collection, more consistent reporting and a more unified body of scholarship (Schmid and Jongman 1988; Coady 2004; Meisels 2006). More importantly, it would require more accountability on the part of those engaged in it as well as their supporters (Ganor 2005).

On the other hand, no actor views the violence that it commits as terrorism, but most actors are quick to label the violence committed by their enemies as terrorism (Jackson 2011; Bryan 2012; Ramsay 2015). Due to the subjectivity and political misuse of the term as well as close organizational and ideological ties between state institutions and prominent researchers- what Burnett and Whyte (2005) label 'embedded expertise'- others have elected not to seek a common definition.[23]

A classic example is the deliberate decision not to define terrorism by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in order to obtain consensus on Resolution 1373. Rather the UNSC opted to allow each member state to arrive at its own definition (Rosand 2003; Saul 2005).

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[23] Representative of Burnett and Whyte's (2005) concept of 'embedded expertise' is Huntington's clash of civilization theory. The phrase was originally coined by Bernard Lewis (1990), and the theory resonated so well among various high ranking officials within the Bush administration that Lewis became quite influential in Washington (Frum 2003). In a 2002 article entitled, *Time for Toppling*, Lewis advocates regime change in Iraq. His advice was obviously taken seriously.

Interestingly, arriving at a common definition has not been the main obstacle for the EU. What has proven to be insurmountable are various other challenges such as vastly different threat perceptions among EU member states, a resistance to true integration of national counterterrorism efforts in favor of cooperation between them, and ineffective implementation of policies (Monar 2007, Coolsaet 2010).

Finally, Ramsay (2015) suggests that terrorism should not be defined because such a definition could not be correctly applied to the many diverse instances of political violence which bear little, if any, resemblance to one another. Thus, a common definition would serve to blur rather than sharpen our understanding of the term. Furthermore, Ramsay insists that the opposite is also true. When states engage in tactical violence that is covert and non-conventional, it is called special operations. However, when non-state actors engage in the very same type of activity, it is called terrorism.

3.3.1.2: Terrorism as an Ideology

Terrorism has been around since antiquity. The Jewish Zealots employed terrorism against the Romans, the Thuggees engaged in acts of terrorism against the British in India, and it is a tactic that is still in use today. In this respect, one could say that terrorism changes little over time. However, scholars have noted an ideological cleavage in recent decades between what many refer to as "old terrorism" and "new terrorism." As with any definition of terrorism, however, this categorization is also debated (Lesser et al. 1999; Merari 1999; Juergensmeyer 2000; Laqueur 2000; Duyvesteyn 2004; Kurtulus 2011; Harmon 2013).

Old terrorism has taken several forms throughout history (anti-imperial, anti-colonial, etc...); however, it has typically been perpetrated toward the liberation of some group. Even between 1960 and 1980, transnational terrorism (which was primarily driven by Marxist ideology, nationalism, separatism, and nihilism) attempted to liberate oppressed peoples. Right-wing terrorism, on the other hand, is usually waged against ethnic minorities rather than on their behalf (Heitmeyer 2005). However with the emergence of religious extremist groups, some scholars contend that a "new face of terrorism" was born (Sampson and Onuoha 2011, p. 36). What is this new face, and what makes it so different from the terrorism that came before it?

A major facet of new terrorism is that it is fundamentally religious in nature (Roy 1994). Hoffman (2013) defines a religious terrorist group as one that has religiously motivated goals (as opposed to politically motivated ones). Hoffman (1997) also points out that by 1995, religious terrorism had increased from two out of 64 active groups to roughly 29 out of 58 active terrorist groups.

Moreover, Hoffman (1999) draws our attention to the connection between religious terrorism and increased lethality. For example, between 1982 and 1989 *Shia* Islamic terrorist groups perpetrated a mere eight percent of all international terrorist incidents. However, in that same period they accounted for 30 percent of the casualties.

White (2003) agrees that violence has substantially increased with religious terrorism. This marked increase in casualties associated with the rise of religious terrorism is evident in the fact that prior to 9/11 no single terrorist incident resulted in the death of more than 500 people.

How to explain this increase in casualties associated with the rise of religious terrorism? Hoffman (1995) argues that the apocalyptic conviction of religious

terrorists makes them more focused on the life to come and, therefore, inclined to view human life in this world with relatively less importance.

Wilkinson (2014) argues that terrorists in the Marxist/nationalist/separatist vein maintained a constituency and hence, had a vested interest in keeping casualties to an acceptable level. However, religiously motivated terrorist groups such as al Qaeda view violence against apostates as a duty, and therefore they are motivated to increase casualties rather than to limit them. Wilkinson supports this line of reasoning with examples such as al Qaeda's Second Fatwa, issued on February 23, 1998, encouraging all Muslims to kill Americans wherever they can be found.

Wilkinson differs with Hoffman however, in that; in Wilkinson's view American lives can be sacrificed with little or no account while Hoffman suggests that the apocalyptic vision of religious terrorists casts all human life as expendable given the impending doom of the human race itself.

One problem with Hoffman's explanation is that not all so-called religious terrorists subscribe to an apocalyptic vision. Of those who do, many are more nationalist than apocalyptic which leads to contention over whether they are indeed fundamentally religious or secular (Juergensmeyer 1993).

A similar problem presents itself regarding Wilkinson's argument: not all scholars agree that groups such as al Qaeda are fundamentally religious in nature (Rapoport 1984; Benjamin and Simon 2002; Bergen 2002; Kepel 2006).[24]

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[24] A second problem with Wilkinson's explanation is the substantial popular support al Qaeda enjoyed as a result of the sheer unpopularity of U.S. foreign policy in the Arab world. Furthermore, groups such as al Qaeda clearly engaged in a propaganda war in an effort to win popular support (Norton 2007b; Leuprecht et al. 2010). This suggests that the group is concerned with a constituency of sorts, even if it is not an electorate in the traditional sense of the word.

However, the main problem as I see it, is the descriptive nature of the theories themselves. While both theories essentially describe the terrorism that they identify, each of them also ignores the strategic objective of the actors involved and focuses entirely on motive.

For instance, Wilkinson conflates al Qaeda's religious motivation with the duty to kill Americans. But, of course, the two have nothing to do with one another. Bin Laden's justification for killing Americans is not the *fatwa* he issued, but the fact that the United States government has killed so many Muslims. The *fatwa* just represents the authority behind the proclamation (much like Bush put the authority of the United States' government behind the military's mandate in the war on terror). To say that al Qaeda kills Americans because it is religiously motivated to do so is comparable to claiming that America kills "terrorists" because they are Muslim.

Likewise, Hoffman conflates apocalyptic vision with the fact that all life is expendable. However, a quick comparison of al Qaeda and Islamic State reveals otherwise. While both groups share the same religion and apocalyptic vision, al Qaeda demonstrates a basic concern for all Muslim lives (as demonstrated in bin Laden's concern over Zarqawi's slaughtering of them), and IS only demonstrates disdain for apostate Muslims. Neither group considers all life expendable. If they did, who would populate the Islamic *caliphate* that both groups share as a strategic objective?

Others, such as Kurtulus (2011) and Brown and Rassler (2013), argue that religion is just one of several factors to consider regarding new terrorism (e.g. horizontal organizational structure, the desire to use weapons of mass destruction, indiscriminate killing of civilians, etc.).

Sedgwick (2004) contends that the confusion over whether a group is fundamentally religious or secular derives from the fact that religious terrorists

employ political tactics toward the attainment of a more far-reaching religious goal. While Sedgwick's approach purports to distinguish between a group's strategic objectives and its behavior, it still does not explain why some individuals and groups who subscribe to a particular ideology resort to violence to achieve their ends while others do not.

So is new terrorism new? Duyvesteyn (2004) argues that it is not. After discussing the supposedly new aspects of terrorism such as its transnational nature, religious ideology and indiscriminate targeting of victims, Duyvesteyn maintains that there are more similarities than differences between the old terrorism and the new.

Similarly, Juergensmeyer (2003) suggests that rather than representing something new, religious terrorism is just old terrorism wrapped in a new package. Furthermore, Juergensmeyer views religious terrorism as a public act performed out of desperation. Religion simply offers a framework that justifies such violence, and it provides the symbols that communities can rally around. Juergensmeyer offers a compelling argument that accounts for the rise of religious terrorism in predominantly desperate communities.

However, Juergensmeyer does not explain religious terrorism of the 9/11 variety. If religious terrorism is essentially a public outcry engaged in by the politically marginalized and disadvantaged poor, how does one explain the 19 educated, financially well-off young men who perpetrated the 9/11 attacks? Even more importantly, what explanation accounts for the numerous (and equally religious) desperate communities around the globe that do not engage in religious terrorism? Furthermore, Juergensmeyer's explanation does not consider the religious violence perpetrated by groups such as Islamic State, al Shabaab and Boko Haram that are clearly motivated by the *takfiri* doctrine, not inequality.

The debate surrounding old and new terrorism is largely symptomatic of the lack of cohesion in the field of terrorism studies as a whole, as well as the inclination to lump disparate groups together under a common label.

As becomes evident, the current lack of consensus within the field of terrorism studies makes the task of defining terrorism by ideology difficult. Even more difficult is the challenge of distinguishing between secular terrorism and religious terrorism, if such a distinction can in fact be made at all. The complex network of terrorist organizations with its diverse membership and cobwebs of alliances makes such an undertaking problematic (Arquilla et al. 1999).

3.3.1.3: Terrorism Defined by the Actor

This definition of terrorism is usually applied to national separatist groups and other non-state actors (Reinares 2005). The main justification for this approach is that focus on the actor results in less focus on the behavior- which tends to produce normative analyses (Lizardo 2015).

The most well-known defender of this definition is the U.S. State Department. Title 22 of the United States Code defines domestic terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience." Alternatively, the U.S. State Department defines international terrorism as "terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country" (U.S. Department of State 2006). As is evident, both definitions exclude states.

One main problem with this approach is that it has led to considerable selection bias. The actor-based definition largely singles out non-state actors and

ignores state terrorism altogether (Blakeley 2007; Jackson 2008). As Richardson

(2005) argues, those who adhere to the actor-based definition (such as various U.S.

administrations) largely only consider rogue states as culpable of acts of terrorism and

even then, usually only through their terrorist clients such as with Iran and Hezbollah.

Of course, this is completely absurd as many of the actions of the United States during

the Cold War alone plainly demonstrate (Gareau 2004). In fact, the concept of nuclear

deterrence was based entirely on the threat to annihilate mass numbers of non-

combatant civilians in order to restrain the actions of the two superpowers.

While the exclusion of state terrorism from the definition naturally leads to the

exclusion of states from the study of terrorism, other scholars (who recognize that

states can and do commit acts of terrorism) still choose not to focus on states in their

research. This decision may be for financial reasons as states may or may not be

willing to finance research on their own atrocities (Hayner 2001), for theoretical

reasons as states have considerably greater resources at their disposal (as well as

greater accountability) and thus are difficult to compare with most non-state actors

(Pape 2003), or for reasons of preference or academic interest (Laqueur 1977b; Ganor

1998; Carr 2003; Black 2004; Bergesen and Lizardo 2004).

Perhaps the most obvious reason for excluding states from the study of

terrorism is the subjective nature of the term itself. No actor considers itself a

"terrorist" or a "terrorist organization," nor do their supporters. For instance, a

significant number of Palestinians do not consider attacks against Israeli citizens to be

terrorism because they perceive Israel as their enemy (Saad-Ghorayeb 2002).

Given that terrorism is often defined by one's enemies, Hülsse and Spencer

(2008) suggest a discourse-centered perspective rather than an actor-centered

approach. Zulaika and Douglass (1996), on the other hand, claim that society actually

empowers those who engage in terrorism by its discourse. Similarly, Stokes (2009) argues that CTS actually places too much emphasis on discourse and tends to ignore other geopolitical factors such as the world's economic dependence on oil, the strategic value of military bases and the West's desire to maintain hegemony by controlling resource-rich areas of the planet. Hence actors are important.

Dalacoura (2009) takes a third path, suggesting that much of what is called state-terrorism is actually an emotive or polemic distortion of the facts. She advises us to build stronger links between area studies and terrorism studies to take advantage of the former's area-specific expertise and the latter's theoretical capacity. Likewise, English (2010) distinguishes between analytical shortcomings and real practical problems involving terrorism and observes that the latter are usually related to the former. Noting that our analytical shortcomings involve shortsightedness and an even shorter historical memory, English recommends that the West re-think its policies of ill-conceived legislative measures and overwhelming but counterproductive military solutions.

Finally, the perception of Western duplicity (condemning others for the very acts it does itself) and ethnocentrism shared by much of the rest of world is a credibility problem for those who would attempt to deny, ignore or otherwise downplay state terrorism in the current political climate of the Global War on Terror (Lewis 1990; Kagan 2004; Byman 2005; Kohut 2005; Carothers 2006).

Grosscup (2006) maintains that a problem with the actor-based definition is the perceived hypocrisy in labeling incidents such as the 9/11 attacks acts of terrorism while calling the intentional bombing of entire cities acts of war when the strategic objectives in both are clearly to coerce political concessions from a target government. Similar criticism has been raised against counterterrorism measures that

fail to differentiate between the innocent and the guilty and are, in fact, intended to terrorize an entire population into submission (Goodin 2013). This is particularly relevant in Africa "where counter-terrorism policies would have us defend the predatory African state" (Solomon 2015, p. 221).

Still others criticize the tendency to ignore acts of terrorism committed by groups supported by Western states such as anti-Castro groups, the Contras, certain Afghan and Iraqi groups, and factions in Mozambique and Angola while focusing on acts of terrorism committed by groups that have not secured such support (Krasner 1999; Acharya 2007).

Of course, not all terrorism research ignores state actors. For instance, Stohl (2004) concludes that states resort to acts of terrorist violence when it is the most efficient and cost-effective means of governance at their disposal. Likewise, Neumann and Smith (2005) clearly contend that states have historically relied upon the tactic of terrorism when it served their purposes.

To sum it up, the main difficulty involved in defining terrorism by the actor is the fact that no group considers itself to be a terrorist organization, while most groups are quick to label their opponents as terrorists. States can be especially culpable in this regard. Because of this reality, definitions of terrorism based on the actor tend to lead to selection bias, discrepancies in data collection and controversies over whether a given event was an act of terrorism or a legitimate act of war.[25]

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[25] Contentions surrounding Israel and the Intifadas are a classic example.

3.3.1.4: Terrorism Defined by the Deed

Jenkins (1974) points out that most terrorist activity involves six basic tactical operations: kidnappings; hostage-takings; bombings; hijackings; armed attacks and assassinations. But if this is the case, how to differentiate between terrorism and other acts of political violence and crime? Neumann and Smith (2007, p. 16) suggest that a differentiation of this sort can be "highly contentious," especially in times of insurgency or war. "Who defines what does or does not constitute political violence may itself be a deeply political act." And, indeed, it usually is. However, several scholars have considered this very distinction nonetheless (Dishman 2001; Ruby 2002b; Shelley and Picarelli 2002; Jamieson 2005).

For instance, Dishman (2001) has taken an interesting look at the relationship between terrorist organizations and criminal organizations. Dishman concludes that while terrorists engage in illegal activities and may even collaborate with criminal organizations, terrorists are driven by a particular objective, not just the pursuit of profit. Ruby (2002b) asserts a similar point when he distinguishes between criminal acts that are aimed at the achievement of a personal objective and acts of terrorism intended to induce a government to make political concessions.

Jamieson (2005) observes a somewhat clearer distinction between terrorism and organized crime. She argues that terrorists are revolutionaries bent on the overthrow of the existing political order, while organized crime tends to be conservative and seeks to maintain the status quo. However, Jamieson's definition flies in the face of Neumann and Smith's (2005) terrorism/insurgency dichotomy that suggests insurgents want to overthrow the existing regime whereas acts of terrorism are intended to coerce the regime into making certain concessions.

Beyond the academic interest in determining between criminal acts and acts of terrorism, there are practical advantages as well. Clearly distinguishing one from the other affords policy makers a more accurate perspective of the severity of the problem and allows them to properly prioritize security initiatives. For instance, between 1965 and 2001, 64,246 Americans were murdered by other Americans in New York alone (Disaster Center 2010). This constitutes an annual average of 2,471 deaths for the 26 year period leading up to and including 2001. When one compares this to the 3,031 people killed in the 9/11 attacks, it doesn't minimize the attacks; but it does demonstrate that crime is a statistically more persistent challenge than terrorism.

In addition to the body of scholarship attempting to differentiate between terrorism and crime, there is also an abundance of literature that focuses on the similarities between terrorism and war (Hyams 1975; Silke 1996; Tilly 2004; Bergen 2006; Neumann & Smith 2005; Morag 2006).

For example, Tilly (2004) discusses the difficulty of distinguishing acts of terrorism from other types of military aggression, particularly when such aggression targets government security personnel and/or military actors as fundamentally part of a larger political/military struggle. Likewise, Silke (1996) defines terrorism as nothing more than a subset of guerrilla war, while Wilkinson (1974) categorizes terrorism as a tactic used by guerrillas. Bergen (2006) argues that the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center cost only a few thousand dollars while the 9/11 attacks cost roughly $200,000, making terrorism a very inexpensive class of warfare.

Morag (2006) agrees that, from a purely economic standpoint, terrorism is an extremely cost-effective variety of warfare for the terrorists. Morag adds that, in addition to fear, chaos and loss of human life, terrorism can also cause substantial economic damage to the target community. For example, WWII cost the United States

roughly $296 billion (in 1941-1945 dollars). The attacks of September 11, however, cost the U.S. approximately $27.2 billion in direct losses and nearly $500 billion in indirect losses (lost income, increased insurance premiums, increased defense budgets, etc.). Even considering the difference between the value of money in 1941 and 2011, the fact that an organization could cause that much damage with such a minimal investment of resources (19 men and $200,000) is truly staggering.

But again, facts such as these offer no more of a consensus on the difference between terrorism and war than exists on the difference between terrorism and crime. Given the rapidly changing face of warfare today and the increasing number of non-state actors involved in warfare, it will only become increasingly more difficult to parse out acts of terrorism from acts of war. Neumann and Smith (2005, p. 572) make this very point, and they insist that any credible theoretical framework must address terrorism "as a bona fide method for distributing military means to fulfill the ends of policy."

Still others distinguish between terrorism as an incident and terrorism as a process. For instance, Rapoport (1971) defines assassination as an incident but terrorism as a process as it requires a lifetime of dedication and discipline. Of course, one could make the opposing argument that it takes a great deal more discipline to become a skilled marksman than it does to strap on some explosives and push a plunger.

In addition to the difficulties associated with defining terrorism by the deed and distinguishing it from other phenomena such as acts of war and crime, there are also challenges involved in analyzing acts of terrorism. For example, Kruglanski and Fishman (2006) contrast terrorism as a syndrome with terrorism as a tool. According to Kruglanski and Fishman, terrorism as a syndrome suggests that terrorists can be

identified apart from non-terrorists. It views terrorism as the product of certain personality traits or predispositions of character. To be useful, however, this understanding of terrorism presupposes the ability to psychologically profile terrorists; which as stated above, is dubious.

Terrorism as a tool, on the other hand, views terrorism as a strategic means to a desired outcome. Kruglanski and Fishman suggest that approaching terrorism from this perspective allows experts to focus on countering the strategy of terrorism without having to *necessarily* understand the mindset of the terrorist. However, as Harris (2006) makes clear, the strategic approach requires an understanding of an actor's preferences and therefore, an understanding of their mindset.

When defining terrorism, it is absolutely crucial to keep in mind that terrorism is a strategy to be countered, and not an enemy to be defeated (Crocker 2005; Neumann and Smith 2005). However, Washington's GWOT and the aid it offers those who join it has greatly exacerbated the misuse of the term to denounce one's political opponents. The obvious cure for this malady is to remove the stigma associated with the label "terrorist." This study adopts Neumann and Smith's (2005) definition of terrorism as a military strategy aimed at three objectives:

> 1) Disorientation: to alienate the authorities from their citizens, reducing the government to impotence in the eyes of the population; 2) target response: to induce a target to respond in a manner that is favorable to the insurgent cause; 3) gaining legitimacy: to exploit the emotional impact of the violence to insert an alternative political message.

Thus, terrorism is just one of several military means employed to obtain a desired political end. As such, it can be carried out in a wide variety of ways and by a

wide variety of actors—including states (Rummel 1998).[26] As Neumann and Smith

(2005) aptly contest, terrorism is not always a weapon of the weak, nor is it always

employed by illegitimate actors.

3.4: Traditionally Accepted Explanations of Terrorism

Beyond Jackson's four-part typology, a host of other attempts have been made

to categorize and explain the various root causes of terrorism. For example, Taylor

(1988) suggests a 3-part typology based on legal, moral and behavioral definitions.

Others suggest that terrorism occurs in waves.

The wave analogy is common among social scientists. For instance,

democratic transition has been referred to as occurring in waves (Huntington 1993b;

McFaul 2002). Economic cycles are also often referred to as waves (Goldstein 1985).

Scholars have used the wave analogy to categorize periods of terrorist activity as well

(Rapoport 2004; Shughart 2006). The most famous use of the wave analogy

pertaining to terrorism is Rapoport's (2004) four waves of modern terrorism typology,

which breaks the periods of modern terrorism into four categories: (1) anarchist, (2)

national liberation and ethnic separatism, (3) left-wing, and (4) religious.

According to Rapoport, the terrorist organization known as Narodnaya Volya

(People's Will) sparked the first wave of terrorism in 1878. This "Anarchist Wave"

spread outward from Russia to Western Europe, Asia, the Balkans, and even America.

Also known as the "Golden Age of Assassination," the first wave peaked in the 1890s

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[26] When compared with the terrorism perpetrated by states (Stalin killed 42 million, Mao killed 37
million and Hitler killed 20 million), non-state actors pale in comparison (Rummel 1998).

but extended well into the 1920s. Rapoport includes the assassination of the American president, William McKinley, in September, 1901 in this wave.

Rapoport's second wave lasted from the 1920s to the end of WWII. The terrorism in this wave was marked by anti-colonial sentiment fueled by the resentment of ethnic and religious groups suffering political marginalization due to the creation of purely artificial nation states. Arbitrary borders were drawn by the victors of WWI as they carved up the former Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, and German empires, and also the African continent and elsewhere. Ironically, Wilson's doctrine of self-determination was ultimately only applied to "hitherto sovereign countries conquered by Germany, Italy and Japan" (Hoffman 2013, p.47). Colonies such as Algeria, Cyprus, Cochin China, Ireland and others were excluded. As a result, nationalist and ethnic separatists in these regions resorted to terrorist tactics, demanding the self-determination that they were denied by the great powers.

Rapoport defines the third wave of terrorism as new left terrorism, which spanned from the end of WWII to 1979. This wave is primarily marked by the terrorism of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and PLO-affiliated groups. It was during the third wave that international terrorism entered its heyday. Opposition to the war in Vietnam created strong anti-American and anti-establishment sentiment, causing left-wing terrorist groups such as the Red Brigades and the Red Army Faction in Europe, and the Weathermen in America, to wage terrorist campaigns consisting of bombings, hijackings and political assassinations.

Finally, the fourth wave in Rapoport's typology consists of religious terrorism. This wave began with the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and continues to this day. It is popularly associated with the pan-Islamic vision of the late Osama bin Laden. More accurately, however, while bin Laden's international franchise has definitely

contributed to the terrorism of this period, local and regional groups such as those in Central Asia, Africa, the Middle East, the Philippines, Indonesia, Kashmir, and Chechnya commit the lion's share of terrorist attacks. Given that these groups are local in purpose and vision, international terrorism comprises only a very small percentage of total terrorist activity in the fourth wave.

Siddique's (2009) analysis is useful here. Dividing terrorist extremism in Pakistan according to target of attack, Siddique creates a four-part typology of terrorist organizations in Pakistan. Type I organizations mainly target the West, Type II target Afghanistan and India, Type III target the government and security forces of Pakistan itself, and Type IV organizations are sectarian. Siddique found that the greatest focus among groups operating in Pakistan is on local and regional targets.

Tinnes (2010) observes a similar focus on domestic targets in her study of contemporary terrorist organizations throughout Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. Tinnes notes that while the presence of American troops in this region has brought the far enemy much closer to home, it has also brought to light the many key doctrinal and strategic differences between the various local *jihadist* groups that have assembled to fight that enemy. Since most groups' tactical and strategic goals are localized, these clashes have resulted in minimal cooperation between groups, if any. Thus, according to Tinnes, the threat of a unitary, pan-Islamic breed of terrorism is not as great as was perhaps once believed.

Hegghammer (2010) largely agrees with Tinnes. He compares and contrasts Saudi Islamist militant groups with a variety of other *jihadist* movements and concludes that most are locally focused and share little in common with one another. Hegghammer's assertion is largely supported by the fact that *Salafist* groups such as

Islamic State (IS) view the purging of Islam as the first step in global *jihad*.

Therefore, the elimination of groups they view as apostate is a priority (Wood 2015).

The ongoing differences between IS and al-Qaeda demonstrates the local and

territorial nature of these groups. Hegghammer's argument is also supported by al

Shabaab and Boko Haram, which though claiming to be loyal to either (or both) al

Qaeda and IS, have demonstrated no practical working relationship with them.

Furthermore, both al Shabaab and Boko Haram continue to experience infighting and

division over issues of power and control of territory and resources.

Sedgwick (2007) builds upon Rapoport's typology by proposing that increases

in certain types of terrorism at certain times (Rapoport's waves) can be explained by

the diffusion effect. Simply put, the perception that terrorism is successful leads other

rational individual utility maximizers to engage in it toward the achievement of their

own goals.

The diffusion effect offers a round-about explanation as to why both al

Shabaab and Boko Haram have pledged allegiance to groups such as al Qaeda and

Boko Haram yet appear to have little or no real working ties to either. The simple

perception of affiliation may serve to translate success for one as success for the

other. This, of course, is not the copycat effect that Sedgwick refers to, but it is related

to it.

The obvious question that Sedgwick's assertion creates is if the perception that

terrorism is successful leads rational individual utility maximizers to engage in it, why

have such a relatively few chosen such a path?

Both Rapoport and Sedgwick offer useful descriptive analyses of the history

of terrorism. However, neither offers much in the way of explanatory or predictive

insight regarding why such a relatively small number of terrorists choose to break with the status quo while the majority of the population does not.

While the question of *why* an actor engages in violence (i.e. motive) is not as important to the strategic theorist as *what* that actors hopes to achieve (strategic objective), a potential bridge between the two is the Machiavellian concept that the ends justify the means. No doubt, in addition to Rapoport's waves and Sedgwick's diffusion effect, the majority of actors also simply justified their violence by the ends that they ultimately pursued (Bassiouni 1975). Again, while strategic theory bypasses the need to justify violence altogether, it suggests that scholars address the question of how well the means serve the ends on a case by case basis rather than as a generalization.

Another well-known typology is the grievance typology, which loosely structures the causes of terrorism into broadly defined categories such as socio-economic marginalization, social-identity marginalization, religious fanaticism, and political grievance (Leuprecht et al. 2010).

Piazza's (2011) work, which explores the link between minority economic discrimination and domestic terrorism, is a prime example from the body of scholarship on socio-economic marginalization. Piazza concludes that poverty per se is not the critical factor, but economic discrimination against minority groups that sparks them to choose terrorism over the status quo. The terrorist violence in the Niger Delta fits within this category.

A representative piece of social-identity marginalization literature is Brinkerhoff's (2008) study investigating the potential for violence in socially marginalized diaspora groups. Brinkerhoff concludes that there is a strong potential risk among the most socially marginalized members of diaspora groups to join

terrorist organizations. Bryden (2014) suggests that al Shabaab was particularly successful in attracting young Somalis from the diaspora for this reason.

Hoffman (1995) offers a compelling discussion of religious fanaticism and terrorism, concluding that religion offers a much more palatable justification of violence than any political position ever could. Beyond mere justification, however, Hoffman also points to the apocalyptic vision that drives some religious fanatics to commit violence because they prioritize eternal life over temporal human life here on earth.

In the case of Islamic terrorism, however, scholars and policy makers need to acknowledge the difference between *Islamists* who seek the return of the caliphate (often through the democratic process) and *jihadists* who reject the idea of separation between religion and politics (Turner 2012; McCants 2015). A proper understanding of the religious ideology that drives al Shabaab and Boko Haram reveals much more about their respective political objectives (as well as why these two groups have chosen to employ violence to obtain them) than a mere political analysis alone.

This is not to say that religion explains everything, however. As Heck (2007, p.8) asks, "is it fair to blame 1.4 billion Muslims and more than 200 million Arabs for the malevolent handiwork of an ideologically deviant few?" The answer is, of course not. Not only is it unfair, it makes for poor scholarship as well.

For example, it was political grievances that sparked Boko Haram's terrorist violence in the first place. One of many resources linking terrorism to political grievances is McCauley and Moskalenko (2008) who conclude that political radicalization stems more from the perceived political grievances of groups than from individual political dissatisfaction.

There is an abundance of literature linking a myriad of grievances to acts of violence and terrorism. Stern (2003b), for example, explores the various grievances that induce individuals to choose terrorism over the status quo such as poverty, unemployment, lack of better opportunities, exploitation, etc. Stern also reveals the disillusionment faced by many young recruits as they become aware of the practical realities of militant organizations such as ambition, corruption and the criminal activities that fund them and allow them to thrive.

The benefit of the grievance typology is that it attempts to identify a reason for discontent. In this respect it is a bit more explanatory than Rapoport's wave typology which descriptively divides terrorist violence into four dispensations. However, one would naturally assume that most individuals who choose to engage in acts of violence have compelling reasons to do so. Critical to any analysis of terrorist violence is not necessarily the perpetrators' grievance, but identifying the strategic objective and assessing whether violence offers a sound strategy to address it.

The main problem with the typologies listed above is that they employ theoretical models that artificially separate terrorist violence into very broad classifications that are highly oversimplified. The real world is never so neatly compartmentalized. Therefore, pinpointing specific root causes of terrorism remains an elusive endeavor.

As Richardson (2007) puts it, there are two reasons why terrorism is so difficult to explain. One, there are so many terrorists, and two, there are so few terrorists. On the one hand, individuals who engage in terrorism come from such diverse backgrounds that it is difficult to generalize about them with any assurance of accuracy.

There are scholars who maintain that those who engage in terrorist violence tend to be younger (Russell and Miller 1977; Combs and Hall 2003), poorer (Kepel 1985), and less educated (Bergen and Pandey 2005) today than they were in the 1960s. However, even basic demographic generalizations such as these require, at minimum, a common agreement on what constitutes an act of terrorism.

In Chapter Two, I introduced systemic and lower levels of analysis. In the next section I will slice the data somewhat differently to look at four broad categories of factors that are often cited as causes of terrorism: structural, cultural, institutional and rational.

3.4.1: Structural Explanations of Terrorism

Viewing individuals as embedded in socio-economic forces, structuralists look for causal mechanisms in large socio-economic forces rather than in the preferences of individual actors (Hay and Wincott 1998). By far, the most common alleged structural cause of terrorism is poverty. And while this claim resonates intuitively with most reasonable individuals, it does not hold up empirically.

