Political Processes, Mobilization Structures and Ideological Frames: Explaining al-Shabaab's Anticivilian Violence

Case Study into al-Shabaab and the Westgate Mall Shooting in Nairobi, September 2013

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Abstract

Since its presence in Kenya, al-Shabaab has carried out many attacks, showing indifference to targeting and killing civilians. During the Westgate Mall shooting in Nairobi in September 2013, al-Shabaab killed at least 67 people and wounded many more. However, a satisfactory relational understanding of why al-Shabaab resorted to anticivilian has not occurred thus far. This thesis turns to anticivilian violence as carried out by terrorist groups and adopts the political process approach of Hafez to address this question. Through Causal Process Tracing, it employs causal mechanisms of political processes on the national level and mobilization structures and ideological frames within movements to deepen knowledge on anticivilian violence by terrorist groups and understand why al-Shabaab resorted to violence against civilians during the Westgate Mall shooting. Through a structured case study, this thesis finds support for the identified causal mechanisms and argues that the Westgate Mall shooting can be viewed as both an outcome of strategic considerations and as a sign of desperation from al-Shabaab. It shows that the reality of repressive and discriminatory contexts influence the emergence of exclusive organizations and antisystem ideologies, that may – but not exclusively – cause the outcome of anticivilian violence.

List of Abbreviations

AIAI	al-Itihaad al-Islamiya
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
APRCT	Alliance for Peace Restoration and Counter Terrorism
CPT	Causal Process Tracing
CTS	Critical Terrorism Studies
EDF	Ethiopian Defence Force
GIMF	Global Islamic Media Front
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
KDF	Kenya Defence Force
KNHCR	Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
SMT	Social Movement Theory
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
U.S.	United States of America

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1. Introduction

Since the tragic events of 9/11, terrorism is seen as one of the most significant threats to peace and security worldwide, to which Africa forms no exception. Africa countries today face enormous challenges of maintaining and regaining peace and security, particularly due to Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda and the al-Qaeda affiliated al-Shabaab group that controls parts of Somalia. Countries in East Africa have been subject to al-Shabaab's transnational terrorism, and arguably the organization forms the biggest threat of security in the region. Although governments have attempted to combat al-Shabaab, the group has developed as a strategic terrorist organization, that exhibits certain patterns of behavior and actions informed by discrete goals of creating an Islamic State (Mutanda, 2017). Since its establishment in 2006 in 'failed state' Somalia, al-Shabaab has killed over 4,000 people and has grown to become the largest and most feared terrorist group in East Africa. In recent years, the group has shifted its primary domestic focus to neighboring countries. Especially Kenya has seen a dramatic increase in terrorist attacks and fatalities since 2011 and has been the most strongly affected by the expansion of al-Shabaab (Global Terrorism Index, 2018). Since its presence in Kenya, al-Shabaab has targeted civilians in a number of instances and particularly the Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi in 2013, where 67 people were killed, showed the indifference of al-Shabaab to killing civilians (Anderson and McKnight, 2015).

As Elu and Price (2015) emphasize, theoretical approaches still fail to assess why insurgents such as al-Shabaab choose to target civilians with violence. Although theories to explain patterns of behavior in terrorism have been introduced, they merely consider 'failed' African states and economic deprivation as fertile grounds for the rise of terrorism (Mentan, 2018). The role of ideology and religion in armed groups has received attention, but these studies cannot solely explain why groups resort to anticivilian violence. And while differences in the effectiveness of states' counter-terrorism strategies have been examined, comprehensive explanatory factors that determine acts of violence of terrorist groups in African countries remain deficient (Um and Pisoiu, 2015). It is thus relevant to examine the question: *why do terrorist groups resort to anticivilian violence?*

To contribute to the answer to this broad research question, this study applies a case study into the development of the al-Shabaab movement in Somalia and Kenya from 2006 to 2013 and adopts the Hafez' (2004) political process approach. Although starting off as a 'small player', since its establishment in 2006 al-Shabaab developed as a terrorist organization that by 2010,

reached its peak in terms of capacity and resources. In September 2013, al-Shabaab killed around 67 people in the Westgate Mall Shooting, in Nairobi, Kenya. This study offers a broad overview of the development of al-Shabaab in the period from 2006 to 2013 and specifically looks into causal mechanisms of political processes on the national level, mobilization structures within the movement and ideological frames that have led to al-Shabaab targeting civilians in the Westgate Mall Shooting in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 2013. This study aims to answer the question: *why has al-Shabaab resorted to anticivilian violence in the Westgate Mall Shooting in Nairobi, September 2013?*

1.1 Research Objectives

By answering this question, this study aims to achieve a number of research objectives. This study applies the main research question to a specific case study and seeks to uncover why al-Shabaab chose to target civilians in the Westgate Mall shooting in Nairobi, September 2013. By doing so, this study aims to contribute to an effective approach to combating such violence. As Jackson *et al.* (2011) emphasize, no life remains untouched by terrorism. In many countries around the world, terrorist groups have effectively defected education systems, caused economic deprivation, generated national security threats, dominated the media, destroyed communities, and killed many people. Efforts to counter- and eliminate terrorism have therefore become a priority of many security agendas and accordingly, instruments, resources and costs are amounted to counterterrorism (Njoku *et al.,* 2018). To critically analyze why these groups resort to anticivilian violence therefore appears not only justified, but also necessary. Furthermore, with this case study and answering the research question, this study aims to apply the political process framework of Hafez (2004) and contribute to the Social Movement Theory stream in Critical Terrorism Studies. Although a bulk of academic studies on the reality of terrorism exists, few studies have undertaken research on al-Shabaab as a terrorist group and even fewer form in-depth case studies to explain their violent behaviour. There is a knowledge gap, that this study seeks to narrow. More so, this study seeks to explicitly contribute to a theoretical approach in the field of terrorism, applying the political process approach to anticivilian violence of al-Shabaab in Kenya. Although the political process approach of Hafez (2004) offers replicable categories and a model to analyse the phenomenon of anticivilian violence it has been used to a limited extent. More importantly, this approach could predict anticivilian violence of terrorist groups in the future and it is therefore highly significant to contribute to this theoretical framework and the broader field of security.

1.2 Structure of the Thesis

This study is structured into eleven chapters. This first introductory chapter seeks to lay out the background, case selection, objectives, and significance of the study. The second chapter presents the literature review of this study. This chapter provides a broad overview of the post 9/11 study of terrorism and a detailed explanation of Social Movement Theory, in which this study is embedded. The third chapter lays out Hafez' theoretical approach to explain anticivilian violence and explains its causal mechanisms (political processes, mobilization structures and ideological frames) that serve as a basis for analysis. Fourth, the methodological framework of this study is outlined, including the research design, case selection, data collection, means for analysis, operationalization, and limitations. The fifth chapter provides an overview of the historical and political contexts that have provided opportunities for al-Shabaab to emerge in Somalia. Sixth, a statistical overview of attacks carried out by al-Shabaab and the organization's changing tactics will be discussed. The subsequent chapters consist of evidence according to the theoretical framework of this study, considering al-Shabaab in the period 2006-2013, that will be concluded with an analysis of the Westgate Mall Shooting. The last chapter of this study provides concluding remarks and a discussion of the thesis.

2. Literature Review

After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the world witnessed the upsurge of the U.S. campaign on the 'Global War on Terror' and its fight to combat terrorism. The terrorist attacks were the starting point of a new era in terrorism and counterterrorism studies and led to a substantial growth in academic and governmental research reports, papers, articles and books on terrorism and counterterrorism. The term *terrorism* has become common in academic and political circles and it is widely used. At the same time, the concept is highly politicized, contested and still not universally defined. There is no clear definition on what terrorism is, nor who the terrorist or terrorist group is. The study of terrorism lacks common ground and a generalized theory of root causes of terrorism, and it is characterized by fundamental disagreement on what terrorism comprises (Bakker, 2015). The lack of consensus in theories of terrorism is problematic because the way in which terrorism is conceived determines to a great extent how foreign policies are conducted, who is assigned as a terrorist, what counter-terrorism strategies are undertaken and which resources are devoted to the effort of eliminating terrorism (Solomon, 2015). Particularly the root cause debate goes to the heart of the theoretical discussion on terrorism and it is therefore essential for this study to elaborate on theoretical perspectives of terrorism and counterterrorism (Bakker, 2015). First, this chapter seeks to offer an overview of main theoretical approaches that provide different understandings and explanations of terrorism. Secondly, this chapter will present Social Movement Theory as part of Critical Terrorism Studies as main theoretical ground for this study. Last, this chapter will outline fundamental concepts of terrorism and transnational terrorism based on definitions that have been established in Social Movement Theory.

2.1 The post-9/11 Study of Terrorism

Bakker (2015) distinguishes four theoretical approaches in terrorism analysis. The first is the rational/organizational approach, a framework that seeks to understand terrorist attacks as rational actions of individuals or groups in the pursue of a particular political goal. Already in 1981 defined Crenshaw (1981, p.380) terrorism as ''a form of political behaviour resulting from the deliberate choice of a basically rational actor, the terrorist organization'', and emphasized how political ideology influences definitions of terrorism. Secondly, the theoretical approach of (social) psychologists focusses on behaviour and thinking of individuals and small groups. This approach emphasizes motivations personalities, beliefs, and attitudes of terrorists and how they are influenced by others. Furthermore, Bakker identifies the third theoretical approach as political or structural. This approach was first introduced by Gurr 's ''Why Men Rebel'' (1970), in which the author stresses the influence of socio-political environments that could facilitate

the emergence of violence. Scholars in this approach have separated preconditions as long-term structural factors that may facilitate violence and precipitants as the particular mechanisms that will activate violence and terrorism. The fourth theoretical approach is the multi-causal approach. Scholars in this approach particularly focus on the high complexity of terrorism and the need for multidisciplinary research to understand root causes of terrorism.

Beyond these four approaches, orthodox theories and Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) can be distinguished as paradigms in terrorism studies. The orthodox school makes a clear distinction between state and non-state actors, focuses on the legitimacy of the state system and considers non-state actors as illegitimate. Importantly, it attributes religious belief as the one of the main drivers of terrorism and often characterizes terrorism as religious extremism. To illustrate, Hoffman (2006) argues that terrorism in the Middle East and terrorist attacks in Western countries are a result of fundamentalism and irrational faith-based choices. This school of thought has been shaped by – among others – Hoffman and Huntington's ''Clash of Civilizations'', in which the author argues that civilizations have a natural tendency to clash, and more importantly, that Western democracy is superior over other religions and societies (Huntington, 1996). Essentially, traditional thinking of the orthodox school has impacted political discourses since 9/11 and main understandings of terrorism to a large extent. Consequently, the fight on terrorism has largely been fought on the premises of 1) democracy is the best form of government 2) the West should protect its way of life 3) religion (and particularly Islam) has a motive of conflict and 4) terrorism is the greatest threat to the West (Huntington, 1996).

On the contrast, scholars of CTS such as Gunning (2009), Jackson (2007) and Krueger (2007) argue that terrorism a psychological phenomenon used by minority groups who seek recognition and extort violence to influence social, economic and political structures. Authors of CTS urge to problematize the rigid religious-secular dichotomy and in particular religion as a set of text-based beliefs that produces violence and rather, facilitate the study of beliefs and practices in the production of political violence (Gunning and Jackson, 2011). CTS emerged after the attacks of September 11, 2001, as a reaction to terrorism-related research that also increasingly appeared since this date. At its broadest, CTS is a critical orientation that challenges existing knowledge about terrorism. In a narrower sense, CTS scholars adopt a particular ontological position in the field that considers terrorism as a social fact rather than a brute fact. The nature of terrorism is not violence in itself, but depends context, circumstance, intention, social, cultural, legal and political- related factors (Jackson, 2007). CTS furthermore

builds on an understanding of terrorism of Tilly (2004), who argues that terrorism occurs in a wider political struggle and moreover, the use of violence in terrorism is only one strategy among a range of contentious action forms. This study is embedded in the CTS-paradigm and proposes that Social Movement Theory as part of the critical approach to terrorism studies of CTS, can contribute to terrorism studies as a conceptual framework that allows to understand and study terrorism and the use of violence in a more deeper and convincing manner.

2.2 Social Movement Theory

In principle, Social Movement Theory (SMT) defines social movements as, ‘‘informal networks, based on shared beliefs and solidarity, which mobilize about conflictual issues, through the frequent use of various forms of protest’’ (Della Porta and Diani, 1999, p.16). Scholars of SMT study larger groups in society and the particular relationship between the individual, group, and broader society, and they have developed three main theoretical perspectives accordingly.

The first is the early approach of *mobilizing resources*, that primarily follows rational choice theory and organizational behaviour models as they emerged in the social sciences. In this framework, violent movements are seen as a function of pre-existing social networks, with a professionalized core that directs violent attacks, assembles resources, and provides leadership over the broader movement. Exemplary, Beck (2008) argues that many modern terrorist groups are structured as social movement organizations. Organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah have developed over time into quasi-governments in their controlled geographical territories while still undertaking violent attacks (Beck, 2008). Secondly, the *political opportunities* framework has emerged as a critique both on socio-psychological and resource mobilization approaches to social movements. Rather than considering movements solely as a function of pre-existing social networks, this approach argues they are also developed in interaction with political opportunity structures – political systems, state practices towards opposition, socio-economic conditions, and elite alliances (Gunning, 2009). This framework considers the importance of ideology and particularly cognitive liberation, that is the ability of political protestors to collectively take advantage of available political opportunities (McAdam, 1982). McAdam (1982) argues in the political process theory that political opportunities together with organizational mobilization capacities allow for the emergence of social movements. Last, *framing/New Social Movement* theories emphasize cultures, emotions and identity and argue that they have been overlooked by previous SMT theories. Framing theory focusses on both long-term socio-economic and political changes as well as ideology. Scholars in this theory

research the social production of meaning and the way in which individuals conceptualize themselves collectively. As Dalgaard-Nielsen (2008) summarizes, mobilization in this perspective consists of the diagnose of problems, attribution of responsibilities, offering solutions, strategies and tactics, and provision of motivational frames. To make potential participants active, framing and New Social Movement theories argue that the movement's version of reality must be resonated with those of the potential participants.