For instance, Krueger and Malečková (2003) explore poverty and poor education as root causes of terrorism among Palestinian suicide bombers and find that, not only were the bombers themselves from diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds, but those who expressed support for suicide bombings as a response to Israeli occupation were as well.

Ahmed (2005) supports this conclusion by observing that the overall sense of humiliation, bitterness and anger among Palestinians transcends income, education

and social class. Ahmed contends that suicide bombings are largely viewed by the Palestinian public as justified given the barbaric conditions of Israeli occupation.

Krueger and Laitin (2008) consider poverty and civil liberties as root causes of terrorism. They conclude that in states with equal civil liberties, poor states do not experience higher rates of terrorism than wealthy states. Rather they suggest that political repression generates terrorists who then, in the case of suicide bombers, often target wealthier and more democratic states.

Abadie (2004) argues that poverty is not a statistically significant variable but level of political freedom is. Abadie also points out that domestic terrorism continues to account for the lion's share of attacks. For example, in 2003 international terrorism constituted only 240 out of a total of 1,536 terrorist attacks. Of course, how one defines terrorism is critical in this type of data collection.

Piazza (2006) looks at ninety-six countries between 1986 and 2002 and finds that, rather than poor economic development, "social cleavage theory" offers a better explanation of terrorism.[27] Piazza uses the theory to measure the level of social division in a society. The greater the number of political parties, the more social division and hence, the more likely political violence will be.

In another study, while conceding that there is no evidence of a direct causal relationship between structural factors and individual acts of terrorism, Piazza (2010) notes a correlation between an overall reduction in global poverty and a corresponding reduction in global terrorism. Piazza therefore suggests that there is a positive correlation between poverty and terrorism at the systemic level even if no

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[27] Social Cleavage Theory proposes that political parties emerge out of basic social cleavages in society (Lipset and Rokkan 1967).

evidence can be found to consistently link individual acts of terrorism to poverty at the sub-systemic level. Similarly, Robison, Crenshaw and Jenkins (2006) find a positive correlation between increased foreign direct investment and a long-term overall reduction in terrorism.

Berman's model (2003) also suggests that systemic poverty and economic inefficiency play indirect roles in that they allow terrorist organizations to win the allegiance and loyalty of their members through the provision of economic benefits that would not otherwise be available. The poorer the market opportunities and government provision of public goods, the easier it is for terrorist organizations to secure such loyalty.

According to Berman, individual and collective loyalty to such groups in exchange for economic benefits is rational. And while groups that benefit from such loyalty may then attract other members who are not desperate for economic benefits (e.g. the nineteen hijackers in the 9/11 attacks), these latter members constitute the elite among the group rather than the rank and file. They are the exception rather than the rule. As Berman points out, al Qaeda would hardly send illiterate members to flight school in America when it had more qualified individuals at its disposal. Therefore, according to Berman's model, the single most effective way to eliminate popular support for terrorism is to improve the economic opportunities of local populations so as to reduce their dependence on the benefits provided by terrorist organizations.

Berman's model is also applicable to wealthier states with rapid population growth such as Saudi Arabia. Though wealthy now, the population in Saudi Arabia is projected to increase from its current level of approximately 27 million to over 41

million in 2025 and 60 million in 2050, making its abundant resources increasingly scarce (Ehrlich and Liu 2002).

While both al Shabaab and Boko Haram have benefitted from poor economic conditions by recruiting from among the desperate and unemployed, neither group would likely elect to lay down their arms should economic realities improve in their respective regions as their strategic goals are focused upon the implementation of *sharia* rather than a larger slice of the economic pie.

Utilizing a more localized group level of analysis, other scholars have noted a correlation between economic downturns and increases in terrorism (Angrist 1995; Honaker 2004; Blomberg et al. 2004). For example, Angrist (1995) notes that the early 1980s witnessed a significant rise in education among Palestinians. However, economic downturns also caused a significant increase in unemployment across socio-economic levels. High levels of unemployment led to dissatisfaction and social unrest. Is it a mere coincidence that this economic downturn coincided with the First Intifada? Honaker (2004) draws a similar correlation between unemployment and terrorism in Northern Ireland. Ehrlich and Liu (2002) and Urdal (2006) find a positive correlation between population growth and terrorism, particularly when increasing numbers of unemployed youth are involved. Finally, Bowman (2008) reports that the U.S. military paid former al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) detainees roughly $200 per month after their release in an effort to deter them from returning to AQI. Most were young, unemployed males who accepted jobs with AQI purely for the money rather than for political ideology or religious conviction.

Bueno de Mesquita (2005) utilizes an individual level of analysis to parse out the various causal factors involved in this complex phenomenon. While agreeing that economic factors play a significant role, Bueno de Mesquita argues a more complex

relationship than the standard linear correlation. Acknowledging that individuals on the lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder are more inclined to volunteer for terrorist missions—particularly those individuals harboring discontent towards the government—Bueno de Mesquita argues that terrorist organizations only want to recruit the most qualified individuals. When economic contractions increase unemployment, terrorist organizations have a more qualified pool of volunteers to choose from.

This inexpensive pool of highly-qualified candidates leads to an increased number of attacks until either (A) the shock value reaches a point of diminishing returns, or (B) government counter-measures drive the cost of attacks to prohibitively expensive levels. But harsh government crackdowns also often generate popular support which offsets the cost of future attacks through a fresh surplus of donations and recruits, and the cycle continues.

Hence according to Bueno de Mesquita, it is not poverty per se that drives terrorism, or even economic inequality, but economic downturns that create a surplus of highly qualified individuals who are angry enough and desperate enough to view terrorism as a viable alternative to the status quo. The question remains, however, how does one explain terrorism during periods of economic boom?

As this section demonstrates, the structural approach to explaining terrorism focuses on economic conditions that are largely beyond the control of individual decision makers. These conditions no doubt escalate frustration and increase desperation for the multitudes they affect. Economic conditions also directly affect the choices individuals make by limiting the alternatives available to them. Finally, those who engage in terrorism may use economic realities to justify their actions or take advantage of desperate economic conditions to further their own agenda as otherwise

law-abiding citizens may be tempted to pursue illicit alternatives during cycles of economic downturn. However, economic conditions alone do not fully explain why some choose terrorism over the status quo while others do not. I will now examine the cultural approach to understanding terrorism.

3.4.2: Cultural Explanations of Terrorism

Culturalists strive to understand the social context from which values, norms, and identities that govern human behavior emerge. Therefore, culturalists argue that an understanding of political processes first requires an understanding of cultural factors (Almond and Coleman 1960; Almond and Verba 1963; Pye and Verba 1965; Dawson et al. 1969).

Culturally speaking, the two largest common denominators shared by people are language and religion. While language has been a source of conflict in isolated incidents (such as the war between East and West Pakistan where Urdu was proclaimed as the national language despite the prevalence of Bengali in the East), religion has played a more vital (if not a central) role in armed conflict throughout history (Fox and Sandler 2005; Silberman et al. 2005: McCormick 2006)

Culturalists suggest that religion can sometimes be absolute and unyielding, and it is often in these occasions that religious convictions (particularly those associated with monotheistic religions) can actually spark violence when confronted with contrary belief systems or practices.[28]

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[28] In the cases of al Shabaab and Boko Haram (and indeed, many other *jihadist* groups), one obvious explanation for the increase in violence is the strong belief that democratic forms of government are

When dealing with terrorism, culturalists search for social conventions that might serve to institute violence as a culturally viable option (e.g. Silverman 2002; Juergensmeyer 2003; Arena and Arrigo 2006). With the increasing prevalence of Islamic terrorism over the past several decades, there has been a surge of interest in Islamic culture in the search for cultural explanations of the phenomena (e.g. Omar 2003; Milton-Edwards 2006; Etienne 2007).

Since September 11, 2001, the body of literature on religion's relationship to terrorism has grown exponentially (e.g. Bergen 2002; Kulwicki 2002; Armanios 2003; Juergensmeyer 2003; Stern 2003b; Kepel 2004; Roy 2004; Kalu et al 2005; McCormack 2005; Bergen and Pandey 2006; Ahmed 2006; Haynes 2007 & 2009; Venkatraman 2007; Yates 2007; Selengut 2008; Hegghammer 2010; Kean 2011; Sageman 2011).[29]

Fukuyama (2001), for example, suggests that perhaps the Muslim world is more prone to terrorism than other regions of the world because of the great disappointment it has experienced in falling so far behind the Western world.

Taylor (1988) asserts that as far back as the sixteenth century, Muslims faced two choices: either embrace those aspects of the West that made it so successful or return to the pure faith of the past. According to Taylor, adherents of the two alternatives have been at odds ever since. In more contemporary times, the twentieth century witnessed the rise of secular nationalism and the neo-fundamentalist ideology that opposed it.[30]

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haram (prohibited) under *sharia* (Schacht 1959). Thus, when this foreign and (in their eyes) unlawful institution is imposed upon them, they rebel.

[29] For an excellent bibliography see, Haynes (2005).

[30]Ajami (1978) offers an excellent discussion of secular nationalism and pan-Arabism in the wake of the Six Day War.

Payne (1989, p. 121) insists that "violence has been a central, accepted element, both in Muslim teaching and in the historical conduct of the religion. For over a thousand years, the religious bias in the Middle Eastern Culture has not been to discourage the use of force, but to encourage it."

Unfortunately, moral majority leaders such as Jerry Falwell, Franklin Graham and Pat Robertson advance this misguided view of Islam by asserting that Islam itself is inherently evil, and therefore, the source of modern-day *jihadist* violence. However, this position is fairly easily discredited for anyone who wishes to look at the facts objectively.

Like all religions, Islam can be a strong unifying force. But of course, not all variants of Islam are the same, so Islam can also be a powerful dividing force as well. However, this doesn't make it evil. Nor is all so-called "Islamic terrorism" motivated by religion (Esposito 2003).

Kepel (2004) contends that this phenomenon is largely divided between the nationalist Islamist political parties in predominantly Muslim states and the internationally-oriented Islamists living elsewhere. According to Kepel, most Islamist movements in predominantly Muslim states have adopted a more nationalist agenda since the end of the Cold War, and therefore religiously-motivated violence in these regions has increasingly been replaced by more politically-motivated violence. In contrast, Kepel insists that religiously-motivated Islamist violence has increased over the same period in the Diaspora, and particularly in the West, where some ten million Muslims reside in Western Europe alone.

Roy (2004) attributes this increase in politically-motivated violence in predominantly Muslim states to the highly politicized terrorism of al Qaeda, whose individual conception of *jihad* breaks with the more traditional notion of *jihad* as a

collective, and primarily defensive, duty.[31] Roy also points to the increasingly individual nature of Islam in the West. Roy maintains that while Western Islam may not be as highly politicized as its Middle-Eastern counterpart, its increasing focus on individualism lends itself to radical views.

Venkatraman (2007) argues that according to the *Quranic* principle of *ijtihad*, Muslims are free to interpret Islam individually and choose their own Islamic practices provided they seek the will of God within an Islamic community. So whether it is due to the politicization of Islam in predominantly Muslim states or the influence of individualism in the West, many scholars agree that there has been both an increase in politically-motivated violence in Muslim states and an increase in religiously-motivated Islamist violence in the West.[32]

An excellent example is al Shabaab which initially opposed Ethiopian military forces, the Somali forces Ethiopia propped up, and any outside military forces that assisted them. While the group espouses a religious ideology, al Shabaab's fight was at one time primarily a nationalist cause- though it has successfully drawn Muslims from other states around the world to fight the "infidel crusaders" who have invaded Muslim soil (Vidino, et. al. 2010).

Others consider the practice of honor killing as a culturally-specific social convention that institutes violence (Kulwicki 2002). While this practice is horrific, it in no way represents an exclusively Muslim disposition towards violence as domestic violence against women is a global problem (Watts and Zimmerman 2002).

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[31] For more on the individual conception of *jihad*, see Lahoud (2010).
[32] Selengut (2008) offers a comprehensive treatment of the rise of religious violence.

Examples of religiously motivated violence abound from the Christian Crusades to Muslim/Hindu conflicts and even Buddhist/Hindu conflicts. Scholars can hardly claim any one religion as the exclusive domain of violence, nor can they conclusively demonstrate that any religion causes violence (Martin 1997). Furthermore, religious violence in any society is almost always accompanied by some level of ethno-political tension and/or struggle over limited resources, making this type of analysis particularly problematic (Barber 2001).

Despite the increase in Islamic terrorism, it is extremely difficult to demonstrate a direct correlation between the religion of Islam and extremist violence. Pearce (2005) concludes that no religion displays a significantly higher or lower propensity to violence than the others. Rather than attribute terrorism to any one religion, Wade and Reiter (2007) find a positive correlation between the number of religious minority groups in a given state and its overall level of terrorist activity. Thus, the search for culturally-specific causes of terrorism remains elusive.

In addition to citing specific cultures as prone to terrorist violence, others maintain that cultural differences produce conflict. The most famous of these is Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations Theory which maintains that, since the end of the Cold War, intrastate war along cultural lines has supplanted interstate war across state borders. While his general observation concerning the rise of intrastate war is accurate, Huntington's theory has been attacked for a number of reasons (Perry 2002). Of primary concern to most critics is Huntington's focus on cultural factors over other considerations such as socio-economic and geopolitical realities (e.g. Appleby 1999; Gopin 2000; Laue 2000; Haynes 2003; Juergensmeyer 2003).

Turner (1993, p. 412) warned that by attempting to equate culture with clearly delineated boundaries, scholars "risk essentializing the idea of culture as the property

of an ethnic group or race." Similarly, Benhabib (2002, p.5) warns against such a reductionist approach to understanding culture. She reasons that the attempt to conceive of culture as a "clearly delineable whole" is derived from the desire to not only understand outgroups, but also to control them. Benhabib contrasts this approach with how most people view their own culture, not as an undisputed reality, but more as "a horizon that recedes each time one approaches it." From this perspective, culture is an elusive concept and one that cannot be applied en masse to rigidly defined groups of people.

Huntington's concept of "cleft" countries is particularly salient to a cultural analysis of conflict in states such as Nigeria and Sudan (during its civil war years). Huntington defines cleft countries as states divided between civilizations. Conflict occurs when those belonging to one civilization attempt to impose their norms, mores and laws upon those belonging to another. According to Huntington's theory, the civil war in Sudan between Muslims in the North and Christians in the South could be attributed to Sudan's status as a cleft state. Likewise conflict in Nigeria could arguably be viewed as a result of tensions between its Christian South and Muslim North.

However, even in religiously dichotomous states such as Nigeria and the former state of Sudan, such simplistic explanations prove insufficient. Closer analysis reveals that in both states the North/South divide is just the tip of the iceberg. Each state has also witnessed a number of struggles between groups of very similar cultural and religious identities.

In Nigeria for example, local groups have clashed with each other over control of resources for decades. Also during the civil war in Sudan, Southerners battled each other just as fiercely as they fought the Northern forces over the question of

unification or independence. Therefore, cultural differentiation and ethno-religious fragmentation are not always the cause of conflict.

Nor does the absence of such diversity guarantee peace. For example, serious conflict has plagued Somalia- a largely ethnically and religiously homogenous state.[33] One would be hard-pressed to explain Somalia's inter-clan conflict and interstate border disputes via Huntington's Clash of Civilizations Theory (or via Wade and Reiter's findings for that matter).

In fact, there is increasing skepticism concerning whether we can even consider discrete ethnic groups as the basic building blocks of society. There has also been growing attention on the institutional origins of ethnicity and ethnic violence (Lieberman and Singh 2010 & 2012). A more satisfactory explanation suggests that stable effective governance has more to do with peace than an absence of cultural diversity (Zubaida, 1989).

If ethnic or religious fragmentation were a significant cause of conflict, one could expect to see more consistent results. But the fact is, Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Togo and Uganda all score high for either ethnic fragmentation, religious fragmentation or both (Lane and Ersson 1994). Yet, all have experienced very mixed results concerning violence within their borders.

Therefore, given that there has always been−and there continues to be−conflict and violence in every culture (both across cultural lines and within them), cultural

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[33] This is not to claim that there are not linguistic and other basic differences that diversify the Somali population. For example, see Solomon (2015).

explanations alone offer limited understanding as to why acts of terrorism occur in one place and not in another.

Finally, any discussion of a correlation between cultural factors and terrorism needs to address the hegemony of discourse contested by critical thinkers such as Said (1978, 1985, 1997), who argue that Orientalism was originally devised to establish European imperial domination, and despite its claims of neutrality, the Academy continues to perpetuate a mere caricature of the East as inferior to the West rather than a true representation of the East as simply different from the West (see also Derrida 1974; Deleuze and Guattari 1977; Foucault 1980; Bhabha 1983; Fairclough 2013).[34]

As an American who has lived and taught in the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Central Asia, I can attest from my own experience that many university students in these regions have been fed a steady diet of neo-Orientalism from their youth. Thus, many readily accept an international hierarchy that places them at the very bottom. Western scholars are no less susceptible. Indeed, as fish in water, Westerners are often so immersed in neo-Orientalism that many hardly notice its existence. Given this vulnerability, scholars need to be particularly careful when applying cultural explanations to terrorism as they are often laden with stereotypes on the one hand and a slew of unanswered questions on the other. In the next section, I will discuss institutional explanations of terrorism.

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[34] Consider Said's academic (and what appeared to be personal) tit for tat with Bernard Lewis (e.g. Said 1976; Lewis 1982).

3.4.3: Institutional Explanations of Terrorism

Institutionalism asserts that institutions shape both the preferences of individuals as well as the acceptable means for attaining those preferences (Wildavsky 1987; Koelble 1995; Bowles 1998; 1999; Persson 2002). Institutions can be formal such as a state's laws, regulations, educational systems, economic policies and government (Stiglitz 2000; Bratton 2007). Institutions can also be informal arrangements of all kinds to include corruption, clientelism or something as simple as people allowing pregnant women and the elderly to go to the front of the line at the bank (Helmke and Levitsky 2004; Grzymala-Busse 2010). As is the case with other systemic factors, institutional explanations for terrorism abound.

3.4.3.1: Political Explanations for Terrorism

There is broad disagreement concerning which type of political regime is more likely to experience terrorism. Some studies link terrorism to democracies while others tie it to authoritarian regimes. One view is that due to increased political representation and participation, democracies are less likely to spawn terrorism than authoritarian regimes (Schmid 1992; Gurr 2003).

Others conclude just the opposite, however, arguing that political rights and civil liberties are positively correlated with terrorism (Ross 1993; Eubank and Weinberg 2001). Drakos and Gofas (2006) argue that non-democracies likely only appear to experience fewer terrorist incidents due to underreporting.

Eyerman (1998) finds that new democracies are especially prone to terrorism because they reduce both the cost and risk, while Li (2005) claims that democracies with proportional representation experience fewer incidents of terrorism than

democracies with majoritarian or mixed electoral systems because proportional representation generally creates more political space for new parties than majoritarian or mixed electoral systems. Li's conclusion largely contradicts Piazza's (2008) findings (mentioned above) that tie terrorism to social cleavages.

Data from empirical studies also suggest an inverted U-shaped correlation between terrorism and both authoritarian states and democracies (Abadie 2004). This correlation is known as the democracy curve. It is premised upon the idea that while authoritarian states are largely able to crush internal threats, democracies tend to experience less threats to begin with. This is not to say that authoritarian states effectively deal with all forms of terrorism or that democracies never face the scourge of terrorism, for one would have to ignore a myriad of realities to make such an assumption (e.g. the Chechen Wars, the Uighurs, 9/11 and the resulting decade-plus GWOT).

Rather, the democracy curve simply notes an increasingly negative correlation with terrorism the further a state advances toward either democracy or authoritarianism. This leads some to conclude a positive correlation between semi-democracies and terrorism due to a lack of basic civil liberties such as freedom of the press (Sawyer 2005) and transparent legal systems (Kreimer 2007).

Beyond regime type, other institutional phenomena that are purported to open the door for terrorist influences are poorly institutionalized party systems and endemic corruption. In Lebanon, for example, Hezbollah has been able to take advantage of the fact that there are few institutionalized political parties in the country (Norton 2007a). In contrast, the endemic corruption of the highly institutionalized Fatah opened political space for Hamas in Gaza (Milton-Edwards 2007). But again, poorly institutionalized party systems and endemic corruption merely represent opportunities

for terrorists to exploit (Shelley 2004; Shinn 2004). Neither demonstrates a consistent correlation with terrorism. In fact, many developing states possess both phenomena without experiencing a high incidence of terrorism (Diamond 2002).

Mohammad (2005) looks instead at a regime's overall legitimacy as the primary factor for terrorism among Arab states in the Middle East. After testing for other factors such as literacy rates, socio-economic development, regime type and popular support for Islamic extremism, Mohammad concludes that none contribute to violence as consistently as the perception that a regime is propped up by the West and that it is supportive of American foreign policy. Similarly, Savun and Phillips (2009) maintain that states are more likely to experience terrorism depending upon the type of foreign policy they pursue. The more isolationist the foreign policy, the lower the probability that a state will experience terrorist violence.

3.4.3.2: The Mass Media as an Explanation for Terrorism

The mass media is another institution that has been linked to terrorism as it sometimes serves the interests of terrorists (Nacos 2016). Exposure through the mass media is perhaps the most critical asset terrorists enjoy when it comes to generating popular support and attempting to propagate their ideology (Hoffman 2013). Without media coverage, terrorists would fail to publicize their actions beyond the immediate victims. Without an audience, terrorism is largely reduced to acts of random violence (Nacos 2007).

Take the recent media coverage of the Islamic State (IS) for instance. The group is, without doubt, a serious threat. However, IS has been active since 1999 under a variety of names with little global attention since the death of al-Zarqawi.

(Zelin 2014). The recent events concerning IS are no doubt newsworthy, however, one also has to take into account the tremendous benefit that IS gains from the added publicity it receives (Giroux 2016).

Wilkinson (1997) asserts that in democracies, where freedom of the press is supposed to be upheld, a symbiotic relationship often develops between the terrorist organizations seeking publicity and the media outlets that profit from sensational news stories. This is offered as one reason why terrorism thrives in democracies more so than in authoritarian states.

Wieviorka (1988) denies the existence of such a simplistic, straightforward relationship, pointing to instances where terrorist organizations have targeted journalists and news outlets.[35] And while democratic governments are usually slow to resort to censorship, many have enacted anti-complicity statutes that prohibit media organizations from lending support to terrorist organizations through publicity.

Others point out that such publicity has a mixed record regarding the amount of popular support it actually generates (Murphy et al. 2004). Not only do mass media outlets publicize the terrorists' cause, they also expose the atrocities committed by the group and such "publicity" often backfires. For instance, Funes (1998) examines how media coverage of the attacks perpetrated by the *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* "Basque Homeland and Liberty" resulted in a significant loss of popular support for the group.

Some scholars argue that terrorists do not need their actions to be publicized as government reactions to terrorist attacks are often enough to incite public outrage. For instance, Bloom (2004) discusses how the media coverage of the harsh retaliatory

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[35] Interestingly enough, IS has recently threatened Facebook CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, and Twitter CEO, Jack Dorsey, for their efforts to deny the group and its affiliates space on their respective social media sites (Moore 2016).

crack-downs initiated by the Israeli government and military forces has served to outrage the Palestinian public, thus generating widespread popular support for Palestinian terrorist activity.

So while terrorist organizations attempt to use the mass media to raise awareness and popular support, regimes attempt to publicize the criminality of terrorism and thereby delegitimize the group in the eyes of the public. Both, however, run the risk of losing public support for their use of violence.

3.4.3.3: Madaris as an Explanation for Terrorism

Another debatable issue surrounding institutions is that of *madaris* (plural for *madrasa*) and the radicalization of school-age children. For example, the 9-11 Commission describes *madaris* as "incubators of violent extremism" (Commission 2004, p. 367). However, this depiction is inflammatory and not entirely accurate. "*Madrasa*" is simply the Arabic word for "school." Many *madaris* serve the impoverished, and as charitable organizations, prove to be harmless. In Somalia, for example, the formal education system ceased to function after 1991. Privately funded *madaris* were largely the only option available for low-income Somali children (Botha and Abdile 2014).

Much of the concern over the perceived link between *madaris* and Islamic terrorism stems from the fact that as many as 10,000 *madaris* in Pakistan, and thousands more around the world, are funded by Saudi *Wahhabi* groups (Armanios 2003; Benoliel 2003). However, emphasis needs to be placed on the quality and type of the education delivered rather than simply the source of the funding (Botha and Abdile 2014).

Since the 9/11 attacks, *madaris* have received a disproportionate amount of attention among Westerners as training centers for radical *jihadists*. However, Siddique (2009) argues that there are only very limited grounds for this conception. While it is true that *madaris* are known to offer religious education, by and large according to Siddique, *militant madaris* are the exception rather than the rule. Siddique concludes that to the extent that *madaris* are militant at all; they are much more likely to support local and regional extremism rather than international.[36] Bolstering Siddique's finding is the interesting fact that none of the nineteen perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks were educated at *madaris*.

Similarly, Bergen and Pandey (2006) examine the profiles of 79 terrorists involved in the five worst anti-West terrorist attacks in recent history (the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 1998 attacks against the two U.S. embassies in Africa, 9/11, the 2002 Bali nightclub bombing, and the 2005 London bombings). They conclude that, unlike the average terrorist engaged in attacks against domestic/cross-border targets, the average global terrorist is highly educated. Bergen and Pandey further determine that the level of technological sophistication required to orchestrate a major terrorist attack against a Western target is simply not supported in most *madaris*.

Puri (2010) also concludes that militant *madaris* in Pakistan play a relatively minor role in the overall equation of cause and effect. Not only are a very small proportion of Pakistani students exposed to such *madaris*, like Bergen and Pandey, Puri points out that those who are exposed to militant *madaris* receive an education

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[36]Siddique's four-part typology of terrorist organizations in Pakistan is discussed more fully later in this chapter under Typologies of Terrorism.

that poorly equips them with the skills necessary to engage in high-tech terrorist attacks.

Stern (2000a) insists, however, that the relatively few militant *madaris* in Pakistan were encouraging their students to engage in *jihad* and sending them to *jihad* training camps. Likewise, Magouirk et al. (2008) report that *madaris* proved an integral part of the equation in securing recruits for Jemaah Islamiyyah.

While many *madaris* around the world are funded by Saudi sources, Coulson (2004) argues that the real blame for the existence of militant *madaris* in Afghanistan is to be laid at the feet of the Reagan administration which invested some $51 million towards text books that incite religious *jihad* against Soviet troops. These textbooks depicted extremely violent "lessons" such as math problems asking students to calculate the length of time it will take a *mujahid's* bullet to reach a Russian's head. This covert plan to indoctrinate, fund, and arm the *mujahidin* was part of the larger $3.2 billion Operation Cyclone (Davis 2002). After the Soviets left Afghanistan, the Taliban movement emerged and was mainly comprised of students (the word "*taliban*" is Pashto for "students") influenced and trained by the very *mujahidin* the U.S. backed in the 1980s.

Mazzetti et al. (2010) also suggest that the Pakistani government, which continues to receive over $1 billion per year from Washington for its part in the GWOT, also funds certain *madaris* toward similar ends. But here again, the focus is on local and regional rather than international terrorism.

The perception of *madaris* as training centers for radical *jihadists*, while meriting consideration, is at best misguided and incomplete, and at worst blatant propaganda. The alarm generated over *madaris* largely stems from the funding they receive by *Wahhabi* groups in Saudi Arabia. However, as noted above, U.S. funding

has been linked to militant *madaris* as well. While some *madaris* may incite hatred, very few students who attend such *madaris* will ever obtain the technical ability and financial means necessary to orchestrate a terrorist attack against the West.

One can see that, as with structural and cultural factors, institutional explanations alone prove incomplete. While institutions may shape both the preferences of terrorists and the opportunities available for them to exploit, they do not explain why only a tiny percentage of the population within a given institutional design choose to engage in or support acts of terrorism. Nor do they further our understanding of whether such actors are likely to achieve their strategic objectives through violence.

Finally, combinations of systemic causes have also been cited as the culprits behind terrorism. However, the sheer randomness of terrorism suggests that something much more specific also needs to be considered. Hence, I will now explore the role of rational explanations as a potential key to understanding this phenomenon.

3.4.4: Rational Explanations of Terrorism

Rational choice scholars analyze individual strategic interactions as the primary causal factors of political outcomes (Fiorina 1995; Kiser 1996; Levi 1997). Thus, it is possible to distinguish rational choice scholars from structuralists, culturalists and institutionalists by the level of analysis that they employ. Rationalists tend to approach problems deductively rather than inductively. They are more interested in broad generalization than deep understanding. The deductive method is evident by the three fundamental assumptions of the rational-choice approach: (1) all individuals have fixed and perfectly ranked preferences, (2) all individuals are self-

interested and strive to maximize their preferences, and (3) all individuals are interdependent and therefore act strategically based upon their expectations of what others will do. Rational choice scholars apply these three assumptions to all cases regardless of individual circumstances.

The rationalist camp in the body of terrorism literature attempts to understand terrorism via the preferences, incentives, and choices of individual utility maximizers who act deliberately toward the most efficient means to an end based upon their perception of what other actors will do (Enders and Sandler 2000; Berman 2003: Frey 2004).

For example, kidnapping is a rational act provided there is reasonable cause to believe that someone will comply with the perpetrator's demands. While kidnapping is sometimes used to raise awareness or to negotiate the release of political prisoners, it would not be employed for these purposes if there were zero expectation that the media outlets or governments involved would comply.

Kidnapping also raises a substantial amount of money. It is estimated that the 409 international kidnapping incidents occurring between 1968 and 1982 yielded some $350 million (roughly $850,000 per incident), generating significant revenue for the perpetrators and therefore constituting a rational act (Rapoport 2004).

Still, no one kidnaps homeless children in Manila. Nor does anyone make demands in exchange for the safe return of a hostage possessing insufficient political or emotional value to those negotiating. Kidnapping is only employed in cases where the perpetrator perceives that there is someone involved who both can and will pay the ransom. Thus, kidnapping is an example of a purely rational act- engaged in only when the perpetrator(s) perceive it to be the most expedient means to a desired end.

Likewise, acts of terrorism can be understood more clearly when one adds the rationalist lens to the looking glass.

One could argue that terrorism is not entirely rational in that the fruits of terrorism are most certainly also a public good because any political concessions achieved are shared by all regardless of whether they participate in the act or not. While this is certainly true, it in no way precludes terrorism from being rational.

Berman (2003) argues that terrorist organizations gain tremendous popularity despite the destruction they cause if the public goods they provide exceed those provided by the government. In this respect, even the provision of public goods is rational as it benefits the organization.

Even in the extreme case of suicide terrorism, any potential benefits are almost entirely in the public realm, making the rationality of suicide terrorism for the individual a particularly difficult case to sell. Still, suicide terrorism is rational if the bomber believes that there are rewards to be had in the next life. What is more, the bomber's family also often benefits through support from the group sponsoring the act (Zakaria 2007).