2.3 Social Movement Theory and Terrorism

Traditionally, scholars of terrorism solely focus on violent organizations, while early SMT scholars mainly studied non-violent movements. Gunning (2009, p.157) however broadens SMT to the study of terrorism and violence and shows how SMT can fundamentally contribute to terrorism studies, arguing that

> [a]mong other things, it can de-exceptionalise terrorism by conceptualising it as part of a wider, evolving spectrum of movement tactics, thereby broadening the research focus as well as challenging its ideological underpinnings. It can denaturalise the state by making human as opposed to state actors the primary unit of moral value. And it can destabilise the sharp dichotomy drawn by statist accounts between a presumed legitimate state and supposedly inherently illegitimate terrorist opponents.

A core contribution that SMT makes to the study of terrorism is the relocation of violence within its social context. Similar to rational choice theories, SMT frameworks consider terrorist groups (violent social movements) as rational actors that are driven by political agendas and a set of political goals. Moreover, SMT seeks to link interactions between social movements and the society and political system they are part of, (social) group factors and individual motivations in its analytical framework and thereby deepens CTS approaches to terrorism (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2008). To illustrate, Kepel (2002) shows that even amateur cells of al-Qaeda in Europe who are regarded as disparate and autonomous, are actually part of a wider social Jihadist movements that cannot be fully understood without a broader analysis. Gunning (2009) similarly argues that violent organizations depend on resources a compelling ideological justification for their violent actions. Moreover, in the same vein as non-violent movements, violent movements are influenced by political systems, state practices, wider ideological dynamics, and socio-economic changes.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Terrorism and Violence

In the same vein as CTS, SMT considers terrorism as a form of contentious politics, that includes the use of disruptive techniques to make a political claims and impact political processes and outcomes (Oberschall, 2004). SMT approaches the use of violence by terrorist groups as only one among many possible tactics that are interacting with a wider context of actions. More so, the use of violence is placed within a wider social context and social movement and violence is considered a dynamic process that is influenced by experiences of activism and participation in organizational structures (Gunning, 2009). Within in the SMT perspective, violence is thus not solely an ideological imperative or tactical choice, but rather the outcome of dynamics and power struggles within the wider movement, impacted by differences in access in resources and the different interpretations of members' ideologies and identities. Violence is shaped and affected by changing ideologies, religious and cultural attitudes as well as state practices towards the wider movement (Gunning, 2009). Indeed, according to SMT, the use of violence cannot be explained without considering social and political dynamics within and outside the movement.

Importantly, the particular understanding of violence and terrorism in Social Movement Theory allows the study of terrorism to put a temporal back into violence, link macro, maso and micro explanations, and bring the state into focus and thereby the interaction and impact of state practices on terrorist attacks (Gunning, 2009; Della Porta, 2008). The emphasis on the state in SMT stems mainly from the political process model, based on the argument of influential scholars, who emphasize the importance of state practices and group dynamics to understand the use of violence in terrorism (Crenshaw, 1981; Pape, 2005). Political process frameworks challenge researchers to focus more explicitly on organizational and ideational movement dynamics and changes within a movement. Moreover, these frameworks allow to study how narratives within a movement allow movements to develop from a non-violent, to an exclusivist and violent movement.

3.2 Political Process Approach

Since this study is particularly interested in violent attacks of al-Shabaab against civilians in Kenya, it adopts the framework of Hafez (2003; 2004) to analyse and explain the use of violence against civilians. This framework does not exclude socioeconomic or rational actor explanations of violence but considers a political process approach a more convincing explanation of anticivilian violence in movement contention. Specifically, to understand why

mass movements resort to violence against civilians, Hafez (2004) presents a model of radicalization that is rooted in Social Movement Theory. According to this model, the convergence of three dimensions of contentious politics can explain the outcome of violence against civilians. Indeed, the political process approach offers conceptual insights as it charters the interplay of the political environments, mobilization structures and ideological frames to explain anticivilian violence. In his study, the author shows that the occurrence of *institutional exclusion* and *indiscriminate repression, emerging exclusive organizations* and *antisystem ideologies* may explain this particular outcome.

First of all, Hafez' model contends that political exclusion and in particular indiscriminate repression to supporters of movements can create feelings of victimization and legitimacy to justify violent acts. Political exclusion encourages movements to delegitimize the political system (the set of formal institutions of the state) and increases forces of radicalization within movements. To more critically analyse forces of political exclusion, Hafez (2003) categorizes repression in levels of repression, timing (pre-emptive or reactive) and method of targeting. Furthermore, the author emphasizes the importance of how repression is perceived (legitimate or illegitimate) by the insurgents, how consistent it is applied and to what extent accommodative strategies are performed.

Secondly, Hafez (2004) outlines how certain mobilization structures are used by rebellions to obtain resources and engage in collective violent action. The author argues that movements in a repressive political environment must overcome constraints to effect change. These constraints include finding trustworthy members while excluding those who try to undermine the movement from within; they must avoid security forces to destroy the movement by allocating resources; and they have to create a high degree of solidarity and cohesion to reduce possible defections. Exclusive organizations therefore have strict membership criteria, shared beliefs and highly demanding codes of conduct among members. As a consequence, members of exclusive organizations will increasingly identify their needs and interests with those of the larger group and realise that defection from the group will be a double loss. Hafez (2004) argues that repressive environments encourage and sometimes even force movements to become exclusive organizations by posing several constraints that must be overcome.

Last, in addition to the development of exclusive organizations, Hafez (2004) maintains how repressive political environments facilitate the development of antisystem frames. The author defines such ideological frames as ''conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimise and motivate collective

action'' (Hafez, 2004, p.156). Framing is thus not an objective process but rather a selective drawing of shared histories, revered symbols and cultural repertoires that are chosen to produce change (Hafez 2004). Through antisystem ideologies, movements can thus portray the state and its political system as corrupt and illegitimate, emphasize the purity of the movement's cause and implement a sense of historical righteousness into its members (Hafez, 2004). Furthermore, the struggle is framed not against a number of individuals but against a whole state and political system and therefore, against social order as a whole. To understand why movements choose to attack civilians, it is crucial to understand that exclusive organizations as described above, do not accept the idea of 'neutrality'. Rather, anyone who is not perceived as supportive is 'unjust' and considered a part of the broad categorization of legitimate targets.