Petter (2004) elaborates on the rationality argument by identifying four distinct terrorist profiles in a typical *jihadist* cell; each with their own rationale for membership: (1) the entrepreneur, (2) the protégé, (3) misfits, and (4) drifters. The entrepreneur is carving out a niche and making a name for him or herself. For the entrepreneur, terrorism is a business opportunity. The protégé sees an opportunity to

utilize his or her special ability. Finally, misfits see a place to belong while drifters see a convenient, albeit temporary, economic opportunity.[37]

Unsurprisingly, Rosendorff and Sandler (2010) find that supporters will join terrorist organizations if they stand to gain more from their participation in the cell than from other economic opportunities available to them. Therefore, as real earnings from wages rise, so do the opportunity costs for engaging in terrorist activities. This point is so intuitive that it hardly merits mention.

However, Rosendorff and Sandler also suggest that in addition to fewer acts of terrorism, policy makers can also expect more egregious types of terrorism in times of economic prosperity. The reason there are often more suicide bombings and other particularly lethal attacks during times of economic prosperity is because terrorist leaders hope to provoke the government into overreacting. Harsh retaliation by the government generates popular support for the terrorists' cause and therefore lowers the group's cost of engaging in terrorism through increased financial support, approval, and volunteers.

This tactic works particularly well against liberal democracies since elected officials respond to political pressure to do something. Harsh retaliation on the part of the state in turn generates popular support which then allows the terrorist organization to continue to operate even in times of economic prosperity (Bloom 2004, Rosendorff and Sandler 2010).

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[37] Horgan (2005) makes a somewhat related point in his discussion of the complexity of human behavior, stating the need to understand that the reason(s) an individual initially engages in terrorist activity is not necessarily the same as the reason(s) that person continues to engage. Nor is it always relevant to the reason an individual eventually ceases to engage in terrorist activity.

Enders and Sandler (2005) propose that individuals can choose how they respond to systemic factors such as the economy and the political structure, thus specifying their models with the individual's choice as the independent variable. This distinction is particularly salient in the post 9/11 era.

The United States and its allies targeted al-Qaeda and its affiliates, captured or killed roughly two-thirds of the leadership (along with some 3,400 operatives), and froze more than $135 million in assets. Al Qaeda responded by decentralizing its network and thereby adapting to the new economic and political realities.

Decentralization renders the larger organization more resilient against infiltration and attacks as each local cell is much more independent than before the GWOT. If one cell is infiltrated and the leadership is captured or killed, the entire organization is no longer compromised. Likewise, the nature of the new design makes it exponentially harder to track and freeze the organization's financial assets as (ideally) each cell is financially independent of the other.

This resilience on the part of al Qaeda demonstrates that it is a rational actor. It does more than simply react to systemic forces. It strategically adapts and responds according to its own preferences. Rosendorff and Sandler (2010) further contend that terrorists can choose to manipulate the government's response−all in accordance with their own preferences.[38] This is quite different from the many approaches that specify the terrorists themselves as the dependent variable.

For example, in addition to the theories mentioned earlier, Gurr (1970) advances the relative deprivation theory, and Tilly (1978) promotes his theory of

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[38]See also Celestino and Gleditsch (2013) who conclude that nonviolent opposition to authoritarian governments substantially improve the chances for democratic transition while violent resistance increases the likelihood that transition will usher in another dictatorship.

political opportunity. While Gurr investigates the link between economic distribution and political violence, Tilly considers the level of state oppression as the greater factor in determining how much violence will be tolerated. Both theories offer compelling arguments and have spawned large bodies of literature, yet neither views the terrorists themselves as the independent variable.

Likewise, Lichbach (1987) introduced a rational actor model with three propositions: (1) Government repression of nonviolent opposition will result in less nonviolent and more violent opposition. (2) The factor that determines whether an opposition group will increase or decrease all resistance activities (both violent and nonviolent) is the government's accommodation policy toward that particular group. (3) It is not repression per se that increases violent resistance, but inconsistency in government policy toward opposition (whether repressive or accommodating) that increases violent opposition. While offering a rational explanation of sorts, Lichbach essentially sidesteps the human agency of the terrorists altogether by specifying the state as the independent variable.

3.5: Suggested Solutions to Terrorism

With the potential causes of terrorism being so widespread, suggested solutions to terrorism run the gamut as well. Everything from economic aid (Cragin and Chalk 2003) and more open trade (Bremmer 2003), to more military intervention (Howard 2003) and better intelligence (Foxell 2004), to increased diplomacy (Slater 2006), increased political rights and civil liberties (Kurrild-Klitgaard et al. 2006; Wade and Reiter 2007), religious reform (Venkatraman 2007) more stable party

systems (Piazza 2006), and American hegemony (Mallaby 2002) have all been offered as potential solutions to terrorism.

From the few examples just listed, it is evident that the same four-part typology used to categorize potential causes of terrorism (structural, cultural, institutional and rational) can also be used to differentiate proposed solutions to terrorism. But there are other approaches as well.

For example, Miller (2007) employs a two-part typology to frame the ongoing debate over the solution to terrorism as essentially one that pits those who promote a more aggressive response to terrorism (O'Brien 1985; Johnson 1986; Carr 1996; Betts 2002; Bremmer 2003) against those that champion a more diplomatic approach (Koopmans 1993; Charters 1994; Tarrow and Tollefson 1994; Sederberg 1995; Ginges 1997; Heymann 2000). Similarly, Sinai (2005) explores a coercive/conciliatory approach as well and concludes that in the case of a military stalemate, states are often better off employing the latter.

Post (2005b) suggests a four-fold typology that consists of (1) preventing individuals from joining groups that employ terrorism, (2) creating dissention within such groups, (3) blocking popular and financial support to such groups and (4) providing exit opportunities and support for individuals entangled in them.

Another approach is to simply view all responses to terrorism as either counterterrorist or antiterrorist.

3.5.1: Counterterrorism and Antiterrorism

Counterterrorism and antiterrorism measures represent the gamut of possible responses to terrorist violence. Hence, virtually all responses fall under one label or

the other. The point of this discussion is threefold. First, from an academic

perspective, it is fruitful and necessary to fully understand the concepts one employs

(Smith 2005).

Second, it is important to emphasize the fact that, like terrorism,

counterterrorism and antiterrorism are also merely tactics. They are simply means to a

desired end. While tactical means are necessary as part of an overall strategy, unless

they are employed toward a strategic goal, they are irrational and incomprehensible.

Even worse, when used in the absence of strategy, tactical measures can actually help

to erode the legitimacy of the target government.

Finally, this section discusses the similarities between policies that rely solely

on tactical approaches and those that attempt to solve the problem of terrorism by

fighting its causes.

3.5.1.1: Counterterrorism

Defined as an offensive military operation in the United States Army/Marine

Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual (Nagl et al. 2008), counterterrorism largely

entails reactive measures such as freezing the financial assets of known terrorist

organizations, the creation of international treaties and uniform legislation

condemning terrorism, and various efforts to apprehend known terrorists.

The U.S. National Strategy for Combating Terrorism officially declared the

9/11 attacks an act of war against the United States and made both counterterrorism

and antiterrorism national security priorities (Bush 2003). Defense of the homeland

(antiterrorism) was only a partial solution, however. The Bush administration also

insisted that the war on terror be brought to the perpetrators of terror wherever they

may be. The war was to be global. Therefore, America's counterterrorism efforts must be global as well. The official U.S. stance on the war made the very narrow assumption that anyone not allied with the United States was allied with the terrorists. A more effective approach might have been to state that anyone not with the terrorists was with the United States. (Bergen 2011).

The 9/11 attacks also resulted in the passage of United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR), 1368, 1373, and 1377, which called upon all member states to join the U.S. in the fight against the perpetrators and sponsors of terrorism and to pass legislation that criminalized terrorism. Even though the GWOT received considerable UN support, several UN member states viewed U.S. reliance on a military solution as ineffective at best, and at times even disastrous (Sampson and Onuoha 2011).

The main problem with counterterrorism efforts is that there is little uniformity across states when it comes to defining, documenting, and punishing acts of terrorism (Shelton 1998). Another major drawback to counterterrorism is that it is often counter-productive, especially if the government involved is viewed as overly harsh or repressive (Solomon 2015).

3.5.1.1.1: Military versus Legal Approaches to Counterterrorism

Targeted killings are a popular practice employed by Israel. When Israel decided to assassinate Salah Shehada, one of the senior leaders of Hamas in 2002, the bomb that took Shehada's life also claimed the lives of at least 14 civilians including nine children. Hamas vowed revenge with the support of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who came out to protest and mourn the dead (Byman 2006).

Targeted killings are also a popular practice employed by the United States. Unfortunately, while notorious for the collateral damage they inflict, targeted killings are also limited in efficiency and effectiveness, and operations are often based on erroneous intelligence (Cordesman 2006).

One of the supposed weaknesses of al Qaeda was the vulnerability of its leadership. However, Van Raemdonck (2012) points out that of the 581 militants assassinated in 2010, only thirteen were high-value targets. Yet the accompanying civilian casualties and collateral damage provided the terrorists with a powerful political weapon. Still, the United States continues to strongly favor military solutions over diplomacy. But at what cost?

As Howie (2012) maintains, witnesses are the true targets of terror. The same can be said of counterterrorism. The fear of a retaliatory strike was very real to the people of Tokmok. It is not only the victims (or potential victims) of counterterrorist attacks that protest such methods. Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) argues that orthodox approaches to counterterrorism are nothing more than hegemonic attempts to maintain the status quo (Jackson et al. 2011). Even among proponents of orthodox approaches, opposing views prevail. For instance, the Clinton administration framed terrorism as a criminal issue[39] while the George W. Bush administration framed it as a military phenomenon (Bush 2001).

Moreover, the Bush administration's approach caused division even among proponents of a military solution because the concept of a war on terror fought largely

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[39] For instance, the Antiterrorism Act of 1996 reintroduced guilt by association as a precedent in the criminal prosecution of those suspected of engaging in terrorist violence (Cole and Dempsey 2002). However, already in 1996, the case was being presented to replace civilian criminal trials with military tribunals in the prosecution of persons accused of committing acts of terrorism (Crona and Richardson 1996). Following the attacks of 11 September, 2001, the Bush administration adopted this very approach (Kellner 2003).

against illegal combatants was also a political construct—one that sparked considerable controversy concerning its lack of legal legitimacy (Nanda 2009).

As both non-citizens and non-state actors, illegal combatants are neither entitled to protection under the Geneva Convention nor the United States Constitution. This approach afforded the Bush administration the opportunity to circumvent due process of the law; an opportunity that it took full advantage of through questionable detention practices, cruel and inhumane interrogation practices, targeted killings and extraordinary rendition (ICRC 2007; Kreimer 2007).

While it never adopted the Clinton administration's view of terrorism as a criminal issue, the Obama administration has shied away from the military construct as well (Pleming 2009; Engle 2010). And although Obama has made some effort to ensure the humane treatment of terrorist suspects and detainees,[40] They were largely ineffective (U.S. Department of Justice 2009; Corcoran 2010; Huskey 2010).

Yet for all his efforts to avoid the politically-charged term "war on terror," and despite his attempts to bring his administration's policies on terrorism back within the rule of law, one could argue that Obama has also intensified the GWOT. For instance, the Obama administration has increased the use of unarmed aerial drone strikes in spite of significant collateral damage (Mayer 2009; Williams 2010; O'Connell 2011).[41]

While the Obama administration has perpetuated the GWOT, it has yet to fully address the legal controversies associated with it (Thompson 2013). Hence, the

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[40] Executive Order No. 13,491, issued on January 27, 2009, addresses unlawful interrogation practices. Executive Order No. 13,492, also issued on January 27, 2009, addresses inhumane treatment of detainees at Guantanamo.
[41] See also the speech that Harold Honglu Koh, legal advisor of U.S. Department of State, made at the annual meeting of the American Society of International Law (Koh 2010).

division among proponents of a military solution to terrorism continues. Meanwhile, America's foreign policy on terrorism has changed very little since the Bush administration despite Obama's more tolerant tone.

Although Article 51 of the UN Charter provides member states with the right to self-defense, Article 2(4) of the UN Charter prohibits the use of force against the political independence or territorial integrity of another sovereign member state without the existence of a real and imminent threat. Thus, the 2003 US invasion of Iraq was questionable at best from a legal standpoint. From a moral standpoint there was no question, and in 2005, widespread concerns over human rights abuses voiced by UN member states led to the appointment of an independent expert on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism (Sampson and Onuoha 2011).

The GWOT greatly damaged America's international reputation. Even though the Middle East has been the recipient of roughly one half of all US foreign aid, a July 2011 Zogby poll reveals that popular opinion toward America in the Middle East is considerably more negative than in other developing areas receiving far less US assistance (Stockman 2011). Given America's unpopularity, Beg (2010) argues that the key to defeating terrorism lays neither with superior military strategy nor usable intelligence data. Rather, success will be obtained by preventing the recruitment of future *jihadists*. Pointing to suicide training centers for children in South Waziristan and factories for improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and suicide jackets in Southern Punjab, Beg insists that the only way to diminish recruitment is to directly challenge radical religious ideology.

Silke (2005) points to U.S. military retaliation against Libya in 1986, extra-legal assassinations in South Africa and Israel, and countless cases of internment

without a trial such as in Northern Ireland to bolster his case that military tactics often do more to radicalize local populations than they achieve in countering terrorism.

One need only consider how the attacks on 9/11; 11 March, 2004 and 7 July, 2005 affected the West. As an example, Murphy et. al. (2004) point out that 9/11 constituted a cultural upheaval for most Americans. This cultural upheaval led to a change in values, which in turn led to a change in attitudes and finally a change in behavior. Among other noticeable changes in behavior (reduced travel, increased attendance at religious services, and increased patriotism), Americans as a whole also demanded retaliation. If the 9/11 attacks radicalized a population as large and heterogeneous as the United States, it is reasonable to expect repeated military attacks against a much more conservative and homogenous population to produce a similar radicalizing effect.

The point to be made here is that military solutions alone are not working (Solomon 2015). Lessons from both Vietnam and Iraq suggest that the only way to militarily defeat non-state enemies is to clear an area and hold it, perhaps indefinitely (Cordesman 2006). But this approach cannot work against terrorism. It is not enough to simply vanquish terrorist groups from a particular region. Even if the United States were willing and able to dedicate troops to the numerous locations where terrorists cells were uprooted with the sole mission of preventing their return, any useful solution to terrorism has to also address the perception that terrorism provides a viable option or new terrorist groups will simply spring up in their place (Gunaratna and Iqbal 2012).

According to the 2004 Zogby International-Sadat Chair poll, popular support for clerics in politics is on the rise, but largely only as an alternative to corrupt, puppet-regimes propped up by the West (Gause 2005).

Daniel Byman (2010) suggests that the United States consider an alternative to military tactics. He points to America's failed attempts at isolating and weakening Hamas. The solution, according to Byman, is direct engagement.

Braniff and Moghadam (2011) agree with Byman (2010). They point to the fact that the popular uprisings in Yemen, Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain and Syria were largely non-violent. These protests not only demonstrate the power of the Arab Street, but also that non-violent approaches are a popular and viable alternative to the violence advocated by al Qaeda and other groups. Braniff and Moghadam also argue that Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution has taught us that popular uprisings can succeed where top-down regime change has failed.[42]

However, Braniff and Moghadam also caution us regarding al Qaeda's post 9/11 success in continuing to inspire global *jihadist* resistance against American hegemony despite the GWOT and the subsequent loss of Osama bin Laden and other key leaders. They remind us that al Qaeda has adapted and evolved and will continue to pose a threat to the West. Braniff and Moghadam's advice is justified by the fact that Islamism appears to be growing more popular in many Arab Spring states.

Public opinion among US Muslims also seems to align with this assessment. A 2007 Pew poll of US Muslims reveals that less than half of all respondents supported the GWOT, but even fewer (less than ten percent) supported violence such as suicide bombings in the name of Islam (McCauley and Scheckter 2011).

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[42] The Jasmine Revolution began when a young, unemployed Tunisian man protested the dire economic conditions in the country by setting himself on fire in front of a government building on December 17, 2010. Others quickly joined in protest, and within a month, President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali was forced to step down after 23 years of dictatorship. El-Khawas (2012) states that the Jasmine Revolution, which sparked the Arab Spring, was truly a popular revolution, with no leader and no political, ideological or religious aims.

Likewise, Pargeter (2008) examines the rise of radical Islamism in Europe and notes that groups such as the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and many others only moved to Europe after they were forced out of their own countries. Therefore, Pargeter concludes that while there may be increasing support for *jihadist* strategies among Muslims in Europe, this support in no way constitutes a coherent, unified movement against the West. It is rather the result of a number of individual nationalist militant groups, with their own unique set of grievances against their home state, continuing to press their demands from exile.

Pargeter's findings, together with the data collected by the 2004 Zogby poll and the 2007 Pew poll, suggest that a moderate solution would be favored by the popular majority in both the Muslim world and the West.

Concerning the effectiveness of military approaches, Jones and Libicki (2008) examined 648 terrorist organizations to determine the most common ways that such groups end. They found that 43 percent of the 648 terrorist groups examined ended by joining the political process, 10 percent ended because they achieved their strategic goal(s), and only 7 percent ended because of military force exerted against them.

Furthermore, Jones and Libicki found that religious terrorist groups share a different experience. While 62 percent of all terrorist groups have ended since 1968, only 32 percent of religious terrorist groups have ended. As Neumann and Smith speculate (2005), religious groups rarely achieve their strategic goal(s), and no religious terrorist group that has ended since 1968 achieved its stated goals.

If the recent Arab Spring has taught us anything, it is the lesson that public perception is relevant to policy considerations and that it can be a powerful force for change. As Byman (2010) argues, by adopting a policy of direct engagement, the United States can help to shape both the trajectory and outcome of that change.

The solution is not to pursue a policy of reactive counterterrorism efforts detached from an overall strategy. Rather, a successful solution must take the enemy's strategic goals into consideration and apply the resources at our disposal in such a way as to prevent the enemy from achieving those goals. In short, there is no one universally accepted counterterrorism policy or approach. Each situation must be analyzed and responded to individually (Wilkinson 2014).

3.5.1.1.2: Other Approaches to Counterterrorism

The previous section largely discussed American approaches to counterterrorism which tend to be employed mostly against foreign targets (although there is a domestic aspect to it as well). The opposite is true in Europe, where most counterterrorism policies were originally targeted at domestic terrorism. The Europeans treated terrorism as a criminal offence (Anderson et al, 1995) while also attempting to uncover its root causes (Bjørgo 2004).[43]

However, rising security concerns over migration began pushing issues of transnational terrorism to the front burner (Joffé 2008). The pot boiled over in 2005, when the London attacks demonstrated that Islamic extremism was no longer just an external threat. It was now also a domestic issue. This realization caused a shift in counterterrorism policy from a focus on root causes to an emphasis on deradicalization (Coolsaet 2010). Of course, others such as Veldhuis and Staun (2009) argue that radicalization *is* a root cause of terrorism.

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[43] For clarification (in light of the recent referendum), for the purposes of this thesis, the United Kingdom is included in discussions of Europe.

A natural outcome of this approach includes managing extremism. Prince (2016) defines extremism as not just possessing hostile beliefs towards members of specific groups (and intolerance for all who do not share those beliefs), but also a willingness to act upon those beliefs. Here too, perception of the other plays a vital role in understanding the motivation behind acts of violence.

Blakemore (2016) suggests that while lone-wolf attacks are a reality to contend with, organized extremist groups constitute the lion's share of threat to society. Indeed, Prince's definition of extremism paints an accurate likeness of groups such as al Shabaab and Boko Haram. The *takfiri* doctrine encourages hostility toward certain groups (Shia, Yazidis, Sufis, etc.) and intolerance of anyone who does not agree.

Awan (2016) rightfully cautions, however, that there are many types of extremists from all different cultures, classes and religions (Islamic, far left, far right and digital populist). Fixating on Islamic extremism alone does everyone an injustice, not just Muslims (Heck 2007).

Following the London and Madrid attacks, a number of European scholars also began to argue that counterterrorism efforts must incorporate a wide range of strategies that first take the individual aims and ambitions of each group into consideration (Neumann 2006; Pargeter 2006; Vidino 2006; Rosenthal 2007, Wuchte and Knani 2013).

Such an approach necessarily involves community-level involvement. For instance, Tucker (2016) suggests a community-led "neighborhood policing" approach whenever possible as it is more sensitive to the local population than the more common "community policing" approach (p. 35). The basic difference between the two is geographic. Neighborhood policing recognizes that there can be a number of

diverse neighborhoods within any community, and it seeks to train and appoint officers that are familiar with and sensitive to the specific needs of each neighborhood who will also be more aware of suspicious activity. The intended result is more effective policing with sensitivity to sub-groups within a community and fewer incidents of police brutality.

One of the downsides to such an approach is that actual geographic borders rarely coincide with virtual borders, making neighborhood policing less efficient and more reliant on more formal international agencies such as Europol and Eurojust. Den Boer et al. (2008) caution, however, that the more horizontal arrangements such as local neighborhood policing may in fact undermine the efficacy of established vertical international agencies.

Whether through local arrangements or through international organizations, there seems to be broad agreement that managing extremism is an integral component of effective counterterrorism (Awan 2016, Blakemore 2016, Prince 2016).

The European approach to counterterrorism has been much more comprehensive in scope than the American approach. Other considerations include the strength and limitations of national legislation on issues such as hate crimes (Bleich 2011), how to deal with digital communities (Ball and Webster 2003), and the age-old challenge of balancing civil liberty with national security (De Hert 2005).

3.5.1.2: Antiterrorism

Antiterrorism can be thought of as defensive or preventative attempts to decrease a society's vulnerability to terrorism, such as hardening likely targets and increasing airport security. The problem with antiterrorism measures is that they are

often costly, disruptive to daily routine, and largely inconsequential as terrorists can simply choose alternative targets. The current anti-terrorism policy has cost the United States billions with very little measurable results (McGovern 2011).

Antiterrorism often violates human rights as well. For example, one standard US anti-terrorism measure entails checking all passengers traveling within the United States and US territories against terrorist watch lists. As of 2001, the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requires all airlines to transmit Passenger Name Record (PNR) data on all passengers aboard their aircraft before entering the United States. DHS has also issued no-fly orders and detained thousands of innocent people. Even the late Senator Ted Kennedy and singer/songwriter Cat Stevens were both detained. The EU has claimed that the policy violates data privacy rights.

In addition to the conflict DHS has encountered with the EU, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has filed a class action law suit on behalf of US citizens believed to have been wrongfully detained by DHS based on PNR data (Brouwer 2009; Byrne 2012).

US anti-terrorism measures also include the blacklisting of state sponsors of terrorism such as Sudan, Syria, Cuba, and Iran. Nigeria was also added to the blacklist after the failed Christmas Day bombing on Northwest Airlines Flight 253, when a Nigerian citizen, Umar Farouk Abdalmutallah, attempted to detonate a small explosive device he had hidden in his underwear. Abdalmutallah was a member of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) based in Yemen (Harnicsh and Zimmerman 2010).

Nigeria was later removed from the blacklist upon its agreement to publicly condemn all forms of terrorism, pass legislation aimed at countering terrorism,

improve its security at Nigerian airports, and place air marshals on board aircraft destined for the United States (Sampson and Onuoha 2011).

Of course, blacklisting state sponsors of terrorism can only do so much, especially considering the dramatic decline in state-sponsored terrorism following the collapse of the Soviet Union. What is needed is an effective deterrent for non-state actors, who have more than compensated for the decline in state-sponsored terrorism with fewer, but more lethal, attacks.

While "terrorist" attacks took 4,798 lives in the ten years between 1970 and 1979, that number rose to 51,797 lives between 1990 and 1996 demonstrating a stark increase in the number of fatalities despite a decreasing number of attacks (Stern 2000a).[44]

In accordance with this general trend, transnational terrorism has also become less frequent but more lethal. There were 5,431 transnational terrorist attacks between 1980 and 1989 resulting in 4,684 deaths. And while the number of transnational terrorist attacks between 1990 and 1999 dropped to 3,824, the number of resulting deaths was 2,468 (an average of 1.5 deaths per incident, up from 1.2 in the 1980s), making the attacks fewer in number yet more lethal (Pillar 2001).

While terrorist attacks decreased overall in the 1990s as compared to previous decades, closer examination of the distribution of attacks reveals that this trend was reversing. There were 19% fewer terrorist incidents between 1990 and 1994 than there were between 1995 and 1999. Yet the attacks in the second period produced more than double the amount of casualties than the first (Enders and Sandler 2000).

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[44] Of course, how one defines terrorism is a critical issue when considering these figures.

So while the increase in incidents was under 20%, the casualties more than doubled making the attacks in the second period far more lethal.

The next decade saw a substantial increase in terrorist incidents. Suicide terrorism also increased substantially with eighty percent of all suicide attacks since 1968 occurring after September 11, 2001. The year 2004 saw more suicide attacks than any year previous, and the number continued to grow in 2005 with more than one suicide attack per day on average in Iraq alone (Desouza and Hensgen 2007).

The trend continued into 2006. The U.S. State Department issued a report in May 2007 revealing that terrorist attacks in 2006 increased by more than 25% over 2005, with fatalities increasing some 40 percent (U.S. Department of State 2006, Whitelaw 2007). Islamist web sites also increased from less than 20 in 2001 to over 3,000 in 2006 (Atran 2006).

Dugan and Chenoweth (2012) examine the situation in Israel. They suggest that rather than attempting to deter terrorists by raising the cost of engaging in terrorism through traditional counterterrorism and antiterrorism measures, policymakers should increase the benefits of not engaging in terrorism. They point out that in both the First and Second Intifada, conciliatory measures led to an overall decrease in terrorist attacks. Furthermore, the authors contend that repressive measures have never led to decreased attacks in Israel. Quite the contrary, they often lead to an increase in terrorist activity. Hamas and Hezbollah secured the loyalty of many in the Palestinian Territories and Lebanon respectively by providing humanitarian services (Malka 2007; Flanigan and Abdel-Samad 2009). In the same respect, Dugan and Chenowith reason that Israel can diminish support for Hamas and Hezbollah by offering services that improve the status quo for Palestinians and Lebanese citizens.

Robert and Araj (2006) make a similar argument, asserting that acts of suicide terrorism against Israel are largely acts of retaliation against real or perceived injustice. This finding is supported globally as well by Piazza and Walsh (2009) who conclude that repressive regimes committing human rights violations experience higher incidents of terrorism than regimes that do not.

Clearly, current antiterrorism and counterterrorism strategies have failed to prevent the death toll due to terrorism from increasing more than tenfold every two decades. Even within the EU, criticism abounds regarding the ineffectiveness of existing measures (e.g. Bamford 2004; AI 2010).

The attacks of 11 September, 2011 (9/11) posed a three-fold challenge to the EU for which it was ill-prepared. The EU suddenly had to prove itself a credible partner in the military and political war on terror, increase internal security and defend its external borders as well (Den Boer and Monar 2002).

Den Boer (2003, p.1) argues that the 9/11 attacks served as a pretext for an "unprecedented wave of policy interventions within the European Union," passed in haste with little or no consideration of human rights.

Bossong (2008) adds that the EU's action plan for combatting terrorism, hastily pushed through by integration-minded policy entrepreneurs, ignores the more important strategic dimension and is therefore flawed. One such dimension is financing.

Napoleoni (2006) insists that a principal reason the West is losing the war on terror is due to a lack of a global policy to prevent terrorist financing. Napoleoni reminds us that, following 9/11, some $200 billion in Saudi funds were transferred out of the Unites States, much of it being reinvested in the EU where she contends that border and financial controls are still too lenient to prevent the financing of terrorism.

The bottom line is that without attention to broader strategic considerations, even the more comprehensive European approach to combatting terrorism is flawed. Having considered the limitations of the more customary approaches to counterterrorism and antiterrorism, I will now explore the danger of relying solely on tactical counterterrorism and antiterrorism as a response to strategic terrorism.

3.5:2 Limitations of Tactical Counterterrorism and Antiterrorism

What does it mean to act strategically in our efforts to prevent terrorist violence? To begin with, one has to distinguish between means and ends. What is the opponent's goal, and what means are they employing to achieve that goal? For example, Hoffman (2009) insists that a crucial step in reducing terrorist violence is to break the cycle of terrorist recruitment. The long-term goal in this case is to reduce terrorist violence. The strategy is to break the cycle of recruitment. Therefore, the tactical use of the means at one's disposal should be employed to logically produce this effect. In order to break the cycle of recruitment, the status quo has to be more appealing to potential recruits than a violent alternative (Clarke 2009). However, in too many instances, the tactical use of violence has not been used in service to a desired strategic goal at all.

In all fairness, the balance between maintaining order and security on the one hand, and acting strategically on the other, is difficult to achieve. Terror attacks are intended to provoke an overreaction on the part of the target state. Who is not both shocked and angry when they see reports of attacks against a children's park on a major religious holiday? The impetus to react is very strong. However, to simply react without the guidance of strategy is a mistake.

This is not to suggest that society simply accepts acts of terrorism or that governments never employ military force against those who engage in terrorist violence. Only that an understanding of each actor's strategic horizon is critical (Wuchte and Knani 2013). Which means that any effective counterterrorism or antiterrorism policy requires more than a short-sighted fixation on the tactic of violence itself (Bryden 2006).

In northeastern Nigeria, for example, more than 650,000 people remain internally displaced and thousands more have been brutally murdered (Internal Displacement Monitoring Center 2015). Boko Haram is only partially to blame for these victims, however. Nigerian security forces and the state-led Joint Military Task Force (JTF) are equally culpable due to their policy of indiscriminately targeting civilians and entire villages suspected of harboring Boko Haram members and supporters (Jarvis 2009). In fact, Solomon (2015, p. 225) states that "state violence in the form of counter-terrorism has been indistinguishable from Boko Haram terrorism."

One of Boko Haram's key strategic goals is to rid Nigeria of its corrupt government officials. However, rather than attempting to counter Boko Haram's anti-government message, Nigerian security forces and the JTF are instead confirming it by overreacting to the group's tactical use of violence and responding with brute military force. Atrocities such as these only serve to exacerbate the violence. They also increase popular support for Boko Haram by demonstrating to the average Nigerian (and to the world) just how corrupt and inhumane the Nigerian government can be (Baiyewu 2014).

The Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in 2006 is another classic example. Both Somali and Ethiopian military forces systematically attacked the homes of al Shabaab

members and supporters, killing their families and destroying their property. Rather than addressing one of the key strategic goals of the group (the elimination of foreign military intervention in Somalia), this particular counterterrorism measure was focused solely on al Shabaab's tactical use of violence and ultimately served to increase the level of terrorist violence in Somalia by reinforcing the public perception that Somalia needed to be defended against the military incursion of Ethiopia. The sympathy this tactic generated on behalf of al Shabaab members and their families translated into massive support for the movement in the form of sympathy, funds, food, clothing and recruits. It also reinforced the perception among many Somalis that the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was illegitimate and needed to be overthrown (Marchal 2009).