For violent movements, framing of (antisystem) ideologies facilitates *moral disengagement*, a process for which Hafez (2004) identifies three mechanisms that increasingly justify anticivilian violence. Firstly, ethical justification serves as a frame for the justification of violence as actions as seen as a way to end social justice or as a reverse of historical injustice. Secondly, advantageous comparison is a justification of violence by which the violent actions of the movement are considered 'minor' transgressions compared to the cruelties inflicted on them by the enemy. Last, displacement of responsibility is a justification of violence where the culpability is shifted to agencies or enemies that 'force' the movement to use violence. Violence is not a choice by the movement but rather seen as a reaction of self-defence.

3.3 Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of the Political Process Approach

Hafez' (2004) political process approach to anticivilian violence is presented as a causal mechanism in this study. The theory assumes a dynamic of action, reaction, learning and adapting between state authorities and the movement, that explain the occurrence of anti civilian violence on the national level. Specifically, it contends that institutional exclusion and indiscriminate repression on the national level are the main drivers for the formation of the second and third causal mechanisms that occur on the level of movements, namely exclusive mobilization structures and ideological frames. Figure 1 visualizes the political process approach as a causal mechanism.

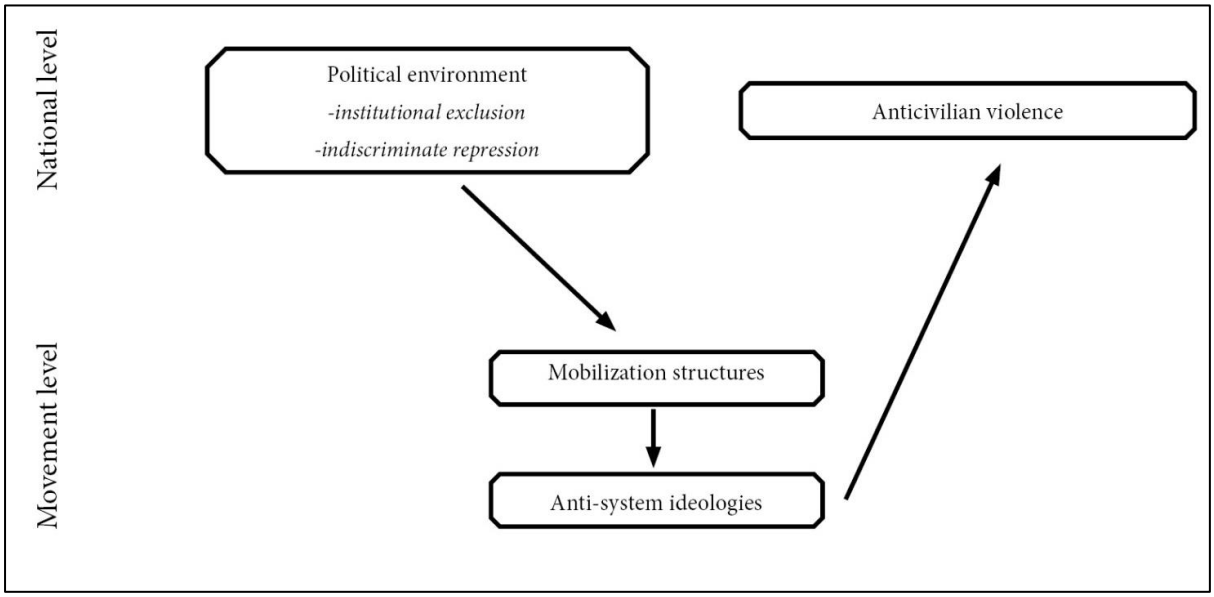

Figure 1. Causal mechanisms of the political process approach.

Indeed, ‘‘[w]hen institutional exclusion is combined with indiscriminate repression after an extended period of organizing and mobilization, large-scale rebellion[1] is likely to occur’’ (Hafez, 2004, p.104). In the political process approach, particular political environments are thus a *necessary* condition that trigger organizations to become exclusive. Furthermore, Hafez (2004) contends that formations of exclusive organizations will contribute to and encourage certain ideological frames. Although Hafez does not state as explicitly the necessity of the second condition, the formation of exclusive organizations is certainly also a *necessary* condition for the political process approach. Last, Hafez (2004) argues that antisystem ideologies are produced under conditions of repression and in the exclusive mobilization structure. Importantly, antisystem ideologies may exist in all societies, but they are by themselves not sufficient to cause anticivilian violence. Rather, as Hafez (2004, p.192) states,

> antisystem ideological frames, however, are indispensable for mass civilian violence even if they are not sufficient to produce it. Perhaps the most convincing proof for this proposition is the fact that Islamists go to great lengths to articulate justifications for violence and counter the condemnations of their critics.

Antisystem frames are thus a *necessary* condition for anticivilian violence to occur, but this outcome will only occur in conditions of indiscriminate political repression and the context of exclusive organizations.

[1] Hafez defines *rebellion* as efforts undertaken by movements to allocate and acquire resources for sustained violent opposition (Hafez, 2004, p.5).

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design: Case Study

Since the events of 9/11, the study of terrorism has received a great deal of attention, and a lot of (non-)academic research on terrorism exists. While most of these studies are marked by quantitative methods, to *deeply* investigate, ask *why* and *how* questions, and give an *in-depth* description of a social phenomenon, qualitative research methods are best-suited (Yin, 2003). The proposed research therefore adopts a case study design. Case studies allow for an in-depth investigation of a contemporary phenomenon in a broader, real-world context and is a well-fitting method for this study (Ross, 2004). Moreover, the essence of a case study is to illuminate *why* a certain decision or set of decisions has been taken and with what result – and it thereby goes to the heart of this study. Adopting a case study design thus features a strength for this research, as it allows to explain causal mechanisms that have led to al-Shabaab resorting to violence.

4.2 Research Methodology: Causal Process Tracing

Process tracing is widely used in security studies and a core methodology in this field (Mahoney, 2015). For a number of reasons, including the origins of security studies that lies in diplomatic history, how process tracing allows security studies to study complicated multi-causality, and the methods' advantage of engaging in a multi-disciplinary lens, process tracing has allocated the field of security studies to develop significantly (Tannenwald, 2015). As Mahoney (2015) argues, process tracing aims to convert historical narratives and causal mechanisms into analytical explanations that are embedded in theoretical frameworks. Process tracing by its very core aims to 'step back' and analyse how specific pieces of evidence might question or support existing theories. Indeed, Tannenwald (2015) finds that process tracing has contributed to studies of dynamics of international crises, causes of war and military intervention, sources of successes and failures in deterrence, democratic peace, post-conflict transitions, bombing and targeting strategies, and so on. Causal Process Tracing (CPT) is a methodological approach focuses on causal conditions, configurations and mechanisms that explain a particular outcome, and it is therefore a highly suitable method for studies that ask *how* and *why* questions (Blatter and Haverland, 2014). It is a within-case method of analysis the focuses on processes and/or mechanisms to link causes and outcomes. This study is interested in the many and complex causes that have led to a specific outcome and CPT is therefore a very suitable method.