When the United States (U.S.), Kenya, Uganda and others joined the fight against al Shabaab, they only served to escalate the violence. It was not long before the group began to retaliate against some of the very governments that supported counter-terrorism efforts against it. In 2010, al Shabaab carried out twin suicide attacks in Uganda, killing 78 people in Kampala and injuring 89 others while they watched the World Cup. This was the deadliest military assault in sub-Saharan Africa since 1998, when al-Qaida bombed the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam (Holzer 2010). Al Shabaab later retaliated against Kenya in the famed Westgate Shopping Mall attack in September 2013 and again with the slaughter of 147 university students in Garissa on April 2, 2015.

Boko Haram also engaged in a series of cross-border attacks against Chad in early 2015 in retaliation for its participation in a multinational counterterrorism effort against the group (International Crisis Group 2014; Blanchard 2015). Clearly, an

understanding of these two groups' strategic goals would have gone a long way in creating a more effective counterstrategy.

There are far too many other examples of ineffective counterterrorism measures gone awry to mention here. As for antiterrorism measures, simply hardening an asset in no way deters an act of terrorism because it does not address the underlying motivation behind the decision to resort to violence in the first place. Not to mention, another target can always be chosen as a suitable replacement.

The point that these examples are intended to make is simply that strategic theory offers policy makers and terrorism scholars a more comprehensive understanding of an actor's decision to employ tactical violence in the first place. And though this is not the primary task of the strategic theorist (Smith 1991), it is the primary task of most policy makers and terrorism scholars. Unfortunately, most policy makers and terrorism scholars continue to rely solely on either widespread systemic explanations of terrorism or lower-level explanations- neither of which produce effective policy when consulted in isolation.

3.6: Conclusion

This chapter addresses the myriad of challenges faced by academics and policymakers when attempting to define terrorism, categorize it, and identify it causes. It concludes that given the vast number of variables involved, and the systemic nature of structural, cultural and institutional causes of terrorism, an additional explanation is desirable.

However, rational explanations are also problematic. Most suggest a type of oppression, grievance or political trigger that creates the impetus for terrorism, but

they do not explain why only a small fraction of the populous affected resort to acts of terrorism. Even several roots and triggers typologies, such as Crenshaw's and others, while specifying elite disaffection as a primary factor, do not always explain why violence is chosen as the means to a desired end rather than some other course of action. Finally, nearly all rational explanations specify the terrorist as the dependent variable, and therefore essentially isolate the cause within the actions of the regime or some other explanation.

Having thus far discussed both the limitations of systemic and lower levels of analysis as well as the strengths of the strategic approach as justification for employing the strategic terrorism framework, I will proceed with the case studies. Join me as I turn your attention to a brief history of Somalia.

Chapter Four: Somalia
The Teeth of a Lion

"A cat in her house has the teeth of a lion…"

-Somali Proverb

4.1: Introduction

If one were to examine the history of Muslim extremist ideology from the

Prophet Mohammad and the Arab conquests to Abdullah Azzam and Ayman al-

Zawahiri and beyond, three categories (or varying degrees) of extremist ideology

would emerge again and again. These three ideologies are *Islamist*, *jihadist* and

takfiri. Unfortunately, space does not allow for such an examination. For our purposes

here, please allow the brief summary below to suffice.

As the Arab conquests spread Islam further west, these ideologies continued to

influence the generations that followed. By the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the

rise of the Muslim Brotherhood, the evolution of these ideas came full circle as

proponents faced persecution and sought asylum in Saudi Arabia. Largely because of

the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, these same ideologies were dispersed from the Arab

peninsula a second time by groups such as al Qaeda, adopted by yet another

generation and passed on to the next.

To the vast majority of Muslims, the word *jihadist* signifies the struggle to be

a good Muslim (Heck 2004; Bonner 2008).[45] However, in the mainstream media,

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[45] For a discussion of the concept of Islamism, see (Mozaffari 2007).

jihadist is synonymous with terrorist. While sensitive to this conundrum, I employ the term more specifically (see below).

Pre-Islamic Arabs observed a basic code of conduct in war: don't kill women, children, the aged or the wounded. Muslim Arabs inherited this practice, and it was established as part of Muslim law (Khadduri 1955). It is believed that in the days of the prophet Mohammad, *jihad* was a very comprehensive term, requiring the submission of all one's resources- both physical and spiritual- to Allah. Therefore, *jihad* encompassed all aspects of life, including military.

The multiple applications of *jihad* were very practical in the time of Mohammad. For instance, the early Muslims were instructed to reject the idolatry and polytheism of the pre-Islamic Arabs, and thus struggle for inner spiritual growth and revelation. When Mohammad and his followers fled to Madinah, they were called upon to sacrifice their homes and possessions and to start over in the name of Islam. Military *jihad* was defensive, as the battles of Badr (624 CE) and Uhud (625) demonstrate. But military *jihad* was also offensive, as when Mohammad attacked Mecca in 630 CE.

As the Muslim empire began to coalesce and power was consolidated, the concept of *jihad* became a matter of state policy, justifying both defensive war and conquest. During times of division when power was contended, *jihad* was used to claim political legitimacy over one's opponents (Bassiouni 2007).

Various scholars interpreted *jihad* differently to deal with different practical realities. For instance, Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Rushd, better known as Averroes, stressed the peaceful and spiritual applications of *jihad*, while Ibn Taymiyyah emphasized its role in war (Bassiouni 2007; MacEvitt and Sizgorich 2011). In contemporary times, its true nature has been widely debated as definitions

vary from the sensational to the more benign (Firestone 1999; Heck 2004; Bonner 2008).

The term itself is derived from the Arabic *jahada*, a verb which literally means to struggle or to exert (Bassiouni 2007). The more moderate interpretation of *jihad*, of course, refers to either (1) the individual spiritual struggle against sin, or (2) the collective battle against an enemy aggressor. However, according to this interpretation, *jihad* must be sanctioned by authority and conducted with restraint (Zawati 2001). The moderate interpretation is based on a *hadith* (account) of the Prophet Muhammad where he is quoted as saying, "self-exertion in peaceful and personal compliance with the dictates of Islam (constitutes) the major or superior *jihad"* and the 'best form of *jihad* is to speak the truth in the face of an oppressive ruler' (quoted in Ali and Rehman 2005, p. 10).

It is not uncommon today to hear reporters and politicians use the terms '*Islamist*' and '*jihadist*' synonymously. Although it may seem pedantic, it is important to differentiate between the two. The aim of the first group is to reform both government and society in accordance with *sharia* (Islamic law) by operating within the political process (Gerges 2005). This goal sets them apart from moderate everyday Muslims who do not necessarily wish to live under *sharia*.

We can correctly date the beginning of Islamist ideology to the 1920s, when the Ottoman Empire was dismembered after World War One. This event was of supreme significance to *Sunni* Muslims everywhere because the Ottoman Empire was the last *caliphate* (Islamic empire), and the Sultan was the *caliph* (deputy of God). And even though the *caliphate* had lost much of its actual power and influence over the centuries, for *Sunni* Muslims, the *caliphate* retained symbolic importance because most believed that there could not be a valid *ummah* (Muslim community) without a

caliph to lead it. However, when Ataturk founded the secular state of Turkey, he abolished the office of the *caliph*.

Conservative *Sunnis* met together at a number of conferences to try and revive the *caliph*, but of course, there was widespread disagreement on who would assume the office. This attempt to bring Islam back into the state marks what many scholars refer to as the beginning of political Islam or Islamism. Islamists such as Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949) and those who followed want to see the re-establishment of the *caliph* and the re-institution of *sharia*. Most are non-violent. Those that are violent are typically referred to as *jihadists*. Therefore, many scholars refer to *jihadists* as a subset of the Islamist population. Technically, this classification is true as both groups desire the reinstitution of *sharia*. However, as we will soon see, *jihadists* have been around much, much longer.

Jihadists, reject man-made laws and democracy as deceptions. In fact, they reject the entire Westphalian nation-state system and all international political institutions (except the *caliphate*), arguing that these are merely extensions of Western imperialism. Therefore, *jihadists* legitimize violence as the only means to re-establishing the *caliphate* and defending the *ummah* (Muslim community). This is what sets *jihadists* apart from *Islamists*, and most are staunchly opposed to their Islamist counterparts (Lahoud 2010b). While it is not entirely incorrect to classify *jihadists* as a violent subgroup within the *Islamist* fold as both desire the reinstitution of *sharia*, it is incorrect to assume that both date their beginnings back to the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The origins of *jihadist* ideology go back much further.

Beyond the classification of Islamist and *jihadist*, it is possible to make another important distinction between *jihadist* and *takfiri* groups. While *jihadist* groups maintain that violence against the apostate regime is necessary for instituting

sharia, *takfiri* groups do not distinguish between the government and the governed (Podeh 1996). In their estimation, *shirk* (idolatry) is *shirk*, and it does not matter who you are. These groups justify their actions upon the *takfiri* doctrine which basically argues that anyone who does not agree with a particular interpretation of the faith should be excommunicated and killed. The doctrine dates back to the *Kharajites* (outsiders) in the seventh century who opposed the Ummayad dynasty, claiming that they were not true Muslims (Lahoud, 2010a; MacEvitt and Sizgorich 2011).

The doctrine has since been invoked by Ibn Taymiyyah, Mohammad al-Wahhab, Sayyid Qutb and more recently it resurfaced in Egypt in the 1960's with an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, *Takfir wal-Hijira* (Excommunication and Exodus).[46] The group's followers spread the doctrine to Peshawar in the late 1980s and early 1990s where it influenced a number of *jihadists* including Zarqawi. Today, the most notorious adherent of the *takfiri* doctrine is Baghdadi's Islamic State, which has inspired literally dozens of other groups to follow its example.

Therefore, I suggest a threefold typology consisting of *Islamist*, *jihadist* and *takfiri* groups. All wish to establish *sharia*. While *Islamists* are willing to contest in democratic elections, *jihadist* reject democracy as an usurpation of the sovereignty of Allah and therefore are willing to employ violence to impose *sharia. Jihadist* organizations such as al Qaeda, however, following al-Banna's more conciliatory bottom-up approach, believe that the *ummah* (Muslim community) should be taught the true way of Islam from the *ulama* (Muslim scholars). *Takfiri* groups such as

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[46] Gilles Kepel (2006) argues that Qutb's ideas should be understood as a reaction to the repression of the Nasser regime, and therefore, only relevant to a specific time and place (Egypt in the 1950s). Michael Chertoff (2008) credits modern-day *jihadist* theory to Western proponents of communism and fascism. Chertoff discusses four indicators linking modern *jihad* with twentieth century totalitarian regimes: (1) their common rhetoric, (2) the shared policy of indiscriminate killing, (3) their mutual celebration of death and (4) the comparable elevation of ideology above the rule of law.

Islamic State, following Qutb's authoritarian top-down approach, believe that apostate Muslims should be killed, not as a means to an end but as an end in itself (Husain 1995; Zollner 2007).

Islamists are Muslims that want to re-establish the caliphate and institute *sharia.* While Islamists are committed to replacing the current international order with a world-wide *caliphate*, they are willing to do so non-violently via political parties and contesting in democratic elections (Ashour 2009; McCants 2011).

While there is not space for a detailed discussion of the concept here, for the purposes of this thesis, *jihadists* are *Islamists* that reject the democratic process as a violation of *sharia* (Phares 2007; Ali and Stuart 2014). Reasoning that man-made law has usurped Allah's rightful position as *al Malik* (the Absolute Ruler), *jihadists* bypass the democratic process and seek to re-establish the caliphate via violence (Turner 2012; McCants 2015).

Finally, *takfiri* groups adhere to the *takfiri* doctrine- a radical *Sunni* interpretation allowing for the accusation of a fellow Muslim of major unbelief which is punishable by death (Stanley 2005; Crooke 2015). The *takfiri* doctrine explains much of the current violence against Muslims that otherwise appears to be senseless and random.

While not every group fits into this typology perfectly, it serves as a methodological starting point from which we can discern an actor's strategy. We will see this very important distinction again and again, for example, from the Islamist approach advocated by the more moderate faction of the Muslim Brotherhood to the *jihadist* agenda outlined by al Qaeda, and finally the *takfiri* doctrine embraced by the Islamic State.

Without the space to go into a detailed examination of al Qaeda and Islamic State, it is possible to conclude that since al Qaeda has both denounced the democratic process and has largely relied upon violence to coerce target governments to change their policies, it is a *jihadist* organization that has employed strategic terrorism.[47] It is also possible to conclude that since Islamic State has adopted the *takfiri* doctrine but has not attempted to coerce target governments to change their policies (rather it has largely acted as a belligerent state itself), it is a *takfiri* group that has not employed strategic terrorism.

Given that al Shabaab has pledged *bay'ah* to al Qaeda under the leadership of Godane, and then again under Godane's successor, Abu Ubaidah, it is important to assess the nature of this alliance and whether it has any impact on the group's strategic objectives. In Chapter Five, I will identify al Shabaab's theoretical underpinnings, trace any influences the group may have adopted from its predecessors and explore the practical implications of these influences on the group's strategic goals and tactical use of violence. I will also employ this information to assess the relationship between al Shabaab and al Qaeda- whether it is based on ideology or something else. However, in this chapter I will focus on the more immediate context.

Because the strategic goals of al Shabaab cannot be fully understood without a minimal knowledge of the region's colonial and modern history, this chapter begins

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[47] Some may take issue with my designation of al Qaeda as a *jihadist* group rather than a *takfiri* group. For example, Quiggin (2010) points out that al Qaeda regularly makes use of the *takfiri* doctrine to discredit its opponents. However, al Qaeda, while employing violence to manipulate concessions from target governments, does not endorse the killing of apostate Muslims as an end in itself as we see with *takfiri* groups such as Islamic State, al Shabaab and Boko Haram. Abdullah Azzam was a staunch opponent of the *takfiri* doctrine. He was so opposed that he issued a *fatwa* against the doctrine claiming that the killing of fellow Muslims and civilians is against Islam. Yet, Azzam clearly supported the use of violence to coerce political concessions from target governments to the ultimate end of regaining lost Muslim territory and establishing *sharia* (Kepel 2004; Wright 2007).

by discussing the history of Somalia and exploring how the Somali population became so fragmented. Second, I examine the various groups that have appeared in Somalia since independence and analyze their strategic objectives in an effort to identify any continuity between them.

4.2: History

Today, there are six political entities in the region of the Horn of Africa with substantial Somali populations. The first is the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS). The second is Puntland, an autonomous state which officially recognizes the authority of the FGS but establishes its own policy. The third is Somaliland, an autonomous region of Somalia which has enjoyed relative peace and stable governance and seeks independence. The fourth is the Republic of Djibouti**.** The fifth is the Somali National Regional State, one of the eight regions of Ethiopia, and the sixth is the Northeastern Province of Kenya (Møller 2009).

While all Somalis are derived from one ancestral tribe, Somalia is further divided into clans and sub-clans. There are four main clan families. Lewis (1980) lists them as the Hawiye, Darood, Dir and Isaaq while Menkhaus (2000a) lists them as the Daarood, Hawiye, DigleMilifle and Dir.

Gundel (2009, p.11) elaborates on the discrepancy by clarifying that the "perceived" majority clans are "the Darood, Hawiye, Dir, and – depending on one's perspective – the Isaaq." These three (otherwise known as the "noble clans") comprise the nomadic-pastoralist clans that speak Af-Maxaa-tiri which became the official language of Somalia following independence. The fourth large group is the

Digil-Mirifle (also called the Rahanweyn) which are mainly farmers who live in Southern Somalia and speak AfMaay-tiri.

Beyond these four main clans, there are a multitude of various sub-clans and diya-paying groups[48] that, heretofore, have remained stubbornly independent of one another (Grossman 2007). Uniting the Somali peoples of the region has been the primary goal of several groups, some of which bear the label, "terrorist."

The area that now comprises Somalia and Ethiopia has been plagued with expansionist conflict for centuries. The two powers vied for control of the borderlands between them while outside powers also wrestled for influence and resources. Religious differences played a role in the fighting as well. While the Somali territories were largely controlled by *emirs* and Islamic elites, the predecessor of modern-day Ethiopia was the Abyssinian Christian Empire.

4.2.1: Pre-colonial History

For centuries leading up to the fifteenth century, peace prevailed in the region between Muslims and Christian Abyssinia. Tradition attributes this peace to the gratitude of the Prophet Muhammad who blessed the Abyssinians for their hospitality and protection of his early followers who fled persecution in Mecca at the hands of his own tribesmen, the Quraysh. Mohammad forbade his followers from waging *jihad*

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[48]Diya-paying groups are most popularly known as blood compensation pacts in which groups ranging from a few hundred to a thousand or more enter into contract to avenge the death of a member or his loved ones. However, Diya groups are also local insurance arrangements that usually exist at the village level or lower. Members of diya groups provide support for each other in times of drought, famine or other such crises. Members also protect one another's property from other diya groups via the threat of retaliation from the entire group. (see for example, Besteman 1996; Menkhaus 2000b; Coyne 2006; Hagmann 2007).

against the Ethiopian emperor and his people. Therefore, while Muslim conquest ensued against the empires of Persia and Byzantium, the Muslim forces lived in peace with Christian Ethiopia for nearly a millennium (Budge 2014).

Friendly relations began to deteriorate when Emperor Yeshaq (1414-29) declared Muslims as "enemies of the Lord" and launched sporadic attacks against vulnerable Muslim settlements. However, a state of war erupted when Yeshaq's armies invaded the sultanate of Ifat in 1415, killed King Sa'ad al-Din and demanded tribute. Yeshaq also commissioned a hymn to commemorate his victory in which the word "Somali" first appears in written history (Trimingham 1952).

By the sixteenth century, the Muslim/Christian divide was already well-pronounced. The Abyssinian- Adal War (1529-1543) cemented the animosity that would persist unto the present day. With the aid of the Ottomans, the Somali *imam*, Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi (also known as Ahmed Guray in Somali which means "Ahmed the left-handed"), captured nearly three quarters of the Abyssinian Kingdom in what came to be known as the "Conquest of Abyssinia." Al-Ghazi might well have taken the entire kingdom had the Portuguese not intervened (Desplat 2005; Solomon 2015).

4.2.2: Colonial History

Once Britain established colonial ties with India, it sought the most economic ocean route available to transport raw materials and goods. The Suez Canal, which opened in 1869, allowed Britain to significantly reduce the distance between India and Britain by traveling via the Red Sea rather than around Africa. In 1884, the Berlin Conference triggered the infamous "scramble for Africa" in which Britain and other

European states laid claim to the continent. Somalia was colonized by four imperial

powers: Ethiopia, Great Britain, France and Italy. Ethiopia claimed the Ogaden

region, Great Britain carved out the area that became the protectorate of British

Somaliland, Italy occupied the South (Italian Somaliland) and France colonized the

region that is now Djibouti. The result was disunity, division and endless war (Martin

2006).

By the late nineteenth century, the British and Italians had gained commercial

rights through a series of trade agreements and established the respective protectorates

of British and Italian Somaliland (Cassanelli 1982). Both powers viewed the

expanding Ethiopian Empire as a direct threat to their own territorial claims. The

Ethiopian victory over the Italians at Adwa in 1896 further confirmed their fears. For

the next thirty years or so, localized border conflicts sprung up here and there between

both Ethiopia and the colonial powers and among the colonial powers themselves.

One such clash led to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and the annexation of the

Ethiopian Empire in 1935-36 (Barnes, 2007).

Somali resistance against foreign incursions was also fierce. One of the more

successful resistance movements of the early twentieth century was led by Sayid

Muhammad Abdullah Hassan, who established the Dervish state and successfully

resisted British and Italian expansion by enlisting the aid of Somali soldiers from

across the Horn of Africa to wage *jihad* against the Christian invaders. The Dervish

state maintained its independence until 1920 when it was finally defeated by the

British (Laitin 1979; Harper 2012).

The British also forced the Italians out of Ethiopia during World War II and

afterward retained control of both British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland as

protectorates. Ethiopia itself was designated as Occupied Enemy Territory, which was

problematic given that the British had allowed the exiled Ethiopian Emperor, Haile

Sellasie, to return with limited powers. The Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement allowed

Ethiopia to become a sovereign state but left certain areas under British control.

Among these areas were the Haud, an important Somali grazing land in the Northeast

along the border between Ethiopia and Somalia, and the Ogaden, a Southeastern

border region which is mostly comprised of ethnic Somalis (Ullendorff and

Beckingham 1964).

In 1945, the UN granted Italy trusteeship over Italian Somaliland on the

condition that it agreed to Somali independence within ten years. In 1948 Britain

returned the Haud and the Ogaden to Ethiopia, a move which would exacerbate tense

border relations between Ethiopia and the soon to be independent Somali state for

decades to come (Barnes, 2007).

4.2.3: From Independence to the Islamic Union

British Somaliland gained its independence on 26 June, 1960, taking upon

itself the new name, the State of Somaliland. The former Italian Somaliland (known

as the Trust Territory of Somalia) gained independence five days later. The two

newly-independent states united and formed the Somalia Republic on July 1, 1960

(Poore 2009).

The new state's border problems increased when the British granted the

largely Somali-populated Northern Frontier District of Kenya to the Republic of

Kenya in 1963. The year 1963 also marked continued border conflict in the Ogaden

with the Nasrullah Uprising, a struggle between Somali nationalists and the Ethiopian

National Defense Force (ENDF). In Arabic, Nasrullah means, "sacrifice for the sake

of Allah" (Abdullahi 2007b). While Somalia's border conflicts with Ethiopia and Kenya are often framed in religious terms, they are fundamentally nationalist at the core, and the Somali government would soon prove itself to be anything but Islamic (Markakis 1987).

On 15 October, 1969, President Abdi Rashid Ali Shermarke was assassinated by one of his own bodyguards. Six days later, on 21 October, Major General Mohammad Siad Barre led a coup and seized power (Walls 2008). He renamed the country the Somalia Democratic Republic. Barre, who headed the Supreme Revolutionary Council, envisioned Somalia as a secular, socialist state. Unsurprisingly, the Barre government leaned heavily toward the Soviet Union (Ahmed 2006).

The military expanded from 5,000 troops in 1960 to 65,000 troops in 1990. Between 1961 and 1979, Somalia imported $660 million worth of weapons. During the 1980s alone, the government spent $44.5 million annually on the military. This incredible military growth came at the expense of social spending such as education, healthcare, clean water and food. The Barre regime had one of the worst human rights records in Africa. During Barre's reign, Somalis ranked among the lowest in the world for per capita caloric intake (Leeson 2007). Meanwhile, the military accounted for 90 percent of Somalia's total expenditures (Mubarak 1997). The United States and the Soviet Union also paid Somalia a great injustice by equipping it with arms and weapons rather than helping it develop its infrastructure, agriculture, industry and educational system.

In 1975, to further its revolutionary socialist agenda to liberate women and equalize society, Barre passed the Family Law, allowing women to inherit wealth equally with men, restricting the practice of polygamy and allowing women to

divorce their husbands. When Somali religious leaders insisted that the law violated Islam, the government put ten to death and imprisoned or exiled hundreds more (Abdullahi 2007a).

In 1977, the Barre regime openly supported rebels in the Ogaden Desert along the border between Ethiopia and Somalia leading to the Ogaden War. Although the Soviet Union had previously supported Barre and the United States had supported Ethiopia, the Soviet Union switched alliances following a Marxist coup in Ethiopia led by Mengistu Haile Mariam, the head of Ethiopia's Derg regime (Zounmenou 2009). Other communist states such as Cuba, East Germany, North Korea and The People's Republic of Yemen also sent troops and/or military aid to Ethiopia (Prunier and Gisselquist 2003).

In an act of Cold War balancing, the United States began to support Somalia (Schraeder 1992). Despite American support, Somalia lost badly. The eight-month war cost Somalia roughly 32,000 troops and nearly all of its heavy military machinery. Still, the Ogaden conflict was never fully resolved. Conflict over control of the region continues to this day. The primary agents in the fight are the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and ENDF. ONLF claims that rightful control of the Ogaden belongs to Somalis, and it perceives Ethiopia as an occupying force in Somali territory while ENDF is simply defending the status quo (Abdullahi 2007b).

Somalia's conflict with Kenya over their poorly-secured, 424-mile common border is also an ongoing problem. Somalia never accepted the borders drawn by the British at independence as the Shifta War exemplified (1963-1967). The Somali government backed Somali rebels in the Northern Frontier District against the Kenyan army in their fight to secede from Kenya and become a part of Greater Somalia (Møller 2009).

As with the Ogaden War, the Shifta War was never fully resolved either. The Somali government signed a ceasefire in 1967, but local clans continue to clash along the border over control of land and resources (Whittaker 2008). In 1981, the so-called "bandits" (the word "shifta" is used in the Horn sub region to refer to bandits or outlaws) formally became the Northern Frontier District Liberation Army (NFDLA) and obtained funding from conservative Gulf countries (Ringquist 2011).

With the exception of a few major incidents such as the 1984 Wagalla Massacre when Kenyan security forces rounded up approximately 2,000 Somali men and opened fire on them at the Wagalla Airstrip (Kerrow 2010), it is usually left to local clan elders to resolve smaller disputes in the absence of more formal mechanisms (Menkhaus 2005).

The Kenyan government has all but ignored the region regarding social services and infrastructure. While there is no official survey data available from the Northern Frontier District, an online article from the region maintains that the Somali inhabitants feel that they are being forced to be Kenyans against their will. The issue is a matter of perception. The NFDLA and native Somalis in the region perceive Kenya as an occupying force on Somali land, and they want to have a say in who controls their territory (Mburu 2005).

Ongoing border disputes are only part of the equation, however. A greater source of instability is derived from internal conflict. While clan politics constitutes the lion's share of the fighting, religious differences between moderates and extremists also plays a role.

Sufism has traditionally been the predominant form of Islam practiced in Africa (Lewis 2002). The main differences between *Sufism* and *Salafist* Islam is that the former tends to be more adaptable to social norms as it is less concerned with a

strict interpretation of the Koran and more concerned with individual spirituality and growth. In other words, it cares less about outward observance and more about inner purity (Meijer 2009). *Salafist* Islam, on the other hand, stresses a strict interpretation of the Koran and demands much more rigid outward conformity to Islamic precepts (Gelvin 2010). *Salafist* teaching often rejects Western culture and advocates both the purification of Islam and the establishment of an Islamic *caliphate* (Hill 2010).

Even before Somalia gained its independence, Somalis began travelling to Egypt and to Saudi Arabia to study *Salafi/Wahhabi* Islam. However, those who broke with the dominant *Sufi* beliefs and traditions in Somalia were clearly in the minority, and they enjoyed only limited success in spreading their beliefs among Somalia's *Sufi* majority (Gatsiounis 2013).

In the 1970s, a large number of Somali men travelled to Saudi Arabia to work in the oil fields. Many of these men returned to Somalia with a strict *Salafist* interpretation of Islam that influenced the emergence of two groups in Somalia: The Unity of Islamic Youth (*Wahdat al Shabaab al Islamiyya*) and The Islamic Group (*al Jama'a al Islamiyya*) (Møller 2009). In 1982, the two organizations merged to become the Islamic Union (*al Ittihad al Islamiyya*), commonly known as AIAI (Harnisch and Zimmerman 2010, Shinn 2011).

4.2.4: From the Islamic Union to the Union of Islamic Courts

AIAI received substantial financial support from Saudi-based charitable organizations, and thus it was heavily influenced by *Salafi/Wahhabi* doctrine. The members of AIAI largely consisted of educated Muslims who had studied in the Middle East and believed that political Islam was the only answer to the problem of the corrupt

government in Somalia (Menkhaus 2004b; Pirio and Gregorian 2006). Under the leadership of Hassan Dahir Aweys, AIAI's primary goals were to oust the corrupt Barre regime, establish an Islamic government in Somalia and free the Ogaden region, currently controlled by Ethiopia (ICG 2002).

Funded by wealthy Saudis and Somali expatriates in Kenya, AIAI gained control of the Gedo region of Somalia and appointed Mohamed Haji Yusuf, a former Somali High Court judge, as leader of the region. Yusuf set up Islamic courts, medical centers, schools, orphanages and other charitable services in the region. Yusuf also outlawed Qat, a stimulant that is commonly chewed in the Horn region (Miller 2004).

Meanwhile, Barre privileged members of his own sub-clan (the Marehan) by granting them access to the best land, water and government jobs. For example, Barre supported Marehan herders by backing their claim on available water in Southern Somalia. Barre also showed favoritism to certain other groups, particularly to the Ogadeni (his mother's sub-clan) and to the Dhulbahante (his son-in-law's sub-clan), while intentionally causing divisions among the other various clans and sub-clans to keep them weak.

External funding during the Cold War years allowed the Barre regime to pursue a ruthless strategy pitting one clan against the other. Those clans that were not favored by Barre united in the 1980s to form various opposition groups such as the Somali Patriotic Movement, the Somali National Movement and the United Somali Congress (Shay 2010). When Cold War support dried up, the Barre regime had too many enemies and too little resources (Rawson 1993). Barre eventually became known as the "mayor of Mogadishu" because he had lost control of so much of the rest of the country (Gettleman 2009).

The Somali Civil War broke out in January, 1991. An alliance of clan militias armed with American and Soviet military-grade weapons drove Barre from power. With Barre out of the way, fighting then broke out between the militias as they spewed their venom on each other (Mwangi 2012). A free for all followed as war profiteers battled over everything of value from shipping ports to parking spots. Overpriced (and often tainted) goods flooded the market as warlords and clan militias taxed shipments by land and sea (Besteman and Cassanelli 1996).

A conference was held in Djibouti in June and July of the same year, in which an interim government was set up with Ali Mahdi Mohamed named as interim president. General Mohammed Farah Aideed (a warlord from the Habir Gadir sub-clan of the Hawiye clan) rejected the agreement, however, and took control of the Southern part of Mogadishu. Meanwhile, Ali Mahdi (from the Abigal sub-clan of the Hawiye clan) retained control of the Northern districts. A green line initially divided the two camps, however, the civil war disintegrated even further into all out clan warfare as clans and sub-clans fought for control over scarce resources (Møller 2009).

Conditions grew steadily worse. Somaliland seceded in May 1991, and by 1992, there were more than ten militarized factions controlling various areas of Somalia.[49] These forces, led by competing warlords, fought among themselves for hegemony, killing hundreds of thousands of civilians and displacing nearly one million others (Sommer 1994).

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[49] United Somali Front (USF), Somali Party (USP), United Somali Congress (USC), Somali Democratic Alliance (SDA), Somali National Movement (SNM), United Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), Somali National Front (SNF), Somali National Alliance (SNA), Somali Africans Muke Organization (SAMO), Somali Democratic Movement (SDM), Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) and Somali National Union (SNU).

The humanitarian crisis that resulted prompted the UN to respond in November 1992 with humanitarian aid and multinational peacekeeping forces to ensure its delivery. The first United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM-I) not only failed to improve conditions in Somalia, it most likely made them worse. By attempting to distribute food and aid through the warlords, the UN only empowered them more and further fanned the flames of the insurgents. UNOSOM-I was followed in December 1992 by the U.S.-led United Task Force Somalia (UNITAF) and UNOSOM-II in March 1993 (Boutros-Gali 1996).