4.3 Data Collection and Analysis

This thesis builds primarily on Hafez' political process approach to understand why terrorist groups resort to anticivilian violence. To do so, it employs research on institutional exclusion and indiscriminate repression against movements; mobilization structures; and the role of antisystem and ideological frames within movements, but also incorporates previous research on al-Shabaab that cover these themes. It is essential for this study to know that gathering data from (East-) African countries is not an easy task. Often, governmental and institutional databases are limited in their scope and accessibility, and secondary data sources such as NGO- and consultancy publications are small in their numbers and provision of in-depth information (World Bank, 2015). Therefore, this study uses primary sources including incident reports, national legislation and law implementation reports, and secondary sources including academic articles, media (news articles), and external publications (NGO- and consultancy reports). Importantly, to examine the influence of the interplay of state practices and al-Shabaab's violent behaviour, reports, legislation, academic articles, media sources and interviews must be identified according to the main research question. However, as mentioned above, due to limitations in data gathering, this study incorporates previous studies into analysis. The next part outlines what previous research on al-Shabaab already exists and argues how incorporating them into this study can improve the overall understanding of why movements exhibit violence against civilians.

4.4 Previous Research

First of all, Hansen (2013) is a leading figure in the study of al-Shabaab. The author offers a highly detailed discussion of al-Shabaab, looking into its membership and organizational structure, finances, and history. Specifically, Hansen (2013) distinguishes al-Shabaab's history into four phases (the expansive phase, 2005-06; insurgency, 2007-08; the Golden Age, 2009-10; the era of troubles, 2010-), in which both internal pressures such as ideological change and leadership conflicts, and external pressures from enemies and al-Qaeda are analysed. Secondly, Menkhaus (2004; 2005) has researched al-Shabaab extensively. The author focuses on the historical and political context in Somalia and outlines how these contexts have led to the emergence and continuous existence of al-Shabaab. Hence, Menkhaus offers substantive insights for historical and political conditions that have created opportunities for al-Shabaab to rise in Somalia and contributes to understanding al-Shabaab's tactical use of violence. Third, Gartenstein-Ross (2009) systematically approaches al-Shabaab's changing tactics by looking at external influences. Exemplary, the author notices how after Godane 's rise to leadership, the number of foreign fighters has increased, as well as the number of suicide attacks and al-

Shabaab's ideological connection to al-Qaeda. In addition, Wise (2011) analyses al-Shabaab's successes and failures by looking at the in- and decrease of its military capacity. The author attributes much of al-Shabaab's success to the Ethiopian invasion, that has caused large-scale radicalization and an increase in membership. Finally, Marchal (2007;2009) discusses al-Shabaab's resilience in the context of its enemies. The author attributes al-Shabaab's successes and failures to the perceived illegitimacy of the Somali and other governments. While this study primarily draws on empirical data, the contribution of the above-mentioned scholars is critical for understanding historical and political contexts that have led to the emergence of al-Shabaab. More so, the work of these scholars complements to the analytical chapters of this study that primarily draw on empirical data, providing detailed insights that can otherwise not be obtained.

4.5 Operationalization

Importantly, CPT is a method that is based on configurational thinking, which implies that the combination of causal factors lead to social outcomes; divergent pathways may lead to similar outcomes (equifinality); and the effects of causal factors may lead to different outcomes (causal heterogeneity). Thus, by adopting a CPT approach this study identifies causal conditions that are individually necessary and jointly sufficient to cause the specific outcome of the case (Blatter and Haverland, 2014). For this study, causal conditions have been identified on the basis of the political process explanation as put forth by Hafez (2004) and are identified as political environments, mobilization structures and antisystem ideologies. The operationalization of the study is presented in table 1.

Process tracing essentially facilitates the uncovering of *critical junctures.* Critical junctures as identified for this study capture events that happened within the established timeframe and that have a substantial impact on the outcome. Therefore, in the operationalization of this study, evidence is presented with an eye to critical junctures that are considered essential for the outcome, in this case anticivilian violence in the Westgate Mall shooting in Nairobi, in September 2013. A combination of quantitative and qualitative data is provided that potentially contributed to the ultimate outcome of this study. In the analytical chapters, a detailed discussion and analysis of these events is presented.

4.6 Limitations in Reliability and Validity

Despite carefully considering all methods employed, the methodological choices have implications for the reliability and validity of this study. As Yin suggests (2003), to minimize errors and biases in a study, opportunities to repeat the study should be in place. For case studies, however, such an opportunity almost never occurs. Therefore, to increase reliability,

this study will use the *case study protocol,* using public documents and making procedures explicit. Secondly, to ensure construct validity, theoretical frameworks concepts are specifically defined. To make sure the research measures what it intends to measure and thus increase internal validity, a single case study with time restriction (2009-2013) is chosen. Nevertheless, external validity will unlikely be achieved. As Yin (2003), argues, generalizability beyond this immediate, explanatory study is difficult as outcomes of case studies tend to be highly context related. However, the value of this study is primarily found in the provision of in-depth knowledge on the use of violence against civilians by al-Shabaab in Kenya. In this way, this study contributes to increasing general knowledge on the use of violence against civilians by terrorist groups.

	Conceptualization of Each Part	Predicted Evidence	Type of Evidence Used to Measure Prediction
1	Political environments on the national level		
a	*Institutional exclusion*	Expect to see evidence of national state attempting to deny substantive access to Islamist movements (e.g. restricting to party formations, competing in elections, holding public office)	Measured using account evidence from formal communications and legislation produced by the government
b	*Indiscriminate repression*	Expect to see evidence of the state to restricting the rights of citizens' freedom and possibilities (e.g. restrictions from the freedom of press, on the rights of opposition parties to campaign, mass arrests and violent repression)	Measured using account evidence from formal communications and legislation produced by the government and from NGO- and consultancy reports
2	Mobilization structures within movements		
a	*Exclusive organizations*	Expect to find evidence of al-Shabaab's strict membership criteria, shared beliefs, and highly demanding codes of conduct for their members, high levels of secrecy	Measured using account evidence from media, NGO- and consultancy reports and interviews with al-Shabaab
3	Ideological frames within movements		
a	*Ethical justifications*	Expect to find evidence of al-Shabaab framing their actions as a necessary evil to end perceived social injustices or/and justification of violence to a historic trend that is deleterious to their people	Measured using sequence evidence (timing of events) and account evidence using (social) media means of communications
b	*Advantageous comparison*	Expect to find evidence of al-Shabaab legitimising their violence by framing theirs as 'minor' transgressions compared to the cruelties inflicted by the enemy	Measured using sequence evidence (timing of events) and account evidence using (social) media means of communications
c	*Displacement of responsibility*	Expect to find evidence of al-Shabaab justifying their violence through a frame of 'self-defence' or/and the enemy 'forcing' them to exhibit violence	Measured using sequence evidence (timing of events) and account evidence using (social) media means of communications

Table 1. Conceptualization and Operationalization of the Political Process Approach.

5. Historical Narrative of al-Shabaab's Development

Without a doubt, al-Shabaab has developed within a certain historical context in Somalia. Although the organization has experienced several major challenges from various armed forces, it has remained one of the most powerful organisations within and around Somalia for a long time. It is therefore essential to, before analysing the causal mechanisms as outlined in Hafez' theory, examine historical conditions and early development of al-Shabaab. Accordingly, this first analytical part of the thesis seeks to address the research question from a historical empirical perspective to better understand the conditions that allowed for the rise of al-Shabaab in Somalia. This chapter presents a descriptive chronological overview of the recent relevant history of Somalia, highlighting political structures and changes to trace the development of al-Shabaab in the country. Last, it presents a short overview of major events that occurred during the period of this study, between 2006 and 2013, and that will be analysed thoroughly in following chapters.

5.1 Historical Conditions: 1991-2004

Somalia was ruled by the socialist communist regime of Said Barre from 1969 to 1991. The fall of the autocratic regime in 1991 became a turning point for Somalia's security and stability as it provided several Islamic militant groups to engage in clan wars (Oloya, 2016). While Somalia had been an Islamic country for over a thousand years, the expression of the faith immensely changed over the last thirty years. Indeed, with the development of new Islamist organizations and an increase in the use of Islamic symbols, Somalia experienced a religious insurgence in the 1990s (Hansen, 2013). Different groups emerged after the fall of the regime, that all worked to promote the influence of Islam on Somali politics and society. The most prominent was al-Itihaad al-Islamiya (AIAI) that was founded already in the early 1980s. AIAI was initially a Sufi[2] inclined movement with a brotherhood-oriented approach to Islam but changed to become more Salafist[3] with the coming of Somali fighters from Saudi Arabia (Menkhaus, 2004). The organization combined Islamist with nationalist ideologies and sought to establish an Islamic State in Somalia. Although AIAI did not succeed in establishing an Islamic State, it has been influential in Somalia in the period after the collapse of the Barre regime (Gartenstein-Ross, 2009). AIAI experienced several violent clashes with other militant groups, conducted a number of terrorist attacks in Ethiopia and governed southern parts of Somalia with the help of al-Qaeda

[2] Sufism has traditionally been the predominant form of Islam practiced in Africa. Sufism is adaptable to social norms and is less concerned with strict Koran and more with individual spiritual growth (Meijer, 2009).

[3] Salafist Islam stresses a strict interpretation of the Koran and demands a more rigid outward conformity to Islamic precepts. Teaching in Salafist Islam often reject the Western culture, and rather focusses on the purification of Islam and establishment of an Islamic caliphate (Meijer, 2009).

until 1996 (Hansen, 2013). Notably, the complex civil warfare in Somalia that took place in the early 1990s caused a major humanitarian crisis with 300,000 deaths, almost 3 million displaced internal Somali refugees and two million Somali refugees in Ethiopia and Kenya (Oloya, 2016). At the same time, after the collapse of the ruthless Siad Barre regime in 1991, Islamic Sharia Courts appeared in South Central Somalia. Although generally Somalis had a moderate, Sufism based approach to Islam, the Sharia courts were seen as a way to solve disputes, control militant groups and resemble a state of normalcy that many prior political interventions had failed to achieve (ICG, 2002). Loosely linked courts became networked and by 2004 there was broad public and business support to merge the courts into a coalition led by Sheikh Sharif Ahmed (Mueller, 2018). Two years later the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) were formalized as a dominant force in Mogadishu. The ICU operationalized in mid-2006, pushed for human rights respect and revitalized public life by re-activating air and seaports, opening schools, lifting roadblocks, and so on (Mueller, 2018). A period of peace was established and former fighters from al-Qaeda and Afghanistan as well as Somali diaspora were attracted into Somalia. Yet as a consequence of these former fighters arriving in Somalia, both neighbouring country Nigeria and the United States (U.S.) perceived the increase of Islamic power through the Courts as a significant threat and the U.S. consequently supported an alliance with secular warlords as the Alliance for Peace Restoration and Counter Terrorism (APRCT) (Hansen, 2013). The APRCT formation immediately caused backlash and led many Somalis to support the ICU. The ICU had quickly defeated the APRCT in Mogadishu (see figure 2 for a picture of Somalia) and began to restore and provide basic services (Gartenstein-Ross, 2009). Yet while the ICU in Mogadishu was thus still able to provide stability, security and justice according to Sharia law, this changed in 2006 when the Ethiopian Defence Forces (EDF) led the emerging Transitional Federal Government (TFG) into Somalia to bring stability. In the wake of the attacks of 9/11, the United States had designated AIAI a terrorist organization and a CIA-led operation to eradicate al-Qaeda from Somalia was started together with Ethiopia. The operation destabilized the ICU's already incoherent militias, that could not stand against Ethiopia's professional army and air force. By the end of 2006, Ethiopian and TFG forces won over Mogadishu and consequently, the ICU fell apart. Notably, although the ICU had been defeated, these operations ultimately exacerbated security tensions and destabilized Somalia, worsening the circumstances of the crisis (Oloya, 2016).

Figure 2. Map of Somalia. Source: Geology.com.

5.2 Al-Shabaab's Expansive Period: 2004-2009

During these years, al-Shabaab emerged as a stand-alone organization. Particularly AIAI left a mark on the development of Islamic organizations inside Somalia and has ultimately inspired and shaped the organization (Hansen, 2013). Al-Shabaab stems directly from radicalised, young members of AIAI. Since after the turn of the century AIAI had disintegrated into a loose, politically inactive network, a new political front could occur (Menkhaus, 2005). Notably, the disentanglement of AIAI together with renewed trust in Islamist charities and religious leaders, and the increase in use of religious symbols and titles contributed to an open discourse that was open for Islamist organizations such as al-Shabaab to occur in (Hansen, 2013). Shortly after an AIAI conference in the Somaliland town Laascanood in 2003, a group of young radicals left and founded the rival Islamist movement al-Shabaab (Shinn, 2009). The official of the organization reads *Harakat al-Shabaab al Mujaheddin*, meaning ''the Youth''. Importantly, all of the founding members of al-Shabaab, including Aden Hashi Ayro, Ahmed Abdi Godane, Mukhtar Ali Robow, Faud Mohamed Khalaf Shangole and Ibrahim Haji Jama al-Afghani, are believed to have fought for al-Qaeda in Afghanistan (Dagne 2010). Initially, al-Shabaab played