In March 1993, fifteen different warring parties signed two separate agreements calling for national reconciliation and disarmament. The first agreement was basically an agreement to reconvene at a future time to discuss national reconciliation. When they re-assembled at the Conference on National Reconciliation on March 27, they signed the Addis Ababa Agreement which outlined the terms of national reconciliation and disarmament. Fighting continued, however, and the agreement was of little effect other than to unite several of the factions together under the leadership of Aideed (AMISOM 2016).

Although UNITAF (also called Operation Restore Hope) received a UN mandate to establish a safe zone for humanitarian intervention, it was more-or-less a unilateral effort that also went badly awry. The intervention of 28,000 (mostly American) forces largely turned the civil conflict in Mogadishu into a bilateral war between the United States and Aideed's coalition (Samatar 2010).

U.S. troops also attracted al Qaeda's attention, and the group dispatched operatives to train Somali militants and fight beside them (Shinn 2009, Mingst and Kams 2011). Al Qaeda operatives fought in the Battle of Mogadishu (and the infamous Black Hawk Down incident) of October 3, 1993 where Somali militants

killed 18 U.S. soldiers and paraded their corpses in triumph through the streets of the city (Sangvic 1998). Al Qaeda later bragged how the defeat led to the withdrawal of American troops (Kohlmann 2009), however, many believe that al Qaeda exaggerated the extent of its role in the victory (e.g. Gartenstein-Ross 2009, Harnisch and Zimmerman 2010).

UNOSOM-II was dispatched in March 1993 to take over where UNITAF left off. Meanwhile, the U.S. began to pull out of the fight. The U.S. withdrawal from Somalia was completed by March 1994. Following suit, UN forces began to withdraw as well. The last peacekeepers left in March 1995. After more than two years of fighting and substantial casualties, some would argue that the international humanitarian intervention left Somalia in worse condition than it had been in before the peacekeepers arrived (Clarke and Herbst 1997).

As disastrous as the failed UNOSOM missions turned out to be, one huge benefit resulted. The vast quantities of aid funneled into Somalia in turn required a myriad of local contractors to build infrastructure and telecommunications systems to aid in its disbursement. Somali businessmen began to offer what the government no longer could: schools, healthcare facilities, courier services and even power plants.

The result was a Somali shilling that was more stable without the central bank than it had been during the last decade of the Barre regime. Despite the involvement of the warlords, this enormous infusion of cash and the creation of legitimate business opportunities had a ripple effect on the Somali economy which stimulated trade and bolstered the political will for stability and the rule of law (Menkhaus et al. 1995).

AIAI had managed to maintain control of the city of Luuq near the borders with Ethiopia and Kenya. The group imposed a strict interpretation of *sharia* and punished violations without mercy. Amputations and stoning were commonplace, but

in the absence of another alternative, the people accepted AIAI because life was safer under the Islamists than anywhere else in Somalia (Jan 2000). In 1996, the Ethiopians provided an alternative (Dagne 2010).

Because of AIAI's strategic goal of creating a greater Somalia, the group focused on liberating the ethnically Somali Ogaden region of Ethiopia. AIAI agitated separatist sentiment in the area and plagued Addis Ababa with a series of assassination attempts and bombings in the mid-1990s. Luuq's close proximity to the Ethiopian border made it both a threat and a convenient target (Jan 2000).

Ethiopian troops attacked AIAI's stronghold in Luuq and slaughtered hundreds of AIAI militants. Various clan militias and many Somalis welcomed the Ethiopian victory because they resented the imposition of *Salafist* ideology and the presence of AIAI militants from other clans. The group decided to alter course and change its operational approach. Rather than relying primarily on military tactics (terror attacks, gaining control of territory and attempting to hold it), AIAI began to focus on providing social services and building a constituency that way (Phillips 2002, Dagne 2010, Menkhaus 2005).

Further efforts at peace and reconciliation were also made. Between November 1996 and January 1997, a conference in Sodere, Ethiopia established a 41-member National Salvation Council (NSC) which was assigned the task of creating a transitional government. Hussein Farrah Aideed, son of the late General Aideed, and the government of Somaliland both refused to attend the conference, however.

A similar conference was convened later that year in Sana'a, Yemen, but this one was also boycotted and rejected by parties to the conflict. It was not until December 1997 that another attempt, this time in Cairo, concluded with an agreement signed by 28 parties (including both Ali Mahdi and Hussein Farrah Aideed). The

Cairo Declaration established a Council of Presidents, a prime minister and a national assembly. But the attendees could not agree on a leader (AMISOM 2016).

Meanwhile, back in Somalia, sub-national governance began to emerge. Local Islamic courts sprung up in place of the collapsed Somali government. They maintained a rule of law, collected taxes and offered basic services such as running water. Local courts were just that, however, local. The courts exercised jurisdiction only within specific sub-clans with no authority outside that sub-clan's town or neighborhood. So while the local courts did much to improve law and order within clans, they did little to establish law and order between clans. In fact, they often competed among themselves for control of strategic resources (Ibrahim 2010).

Even within the more stable autonomous region of Somaliland, fragmentation continued to be a major challenge to maintaining law and order. The local courts also proved initially powerless to confront the warlords, who were a major threat to peace and security following the collapse of the Barre government (Marchal 2007). But the local authorities did at least enjoy some level of legitimacy in the eyes of their constituents which is more than can be said of the warlords (Le Sage 2005).

The fact that the local tribal leaders and the local courts enjoyed legitimacy in the eyes of their constituents went a long way in preserving order at the local level. A correlation can be drawn between the local peace achieved in Somalia and the perception of the local courts as legitimate in the eyes of the people.

Despite claims that AIAI posed a serious international threat, many experts remain unconvinced concerning its strength and alleged links with international terrorist organizations, claiming that there is no reliable information or pattern of behavior to indicate that the group had an international agenda (Dagne 2002).

Still, U.S. intelligence reported that AIAI cooperated with al-Qaeda in the 1998 United States embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam that claimed the lives of 224 people. After 9/11 and the subsequent defeat of the Taliban, AIAI was labeled a terrorist organization by the United States. Washington feared that the collapse of the Taliban would drive al Qaeda operatives to Somalia to seek safe haven with AIAI. Under Executive Order 13224, the organization's finances were frozen and its leaders were sanctioned (ICG 2005, Shinn 2007). The U.S. also put pressure on Saudi Arabia to close down al-Haramain, an Islamic charity that funded AIAI. The Bush administration also froze the assets of al-Barakat, a wire service in Somalia, claiming that it transferred funds for al Qaeda (Kelley 2001).

In 1998, Aweys started an Islamic court in Merka, a port city in Southern Somalia. Aweys, who hails from a sub-clan of the Hawiye/Habr Gedir clan, rose to prominence as the spiritual leader of the Consultative Council of Islamic Courts, a loose network of Islamic courts that controlled Northern Mogadishu (Holzer 2008). The more moderate members of the group disagreed with Aweys' strict *Wahhabist* views, but they were unable to prevent the hard-liners from taking control. Aweys' court soon became a foundation of the future ICU (ICG 2005; Barnes 2007).

A major political divide emerged in Somalia. On the one side, the Mogadishu Group was dominated by the Hawiye/Habr Gedir clan and favored a strong central government. This group included Islamists such as Aweys, received support from the Arab world and was staunchly anti-Ethiopian. On the other side, the Somali Restoration and Reconciliation Council (SRRC), led by Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmad (a former warlord turned president of Puntland), favored a decentralized state. The SRRC was anti-Islamist, pro-Ethiopian and dominated by the Darood clan-family.

These two camps were so bitterly opposed to one another that more than a dozen efforts at reconciliation failed to bring unity to Somalia (Menkhaus, 2007).

One such effort, the 2000 peace talks in Arta, Djibouti, culminated in the establishment of the Transitional National Government (TNG). The TNG was dominated by the Mogadishu Group and therefore opposed by the SRRC. It faced substantial political opposition by various other clan factions as well. The TNG was also seriously weakened by financial problems and internal conflicts. Three years and four prime ministers later, the TNG declared bankruptcy (ICG 2002).

In October 2004, after two years of negotiations, the delegates to the Nairobi peace accords agreed that a transitional federal government would replace the defunct TNG. The negotiations were anything but neutral, however, and heavy outside pressure influenced the outcome. The TFG was clearly allied with Ethiopia, and it therefore alienated many Somali clans, especially in and around Mogadishu (Koko 2007).

Not surprisingly, on October 10, 2004, the TFG elected Abdullahi Yusuf as its president. Yusuf, as the leader of the SRRC and with the support of Ethiopia, had heavily influenced the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) for the past two years concerning the formation of a new government.[50] Ethiopia had an interest in replacing the TNG because it had been strongly influenced by Islamist groups, and so Addis Ababa supported the SRRC toward that end. Even though IGAD attempted to reconcile the SRRC with the TNG, Ethiopia was able to influence the

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[50] The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development is a trade bloc consisting of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda.

final outcome and thousands of Ethiopian troops would later support the TFG from late 2006 until the beginning of 2009 (Shinn 2011).

The resulting TFG, though supposedly based upon the principle of proportional clan representation, was not a unity government at all. Instead, it was a narrow, pro-Ethiopian coalition which excluded Islamist groups and TNG supporters alike. Among those which were marginalized by the new government was the Habar Gedir Ayr sub-clan, one of the most influential sub-clans in Southern Somalia. The previous TNG president, Abdiqasim Salad Hassan, as well as several prominent Islamist figures, descended from this sub-clan (Menkhaus 2004c).

Both the TNG and the TFG employed the 4.5 formula, an electoral policy that allocates equal seats in parliament to the four largest clan-families. Half that number of seats were allocated to the remaining minority groups. However, because Somali clan-families are further divided into sub-clans, the TFG was able to abide by the 4.5 formula in principle while effectively excluding sub-clans that were politically opposed to it (Bryden and Brickhill 2010).

The TFG was largely viewed as a puppet regime by many ordinary Somalis. A Somali blog representative of this perspective refers to the "U.S. inspired brutal occupation of Somalia by Ethiopian troops," as just another sign of U.S. imperialism and hegemony (Lalkar 2009). The blog states that the TFG was created by Ethiopia and was controlled by the US. It further states that the ICU, which the U.S. overthrew, exercised considerably more authority and created more stability than the TFG could have ever hoped to.

4.2.5: From the ICU to al Shabaab

The ICU emerged as several of these clan-based courts began to cooperate with one another (Menkhaus 2005; Stevenson 2007). By 2005, eleven clan-based courts merged to form the ICU. Some, like the court in Merka, were radical and some were more moderate. At the top of the ICU organizational structure, the Supreme Islamic Court was chaired by Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. Some would argue that the real power, however, was in the hands of Aweys who headed the Shura Council which could approve or veto all decisions made by the Supreme Islamic Court (Stevenson 2007; Harnisch and Zimmerman 2010). Still, most districts were ruled according to the individual court that held jurisdiction over it. Therefore, the application of *sharia* and secular law was patchwork depending upon the local judge (Mwangi 2010).

Not long after the ICU established itself, hundreds of foreign fighters from Chechnya, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Arabian Peninsula began arriving to train in Somalia's training camps. Eventually the ICU became the central judicial body in Somalia and also took on the role of the de-facto police as local businesses hired its services for protection against gangs and organized crime (Prendergast and Thomas-Fensen 2007; Bakier 2008).

The ICU also supported two armed insurgencies against Ethiopia: the Oromo Liberation Front and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (Connell 2009). The leadership of the ICU was comprised of mostly moderate Islamic scholars. As before, however, Awey's influence was strong and the hardliners dominated the courts (Ibrahim 2010). The ICU won the support of the people as it waged war on crime, drugs and pornography. Most ordinary Somalis, while not necessarily favoring the imposition of strict *sharia*, preferred the ICU over the corruption and chaos that

ensued under the TFG and the warlords (Terdman 2008; Bruton 2010; Harnisch and Zimmerman 2010).

The rise and success of the ICU in 2006 triggered alarm among Somalia's neighbors and also raised considerable concern within the international community. Ethiopia feared a continuation of AIAI-style attacks while the U.S. suspected that the ICU continued to maintain AIAI's alleged connection with al Qaeda. Many moderate Somalis worried that, given Eritrea's support for the ICU, Somalia would be used as a battlefield in the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The greater concern within the international community was that Somalia might turn into another Afghanistan (Bruton 2009).

As the ICU gained influence, the warlords and other clan-based authorities began to challenge its authority and demand that ICU militias withdraw from their districts. However, the ICU claimed a mandate based on the support of the people and the fact that many local businesses had hired its militias to protect them from the warlords. In February 2006, the warlords formed the Alliance for Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (ARPCT) and were backed by TFG forces and funded by the U.S (Bruton 2010; Shay 2010; Stevenson 2007).

After the failure of UNITAF in 1992-93, one would think that the United States had learned a lesson or two about dealing with Somali warlords. Nevertheless, the Bush administration decided that the way to fight the Islamists was to deputize the warlords and arm them to the teeth. According to one account, American CIA agents armed with briefcases full of cash arrived in Mogadishu. The fact that the warlords had been exploiting and abusing the Somali people for decades was bad enough. Now they were supported by the United States. The Bush administration's move backfired badly and the ICU grew more popular than ever (Gettleman 2009).

Fighting between the ICU and ARPCT escalated into open street battles in the capital and continued for four months (Kagwanja 2006). In April 2006, a UN monitoring group referred to the ICU as a "third force" in Somalia and reported a dramatic increase in its military capability (Schiemsky et al. 2006). On June 5, 2006, the ICU took control of Mogadishu and it soon controlled most of Southern and central Somalia. The ICU victory over the ARPCT and TFG forces marked the first unified rule in Mogadishu in 15 years (Stevenson 2007; Abbink 2009; Gartenstein-Ross 2009). Other groups subsequently joined the ICU (which renamed itself the Supreme Council of Islamic Courts), and the ICU model of governance quickly spread throughout Southern Somalia as a result (Menkhaus 2008, Bruton 2010).

Puntland and Somaliland still remained outside of the ICU's control, and Baidoa served as the TFG stronghold, but the ICU controlled large portions of Somalia and its authority was increasing. By October 2006, the ICU had claimed nearly all of the country's key strategic points and was able to transport supplies without hindrance. Somali businessmen greatly benefitted from the removal of the many roadblocks and checkpoints previously used to tax the movement of goods under the warlords. Furthermore, Baidoa was more-or-less surrounded and many TFG forces defected to the ICU. If it were not for the Ethiopian military surrounding the city, Baidoa would have fallen to the Islamists (Roggio 2006).

For the first time in years, civil society began to return to ICU-controlled areas. Children played outside, trash was collected and Islam truly equated to a measure of peace. Still, the price was high. Thousands of Somali civilians had been displaced in the conflict (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2007; Bradbury and Kleinman 2010).

Many credit the ICU's victory to outside assistance from Eritrea, Saudi Arabia and members of the Somali Diaspora (Terdman 2008). However, others attribute the ICU's success to the strong nationalist sentiment that developed among the Somali people. This nationalism was fueled by the fact that both the ARPCT and the TFG were backed by the hated Ethiopians, and worse yet, the Americans. The people's perception of the ICU as legitimate and the ARPCT and TFG as illegitimate proved to be a decisive factor (Bruton 2010). This perception was echoed by a leading member of the ARPCT as his reason for defecting to the ICU. "I have left the alliance because of requests from elders and other civil society members from my Sa'ad sub-clan" (Aljazeera 2006).

Had the ICU not been so internally fragmented itself, it might have been more successful in using this spirit of nationalism to unite the Somali people. But two opposing ideologies within the ICU itself prevented this. The first was the division between the moderates who wanted to cooperate with the TFG and the hardliners who wanted to overthrow it. The second division concerned the issues of morality and foreign influences. The hardliners wanted to effectively ban any and all foreign media- particularly movies and music. They also wanted to rid Somalia of all social influences (foreign or domestic) that tainted the purity of Islam. The hardliners imposed a strict interpretation of *sharia* upon Somali society which made them less popular than the moderates. However, the hardliners controlled the ICU's armed militias (Le Sage 2009).

A message, presumably from Osama bin Laden, was posted on the internet in July 2006 encouraging Somalis to establish an Islamic state in Somalia and promising to join the fight against the TFG and its external supporters (Hansen 2013). In September 2006, Ayman al-Zawahiri further urged all Somalis to oppose the TFG and

its allies. On 18 September, a Somali man named Abdisalan Hirsi Mahmud Lugey

became the first known Somali to carry out a suicide attack by detonating his vehicle

outside parliament in the provincial capital of Baidoa. The attack, which targeted

former President, Abdullahi Yusuf, killed five people and injured several others.

Yusuf was not harmed (Gartenstein-Ross 2009).

Meanwhile, the ICU made several efforts to convince the international

community that it was a moderate force intent on returning peace and order to

Somalia. These efforts included improving traveler safety, re-opening both the

Mogadishu airport and seaport, and fighting pirates (Terdman 2008).

The ICU's efforts to combat piracy were largely underappreciated. Roughly

ninety percent of global trade passes through the Gulf of Aden and the Suez Canal.

Approximately 20,000 ships sail Somali territorial waters every year. Nearly one third

of the world's oil is shipped through the Gulf of Aden. Given Somalia's 3,025

kilometers of coastline, protecting coastal waters is no small feat (Menkhaus 2009a).[51]

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[51] Piracy increased dramatically after the ICU disintegrated. The year 2008 witnessed a surge in reported pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden. The International Maritime Bureau lists 111 recorded attacks off the Horn of Africa in 2008 alone- more than double the number of reported attacks in 2007. Estimates vary, however, depending on how one defines a pirate attack. Also, ships rarely report minor incidents or attempted attacks (to keep insurance premiums as low as possible), so the actual number of attempted attacks and thefts may be considerably higher. It is difficult to be certain. What is known, however, is that by the end of the year, at least 815 crewmembers had been taken hostage and twenty-three countries had sent a total of 30 warships to patrol the Gulf of Aden. Estimates of total ransoms collected in 2008 range from $50 million to $130 million (Gettleman 2009; Rothwell 2009). A record $3.2 million was paid for the release of the *MV Faina* alone (Frump 2009). By April 2009, Somali pirates were operating within an area extending over one million square miles from the Gulf of Aden to the Indian Ocean. Between January and September 2009, an estimated 306 attacks took place. Pirates boarded approximately 114 ships, took 661 crew members hostage and murdered six others (Ploch et al. 2011). This enormous increase in reported attacks generated renewed interest in piracy. In addition to questions regarding the sovereignty of Somalia and whether it is legal for foreign states to conduct counter-piracy measures in Somali coastal waters, there has also been speculation in the popular media that the recent increase in piracy is somehow linked to terrorism (Burgess 2008). But this concern is largely unfounded. While there have been allegations that al Shabaab taxes the profits gained from piracy (ICG 2014), it is known that the ICU took a very strong stand against piracy, making it a capital offense and beheading convicted pirates (Panjabi 2009). Unfortunately, the ongoing struggle for power between the TFG and al Shabaab provided a vacuum within which lawlessness and chaos thrived. Piracy and other forms of violent crime grew rampant as desperate Somali youths were lured into illicit

Despite these efforts, the ICU was unable to win the favor of the international community (Wise 2011). Any further effort became futile once the idea spread that the ICU was controlled by al-Qaeda. This misinformation was first advanced by Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, in November 2006 and then echoed by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Jendayi Frazer, in December 2006. As a result, international favor rested largely with the TFG, which was receiving military support from Ethiopia, the African Union (AU) and the United States (Shinn 2007).

Addis Ababa, of course, benefited substantially from the rumor. With a population that is nearly 50% Muslim, and the ethnically Somali ONLF active within its borders, the last thing Ethiopia wanted to see was an Islamist awakening gain ground next store. Selling itself as an agent of light against the forces of evil, it did not take much for the Zenawi administration to convince the U.S. to back the Ethiopian invasion (Gettleman 2006).

On 6 December, the UN passed Resolution 1725 (in 15 minutes!). The resolution authorized IGAD and the surrounding AU Member States to train and protect TFG forces, and further stipulated that according to the arms embargo originally imposed in 1992 (under UN Resolution 733) and readdressed in 2002 (under UN Resolution 1425), the surrounding AU Member States would not deploy troops to Somalia. However, the resolution did allow weapons to be introduced for the sake of training and protection (United Nations 2006).

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activities by the promise of easy money and a way out of their dismal and hopeless existence (Hanson 2013).

On December 20, 2006, the ICU attacked TFG forces in Baidoa which were heavily backed by Ethiopian troops. The attack failed. Many of the ICU's fighters fell in the offensive, and many more were driven back by the superior Ethiopian military (Hackett 2006; McGregor 2008). On December 25, Ethiopian forces "officially" crossed into Somalia with 14,000 troops where they were accused of indiscriminately shelling civilian areas, including entire neighborhoods- prompting the EU to open a war crimes investigation (Harper 2012).

The UN asserts that it has evidence that Ethiopia exploded white phosphorous bombs against al Shabaab militants hiding among civilians.[52] White phosphorous burns human flesh to the bone, and it keeps burning until it is deprived of oxygen. Victims who survive the burns often die of vital organ failure as the phosphorous is absorbed into the body. These and other atrocities forced hundreds of thousands of Somalis out of Mogadishu (Smith 2007).

By December 29, a combination of TFG forces, Ethiopian troops, and AU peacekeepers backed by U.S. air power reclaimed Mogadishu, and the TFG moved its headquarters to Mogadishu. In the face of utter defeat, Aweys resigned as the leader of the ICU (Stevenson 2007; Gartenstein-Ross 2009; Harper 2012).

By January 12, 2007, the combined forces took Ros Kamboni, the ICU's only remaining stronghold. On January 13, 2007, the TFG declared a state of martial law throughout Somalia in an effort to consolidate its authority. The ICU disintegrated with the moderate members fleeing to Eritrea and the hardliners reconstituting into al Shabaab and later Hizbul Islam. Many of the group's fighters simply went back to

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[52] The UN presented photographs and soil samples demonstrating that affected areas had 117 times as much phosphorus as normal (Smith 2007).

their clans and took their weapons with them (McGregor 2008; Menkhaus 2008). For the first time since 1991, the federal government controlled most of Somalia (Browne and Fisher 2013).

4.2.6: From al Shabaab to the Present Day

The group that would officially become known as al Shabaab began as the Youth Movement wing of the ICU. The official name of the group is Harakat al-Shabaab al Mujahidin or Movement of the Striving Youth (Woodward 2012).[53] It is not entirely certain when the group began. Accounts of its early leadership also vary.[54] By one account, the group was founded in 1998. The original leader of the faction, Aden Hashi Ayro, was appointed by Aweys, his long-time mentor, who was then the leader of the Shura Council of the ICU (Dempsey 2006). It is believed that Aweys arranged for Ayro to train in Afghanistan in the 1990s (Gartenstein-Ross, 2009; Shinn 2011).

In July 2004, the CIA attempted to assassinate an al- Qaeda operative, Abu Taha al-Sudani, believed to have been sheltered by Aweys and Ayro in a compound in Mogadishu. The CIA authorized a raid which resulted in the death of Ayros'

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[53] In local parlance where I live in the United Arab Emirates, al Shabaab simply translates as "the guys."

[54] Reports of the group's origins vary. One version suggests that al Shabaab emerged in 2005 when the group retaliated with a number of reprisal killings after a string of ICU members were assassinated in Mogadishu (Barnes and Hassan 2007). Another suggests that Aweys created the group in 1998 as the military arm of the ICU (ICG 2008). A variation of this report claims that Aweys created the group in 2006 to fight against the Ethiopians (ICG 2008). A third version claims that the group formed in 1996 in a training camp in southcentral Somalia (Bakier 2008). A fourth version suggests that al Shabaab emerged in 2003 after a group of radicals stormed out of an AIAI meeting in Laascanood and later formed the group (Dagne 2010; Shinn 2011). In an interview in 2011, Ahmed Madobe (who later became president of Jubaland State, claimed, "I wasn't just in the Shabab; I helped found it" (Gettleman 2011).

brother-in-law (neither Ayro, Aweys, nor al-Sudani were present). According to the story, Ayro spent the next 18 months recruiting and training poor and marginalized young Somali men. These young fighters were not religious radicals by any means. Unemployed and desperate, their loyalty lay first with their clans and second to the ICU due to the wealth of social services it offered (Vidino et. al. 2010).

Regardless of how the group actually began, it is generally agreed that the original members included Ayro, Godane, Robow, Faud Mohamed Khalaf Shangole and Ibrahim Haji Jama al-Afghani (Dagne 2010, Harnisch and Zimmerman 2010a).[55] By December 2006, when the ICU was driven out, more than 5,000 al Shabaab fighters remained behind in Mogadishu alone (Bruton and Williams, 2014).[56]

The Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in December 2006 played an important role in both the rise and operational strategy of al Shabaab. First, al Shabaab owes much of its original success to the intense anti-Ethiopian and anti-American sentiment felt by many Somalis. Not only did the majority of Somalis resent Ethiopian occupation, they had not forgotten Mogadishu 1993. And they hated the occupation even more because of the fact that it was supported by the American military (Strachan 2008). While the ICU gained legitimacy for its ability to offer stable governance amid the chaos in the wake of the Barre regime, al Shabaab's legitimacy derived from the fact that it was fighting a foreign invasion. This perception of the group among average Somalis boosted its recruitment efforts substantially and largely allowed it to transcend clan identification (Solomon 2014).

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[55] It is believed that all five of these men trained in Afghanistan.
[56] The Ethiopian invasion dramatically increased al Shabaab's membership from about 400 initially to several thousand (Wise 2011).

Second, the invasion pitted the young and tiny 'David' against the much larger and seasoned 'Goliath.' Thus, al Shabaab learned to employed guerrilla tactics early on in order to survive. Finally, the presence of a foreign army encouraged radicalism. While the Ethiopian incursion had been successful in wiping out the ICU, it was not successful in eradicating the threat of Islamic radicalism. In fact, the opposite was true. Al Shabaab had been the military arm of the ICU. With its more moderate master driven out, the group had to rely on its own political leadership as well as advice from outsiders. Much as was the case with the ICU, the more radical elements in the organization quickly floated to the top. Al Shabaab soon presented a much greater threat to Ethiopia than the ICU ever did (Menkhaus 2013b).

Al Shabaab was able to capitalize on the chaos that ensued in the South Central regions of Somalia in 2007. The group earned tremendous popularity for its efforts to expel the Ethiopians (Shinn 2009; Curran 2011). This popularity afforded al Shabaab financial support and plenty of new recruits. While AIAI was not able to control territory outside the town of Luuq, both the ICU and al Shabaab gained control of large portions of Somalia—though neither group was able to maintain control for very long.

A commercial property-owner in Mogadishu (that has requested to remain anonymous for reasons of personal safety) states that the group is highly organized and very strict on its members. The source also disclosed that most al Shabaab fighters are poor, illiterate young men who are fiercely loyal to the organization (although the group has also been able to attract increasing numbers of young women as well- mostly through family connections with existing members). Since the majority of the rank and file cannot read, it is much easier for the group to radicalize them (Anonymous 2016).

The group established training camps and, in the absence of any real government opposition in the South, was able to arm and train its recruits quickly and effectively without hindrance. Thus the Ethiopian invasion was largely responsible for both radicalizing al Shabaab and transforming it into the most lethal militia in Somalia (Menkhaus and Boucek 2010; Wise 2011). However, it is important to point out that the Ethiopian invasion merely picked up where the Barre regime and the warlords that followed left off. A resident of Somaliland described the terrible persecution her Isaaq tribe endured at the hands of the Barre Regime (Hussain 2016).

As al Shabaab increased in power, it began to expand the area under its control. Whenever the group took control of a new region, it would use a combination of charity, public rallies and propaganda to win over the majority- often coopting local clan elders for support. Where public relations failed, intimidation and sheer terror succeeded (Bruton 2009; Harnisch and Zimmerman 2010; Curran 2011).

The group operated much as the ICU did before it, as a network of more-or-less independent administrations accountable to a central Shura Council consisting of 85 members and led by the group's *emir* (Shinn 2011). Each administration was responsible for implementing al Shabaab's radical interpretation of *sharia.* However, as with the ICU, the actual implementation varied from one administration to the next (Gartenstein-Ross 2009). The Shura Council possessed the authority to overrule decisions made by individual administrations, such as when the Office for Supervising Foreign Agencies reversed the decision by some administrations to increase the number of aid agencies permitted to operate due to the drought in 2011 (Chothia 2011).

In most cases, al Shabaab enforced a strict *Salafist* interpretation of *sharia* in an effort to radically reform all aspects of Somali life and society. The group also

used *Salafi-Wahhabism* as a way to transcend clan loyalties and forge alliances between clans (Roque 2009).

The group's religious police, the Army of Hisbul, carried out public whippings and amputations for crimes such as stealing, drug use or improper dress and public executions for murder, adultery and other more serious crimes (Harnisch and Zimmerman 2010). All forms of entertainment such as movies, music, sports and dancing were prohibited as well as any public coed activities. Women were required to completely cover their body and were denied participation in most aspects of public life. Indeed, women were forbidden to go out in public at all unless accompanied by a male relative. Single women were often compelled to get married, sometimes on penalty of death if they refused (Albin-Lackey et al. 2010; Macleod and Flamand 2010).

While the emphasis was clearly placed upon policing the population, these administrations also collected taxes, built and repaired roads and bridges, and provided other public goods. However, these services also varied by administration (Gartenstein-Ross 2009).

Al Shabaab forced two major transitions on Somali society where the group was active. The first involved the imposition of strict *sharia* as discussed above. This observance of *Salafist* doctrine as law was alien to the vast majority of Somalis whose clan-based approach to conflict typically depended upon customary law and, in the case of an inter-clan dispute, negotiation between clan elders (Menkhaus 2007). However, the imposition of *sharia* bypassed both customary law and, in large part, the elders as well. Since most Somalis did not willingly accept this new order, al Shabaab often forced it upon them (Gartenstein-Ross 2009).

In early 2007, Ayman al-Zawahri released a statement encouraging al Shabaab and other Islamists in Somalia to employ suicide attacks to drive out the invading forces. Capitalizing on a power struggle between TFG president, Abdullahi Yusuf, and Prime Minister, Ali Mohamed Gedi, al Shabaab established itself as a formidable opposition force and began to recapture territory lost to the TFG.

Fighting in the capital grew fierce as al Shabaab and various other warlords and factions continued to oppose the TFG. By the end of 2007, the group would gain control of most of the capital- all but a tiny federal holdout protected by AU peacekeepers- but the civilian toll was alarming. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2007) reported that over 600,000 civilians fled Mogadishu in 2007 and over a million were left homeless.

While al Shabaab primarily targeted TFG, Ethiopian and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces, it was not yet strong enough to confront them in conventional battles. Rather, the group employed a variety of suicide blasts, car bombs and sniper attacks.

In April 2007, for example, the group exploded a car bomb outside the Ambassador Hotel in Mogadishu where TFG officials were known to stay. The blast killed mostly civilians. In June 2007, al Shabaab launched a suicide attack against the home of Prime Minister Gedi. Although Gedi himself was not injured, seven guards and the attacker were killed.

The TFG, itself largely considered a faction rather than a unity government, used the threat of terrorism as an excuse to request foreign assistance to defeat its political adversaries. However, internal division was also a problem. The president and prime minister were from different clans. Ahmed was from the Majeerteen Harti Darod clan, and Ghedi was from the Abgaal subclan of Mogadishu's Hawiye clan.

The two were bitter rivals and fought over clan politics. The dispute further dashed any hope of stabilizing the regime.

International support for the TFG also split. With only a fraction of the projected AU peacekeeping forces mobilized, Ethiopia began to complain that it bore the brunt of the support. Meanwhile, the UN accused Ethiopian forces of human rights abuses (Weinstein 2008).

In September 2007, the more moderate members of the former ICU met with the former TNG Deputy Prime Minister Hussein Mohamed Farrah and the former TNG Speaker of Parliament Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden[57] and formed the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS). The group approved a constitution, created a central committee and vowed to oppose the TFG and its allies (Menkhaus 2009b; Harnisch and Zimmerman 2010).

By the beginning of 2008, al Shabaab had begun to engage Ethiopian troops in more conventional battles and actually win. Having largely shifted away from its early guerrilla tactics, the group launched an offensive against Ethiopian and TFG forces and gained control over territory throughout southern Somalia (Harnisch and Zimmerman 2010; Curran 2011). In fact, already in January 2008, AU Commission Chairman, Alpha Konare, issued a warning that al Shabaab had captured areas outside of Mogadishu. Konare also expressed concerned that al Shabaab was enlisting additional fighters and planning to increase its territory (IRIN 2008). The AU was

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[57] President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed nominated Nur Hassan Hussein as Prime Minister after Ghedi resigned in October 2007. Yusuf himself was forced to resign at the end of 2008 (Lister 2012).

also alarmed at the group's success, and in February 2008, the U.S. State Department

designated al Shabaab a terrorist organization (Shinn 2011).[58]

The second transition that al Shabaab forced upon the Somali public began in

May 2008 after Ayro, the group's *emir*, was killed in his own home by an American

missile strike (Shinn 2010). Ayro was succeeded by Ahmed Abdi Aw-Mohamed

Godane, also known as Mukhtar Abu Zubair. Godane had trained with al-Qaeda and

fought in Afghanistan until 2001. He had also been an integral member of AIAI

(Shinn 2009).

Born in Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland, Godane was in many respects an

outsider from the beginning. Although he was no stranger to the cause, he hailed from

the Isaaq tribe in the North, and therefore did not have the support of his clan to count

on in the Deep South where al Shabaab mainly operated (Le Sage 2010; Abukar

2013). After becoming *emir* of the group in 2008, he began to refute clan loyalty and

impose the *takfiri* doctrine upon Somalis and fellow al Shabaab members alike. This

latter development took place as the Ethiopian occupation was beginning to wind

down, making al Shabaab's brutality that much more intolerable. Once Ethiopian

troops completely withdrew in January 2009, the group enjoyed minimal support from

the *Sufi* majority who clung to clan loyalty and resented the imposition of *Salafi*

doctrine on their daily lives (Harnisch and Zimmerman 2010).

Dwindling local support and strong clan loyalty among the group's rank and

file increased the need for foreign fighters. Therefore, al Shabaab also began to

develop its online media program through which it warned against the evils of

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[58] On 5 April, al Shabaab released a statement declaring that the designation was an honor (NEFA 2008). Al Qaeda responded by issuing its first public recognition of the group and encouraging Somalis to fight for an independent Islamic state (Shinn 2011).

democracy and denounced Western influence. Godane was shrewd enough to realize that in order to increase foreign recruits, he needed to elevate the conflict in Somalia beyond the local level (Thomas 2013). The group was particularly successful in attracting young Somalis from the diaspora, but it was also able to recruit a fair amount of non-Somalis as well (Bryden 2014).

The inclusion of a foreign contingent allowed al Shabaab to introduce unconventional tactics into its repertoire such as the use of suicide bombings and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Suicide is taboo in Somali culture and brings shame and disgrace upon the family (Byman 2012). Al Shabaab first employed martyrdom operations in 2006 against a government convoy, and it has depended upon the tactic more and more as the number of foreign recruits supplied willing operatives (Gartenstein-Ross 2009; Harnisch and Zimmerman 2010; Shinn 2011). Arabic and English are spoken in the group's martyrdom videos, demonstrating both their intended audience as well as the continued stigma of suicide in Somali culture (Vidino et al. 2010).

Likewise, al Shabaab also increased its use of IEDs dramatically. Often referred to as roadside bombs, IEDs were fairly uncommon in Somalia prior to 2006. The group largely depended upon drive-by assassinations using technicals- machine guns mounted on the back of a pick-up truck (McGregor 2008).

However, by 2011, IEDs had become the weapon of choice as unexploded artillery shells became more available. While the IEDs al Shabaab used were initially very crude, extracting the explosive material from the shells, packing the IED with shrapnel, and successfully activating the device with a mobile phone required much greater sophistication and technical expertise than is commonly available among the average Somali population. Therefore, the group's increasing reliance upon

explosives for IEDs and suicide vests is often attributed to foreign expertise and training (Harnisch and Zimmerman 2010; Shinn 2011).

In June 2008, the ARS and the TFG concluded a peace agreement calling for a 90-day ceasefire and the eventual withdrawal of Ethiopian troops (Kasaija 2010). However, Aweys rejected the agreement, and a split emerged between the moderate members of the ARS and the hardliners who, led by Aweys, formed the Asmara wing of the Alliance (ARS-A). Al Shabaab also sharply criticized the ARS for cooperating with the TFG (Menkhaus 2008; Gartenstein-Ross 2009).

In September 2008, al Shabaab announced that it had established a government administration in Kismayo and that it was planning to declare the Islamic Emirate of Somalia. The group stated that administrative posts would be allocated between al Shabaab, surviving ICU members and clan elders, however, various clan elders and ICU commanders that were left out of the negotiations criticized the arrangement (Grace 2008a).

In January 2009, three important factors would unfold. First, the ARS joined the TFG, and Sheik Sharif Ahmed, the former Commander in Chief of the ICU, emerged as the new President of the TFG (Le Sage 2010). Senior leaders within al Shabaab refused to acknowledge the agreement and the group launched attacks on the ARS, calling it a puppet of the TFG (Menkhaus 2009; Dagne 2010; Shinn 2011). Within a few months, the new coalition government had lost control of nearly all the territory the TFG recovered in 2007 (Shinn 2010). By July 2010, the government only controlled a small portion of Mogadishu and even that was only possible because of the assistance of 4,000 Ugandan and Burundian peacekeepers (Samatar 2010).

Second, Ethiopia withdrew its forces. Al Shabaab lost much of its popular support once Ethiopia pulled out. Somalis were willing to put up with the imposition

of strict religious mandates in exchange for liberation from Ethiopian occupation.
However once the Ethiopians left, support for the group decreased significantly as
people grew tired of its adherence to strict *sharia* and harsh punishments (Menkhaus
2009).[59] The group began to rely more and more on foreigners and forced conscripts
(Bruton 2009, Le Sage 2010).

Somali moderate groups that opposed al Shabaab took advantage of the
group's declining popularity. One such group is Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a (ASWJ). Also
known as "the Majority," ASWJ was formed in 1991 and is comprised of Somali *Sufi*
moderates. The group, which allied itself with the TFG, clashed with al Shabaab after
it began destroying the tombs of *Sufi* saints (Hassan 2009). While ASWJ receives
support from Ethiopia and can muster larger numbers than al Shabaab, its forces are
not as well trained, leaving ASWJ at a distinct disadvantage. Also, the group's
reliance on Ethiopia has led many Somalis to view it as a proxy of Addis Ababa
(Bruton 2009; Said 2015). Still, ASWJ continues to fight against al Shabaab with
support from federal forces (Gettleman 2009).

Third, under the leadership of Aweys, the ARS-A merged with three other
Islamist militias to form Hizbul Islam: Mu'askar Ras Kamboni (Ras Kamboni
Brigade), Jabhatul Islamiya (Islamic Front) and Mu'askar Anole (Anole Brigade)
(Lossi 2009, Dagne 2010, Le Sage 2010).[60] Seeing itself as now the largest and
strongest militia in Somalia, al Shabaab refused to join (Wise 2011).

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[59]Popular resistance against al Shabaab continued to escalate throughout 2009, culminating in mass
protests against the group throughout Mogadishu after al Shabaab launched a suicide attack against a
large graduation ceremony for doctors in December, killing 19 (Bruton 2010; Harnisch and
Zimmerman 2010; Lister 2012).

[60] ARS-A was led by Aweys and dominated by the Ayr clan. The Ras Kamboni Brigade was founded
by former commander of both AIAI and the ICU, Hassan Abdullah Hersi al-Turki, and dominated by
the Ogaden clan. The Anole Brigade was dominated by the Marehan clan but also had some fighters

The merger was doomed to fail from the beginning, and there was contention as clan rivals competed for control. In April 2009, the Anole Brigade clashed with the Ras Kamboni Brigade in a territorial dispute near the port city of Kismayo in the Southern Lower Juba province of Somalia (Roque 2009).

At times Hizbul Islam cooperated with al Shabaab, but there were also times when the two groups battled over territory (Le Sage 2010; Roggio 2010). For instance, in October 2009, a dispute erupted over control of Kismayo. This time the Ras Kamboni Brigade contended with al Shabaab. Kismayo had traditionally been an Ogaden city, and the contention created a rift in the Ras Kamboni Brigade itself. One group led by former AIAI commander, Hassan al-Turki, sided with al Shabaab against the other group, led by al-Turki's son-in-law, Ahmed Madobe. Al-Turki had more fully embraced al Shabaab's *Salafist* ideology and was, therefore, more willing to rise above clan politics and accept outside leadership in Kismayo. Madobe, on the other hand, was much more clannish and attempted to defend Ogaden clan interests in the port city (Hansen 2013).

The conflict also caused further division in Hizbul Islam with ARS-A and the Islamic Front aligning with al Shabaab, and the Anole Brigade remaining neutral. Al Shabaab claimed a clear victory and took control of the city (Hesse 2010). Over the next three months, al Shabaab successfully drove the Madobe faction out of Southern Somalia. Meanwhile, in February 2010, al-Turki's faction merged with al Shabaab (Dagne 2010; Höhne 2010).

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from the Harti clan, and the Somali Islamic Front was led by Mohamed Ibrahim Hayle and dominated by Hawiye sub-clans.

Hizbul Islam had been negotiating a merger with al Shabaab since 2009 when it became clear to Aweys that his group could not emerge as the dominant force. However, local disputes prevented any successful agreement for over a year (Roggio 2010). At the same time, disagreements among senior members of al Shabaab were brewing, primarily over Godane's authoritarian style of leadership.[61] A division eventually erupted between Godane (whose group consisted of a large number of foreign fighters)[62] and Robow, Aweys and Afghani (who formed a coalition of nationalists headed by Afghani). The nationalist group increasingly refused to take orders from Godane, and the two factions began to oppose one another (Bryden 2014).

In return, Godane made several public statements signaling that al Shabaab shared al Qaeda's vision of global *jihad* (a fight for global *jihad* has more appeal to foreign fighters than a local power struggle ever could). He made several attempts to alter the group's international image such as (1) adopting the use of suicide bombers, which were previously unheard of in Somalia, (2) changing the group's name to *Harakat al Shabaab al-Mujahidin* (Mujahidin Youth Movement) in an effort to stress its global agenda, and (3) Godane stopped using the Somali flag and nationalist slogans and began forcing Somali women to marry foreign fighters (Bruton and Williams 2014).

Despite Godane's efforts to change the face of the group, both factions continued to be predominantly concerned with the local power struggle rather than

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[61] Al Shabaab had previously been ruled collectively by the senior leadership rather than according to the dictatorial approach assumed by Godane (Abukar 2013).

[62] The majority of the group's non-Somali foreign fighters come from Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Sudan and are believed to have been recruited by third party organizations such as Kenya's Muslim Youth Center (MYC) (Anzalone 2012).

global *jihad*, suggesting that Godane's sworn allegiance to al-Qaeda and other cosmetic changes were simply attempts to gain outside support, convince foreign fighters to stay and to regain control over a quickly disintegrating group (Ploch 2010, Omar 2012). While some al Shabaab's leaders were believed to have trained with al Qaeda in Afghanistan, most foot soldiers knew very little about al Qaeda (Lister 2012).

Despite the local flavor of both groups, there were key differences in ideology between them. The nationalist faction rejected an alliance with al-Qaeda (however superficial it may be), the involvement of foreign fighters and especially the practice of the purging of Islam by killing apostate Muslims (Bryden 2014). As a result of these differences, intense fighting broke out between the two al Shabaab factions.

In July 2010, IGAD approved an additional 2,000 AMISOM troops to fight al Shabaab. Particularly interesting is the fact that IGAD did not preclude bordering states- including Ethiopia- from contributing troops. This increase in troops (particularly Ethiopian troops) offered the two opposing al Shabaab factions a common enemy to converge around. A week later, the group launched the retaliatory twin suicide attacks in Kampala. These attacks can be viewed as an effort to coerce Uganda to withdraw its troops from Somalia and as a warning to other countries as well. However, the attacks can also be seen as an effort to instigate a harsh reaction from the international community and provoke a surge of foreign troops (particularly Ethiopian troops), which had previously been their greatest source of legitimacy and support.

To some extent, the provocation was fruitful. Literally within hours of the attacks, Ugandan forces retaliated by bombing a residential area of Mogadishu, generating support for al Shabaab and hatred for the TFG. Ethiopia's official reaction

was more tempered, however. In accordance with U.S. policy, Addis Ababa ruled out

sending more troops to Somalia at that time (Holzer 2010).

Disagreements between the two factions continued over a variety of divisive

issues such as whether to merge with Hizbul Islam (Godane was against the merger)

and the Shura Council's decision to ban aid agencies from assisting during the famine

(Bruton 2010). In September 2010, Robow (a deputy leader of the group) moved his

militia out of Mogadishu and went back to the Bay region in protest of Godane's

leadership (Dagne 2010; Abukar 2013). The ongoing contention eventually led to al

Afghani's elevation to the position of *emir* of the nationalist faction in December

2010 (Shinn 2011). Al Afghani allowed the merger with Hizbul Islam to go through,

and it officially joined ranks with al Shabaab on 24 December 2010 (Roggio 2010).

Fighting between al Shabaab and Hizbul Islam quickly emerged (Shinn 2011).

Infighting within al Shabaab itself also began to take its toll, and by August 2011, al

Shabaab once again lost control of Mogadishu to federal forces with the help of

AMISOM troops (Omar 2012; Hansen 2013).[63]

On October 16, 2011 Operation Linda Nchi was launched as Kenyan forces

crossed over into southern Somalia with a two-fold mission: capture Kismayo and

wipe out al Shabaab (Anderson and McKnight 2015). Kenya's decision to invade

Somalia came after two years of planning and preparation. Al Shabaab had long

created both regional security concerns and posed a direct threat to the Kenyan

economy.

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[63] Uganda was the first African country to contribute troops to AMISOM in March 2007. Kenyan forces joined the struggle against al Shabaab in October 2011 and were officially integrated into AMISOM in June 2012.

A number of factors came to a head in 2011 that prompted Kenya to act when it did. First, the ongoing refugee crisis along the Kenyan-Somali border was exacerbated by the drought that devastated East Africa in mid-2011 (Chothia 2011; Gettleman 2011). Kenya accused al Shabaab of attacking aid workers on the Kenyan side of the border (Hirsch 2015). Second, the recent success of AMISOM forces in Mogadishu, no doubt, encouraged Kenya to kick al Shabaab while it was down. And third, Kenya has a vested interest in stabilizing southern Somalia as it is actively developing its own northern regions (Williams 2016).

The same day that a Kenyan battalion crossed into Somalia to create a 100 kilometer buffer zone, air support targeted al Shabaab positions near Qoqani in Lower Jubba. Kenya's hopes of wiping out al Shabaab were premature, however. The next day, al Shabaab hit a Kenyan patrol boat with a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) off the coast of Lamu, injuring three.

On 18 October, the group dispatched a suicide operative who exploded a car bomb near the Foreign Ministry in Mogadishu. The attack occurred while Kenyan Defense Minister, Mohammed Yusuf Haji, and Foreign Minister, Moses Wetangula, were visiting. No one was injured, however, as the planned route to the airport had been changed last minute.

The next day, al Shabaab exploded a remote-control bomb near the seaport in Mogadishu. The group attacked Kenyan soldiers on 21 October and again on 27 October. The same day, al Shabaab militants killed two Ministry of Education officials. On 28 October, a paramilitary vehicle from the Kenyan General Services Unit (GSU) hit a roadside bomb planted 7 km from Garissa, Kenya.

The attacks continued through November and December with al Shabaab militants ambushing Kenyan convoys with RPGs, killing tourists in Kenya, throwing

hand grenades into a church and assaulting Kenyan police officers and government officials (Zimmermann and Khatib 2012).

Pushback from AMISOM forces was fierce. While al Shabaab did not break, it did retreat. And in its absence, clans began to clash as they competed for local power and control over resources. Similar to the period following the fall of the Barre regime, chaos ensued. The TFG was too divided and corrupt to maintain control in the capital much less over the rest of the country. Nearly two dozen mini-states were established-many with well-armed militias- that not only fought al Shabaab, but also battled each other (Gettleman 2011).

In December 2011, senior al Shabaab members met and agreed to change the name of the group to *Imaarah Islamiyah* (Islamic Authority), stating that they were no longer young. The senior members also agreed to alter the tactics of the organization and to establish a Shura Council for the Islamic Emirate of Somalia. Godane, who did not attend the meeting, posted a message on the group's twitter page denying any such name change (Odowa 2011).

For two years, internal struggles over practical matters such as the value of allying with al Qaeda, the *takfiri* doctrine and the inclusion of foreign fighters prevented al Shabaab from making any real headway toward its strategic goals (Lister 2012). However, in June 2013, the group's infighting came to a head (Bryden 2014). The two contingents clashed in Barawe. Afghani was killed by Godane's men while Aweys and Robow fled. Aweys cut a deal with the TFG, and there have been unsubstantiated rumors that Robow, who escaped to his Rahanweyn clan in the Bay and Bakol region, also defected to the Somali government.

Godane launched an attack against any remaining supporters of Aweys and Robow within the ranks of the group, including foreign fighters such as al Amriki

(Harper 2012; Abukar 2013). Godane's purge of the nationalist faction had a three-fold effect.

First, it consolidated Godane's power and allowed him to more convincingly promote the image of a group committed to international *jihad* and second, it greatly reduced al Shabaab's military capacity as the majority of the group's foot soldiers came from Robow's Rahanweyn clan (Abbink 2009). Third, Godane's purge of foreigners loyal to Robow and Aweys greatly jeopardized the group's appeal for foreign fighters, and revealed that the *jihad* in Somalia was first and foremost a local struggle for power (Abukar 2013). Yet the group remained a force to be reckoned with.

On November 12, 2013, the United Nations Security Council authorized an additional 4,000 peacekeepers in Somalia to battle al Shabaab militants (Reuters 2013). By July 2014, Kenya alone had 4,400 soldiers fighting in southern Somalia and the Kenyan navy patrolled Somali waters. A 'temporary' increase in troop strength brought the total number to 22,126 AMISOM forces in Somalia. Although, many of these were simply a reallocation of Ethiopian forces that were already deployed to Somalia (Anderson 2014).

Still, simply sending more troops is not the answer. The main problem is that the federal government has little (if any) legitimacy in the eyes of the people. More troops can never solve that problem. The UN has effectively chosen sides in a long and bloody civil war, further delegitimizing the federal government in the eyes of many Somalis and actually exacerbating the violence (Lynch 2013).

AMISOM initially attempted to defeat the group by liberating al Shabaab controlled territories and then holding them. This approach was effective to a degree as it cost the group in two ways. First, a few senior leaders were killed in the process.

Second, the loss of towns often meant the loss of profits from taxing local businesses and from operating illicit smuggling operations. It is estimated that al Shabaab raised approximately $70 to $100 million annually from taxing local businesses (Harnisch and Zimmerman 2010). The group also earned an estimated $15 million by illegally exporting charcoal (Chothia 2011).

However, this approach also cost AMISOM as well. First of all, al Shabaab would often retreat at the sight of AMISOM forces and surrender towns without a fight, destroying wells, clinics and most other vital infrastructure as they left. Then, the group would set up camp a few kilometers away. As AMISOM forces gained control of more and more towns, its critical supply lines grew longer and more vulnerable and its troop strength began to grow thin. Al Shabaab would then attack AMISOM forces where they were most vulnerable with sporadic hit and run tactics and by planting improvised explosive devices (IEDs) along major supply routes (Williams 2016). However, al Shabaab was not AMISOM's greatest problem.

Not only did AMISOM troops lack properly-trained personnel to govern in these newly-acquired areas, but the presence of foreign troops (and especially Ethiopian troops) caused resentment among the residents. AMISOM forces have been implicated in sexually abusing and exploiting Somali women and young girls (Ahmed et al. 2015). At the other extreme, AMISOM national contingents often engaged in illicit side deals with the locals. For example, Kenyan troops allowed charcoal and sugar to be smuggled through Kismayo, indirectly aiding al Shabaab and costing AMISOM considerable legitimacy (Anderson and McKnight 2015).[64]

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[64] Al Shabaab, the Ras Kamboni Brigade and local merchants all benefit from the export of charcoal and sugar. Al Shabaab was believed to be earning approximately one million per month by taxing imports and exports transported through the port of Kismayo (Roble 2010). It is estimated that al

Furthermore, the presence of Somali National Army (SNA) troops was an affront to local leaders and powerbrokers. This was especially true since many SNA recruits come from the Hawiye clan. Given the nature of clan politics in Somalia, the high representation of Hawiye in the SNA created suspicion that its interests in southern Somalia were not neutral (McConnell 2014). In other words, it was obvious to everyone involved that capturing state resources was the name of the game, not rebuilding the Somali state. Therefore, the SNA was perceived as an agent of the Hawiye clan rather than an agent of the federal government.

As the localized struggle for resources raged on, al Shabaab was largely adapting to the situation. Robinson (2007) argues that successful military action against militant groups can often disperse rather than defeat such organizations, effectively exporting terrorism across state borders (such as occurred with Russian military intervention in the second Chechen War).

This is largely what happened with al Shabaab. Rather than attempting to create a state within a state and govern such as IS has done, al Shabaab has instead taken a more transnational course of action by adopting a guerrilla-style hit and run approach aimed at destabilizing the entire region. This new approach is facilitated by Somalia's long and poorly-protected border with Kenya. While the Shura Council dictates strategic goals, individual al Shabaab militias continue to be commanded locally. AMISOM needs to change its approach as well if it ever hopes to be effective in ridding Somalia of al Shabaab.

Shabaab is actually drawing more revenue now from taxing trucking routes than it did when it controlled the port of Kismayo (Anderson and McKnight 2015).

Al Shabaab retaliated against AMISOM involvement with twin suicide attacks in Uganda, the much-publicized Westgate Shopping Mall attack in Nairobi and again when the group attacked a university in Garissa. The group has also continued to orchestrate attacks against Ugandan, Kenyan and Burundian AMISOM bases. These operations have evolved into complex hybrid attacks, utilizing both suicide bombers and suicide infantry. After armed operatives launch an assault and secure access for the suicide bombers, they detonate themselves as well to maximize casualties (Bryden 2014).

Godane continued to lead al Shabaab until he was killed in a U.S. drone strike in Southern Somalia on September 1, 2014. Eight days later, Ahmad Umar (also known as Abu Ubaidah), one of Godane's generals, succeeded him as the group's *emir* (Chothia 2014).

Umar was a member of AIAI since 1996 and later became an officer in the ICU. He was educated and headed a Qur'anic school in Kismayo. Umar became a member of al Shabaab in 2007 and worked as Ayro's assistant. In 2008, he became Godane's assistant after Ayro was assassinated. Umar was promoted to deputy governor for the group over the Lower Jubba region in late 2008 and on 29 June, 2009, Umar was again promoted to governor of Bay and Bakool regions.[65] As al Shabaab's governor, he imposed a *Salafist* interpretation of *sharia*, enforced a strict code of conduct on humanitarian workers operating in the regions and absolutely forbade any and all aspects of Western culture. In January 2012, Godane appointed Umar as transitional military commander of Bay, Bakool, and Gedo regions. Godane

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[65] During this period, Umar was known as Mahad Omar Abdikarim.

promoted Umar again in November 2013. This time the appointment was to the position of advisor. It is speculated that Umar influenced Godane's decision to purge the group's foreign fighters in 2012-2013. He is also credited as leading the contingent that murdered al Amriki. From Godane's advisor, Umar moved up to oversee al Shabaab's office of the interior where he largely dictated the group's domestic policy. From that position, Umar became *emir* (Cleaves 2015).

On 5 October 2014, Somali and AU troops forced al Shabaab out of the coastal city of Barawe, the group's only remaining stronghold and the location of its headquarters for the past six years. Control of Barawe afforded al-Shabaab strategic access to a major route for importing weapons, fighters and finances (AMISOM 2014).

Umar firmly adheres to the *takfiri* doctrine and is infamous for his brutality. He is reported to be equally ruthless in his leadership. When the news broke that the group's spiritual leader, Abdul Qadir Mumin, pledged *bay'ah* to IS in October 2015 with roughly 100 (mostly younger) followers, Umar responded by directing the Amniyat, al Shabaab's secret police, to start sniffing out and arresting other members who might also pledge their allegiance to IS (Kriel and Duggan 2015). Hussein Hassan, a popular preacher based in Kenya who once supported al Shabaab, has also been influencing members to pledge allegiance to Baghdadi (IISS 2015).

The faction of fighters drawn to IS represents just one of Umar's problems. There are also an unknown number of members that oppose the *takfiri* doctrine. Representative of this group is former intelligence chief, Zakariya Ismail Ahmed Hersi, who surrendered to authorities in December 2014. "There were a number of us who opposed the leadership's approach and its flawed doctrine," Hersi revealed to journalists in January 2015. Hersi referred to the *takfiri* doctrine as a "distorted form

of the holy *jihad*, which has resulted in countless innocent Somali citizens being killed" (AFP 2015).

Even though most people in the West have only become aware of al Shabaab since the attack on the Westgate Shopping Mall in September 2013, the group is fighting a battle that has raged on for decades. At the heart of the matter are clan politics, border conflicts, and the age-old issue of who possesses the legal and legitimate right to rule Somalia (Bruton and Williams 2014).

In February 2015, an al Shabaab operative carried out a suicide attack at the Central Hotel in Mogadishu, killing the deputy mayor, two legislators and 23 others. Nearly 50 more were seriously injured. The following month, 24 people were killed when the group laid siege to the Maka Al-Mukarramah Hotel in Mogadishu. The group continues to launch increasingly deadly guerrilla attacks such as the assault on a Kenyan army camp in El-Adde in January 2016 in which 200 soldiers died.[66] Although the Kenyan government denies the death toll, al Shabaab's tactics are successfully hindering AMISOM forces.

In February 2016, Ambassador Maman Sidikou claimed that AMISOM forces had liberated 80% of Somali territory. Despite the fact that there are still more than 22,000 AMISOM forces in southern Somalia today, poor co-ordination and a lack of cooperation prevents them from being effective. Al Shabaab continues to enjoy freedom of movement and maintains a troop strength of approximately 7,000 fighters (Williams 2016).

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[66] Al Shabaab posted a video of the assault, claiming to have killed over 100 Kenyan soldiers (News Desk 2016).

In March 2016, a US airstrike hit the group's Raso training camp in the central Hiran region, killing almost 70 militants and wounding dozens more. Among the victims were several al Shabaab commanders who were there for the graduation of hundreds of recent recruits.

Al Shabaab initially focused on nationalism and controlling Somali territory, therefore the target of the group's violence was TFG forces and the Ethiopian military. After Godane took over leadership, he adopted the *takfiri* doctrine and began to specifically target apostates. Once the Ethiopians pulled out, the group's audience largely shifted to internal enemies. This targeting of everyday Somalis cost al Shabaab many of its followers and created a huge rift within the organization. The group fractured and split and Godane lost several top commanders and a large number of foot soldiers as a result. Al Shabaab has since also lost most of the territory under its control and has altered its operational tactics as well. It transitioned from an insurgent group dedicated to overthrowing the corrupt Somali government and replacing it with *sharia* to an organization reliant upon violence to manipulate foreign governments. The group now attacks mainly foreign targets. Whether this change is out of necessity, due to military defeats and the loss of Mogadishu, Kismayo and Barawe, or whether al-Shabaab has legitimately changed its ideological focus from national interests to global *jihad* remains a matter of speculation. The conflict remains largely unresolved to this day.

Chapter Five: The Strategic Terrorism of al Shabaab

"Everything in strategy is very simple,
but that does not mean that everything is very easy"
-Clausewitz

5.1: Introduction

In the previous chapter, I concluded that al Shabaab has transitioned from an insurgent group that targeted the corrupt TFG and Ethiopian invaders to an organization that dedicated to the use of violence to manipulate foreign governments. In this chapter, I consider how al Shabaab devised its strategic objectives as well as the extent that ideological, tribal and religious factors helped to shape, advance or hinder those goals. In what ways are these objectives different from the group's immediate predecessors and why? Have these goals been consistent? If not, how have they changed and evolved since the group's inception? I then explore whether al Shabaab is engaged in strategic terrorism, and I consider whether this strategy is likely to be successful.

I begin by identifying al Shabaab's theoretical underpinnings, tracing any influences the group may have adopted from its predecessors and exploring the practical implications of these influences on the group's strategic goals and tactical use of violence. Next, the chapter details the various stages that al Shabaab has moved through and identifies which stage the group is in now. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief analysis as to whether al Shabaab employs strategic terrorism or whether it should be considered a guerrilla insurgency.

5.2: Militant Groups in Somalia

As previously mentioned, disunity is endemic in Somalia. The ongoing conflict in the country is much more complex than any one cleavage (i.e., religious versus secular or Islam versus Christianity) can explain. Ambitious warlords, corrupt politicians, greedy businessmen and constantly shifting alliances prevail in the place of stable political institutions (ICG 2006). Even in the relatively stable autonomous region of Somaliland, governance stems from the political will of the clans to cooperate and not from official political institutions. This absence of effective top-down governance in the face of strong clan-based loyalties is a reality that deserves recognition (Menkhaus 2007).

Gaining the trust of the people is critical to uniting them behind any single cause. Organizations in Somalia might gain the local support of the people in any number of ways. First, they must be careful not to abuse the people as the TFG forces, warlords and gangster politicians have typically done. A young man in his mid-twenties who grew up in Mogadishu told me that he remembers seeing armed-men in pick-up trucks going into stores and businesses to collect "taxes." Often, those who did not pay were beaten or worse. The men also sometimes took women and children as payment. While the people definitely feared these men, they also hated them and it is not difficult to understand why they would welcome Islamist groups such as the ICU or al Shabaab as an alternative (Sharmáke 2016).

Second, insurgent groups in Somalia might earn a measure of respect in the eyes of the local population by fighting foreign forces such as Ethiopian, American, and AU peacekeeping troops largely considered invaders by ordinary Somalis. Armed groups in Somalia may also gain the public trust by offering protection, enforcing laws and punishing infractions as the ICU militias did. In return, once an organization

has earned the trust of the people, they often enjoy support from religious leaders, local mosques, Somali businesses and individuals in the form of food, water, shelter and clothing. Most importantly, such groups gain the perception of legitimacy in the eyes of the people (Seery 2009).