no major role, yet in 2005 the organization joined the ICU and gained strength. Somalis felt resentment against the Ethiopian occupation, even more because it was supported by the American military. Al-Shabaab owes much of its initial success to these resentments because it was therefore able to gain legitimacy and support from Somali citizens. Al-Shabaab soon carried out violent suicide attacks targeting the EDF and became internationally recognized as a violent jihadist group. The movement entered years of large victories and great backlashes. Certainly, al-Shabaab had taken over Kismayo in September 2006, but by the end of the same year the EDF killed many clan militias and send al-Shabaab into the countryside (Hansen, 2013). Simultaneously, the increase of violence and humanitarian crisis in Somalia urged several countries in East Africa, including Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti and later Ethiopia, to combine forces, support the TFG and fight al-Shabaab. Under the name of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the force with 21,561 troops reclaimed territories from al-Shabaab, re-organized democracy and trained the Somali National Army from 2007 (Taarnby and Hallundbaek, 2010). Nonetheless, after being easily defeated by Ethiopian forces in 2006 and losing credibility among Somali citizens due to assassinations of aid workers and government officials, al-Shabaab remained dedicated to its cause and regrouped in 2007 (Hansen, 2013). The movement officially broke with remainders of the ICU in September 2007 and publicly adopted a 'global jihadist ideology' (Gartenstein-Ross, 2009, p.28). Al-Shabaab continued to attack Somali and AMISOM forces and build strong ties with clan leaders and several populations in Somalia (Oloya, 2016). As Hansen (2013, p.46) stresses, ''[a]l-Shabaab did not escape the clan realities of Somalia, but it was exceptionally good at transcending them''. By early 2008, al-Shabaab was able to go beyond short guerrilla style hit-and-run attacks and began to take over territories from Ethiopian troops in southern Somalia and attacked Ethiopian and TFG forces in Mogadishu (Curran, 2011).

5.3 Al-Shabaab's Organizational Peak: 2009-2010

As laid down in the Djibouti peace agreement, Ethiopia withdrew its troops from Somalia in 2009. Although the peace agreement led to hopes of al-Shabaab losing relevance and fading, al-Shabaab proved resilient (Hansen, 2013). Aden Hashi Ayro, one of the founding members and leader of al-Shabaab, was killed during a US missile strike on his home in Dhusamareb, Somalia on May 1, 2008. Ayro 's successor Ahmed Abdi Godane intensified the international focus of the Islamist movement and increasingly laid contact with al-Qaeda, the Afghanistan Taliban and Islamic State in Iraq. Accordingly, al-Shabaab expanded its rhetoric against the West and thus to fighting the TFG and AMISOM (Gartenstein-Ross, 2009). In 2009, al-Shabaab

gained territory and started establishing local governance structures, providing services to Somali citizens. By 2010, the organization had reached its operational capacity peak through income-taxation and had authority and power in its controlled territories (Mueller, 2018). The organization started online propaganda and increased attraction from (international) media by increasing its high-profile suicide attacks (Hansen, 2013). Furthermore, although al-Shabaab faced challenges from other Islamist groups that battled al-Shabaab's authority, due to its strength these groups diminished into al-Shabaab. Particularly the absorption of Hizbul Islam, an anti-government organization that was al-Shabaab's largest challenge in the region, showed the effectiveness and power of al-Shabaab (Mueller, 2018).

5.4 A Transnational Focus: 2010-2013

To maintain its power and authority, strong presence in Mogadishu was of significant importance for al-Shabaab. However, after months of battles with AMISOM and TFG forces, al-Shabaab was evicted from Mogadishu in August 2010. In fact, the so-called Ramadan Offensive led to the most critical crisis for the organization. Godane' s status as leader was damaged and al-Shabaab fell apart in de-centralized local parts. Although by the end of the year disputes had been resolved, particularly disagreements over tactics and leadership led to fundamental weakening of al-Shabaab (Hansen, 2013). AMISOM and the TFG launched major offenses against the organization, Kenya intervened with Operation Linda Nchi[4] in Somalia in 2011 and started a series of defeats for al-Shabaab until March 2012. The operation was issued after al-Shabaab was accused of kidnappings of aid workers from refugee camps in North East Kenya and aimed to push back al-Shabaab into Somalia and keep Kenya safe (Mueller, 2018). As the next chapters will look into and further emphasize, al-Shabaab experienced major setbacks in 2012 in south central Somalia, but was expanding in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia by 2013 (Hansen, 2013).

[4] Operation Linda Nchi translates to Operation Protect the Nation in Swahili.

6. Statistical Trends in Tactical Choices

Following the historical outline of al-Shabaab's development, this chapter outlines statistical trends in the in- and decrease of violent attacks and changes in the tactical choices of al-Shabaab. Since this study specifically focuses on the occurrence of anticivilian violence in the Westgate Mall shooting in Nairobi, Kenya in September 2013 there is a particular focus on transnational attacks of al-Shabaab in Kenya. Over the years al-Shabaab has demonstrated its ability to carry out terrorist attacks in Somalia and surrounding countries in the name of the global movement. Several trends that are worth examining with closer detail will be looked at in this chapter.

6.1 Violent Incidents in Somalia and Kenya

The development of the use of violence by al-Shabaab has been remarkable. While initially a minor player, by 2013 al-Shabaab had carried out over 600 attacks in Somalia and several other countries in East Africa, as depicted in figure 3. Although in the years from 2006 until 2010 the number of attacks can be described as 'modest', subsequently to Ethiopian troops leaving Somalia in 2011 the amount of attacks conducted by al-Shabaab heavily increased. Following increasing outside pressure and internal disagreements over tactics and leadership, a slight decline of number of attacks in noticeable in 2012. Yet as discussed in the previous chapter, by 2013 al-Shabaab was expanding to other countries in East Africa.

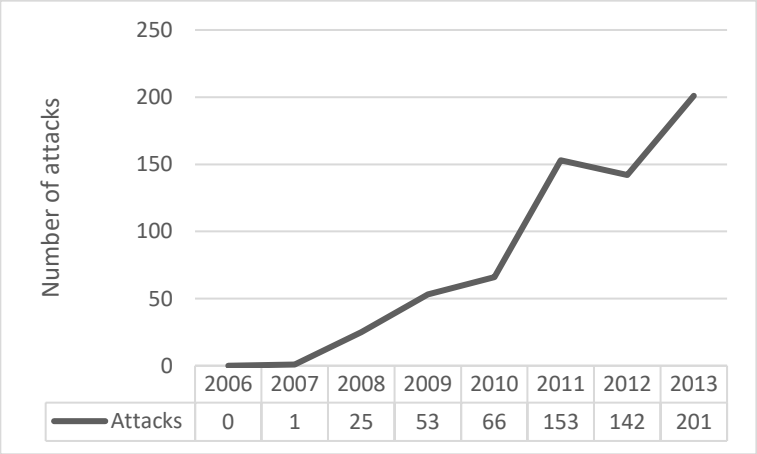

Figure 3. Al-Shabaab attacks between 2006 and 2013. Source: Global Terrorism Database.