Armed groups in Somalia also frequently receive arms and munitions through soldiers who defect from the TFG. These soldiers are equipped with weapons and supplies provided mainly by Ethiopia, but also by the United States and other foreign governments. Thus, Somali armed factions tend to be well-armed. Finances are commonly obtained by Somalis living abroad who send remittances (Lindley 2010; Rahim 2016). Financing also flows directly from Saudi Arabia and through Muslim charities such as the World Assembly for Muslim Youth (WAMY) and the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) (Saggiomo 2011).

The main point to be made is that al Shabaab did not emerge in a vacuum. Both its ideological underpinnings and its strategic objectives are in many ways connected to the broader context and adopted from groups that came before it. The following is a summary of the major arteries of terrorism in Somalia prior to the emergence of al Shabaab. In this section, I will examine AIAI, the ICU and the limited role of al Qaeda in Somalia. I will compare and contrast these group's ideological underpinnings and strategic objectives, and I will consider any continuity between them. I will demonstrate that, for the most part, the main division within these groups has been between the moderate and radical elements. As these elements battled each other, factions within have formed, splintered, disintegrated and then re-emerged again under the same leadership with different names. The same would later be true of al Shabaab.

5.2.1: Al Ittihad al Islamiyya (AIAI)

AIAI is a *Salafist* group that draws its influences from the *Wahhabi* tradition in Saudi Arabia. While there is some speculation regarding the level of involvement AIAI may have had with al Qaeda,[67] it is doubtful that the group adopted its *Wahhabism* from al Qaeda as Somalia has enjoyed a direct link with the Arabian Peninsula for centuries (Budge 2014). Not to mention, when al Qaeda did attempt to establish itself in Somalia, its operatives were attacked by bandits and extorted by the various clans. In the end, these obstacles and the overall lack of appeal of *Salafi* Islam among the *Sufi* majority precluded al Qaeda from establishing a franchise in Somalia (Stevenson 2007; Shinn 2011).[68]

Neither did AIAI employ strategic terrorism. While the group technically falls within the *jihadist* camp given its emphasis on violence, AIAI was largely attempting to replace some semblance of law and order in the chaos that followed the collapse of the Barre regime in 1991. As such, it acted more like a pseudo-government than a terrorist organization. By providing public services and collecting taxes, it attempted to win broad popular support and gain legitimacy in the eyes of the people. In fact, it is not entirely unlikely that AIAI might have taken a more peaceful route through mainstream politics had the opportunity been available. However, given the structure of society in Somalia, clan politics and the sheer power of the warlords at the time, such an option was not viable (Menkhaus 2013b).

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[67] U.S. intelligence reports suggest that AIAI provided safe haven for three al Qaeda operatives following the embassy bombings in 1998 (Marquardt and Shinn 2009). However, Menkhaus (2004b) points to the facts that (1) no Somalis hold positions in al Qaeda's top leadership and (2) no Somalis have been involved in attacks against Western targets outside of Somalia until 2003.

[68] However, al Qaeda was able to recruit a few young men such as Ayro and Godane to train in Afghanistan (Shinn 2011).

As stated earlier, AIAI's ideology was a combination of *Salafism* and nationalism, and its primary goals were to oust the corrupt Barre regime, establish an Islamic government in Somalia and free the Ogaden region (Stevenson 2007; Gartenstein-Ross 2009). While Aideed's United Somali Congress deserves most of the credit for defeating Barre, it was a collaborative effort.

Although the extent of AIAI's actual involvement in overthrowing Siad Barre in 1991 is largely unknown, what is known is that the group never rose to the level of prominence in Somalia as the ICU briefly did. Rather, AIAI's heyday came after the state collapsed when the group governed the town of Luuq for five years from 1991 to 1996 and launched a string of terrorist attacks in Ethiopia in the 1990s (Menkhaus 2005; Shinn 2011).With the successful overthrow of the Barre regime, AIAI focused on its remaining two goals of establishing an Islamic government and freeing the Ogaden region from Ethiopian control.

Regarding AIAI's second goal of establishing an Islamic government in Somalia, the absence of a central government obviously created a vacuum in which various groups competed for power. However, the specific absence of the secular/socialist Barre regime, which had ruthlessly stifled any expression of religious or tribal identification, meant that competition could now be framed in both tribal and religious contexts.

The main contenders in this competition emerged as (1) the *Salafist* Mogadishu Group (dominated by the Hawiye/Habr Gedir sub-clan) which favored a strong central government and was staunchly anti-Ethiopian, and (2) the anti-Islamist SRRC (dominated by the Darood clan-family) which favored a decentralized state and was pro-Ethiopian. Aweys, who led AIAI, was also a prominent member among the

Mogadishu Group. Although the Islamists achieved temporary success between 2000-2003 with the TNG, AIAI was already disbanded by December 1998.

AIAI also failed to achieve its third strategic objective, freeing the Ogaden region from Ethiopian control. Its tactics were initially limited to terrorist attacks against Ethiopian forces. In 1996, AIAI attempted to assassinate the Ethiopian minister of transportation in Addis Ababa. Although the attempt failed, the minister of transportation was seriously injured. The group is also suspected of perpetrating a string of explosions in Addis Ababa in 1996 and 1997 and kidnapping a number of relief workers in 1998 (Menkhaus 2013b).

AIAI's terrorist activity elicited harsh responses from Ethiopian security forces. On 18 September 1996, the Ethiopian army attacked AIAI forces in the district of Luuq. Over the next two years, AIAI fought both Ethiopian forces and later mainly Somali National Front (SNF) militias receiving substantial support from Ethiopia. The fighting ended when a truce was negotiated at a peace conference held in December 1998 (Omar 2012). Many of AIAI's members fled to Yemen. Aweys later became a prominent member of the ICU (Bryden 2006).

5.2.2: The Union of Islamic Courts (ICU)

The ICU can largely be seen as an extension of AIAI. After AIAI was defeated in 1998, Aweys and other key players in AIAI simply laid low and regrouped to continue the fight another day. When they re-emerged as the ICU, no one had any illusions as to where this "new" group had come from. Ethiopia feared a continuation of AIAI-style attacks while the U.S. suspected that the ICU continued to maintain AIAI's alleged connection with al Qaeda (Bruton 2009; Shay 2010). Despite bin

Laden's vow to fight foreign troops on Somali soil, the ICU's practical relationship with al Qaeda is also highly questionable. In fact, the ICU even went so far as to publicly denounce Al Qaeda (Dagne, 2010).

In this respect, one can draw very similar conclusions regarding the ideological makeup of the ICU as with AIAI. Neither group employed strategic terrorism. And while the ICU is technically a *jihadist* organization, like AIAI it was also so heavily involved in governance that one has to wonder whether, given different circumstances, the group might not have opted for a more peaceful alternative.

The answer to this question is definitely maybe. The ICU was internally divided between two main groups and each had its own unique objective. The first group was led by Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and consisted of the moderates who wanted to work with the TFG, and consequently, with Ethiopia. The second group was led by Aweys and consisted of the *Salafi* faction who wanted to overthrow the TFG, impose *sharia* and reclaim the contested lands in Ethiopia and Kenya that constituted Greater Somalia (Terdman 2008).

Whether the ICU might have taken a more peaceful path and renounce its *jihadi* ways depends on which element might have ultimately dominated the group. Given that the ICU was defeated and dissolved in 2007, it is impossible to know the answer to this question with total certainty. However, a short exercise in counterfactuals can be useful here.

Even though the application of *sharia* and secular law was patchwork in the lower-level courts, the *Salafi* faction clearly dominated the ICU in 2006. Aweys headed the Shura Council and the hardliners controlled the ICU's armed militias (Le

Sage 2009). As long as Aweys and the hardliner faction maintained the upper hand, it is safe to assume that the ICU would have remained a *jihadist* organization.

However, the *Salafi* hardliners were not at all popular with the *Sufi* majority in Somalia (Menkhaus 2002; Dalmar 2015). Therefore, had the moderates been able to influence the future course of the group, given their level of popular support and their willingness to work with the TFG, the ICU would most likely have made the transition to an *Islamist* group and possibly even denounced violence.

The ICU shared AIAI's vision of freeing the Ogaden region from Ethiopian control, however, its other strategic objectives were somewhat different. First, while AIAI initially faced Barre as a major obstacle, the ICU had to contend with the ARPCT. Second, as already noted, the *Salafi* faction of the ICU wanted to establish an Islamic government in Somalia while the moderate faction wanted to cooperate with the TFG.

The ICU was clearly successful in achieving it first goal of defeating the ARPCT. As for its second strategic objective, The ICU was never able to establish an Islamic government over the whole of Somalia. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed did, however, serve as president of Somalia under the TFG from 2009-2012. Regarding its third goal, the ICU engaged Ethiopian troops directly and supported two armed insurgencies against Ethiopia: the Oromo Liberation Front and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (Connell 2009). Despite these efforts, the ICU failed to free the Ogaden region from Ethiopian control.

5.2.3: Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda has been more successful in East Africa and the Horn than anywhere else in sub-Saharan Africa. Osama bin Laden operated out of Sudan between 1991 and 1996, and al Qaeda later claimed credit for the 1998 attacks on the two U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and the 2002 hotel bombing in Kenya. The 9/11 attacks, combined with a number of other factors, culminated in a change of U.S. foreign policy toward Somalia from mostly humanitarian and reconstruction efforts to focusing primarily on counterterrorism. While 9/11 served as the main impetus for this switch, other reasons included the 1998 attacks on the two U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, Somalia's proximity to the Middle East, and the suspicion that al Qaeda may try to relocate its base of operation to Somalia (Riedel 2007).

Declassified al Qaeda documents reveal that Osama bin Laden considered Somalia to be a potential safe haven and possibly even the next Afghanistan. Abu Hafs al Masri, a top al Qaeda lieutenant, travelled to Somalia frequently to determine the potential ability of Somali Islamists and to equip and train *jihadists* (Watts et al. 2007).

In December 1992, UNITAF began to arrive in Mogadishu to deliver food to starving Somalis. On December 29, al Qaeda exploded a bomb at the Gold Mohur Hotel in Aden, Yemen where U.S. troops lodged on their way to Somalia. The attack failed, however, as the troops were already en route to Somalia (Shinn 2007).

Later in February 1993, an elite group of seasoned al Qaeda operatives arrived in Somalia. They set up three training camps and solicited the aid of AIAI fighters to target U.S. operations in the Arabian Peninsula. Al Qaeda also assisted Mohamed Farah Aideed, a prominent Mogadishu warlord who fought in the resistance against UNITAF forces (Kohlmann 2009). The U.S. pulled out of the operation in October

1993 after Aideed's militia shot down a special forces Black Hawk helicopter (Shinn 2009).

Short-lived victories aside, bin Laden believed that conditions in Somalia would create a steady supply of willing recruits, eager to fight against the foreign invaders. However, Somalia turned out to be far different than anticipated. Al Qaeda operatives met with massive corruption in bordering states only to be extorted by rival Somali clans and attacked by Somali gangs once they entered Somalia (Riedel 2007).

Somali clan leaders were largely in agreement concerning their desire to expel U.S. forces from Somalia. However, they were even more concerned with defending their own clan's interests against the claims of other clans. Abu Hafs attempted to create a sense of unity among the various leaders, but to no avail. The cost of operating in Somalia proved too high for al Qaeda (Watts et al. 2007).

Al Qaeda continued to hold an interest in Somalia, and it encouraged Somalis to wage *jihad* against foreign forces in Somalia. U.S. intelligence, however, was not aware of the threat that al Qaeda posed in the region until 1996 (Kean 2011). Following the embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam on August 7 1998, the U.S. actively pursued three al Qaeda operatives linked to the attacks (Fazul Abdullah Muhammad, Abu Taha al-Sudani and Salah Ali Salah Nabhan). Intelligence reports suggested that AIAI had provided safe haven for the three operatives in Somalia (Marquardt and Shinn 2009; Vidino 2010).

In 2007, al-Sudani was killed in an Ethiopian airstrike near the Kenya-Somali border (Grace 2008b; Shinn 2009). Nabhan appeared in an al Shabaab promotional video in 2008. He was allegedly involved in training for the organization in Southern Somalia. Nabhan died on September 14, 2009 near Baraawe, along with three Somali al Shabaab members, when four American military helicopters fired upon their trucks

(Gettleman 2009; Harnisch and Zimmerman 2010). Lastly, Muhammad was killed at a military checkpoint outside Mogadishu on 7 June, 2011 (Omar 2011).

While al Qaeda was clearly involved in Somalia during the early 1990s, the extent of its involvement is still undetermined- as is the nature of its relationship with the groups under examination (Dagne 2002). What is clear is that the presence of al Qaeda in Somalia has failed to materialize into the threat originally predicted by Washington. In addition to the difficulty of operating in a failed state, Somalia's *Sufi* majority and clan-based system makes it an unfavorable location for al Qaeda to thrive in (Watts et al. 2007).

Even though al Shabaab officially joined al Qaeda in 2012, Gartenstein-Ross (2009) points to earlier evidence of the group's ties to al Qaeda such as Godane's press releases proclaiming global *jihad* and the various messages released by American member, Abu Mansoor al-Amriki, as proof of the group's ideological alignment with Al Qaeda.

In one message released in January 2008, Amriki quoted Qutb and Maududi and insisted that al Shabaab would never accept anything short of *sharia* in Somalia. Amriki insisted that this refusal to compromise with the *kaafir* (infidel) governments distinguished al Shabaab from the ARS who had sold out and left the path of *jihad*. Amriki also criticized the ICU for their willingness to cooperate with clan politics and for abiding by the borders delimited by the *taghoot* (a ruler that does not follow *sharia*).[69] Finally, Amriki claimed that al Shabaab's methodology is the same as bin Laden's, Zawahiri's and Zarqawi's.

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[69] I can only assume that Amriki was referring to the moderate faction within the ICU that accepted political concessions from the TFG and ultimately accepted man-made borders, because the hardliners within the ICU rejected the existing borders and wanted to establish Greater Somalia.

Gartenstein-Ross (2009) also points to the fact that Godane increased the number of foreign fighters, adopted the tactic of suicide attacks (which were previously unacceptable in Somalia), and upgraded the quality and sheer quantity of the group's media releases as indications of al Shabaab's ideological connection to al Qaeda.

Still, there are reasons to doubt the practicality of the relationship between al Qaeda and al Shabaab. It is true that Godane increased the number of foreign recruits and adopted the tactic of suicide attacks. By 2009 more than twenty young men joined al Shabaab from America alone. One American recruit, Shirwa Ahmed, was among the group's first suicide bombers in October 2008 (Ephron et al. 2009). Al Shabaab has successfully recruited young men from Canada as well (Abdulkadir 2012). So how does one explain Godane's reliance on foreign recruits if it is not due to a strong working relationship with al Qaeda?

First of all, one has to consider Godane's situation at the time that he assumed leadership of al Shabaab. From a strategic standpoint, it made perfect sense for Godane to shift from a predominantly nationalist position to an Islamist focus as his organization was facing increasing opposition from the clans over the imposition of *Salafist* doctrine. This became particularly relevant as the Ethiopian invasion drew to a close and the group lost its main rallying cause. Godane needed to justify the harsh interpretation of *sharia* as Somalis were no longer willing to accept it as the lesser evil. The increasing quality and quantity of al Shabaab's media releases served this purpose.

The shift to a primarily Islamist agenda, in turn, created a rift between the nationalist faction led by al Afghani and those that were loyal to Godane. At the heart of this rift is the same issue that rose up again and again: whether to topple the corrupt

apostate regime and establish a state based on *sharia* first or attack the far enemy first.[70] The ensuing power struggle created the need for Godane to recruit outsiders. While agreeing that Somalia belonged to Allah and therefore should be ruled according to *sharia*, the earlier leadership (2006-2008) played the patronage game and were careful to work within clan politics as much as possible.

Godane declared war on the old leadership and eventually purged the nationalist faction from the group. Foreigners were useful to Godane as they were willing to do things that most Somalis would not (suicide missions, defy clan politics, murder clan elders, etc.). Godane needed them to effectively counter the growing resistance from the Somali public as well as to consolidate his power in relation to the nationalist opposition within the organization itself.

Once Godane achieved the upper hand, he still needed foreign fighters to insulate and protect him from his enemies among the more clan-minded members of the group (Gartenstein-Ross 2009). Therefore, foreign fighters were strategically valuable to Godane. Furthermore, the group largely attracted foreign recruits through *jihadist* propaganda. In this respect, any alleged ties to al Qaeda were very valuable. In light of these facts, it is not entirely surprising that Godane released a video in 2009 offering his services to al Qaeda. But this still does not automatically suggest that there was a viable working relationship between the two groups.

By far the most compelling reason to question the true nature of the relationship between the two groups is that al Shabaab transformed from a *jihadist* group under Ayro to a *takfiri* group under Godane. In this respect, al Shabaab was ideologically closer to al Qaeda under Ayro than it was under Godane- even though

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[70] Ironically, even with all of its global rhetoric, al Shabaab remains focused on African targets.

the earlier al Shabaab leadership was openly opposed to a relationship with al Qaeda (Harper 2008).

If the relationship between the two groups was legitimately an operational one, why did al Qaeda largely ignore al Shabaab's pleas for help from the international community? For example, in August 2008 (after Godane took over leadership of the group), al Shabaab released a video practically begging for reinforcements. In the video, Commander Abu Yusuf Saalih Anabhaani pleads, "Oh muhajirins, Oh muhajirins Will anyone respond? Will you not rush to the help of your brothers in the army of difficulty?" (Anabhaani 2008). Assuming the relationship between the two groups was as strong as some suggest, why did al Qaeda not respond to al Shabaab's cry for help by sending operatives?

Even more puzzling, why did al Qaeda remain silent during Godane's reign of *takfiri* terror when bin Laden and Zawahiri were so outspoken against Zarqawi? Al Qaeda did not attempt to exercise control over al Shabaab at all (Harnisch 2010a). In fact, there is little evidence of any direct correspondence between the two groups (as occurred between al Qaeda and AQI). Contact between al Shabaab and the al Qaeda leadership generally consisted of unofficial statements made indirectly through media releases or some other intermediary (Bennett 2011).[71]

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[71] There were several such random releases such as the messages of encouragement from bin Laden and Zawahiri in 2006-2007, the video released in September 2008 in which Saleh ali Saleh Nabhan pledged allegiance to al Qaeda on behalf of Al Shabaab, and Zawahiri's quid pro quo in November of the same year (Joscelyn and Roggio 2012). Bin Laden released a video in March 2009, denouncing the ARS and accusing Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed of abandoning Islam to partner with apostates (bin Laden 2009). Al Shabaab released a message in February 2010 stating that it would ally itself with al Qaeda (Childress 2010). Zawahiri released a video in September 2015 claiming that, according to a correspondence from Godane, al Shabaab is not interested in becoming an affiliate of IS (Meleagrou-Hitchens 2015). However, there is little evidence of actual correspondence between the two groups.

In all fairness, there could be legitimate reasons for this. For instance, in 2010, bin Laden (apparently replying to a request from Godane to join al Qaeda) suggested that correspondence between the two groups remain informal for security reasons (Meleagrou-Hitchens 2015). Another possibility is that bin Laden had such dire concerns about making another mistake such as the one he had made with Zarqawi, that this is the reason why al Shabaab's membership into al Qaeda was not approved until after bin Laden's death- despite Godane's many efforts to court the group (ISS 2015).

Finally, there is Godane's internal purge of foreign fighters in 2012-13, among which Amriki's death was the most conspicuous (Hammami 2012; Blake 2013; Pantucci and Sayyid 2013). Recall that Amriki was under the mistaken impression that al Shabaab's ideology lined up with al Qaeda's. This is not so mysterious if one considers the possibility that Godane used the group's alleged ties to al Qaeda to attract foreign fighters in the first place, and then used the foreign fighters to conduct suicide operations and purge his enemies from the ranks. In an open letter to Zawahiri released in April 2013, Ibrahim al-Afghani requested that Zawahiri intervene in a controversy between Godane and the international operatives. The conflict seems to center around Godane's dictatorial approach to leadership and the foreign fighter's apparent disillusionment with the overall direction of the group (Pantucci and Sayyid 2013).

Observations such as these should raise serious questions regarding the true nature of the relationship between al Shabaab and al Qaeda. Other than simply assuming a practical working relationship between the two groups based upon the changes instituted by Godane, one must also consider that, given Godane's need for

outside support against the nationalist faction, he likely attempted to maximize the international appeal of the group in any way possible.

As for al Qaeda, the situation in Somalia made the country an ideal poster child for the global *jihad*. When Christian Ethiopia invaded Muslim Somalia with the backing of the evil United States, it created a propaganda opportunity that was too good for either group to pass up (Thomas 2013). It is important to consider, however, that while Somalia offered an ideal situation for al Qaeda, al Shabaab under Godane did not.

Given Somalia's religious composition, its strategic location via the Arab Peninsula and its proximity to key Islamic cities such as Mecca and Medina, one would have expected that the invasion of the country by infidel crusaders would have turned it into a hotbed for international terrorist groups such as al Qaeda. However, this is not the case. While the ongoing conflict in Somalia has clearly involved citizens and territory of more than one country, it can hardly be labeled a global *jihad* of the al Qaeda variety (Gatsiounis 2013).

Even al Qaeda's global *jihad* is aimed at driving the far enemy out of the Islamic world so that it can focus on destroying the near enemies: Israel and apostate regimes such as those in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt and Jordan (Gerges 2005; Riedel 2007). Furthermore, several U.S. State Department officials argue that "most terrorist cells in Africa are pursuing local aims, not global ones, and do not present a direct threat to the United States" (Whitlock 2012, p. 2).

Even though al Qaeda was not able to set up permanent operations in Somalia, it has enjoyed some limited access. The perpetrators of the 1993 "Black Hawk Down" incident allegedly received arms and training from al Qaeda, the perpetrators of the

East Africa embassy bombings took refuge in Somalia, and the arms used in the 2002 Mombassa attacks were smuggled through Somalia (ICG 2005).

In spite of attempts by al Qaeda to capitalize on Somalia's unique opportunities, terrorism in Somalia has been, and continues to be, primarily a tactic used by local groups in a localized struggle for power. What is more, conflict in Somalia is mainly a clan-based/nationalist struggle framed at times as a religious cause and at other times as anti-imperialist, anti-Ethiopian, anti-Kenyan and anti-American (Abdulkadir 2012).

Framing the conflict in such a multi-dimensional way has attracted substantial foreign interest. And while a very small number of foreign *jihadists* have entered the fray due to their religious convictions, the vast majority of individual participants see the cause as one of nationalism, clan loyalty, a matter of economic opportunity or all of the above (ICG 2005).

5.2.4: Al Shabaab

By comparing the ideological underpinnings of AIAI and the ICU, it is possible to trace the line of continuity from one group to the next. This line of continuity also extends to al Shabaab under the original leadership of Ayro. Aweys dominated the ICU via control of its armed militias. When Ethiopian troops forced the ICU out of Somalia, the group split with the moderates fleeing and later joining the TFG and the hardliners staying behind to fight. In the struggle for dominance among the militias that followed, al Shabaab emerged victorious. However, the group maintained the *Salafi jihadist* ideology of Aweys and other hardliners who had also been members of AIAI and the ICU (Wise 2011).

The group's strategic objectives also remained largely the same as its predecessor groups', with a few differences. AIAI and the ICU both wanted to (1) overthrow the existing order, (2) establish an Islamic state, and (3) expand that state to include greater Somalia. However, al Shabaab's objectives have changed since its inception.

Al Shabaab initially battled Ethiopian troops and TFG forces, and it is now battling AMISOM troops and SNA soldiers. Al Shabaab's primary goal was initially to liberate Somalia from foreign occupation. Whether or not this is still the group's primary goal is highly debatable. Second, while al Shabaab initially wanted to establish an Islamic state, the group's current strategy suggests that statehood may no longer be an immediate objective (Menkhaus 2016).

Both of al Shabaab's predecessor groups boasted Islamic scholars, judges and former government officials as members, whereas al Shabaab is mainly comprised of militants. The group does have its hierarchy, of course. However, al Shabaab's leadership continues to be highly decentralized as compared to AIAI or the ICU (Turbiville et al. 2014). Third, al Shabaab shares its predecessors' vision of a greater Somalia. This goal is evident by the group's support for the ONLF and its own activity in Kenya and Uganda (Opalo 2010; Hirsch 2015). It is not clear, however, what role al Shabaab sees itself playing in the actual governance of such a state once it is established.

5.3: Does al Shabaab Employ Strategic Terrorism?

According to Neumann and Smith (2005), strategic terrorism is based upon two main assumptions: (1) that a target government's resolve can be eroded by

persistent terrorist violence, and (2) that terrorist violence will create sufficient fear within the target population to undermine its trust in the government's ability (or desire) to protect its citizens. Furthermore, strategic terrorism involves three stages: (1) disorientation, (2) target response and (3) gaining legitimacy.

Neumann and Smith argue that in the third and final stage of strategic terrorism, an actor attempts to gain legitimacy through either extensive media coverage or through grassroots methods of mobilizing public support. However, they then propose that such activities in and of themselves make it debatable whether the group is still employing strategic terrorism because the main tenet (the sole reliance on violence) has been violated. Neumann and Smith thus conclude that strategic terrorism is "a potentially flawed strategy, which- except in the most favorable circumstances- is unlikely to achieve the political ends for which it is used" (Neumann and Smith 2007, p. 10).

Al Shabaab has been largely operating in the favorable circumstances of foreign occupation. The purpose of this section is to explore whether al Shabaab's violence can be labeled as strategic terrorism.

Since al Shabaab's primary goal was to drive out the Ethiopian forces, the group enjoyed a tremendous amount of legitimacy as most ordinary Somalis perceived the group as freedom fighters. This is evident in the fact that al Shabaab received support from Somalis living abroad.

Despite the fact that Somalia's economy utterly depends upon remittances (Lindley 2010), the foreign diaspora supported al Shabaab even though it could very possibly have jeopardized the entire remittance structure and left millions of Somalis without any assistance at all. Why did they take such a huge risk? Because in 2006-2007, most Somalis were furious at Ethiopia and the U.S. The Ethiopian invasion

devastated Mogadishu. Of approximately 1.3 million people in the capital, 700,000 were displaced, and the ICU (the only stable governance structure Somalia could claim for the past 16 years of civil war) was shattered (Menkhaus 2016).

So when al Shabaab emerged as the main force, willing and able to stand against the invading forces, it was able to combine national sentiment with anti-Ethiopianism, anti-Americanism and, of course, Islam. Therefore, many Somalis rejected the US designation of al Shabaab as a terrorist organization in 2008 (Menkhaus 2013b).

Suffice it to say that foreign occupation definitely worked to the group's advantage. Had the organization been militarily and administratively capable, it would likely have replaced the TFG and governed Somalia under *sharia*. However, al Shabaab was largely comprised of militants not scholars (it had been the militant arm of the ICU).

Prior to 2008, the group was neither militarily strong enough to confront the Ethiopian forces conventionally, nor was it administratively capable of governing the country. While it enforced *sharia* and imposed a crude form of taxation during these early years, it operated more like a well-armed gang than a government. The period between January 2006 and December 2007 can be considered as phase one.

Al Shabaab did, however, grow in both capacities. By early 2008, the group began to engage its enemies in pitched battles that resembled conventional rather than guerrilla warfare. The group also began to assume control of large swaths of territory, collect taxes, govern and provide a measure of public goods such as judiciary services, law enforcement and welfare (Harnisch and Zimmerman 2010; Wise 2010; Mwangi 2012).

Wise (2011) also suggests that al Shabaab was able to take over the radio and print media outlets in the areas that it controlled and use them to enhance its recruiting efforts. Al Shabaab's 85-member Shura Council boasted a degree of organization that made other militias, and even the TFG, pale in comparison (Bruton 2009; Shinn 2011). January 2008 to April 2008 can be considered as phase two.

In May 2008, the group changed leadership after Ayro was killed in a drone attack. Godane, the new *emir*, faced a number of challenges. First, he was a northerner (from the Isaac clan) leading a primarily southern organization. Because he had no clan base to support him, he needed to somehow transcend clan loyalties if he hoped to negotiate the clannish political terrain of Southern Somalia. He did this primarily by emphasizing allegiance to the group rather than to the clan (Bruton 2010).

However, Godane's attempts to transcend clan loyalty did not sit well with the clan leaders, which meant that foot soldiers were now forced to choose between allegiance to their clan and allegiance to al Shabaab. Many chose the former as the predominantly *Sufi* Somalis were not easily swayed from allegiance to their clan in order to stay in the good graces of a *Salafis*t militant group. The *takfiri* doctrine became an effective motivator. However, the brutal killing of fellow Muslims did not bode well with most of the other senior leaders of the group, who had spent years perfecting the clan politics game and cementing the support of clan elders. A split occurred.

Thinning recruits were made even thinner as Ethiopian forces began pulling out, thus increasing the need for fighters. Conscripts, child soldiers and foreigners began to fill the ranks (McConnell 2012). By 2010, as many as eight in ten al Shabaab militants were children (Wright 2011). Foreign fighters were particularly useful as

they were willing to do things that most Somali fighters would not: defy clan elders and commit martyrdom operations. Godane, therefore, needed to make the *jihad* in Somalia more appealing to international fighters. What better way than to pledge allegiance to al Qaeda? An alliance with al Qaeda would allow Godane to frame the conflict in Somalia as part of the global *jihad* rather than what it actually was- a local squabble primarily in the Southern half of a country that nobody cared about. May 2008 to July 2011 can be considered as phase three.

By August 2011, al Shabaab had lost control of Mogadishu to federal forces with the help of AMISOM troops. The group began to retreat from the territories it once controlled and revert back to guerrilla-style tactics. It also began to launch more transnational attacks, increasingly attacking foreign targets. Therefore, August 2011 to the present comprises phase four.

While the dates attributed to these four phases are by no means exact (rather like attributing the beginning of modern nation-states to the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648), the four phases themselves are accurate in that they represent changes in al Shabaab's tactical operations.[72]

5.3.1: Stage One- Disorientation

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[72] Another way to slice the data would be to argue that there are two distinct ideological phases. The first phase occurring while al Shabaab was still under the leadership of Ayro and the nationalists. This phase constitutes the *jihadist* phase of al Shabaab. The second phase is from the death of Ayro in 2008 to the present day. This phase constitutes the *takfiri* phase. It is certainly true that the transition from a *jihadist* group to a *takfiri* group was not instantaneous. In fact it was not until 2013 that Godane was able to completely purge the nationalist faction from the group. However, Godane's *takfiri* ideology caused a reaction from the nationalist almost immediately and they increasingly refused to take orders from him. I have chosen to employ the four phase typology as it allows a more precise analysis via the three stages of strategic terrorism.

Under the leadership of Ayro, al Shabaab enjoyed tremendous popularity as the liberators of Somalia. During this early period, the group enjoyed the support of the clans, businessmen and average Somalis. Since al Shabaab focused the majority of its attention and resources on fighting the Ethiopian military, TFG forces and AMISOM peace keepers, one could argue that it more accurately resembled a guerrilla insurgency than strategic terrorism because its aim was to topple the corrupt regime rather than to coerce political concessions through violence.

This is where the analysis gets a bit tricky. The primary focus of the first stage of strategic terrorism is disorientation, not winning hearts and minds. Up through January 2008, while al Shabaab's senior leadership was very careful to work with clan leaders and operate largely within clan politics (winning hearts and minds), the group not only targeted its military enemies, but also all supporters of the TFG, the warlords, non-cooperative clan leaders and anyone else that resisted the group and/or its strict *Salafist* doctrine. Given the nature of the asymmetric conflict, al Shabaab relied primarily upon terrorist violence that killed more civilian bystanders than actual targets. Therefore, while collateral damage (disorientation) was very high prior to January 2008, it is necessary to look at the group's strategic objectives. Had al Shabaab been strong enough during phase one to confront its enemies more conventionally and therefore avoid the extensive collateral damage among civilians, it most likely would have.

One has to question whether the group was primarily trying to erode the security of the people in order to make the government look incapable of maintaining order and stability or whether it was simply trying to win an asymmetric conflict with the resources it had available at the time. In other words, was the group's strategic goal to conquer the enemy or merely manipulate political change through terror?

Clearly, at that time, al Shabaab sought to overthrow the TFG and establish a new government. Furthermore, one can surmise based on the group's course of action after January 2008 that, had it been previously strong enough to confront its enemies in a more conventional manner, it would have- thus avoiding much of the disorienting effect.

While it may appear questionable whether to label al Shabaab's violence strategic terrorism or guerrilla insurgency prior to January 2008, I argue here that the group's resources were simply poorly equipped to meet its strategic goals without causing a tremendous amount of collateral damage. However as Neumann (2002) implies, sound strategy only requires an actor to employ the means at its disposal in such a way as to achieve its policy objectives. Given that al Shabaab's tactics prior to January 2008 drew it nearer to its objectives (as measured in territory under its control), I argue that the group's strategy was sound.

Al Shabaab' short-lived success in the first half of 2008 reveals its true strategic objectives, at least for that period. The group waged conventional battles, controlled territory, collected taxes and governed much as the ICU had done before it. Despite any doubt regarding its true nature in phase one (2006 to 2007), al Shabaab had clearly moved into the realm of insurgency by phase two- particularly given the effort of its senior leadership to coopt the clan elders.

During this time, al Shabaab began to directly administer the populations living in the territories it controlled (Mulaj 2010). The group, therefore, needed to cooperate with the clan leadership more than ever. It is difficult to speculate what might have happened had the group not suffered the loss of Ayro. Had Ayro survived, he would no doubt have been a more diplomatic administrator and not ostracized the

other senior leaders and clan elders, who appear to have been Godane's biggest

obstacles.

Phase three (May 2008 to July 2011) under the leadership of Godane

represents a period of division and stalemate. Even though al Shabaab controlled

substantial territory and governed during this phase, it had suffered the loss of its

legitimacy and popular support (Le Sage 2010). The group also split into opposing

factions and Godane increasingly relied upon foreign fighters to subdue his enemies-

both inside and out of the group. But the use of foreigners also came at a price.

Somalis are well-known for their hatred of foreign intervention in their

country (Byman 2012). Godane's heavy reliance upon foreigners no doubt cost him

any local support the group may still have enjoyed (Dagne 2010; Shinn 2011). The

practice of killing apostate Muslims also exacted its toll, resulting in defections and

resistance from opponents within the group and also from other moderate militant

groups such as ASWJ. Al Shabaab factions were now fighting each other, the TFG,

Hisbul Islam, moderate militant groups and AMISOM forces (Mulaj 2010). The

group eventually began to lose all the territory it came to control.

Phase three also represents a transition for al Shabaab. Whether Godane truly

believed in the *takfiri* doctrine, or whether he simply utilized it to consolidate his

power is anyone's guess. However, the group's strategic objectives were now in flux.

Godane was no longer seeking legitimacy from clan elders or anyone else that did not

recognize his leadership. Much like Baghdadi, Godane employed the *takfiri* doctrine

against his enemies. This break with clan politics made it impossible for al Shabaab to

continue to govern the territory under its control effectively. The loss of cooperation

(passive support), combined with the lack of active support and the sheer magnitude

of opposition against the group dictated a change in strategic objectives.

Just as in phase one, it is difficult to discern whether al Shabaab's violence during phase three constitutes strategic terrorism or insurgency. On the one hand, the group no doubt terrorized much of the population, and its actions were indeed disorienting. On the other hand, without the realization that the group's objectives had changed, its harsh punishments could easily be construed as intended to enforce its strict version of *sharia* over the territory it controlled, and its growing reliance upon suicide attacks and IEDs as reflecting its deteriorating military capacity and growing inability to confront its enemies in a more conventional manner.

It is only through perception of the other that the distinction becomes clear. While the earlier leadership of al Shabaab made a distinction between the TFG and the Somali people, Godane increasingly began to view them all as enemies. While Ayro and other members of the senior leadership in the nationalist camp were perceived as liberators and leaders (and indeed viewed themselves as such), Godane was perceived as an outsider from the beginning. Al Shabaab was no longer perceived as fighting for Somalia under his leadership, and Godane increasingly perceived himself as an outsider and those who did not acknowledge his authority as enemies (Sjah 2014).

I argue that al Shabaab's first two strategic objectives began to change during this phase. While the organization still controlled territory and appeared to the rest of the world to be the same, it focused less on liberating Somalia and establishing a new regime and concentrated its efforts more on destabilizing the surrounding region and coercing the governments contributing troops to AMISOM to change their policies. Thus, the group was moving toward strategic terrorism.

Once al Shabaab lost Mogadishu, Kismayo and finally Barawe, the group more obviously reverted back to guerrilla-style attacks and, at least in its military

capacity, resembled the al Shabaab of phase one- only far less popular. The organization's increase in transnational attacks during phase four (August 2011 to present), has been the closet it has come to pure stage one violence so far, as the violence is clearly intended to manipulate political change in states contributing troops to AMISOM rather than overthrow the regimes there. Thus far, Umar has made no substantial changes in the group's tactical operations, leaving some to wonder whether al Shabaab even wants to govern anymore (Menkhaus 2016).

Therefore, al Shabaab's main goal in phases one and two was to overthrow the TFG, not to effect policy change through violence. However, the group began the transition to strategic terrorism in phase three under Godane and has been employing strategic terrorism in phase four since.

5.3.2: Stage Two- Provoking a Response

In the second stage of strategic terrorism, an actor attempts to provoke a reaction from the target. Again, while al Shabaab's objective was clearly to overthrow the TFG in phase one, it lacked the capacity to do so. By phase two (January 2008 to April 2008), the group's tactics had definitely provoked a number of reactions. In February 2008, the U.S. State Department designated al Shabaab a terrorist organization. Meanwhile, the TFG reacted by striking a deal with the moderate ARS, culminating in June 2008 with the call for a 90-day ceasefire and the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops. The deal not only isolated al Shabaab politically, the eventual withdrawal of Ethiopian troops in January 2009 deprived the group of its source of popular support and legitimacy.

During phase three (May 2008 to July 2011), the July 2010 attacks in Kampala successfully provoked a response from Ugandan forces which generated increased hatred for the TFG if not additional support for al Shabaab. The same can be said of al Shabaab's deliberate targeting of aid workers in Kenya during phase four (August 2011 to present) which Nairobi claims is what provoked Operation Linda Nchi, sending Kenyan forces across the border into Somalia in October 2011.

Therefore, al Shabaab has been successful in provoking reactions in all four stages. However, I argue that in stages one and two it did not attempt to provoke a reaction for the purpose of gaining legitimacy or political concessions. This began to change by stage three, and by stage four, al Shabaab clearly appears to be intentionally attempting to provoke a response.

5.3.3: Stage Three- Gaining Legitimacy

In the third and final stage of strategic terrorism, an actor attempts to gain legitimacy through either extensive media coverage or through grassroots methods of mobilizing public support.

In phase one, the group had very little need to gain legitimacy with most Somalis. The few public services the group could afford to offer in these early years basically amounted to (1) law enforcement (imposing its own *Salafist* interpretation of *sharia* upon the *Sufi* majority)*,* (2) judiciary (punishing those who violated *sharia*), and (3) a crude form of patronage to smooth troubled clan waters.

While the group's leadership attempted to maximize legitimacy with clan elders, the imposition of *sharia* was actually extremely unpopular. So much so, that it had to be strictly enforced or no one would have obeyed it. Had al Shabaab not

already enjoyed tremendous legitimacy as the defenders and liberators of Somalia, the Somali public would never have tolerated their strict *Salafi* demands. They were tolerated, however. At least until the Ethiopians pulled out.

The group's limited capacity in these early years also equated to fewer media releases in comparison with later years and a heavy reliance on third party organizations such as Kenya's Muslim Youth Center (MYC) for recruitment outside of Somalia (Gatsiounis 2013).

By phase two, the group had dramatically increased its capacity to govern, collect taxes and provide public goods. It also utilized media outlets under its control to promote its version of *sharia* and coopt clan elders. It is important to note, however, that al Shabaab did not need to use the media outlets it acquired in this phase primarily to enhance recruitment (although this was, no doubt, an added benefit). The group already enjoyed substantial support in the form of funds and recruits (Dagne 2010). The organization's primary use of the media outlets was to disseminate its *Salafist* ideology among the predominantly *Sufi* majority and to promote itself among the clans. Again, not to gain legitimacy per se, but as a means of promoting its *Salafist* doctrine, distributing information regarding what the new laws were and the consequences for violating them.

During phase three, al Shabaab relied much more on media outreach than ever before. During these years, Godane made every effort to court al Qaeda and thus gain legitimacy with foreign *jihadis* rather than with Somalis. By 2009, the organization's recruiting videos had noticeably increased in production quality, featuring foreign fighters, training clips and scenes recorded in battle which substantially broadened al Shabaab's recruitment pool beyond Somalia. Most notably, the releases were narrated in Arabic and English rather than Somali, demonstrating that they were intended for

foreign audiences (Harnisch and Zimmerman 2010; Vidino 2010). At the same time, the group also increasingly engaged in less governance as it lost territory to the TFG and AMISOM forces. All of these factors indicate that al Shabaab was steadily moving further away from insurgency and closer to strategic terrorism.

5.4: From Near to Far

Al Shabaab did not employ strategic terrorism during its *jihadist* phase (phases one and two) under the leadership of Ayro. Rather it transitioned to strategic terrorism in phase three under Godane and has been employing strategic terrorism in phase four since. Phases three and four constitute the *takfiri* phase. I argue that they represent both a change in the group's ideology and its strategic objectives.

Despite the disorienting effect of al Shabaab's guerrilla tactics in phase one, and the fact that they provoked a response from the various target governments, neither of these were the primary objective behind the attacks. Al Shabaab's main goal in phases one and two was to overthrow the TFG, not to effect policy change through violence. This qualified the group as an insurgency. Furthermore, the Ethiopian occupation already gave the group all the legitimacy that it needed. It did not need to provoke a response to discredit the target or gain legitimacy for itself, as public opinion was already largely against the occupation and in the group's favor.

In phase two, al Shabaab began to confront its military enemies in a more conventional manner. It also gained control of large portions of the country and governed quite effectively- albeit for a short time. While the *Sufi* majority in Somalia did not welcome the harsh life imposed upon them by *Salafism*, al Shabaab benefited

from the fact that the group was perceived as the lesser evil when compared to the alternative.

However, once the Ethiopians pulled out, al Shabaab faced a very different reality. Popular support had already waned considerably as a consequence of the group's change in leadership (and Godane's emphasis on religion rather than clan loyalty). Once the foreign occupiers left, popular support (which in many cases was mere toleration) turned to contempt.

Al Shabaab experienced a dramatic shift in ideology under the leadership of Godane. With the adoption of the *takfiri* doctrine, the group became much more brutal. As Ethiopian forces pulled out, al Shabaab fighters moved in and began to impose a strict interpretation of *sharia*. Somalis were no longer willing to tolerate the harsh punishments, now that the Ethiopians were gone. When al Shabaab responded with amputations, stoning of adulterers and the execution of apostate Muslims, clan politics quickly turned against the group.

Although AMISOM had about 1,600 Ugandan soldiers stationed as peace keepers in Mogadishu since 2007, the Somali public did not resent their presence in Somalia as much as they did the hated Ethiopians. Once the level of AMISOM troops began to escalate to its current level of approximately 22,000, and the atrocities became more regular and widespread, public opinion began to shift against AMISOM but not necessarily in favor of al Shabaab. The continued lack of popular support materialized in ever reducing levels of funding and fewer recruits. The group subsequently retreated from all of its strategic holdings. Al Shabaab has since reverted back to guerrilla tactics. There has also been a dramatic shift in the group's strategic objectives.

Despite AMISOM forces and U.S. airstrikes (one could also argue because of these two factors), al Shabaab is still active in much of South Central Somalia. Yet it has not declared a state. Despite its considerable resources, the group also appears to be content to remain in a stalemate with the Somali government and AMISOM forces.

Hansen (2013) suggests that in the case of Mogadishu from 2009-2013, the stalemate occurred because al Shabaab was simply unable to defeat the superior AMISOM forces. Meanwhile AMISOM lacked the mandate to push beyond the capital. Alternatively, Menkhaus (2016) argues that al Shabaab might actually prefer a stalemate because the current situation allows the group to mobilize without creating the need to govern. Menkhaus reasons that if al Shabaab were to take more territory (especially in Mogadishu) it would have to govern and that would draw it into a number of clan conflicts which the group has learned to avoid.

The point is salient because when al Shabaab took the TFG stronghold in Baidoa after the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces in January 2009, it inevitably had to negotiate the very complicated web of Somali clan politics which led to a clash with the Ras Kamboni Brigade and a number of other struggles with clan leaders. This challenge put pressure on the group that exposed internal divisions over practical matters of governance.

The overarching rationale upon which strategic theory is based is comprised of three primary assumptions: (1) military force is a dimension of power exercised toward political goals, (2) politics is a game of thrones in which each actors strives to maximize its own power in relation to other actors, and (3) all actors act rationally (Smith 1991).

Senior leaders such as Ayro were effective in mobilizing Somali resistance against the Ethiopian invasion by appealing more to their sense of nationalism than to

their religious ideology. This helped the group to navigate the troubled waters of clan politics (Gartenstein-Ross 2009). However, according to the first assumption of strategic terrorism, this focus on nationalism betrays more than just the diplomatic ability of the early leadership. Their focus on nationalism and efforts to coopt the various clans also reveals that their true strategic objective was to overthrow the TFG and establish an Islamic government. Godane did not exercise his power toward this same political goal.

I have argued that Godane's changes to al Shabaab were employed out of necessity rather than a true commitment to global *jihad*, and there is certainly ample justification for this claim. In accordance with assumptions two and three above, it makes perfect sense that Godane reacted as he did. In addition to the practical necessities discussed earlier (the need for foreign fighters and the benefits of associating al Shabaab with al Qaeda), one can add the likelihood that Godane decided to retreat from the group's territories- not only out of military necessity- but also because he realized that Somalia was just too difficult to govern, especially for someone with little or no clan support. More importantly, Godane no doubt realized that governing in Somalia would require more power sharing than he was willing to concede. Even if Godane had been able to garner the support of the clan elders, he clearly did not want to.

If one accepts Godane's adoption of the *takfiri* doctrine as sincere rather than utilitarian, then in his eyes, everyone that did not accept his version of Islam were infidels- *Sufi* idolaters who deserved to die. How could he ever share power with them? This is the same ideology that affected the decision making of Zarqawi and Baghdadi. One must consider the possibility that al Shabaab's diminishing military

capacity is not the primary reason the group reverted back to guerrilla-style tactics. One must also consider the potential outcome of such a possibility.

If one compares phase one of the group with phase four, the military capacity and the guerilla-style tactics are both similar. What appears to be different is the goal. In phase one, al Shabaab strove to consolidate its strength and acquire territory. In phase four it is doing just the opposite. Under Godane, the group went from governing huge swaths of territory to voluntarily retreating in the face of AMISOM forces. One has to question whether this tactical shift was driven by sheer asymmetric realities on the ground or a new strategic objective.

Perhaps just as al Qaeda decided to attack the far enemy first, al Shabaab also altered its immediate strategic objective from overthrowing the near enemy to coercing the various states contributing AMISOM troops to pull out. Perhaps this is why Godane began to increasingly rely on violence rather than governance as the primary means of obtaining the group's objectives. But this would mean that the group had given up on, or at least put off, its strategic goal of establishing an Islamic state in Somalia. However, this appears to be the case.

If all one considers are the military aspects, then either way, the group is employing sound strategy. By terrorizing the areas it once controlled, laying siege to them by blocking all routes in and out and attacking AMISOM forces where they are weakest, al Shabaab is either making the best use of the military strength it has left, or it is following the strategic terrorism playbook chapter and verse.

In the first stage, an actor tries to erode the security of the people in order to make the government look incapable of maintaining order and stability. This is typically attempted through a series of random violent attacks. By yielding towns and cities to AMISOM and SNA forces, the organization is setting the government up for

failure as it has neither the resources to govern nor the ability to protect. Its only

options are to agree to political concessions, depend on foreign assistance to drive al

Shabaab out or learn to live with the violence.

In the second stage, an actor attempts to provoke a reaction from the target. In

addition to terrorizing Somali targets, al Shabaab has also increasingly engaged in

transnational attacks intended to disorient foreign populations and provoke a response

from states contributing AMISOM troops. Neumann and Smith discuss four potential

responses proposed by N.O. Berry (1987). First, a target could potentially overreact

by engaging in extra-legal responses and thereby discrediting its own legitimacy such

as when Ugandan forces retaliated in July 2010 by bombing a residential district in

Mogadishu. Another possible reaction is that the target fails to react sufficiently to

demonstrate that it is capable of dealing with the threat. Berry calls this reaction

"power deflation" (1987, p.10). This appears to be the Somali government's default

response, and it plays directly into al Shabaab's hands.

Alternatively, if al Shabaab is indeed simply losing ground due to diminishing

military capacity, then it is utilizing its assets as best it can. But to what end? If the

organization's strategic objectives are still the same, why would it continue to

marginalize itself from the clans and forego the support of the people when it needs

them more than ever?

The most likely reason is ideological. The *takfiri* doctrine is the most

satisfying explanation as to why al Shabaab continues to shun the *Sufi* majority even

in the face of extermination. Neumann and Smith (2005) contend that most religious

groups that employ strategic terrorism are not willing to compromise. Therefore, one

of two options is probable: (1) the group will either fail to sufficiently escalate the

violence to the necessary level to provoke a reaction, or (2) if it is successful in

provoking a reaction, the group will lose the support of the people, disintegrate into splinter factions and/or be annihilated by the target government.

In the case of al Shabaab, this is precisely what happened. The organization successfully provoked a reaction- to the extent that a U.S. drone strike took out its leader (Ayro). The group lost the support of the people after Ethiopia withdrew its forces in January 2009 and subsequently split into opposing factions. The likelihood that al Shabaab will succeed in provoking just the right response so as to cost the Somali government a sufficient measure of legitimacy and also garner a measure of legitimacy for itself is highly unlikely.

I suggest that al Shabaab's strategic objectives have changed from (1) liberating Somalia, (2) establishing an Islamic government and (3) creating Greater Somalia to (1) destabilizing the entire region in order to coerce the states contributing troops to AMISOM to withdraw their militaries, and (2) creating Greater Somalia. I believe that, like al Qaeda, al Shabaab has adopted a more sound and realistic strategy of fighting the far enemy given the strength of the near enemy and its own current resources.

The benefits of foregoing the group's original first two goals are multiple. First of all, at least for the present, al Shabaab can side-step Somali clan politics. Second, *Salafism* is rare enough in Somalia. *Takfiri Salafism,* which promotes the killing of apostates, is a very hard ideology to sell- particularly in Somalia where clan loyalty is so strong. It is much easier for the group to recruit Somalis in surrounding states where non-Somali *Sufis* and *Christians* can be targeted.

Given that Umar appears to be following in Godane's footsteps, it is quite possible that al Shabaab has transitioned from guerrilla insurgency to strategic terrorism. The true test of the group's new strategic objectives (if they are indeed

new) will be the course of action it takes in the future. Does al Shabaab still want to drive the foreign occupiers out of Somalia? Or is it attempting to draw them in? Will al Shabaab again pursue an Islamic state in Somalia? Or has the group set its sights on an even bigger prize? Only time will tell.

Chapter Six: The Future of Terror and the Role of Strategic Theory

It should not be entirely surprising that militant groups such as al Shabaab and Boko Haram attack and kill civilians. As heinous as it might seem, this is exactly what most states do in armed conflict. Not just "rogue" states such as Libya (Pan Am Flight 103) and Iran (Hezbollah), but status quo states as well.

During World War One, for example, Britain made a clear distinction between its policy objectives concerning the German people (which it intended to liberate) and the German government (which it intended to defeat). Yet, Britain made little distinction between government and civilian targets in its urban bombing campaigns. Still, it fully expected the German people that it was bombing and killing to side with the British government rather than with the German government. The November 1918 German revolution is often cited as evidence that the British achieved their goals.

Again, in March 2003, the U.S. (backed by Britain) make the same play in Iraq with less measurable success.

As for Muslim extremist ideology, it has been around for a long time. In this project, I have distinguished between three categories of extremist ideology (Islamist, *jihadist* and *takfiri*).

After comparing and contrasting the ideological underpinnings of al Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS) and by tracing the respective influences that each have borrowed from their predecessors, I have concluded that al Qaeda is a *jihadist* organization that meets the criteria for strategic terrorism and Islamic State is a *takfiri* group that does not. Given that al Shabaab has pledged allegiance to al Qaeda but has also adopted the *takfiri* doctrine, I explored whether the so-called alliance between the two organizations has had any impact upon al Shabaab's ideology and/or strategic objectives. Other than the potential influence that al Qaeda may have had on al Shabaab's relatively recent switch to a strategy that focuses on the far enemy, there does not seem to be any concrete ties between these groups.

Al Shabaab has thus far gone through three phases (from inception to December 2007, January 2008 to April 2008, May 2008 to July 2011) and is now in phase four (August 2011 to the present). In the first two phases, al Shabaab was a *jihadist* group, and in the last two phases it has been a *takfiri* group. In the first three phases, the organization's activity more closely resembled an insurgency than strategic terrorism as two of its strategic objectives were to overthrow and replace the enemy, rather than merely manipulate political change through terror. Therefore, the group's audience (the targets of its violence) has also necessarily changed.

Furthermore, while al Shabaab possessed very limited military and administrative capability in phase one, by phase two it had managed to incorporate

both the political organization of the masses and the eventual use of conventional

military force. It is not until phase four that the group began to retreat from its

territorial holdings and revert to tactics that more closely fit the first two stages of

strategic terrorism (disorientation and target response).

I have considered the likelihood that al Shabaab has changed its strategy from

attacking the near enemy to attacking the far enemy and suggested that its strategic

objectives have also likely changed from (1) liberating Somalia, (2) establishing an

Islamic government and (3) creating Greater Somalia to (1) destabilizing the entire

region and (2) creating Greater Somalia.

Table One

Al Shabaab	Phase One	Inception to December 2007	Jihadist	Insurgency
	Phase Two	January 2008 to April 2008	Jihadist	Insurgency
	Phase Three	May 2008 to July 2011	Takfiri	Insurgency
	Phase Four	August 2011 to Present	Takfiri	Strategic Terrorism

What does the future hold for al Shabaab? Without a crystal ball, no one can

know for sure. However, one can be certain that whatever developments occur,

analytical tools such as strategic theory and strategic terrorism will prove

indispensable for understanding terrorist violence and the strategic goals of actors that

engage in it.

It is time to answer the "so what" question. What could it possibly matter

whether al Shabaab is engaged in insurgency or strategic terrorism?

As I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, the violence in Somalia

represents conflict that is much older than al Shabaab itself. The U.S. decision to

designate the group as terrorist organization was politically motivated. Since The U.S.

refuses to negotiate with terrorists as a matter of policy, but has on several occasions

backed insurgents, the designation has long-term implications as it has set U.S. foreign policy toward this organization in stone. America's involvement in Somalia has only served to exacerbate the violence.

Rather than attempting to understand actors that engage in violence via the traditionally suspected causes of terrorism, a more productive approach would be to consider the strategic value of violence in relation to the groups' respective long-term goals.

In addition to being a less efficient approach, the continued reliance on either widespread systemic or lower-level explanations of terrorism has led to questionable "solutions"- often with disastrous results.

For instance, economic aid certainly has not improved popular opinion toward America in the Middle East, and the fact that Israel has consistently received substantially more aid than any other country in the Middle East has been a point of contention among Arab states (Stockman 2011).

According to both systemic and lower-level approaches to countering terrorism, however, economic aid should have produced positive results toward the reduction of anti-American violence. Systemically, aid is intended to alleviate poverty and improve overall living standards. Yet despite the *net* increase in living standards (after factoring for corruption), popular opinion towards America is still low.

We certainly cannot blame America's low popularity rating on mental illness or moral deficiency alone, although the latter almost certainly did play at least a partial role. Furthermore, as unpopular as American foreign policy has been in the Middle East, it's certainly not among the more pressing grievances of the average individual faced with high unemployment, rising prices and fading hope for the future.

From a purely cost-benefit analysis, one would expect states receiving U.S aid to act in accordance with America's foreign policy goals so as not to jeopardize future aid. Yet this has certainly not been the case for most Arab states in the Middle East. Economic aid has neither reduced violence nor improved America's popularity in the region. Nor was it the case when the U.S. entered Somalia in the early 1990s.

Organizations that engage in violence often rely on popular support to succeed. One can distinguish between active support (providing safe haven, recruits and donations) and passive support (refusal to cooperate with the group's opponents). Both types of popular support equate to an overall reduction in the cost of engaging in violence, making future incidents even more feasible.

The simple distinction between insurgents and groups employing terrorism can often be an enlightening exercise regarding how much popular support an organization enjoys. Al Shabaab enjoyed tremendous popular support because the group fought against regimes that were largely hated by the majority of Somali citizens. When the U.S condemns the human rights abuses of one state but then enforces the human rights abuses of other states with its own military (as it has done in Somalia) it both loses legitimacy and lends legitimacy to those who fight against its perceived hypocrisy and hegemony.

While tactical counterterrorism is necessary, it often exacerbates violence when it is not employed as part of an overall strategy. Unfortunately, this is most often the case. America needs to be more strategic in its response to violence. Firefighters don't just automatically spray water on every single fire that breaks out. First they need to understand the nature of the fire. Water may put it out, or it may make it worse, spreading the fire to other structures and creating a far greater problem. The same is true with violence.

Simply responding to violence with more violence is often ineffective in preventing more violence. What's worse, it is often the very response that perpetrators are hoping for as it plays directly into their hands, affording them a measure of legitimacy and helping them generate support.

If the first mistake in the "war on terror" is to exact a pound of flesh regardless of the long-term results, then another mistake is to focus on the suspected "causes" of terrorism rather than the strategic goals of those who engage in it- for this is simply the opposite side of the tactical coin. The tradition of isolating our focus on either systemic or lower-level causal variables (such as religion, poverty, illiteracy, political grievances, insanity or a cost-benefit analysis) is virtually the same approach as reacting to tactical violence with more tactical violence. Both are tactics, and neither address the strategic goals of the perpetrators.

The strengths of this research include its original contribution to the body of literature. Silke (2003) points out that despite the growing multidisciplinary body of literature on terrorism, only one fifth of research published on the subject produces substantially new findings. To date, no work has applied Neumann and Smith's (2005) framework of strategic terrorism to al Shabaab.

Another strength is that, in the course of gathering data, I have visited blast sites and interviewed survivors and witnesses whenever possible, rather than relying solely upon secondary sources. Dolnik (2013) argues that the best way to increase the current output of new information is for terrorism scholars to rely less on secondary sources and to rely more on theory-driven approaches to field research.

Field research can also present a major limitation, however, as first-hand experiences leave a much deeper and lasting impression than information one consumes second hand. For this reason, I simply do not agree with many of the

statements made by experts about matters for which they make confident assertions. This is not to say that I am correct and they are not, but rather to point out that personal interaction with your subject matter makes it infinitely more difficult to remain impartial, unbiased and to refrain from making normative judgements.

An obvious example of the subjectivity of the field is the 200 plus definitions of terrorism. While most would agree that terrorism is a cancer affecting society, there are not 200 definitions of melanoma or astrocytoma. There are, of course, physicians that disagree on diagnoses (i.e. the condition of the patient), but not on the essential nature of the cancer in question. Terrorism studies lacks any such objectivity. As I have discussed, there are those that argue that we should not strive for an objective definition, or even a definition at all for that matter. I disagree.

Other limitations of this research include the difficulty of aiming at a moving target. Obviously, while al Shabaab continues to evolve, analyses of them need to evolve as well. While I have done my best within the space allowed to conduct a historical analysis by drawing a clear connection between the two groups under examination and their predecessors, space is limited and difficult choices had to be made concerning which information to include from the past and which to omit in order to include relevant contemporary data.

A third limitation is that different scholars assess the phases of each group differently. For example, Wise (2011) concludes that al Shabaab has gone through two phases (phase one: December 2006- early 2008 and phase two: early 2008-present). While Hanson (2013) also concludes that al Shabaab has gone through three stages and is now in stage four, his dates are different than mine (phase one: 2005-06, phase two: 2007-08, phase three: 2009-10, phase four: 2010- present).

Different scholars have their own various reasons for computing these phases the way that they do, all of which have merit. I have chosen to approach the data in the manner that I have as it seems the most logical demarcation of the timelines involved, taking into account not just changes in leadership but also key changes in tactics as well as strategic goals. Others may disagree.

A fourth limitation concerns the survey of literature. There is simply far too much terrorism literature to review in the space allotted. My effort has been to discuss a representative sampling in as fair and unbiased a manner as possible. This work has now been reviewed by multiple scholars from a variety of disciplines on a number of continents, and all have offered vastly different, and often contradictory, feedback. What may be essential literature to one scholar is superfluous to another. Or to borrow from the spirit of Jones and Smith (2009), what may be "critical" to one, is "hypocritical" to another. Realities such as these further demonstrate the subjective nature of the field.

This leads to a final limitation that I would like to point out (not that there are only five, but I believe these to be the major and most glaring limitations). As mentioned briefly in the Acknowledgement, I was trained as a political scientist in the United States, and I am very much a product of the empirical school. During the past three years, I have been exposed to a very different epistemological approach. While I have worked very hard to familiarize myself with an enormous amount of literature that was completely absent from both my undergraduate and graduate curriculum, I still have considerable ground to cover. Consequently, my research reflects a distinctly American bias. However, I strive to correct this deficiency. Thanks to the guidance and direction of Professor Richards and Dr. Gerodimos and the extensive

feedback from Professor Parker and Dr. Harris, I am on my way to achieving greater

balance.

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