Indeed, Al-Shabaab focused in its transnational fight on Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Rwanda. Notably, figure 4 shows that the number of attacks in Kenya boosted already from 2011, shortly after the start of Kenya's Operation Linda Nchi. The vast majority of the attacks occurred in Nairobi, Mombasa, and parts of North Eastern Kenya. The boost in the number of attacks in Kenya is particularly interesting because as the overall number of attacks by al-Shabaab

decreased in 2012, it reached a peak in Kenya in 2012 simultaneously. Certainly, out of 142 attacks in total in 2012, 50 were carried out in Kenya.

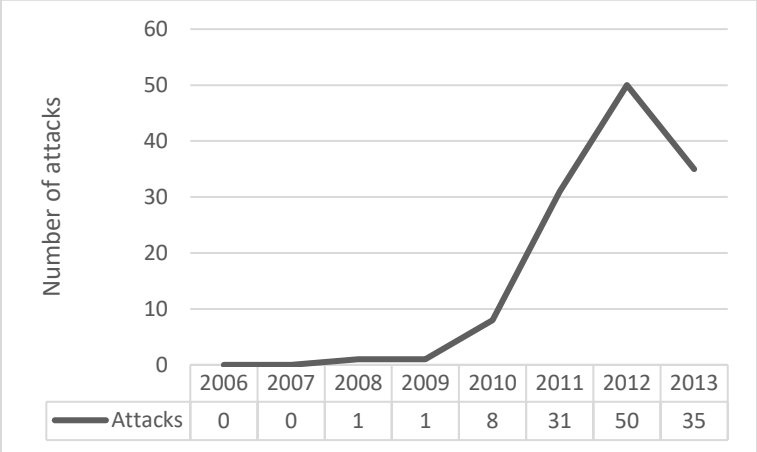

Figure 4. Al-Shabaab attacks in Kenya between 2006 and 2013. Source: Global Terrorism Database.

6.2 Military Tactics

Beyond the in- and decrease of violent attacks, tactical choices have changed as well. Trends of choices in the scope of tactics that al-Shabaab used between 2006 and 2013 are worth examining. In the first few years, Al-Shabaab used guerrilla style hit-and-run and insurgent tactics to defend and expand its territories such as targeted assassinations of government officials. From 2009, the use of suicide bombings increased, as demonstrated in table 2. Both the number of assassinations, armed assaults and (suicide) bombings increased heavily in 2012. Notably, hostage taking through kidnapping by al-Shabaab reached a peak in 2011, as Mueller (2018) notes, most likely due to later major territorial losses. The discussion on these tactical choices will be discussed later in this study, but for now it is worth noting there has been a steady increase in usage of various tactics and number of attacks.

Tactic	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Assassinations	-	2	-	5	7	18	16
Armed Assault	2	15	12	22	39	83	94
Bombings/explosions	4	10	20	21	51	112	153
(included above) Suicide bombings	-	-	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(8)*	*(15)*	*(19)*
Hijacking	-	-	1	-	1	-	2
Hostage Taking (Barricade)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Hostage Taking (Kidnap)	1	3	16	15	54	4	11
Facility/Infrastructure	-	-	2	3	10	6	6
Unarmed assault	-	-	1	3	3	-	-
Unknown	3	-	7	5	8	17	49
Total Tactical Diversity		4	7 (8)	7 (8)	8 (9)	6 (7)	8(9)

Table 2. Al-Shabaab yearly tactical diversity between 2007 and 2013. Source: Mueller, 2018.

The evolvement of tactical choices of al-Shabaab can also be viewed by the numbers of fatalities caused by al-Shabaab attacks. Figure 5 shows the number of fatalities in Kenya, figure 6 shows the number of fatalities in al-Shabaab attacks in Somalia. The number of fatalities in al-Shabaab attacks peaked in Kenya in 2013, mainly due to the heavy attacks in the Westgate Mall shooting in Nairobi, September 2013. Furthermore, in accordance with the increase of assassinations, armed assaults and (suicide) bombings, the number of fatalities in al-Shabaab attacks immensely raised in 2012 and 2013.

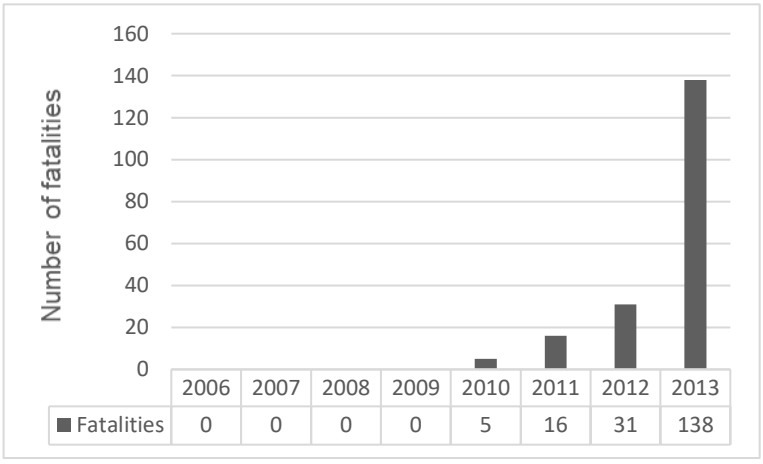

Figure 5. Number of fatalities in al-Shabaab attacks between 2006 and 2013 in Kenya. Source: Global Terrorism Database.

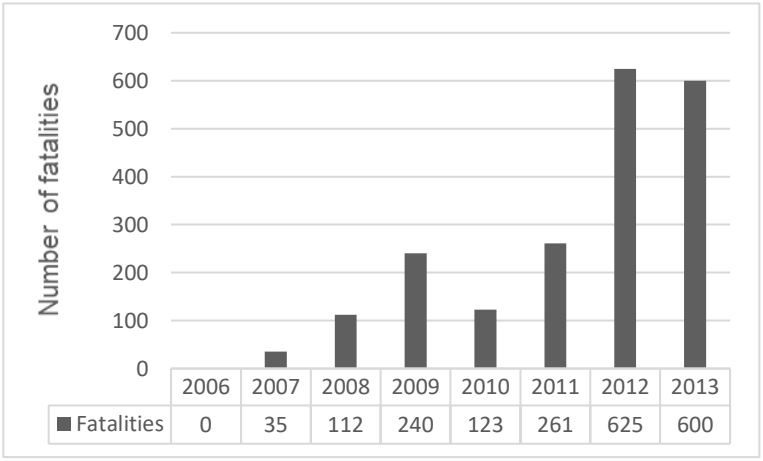

Figure 6. Number of fatalities in al-Shabaab attacks between 2006 and 2013 in Somalia. Source: Global Terrorism Database.

Although al-Shabaab's alterations in tactics and targets will be analysed in-depth in a later chapter of this study, these initial findings fit with the strategy of warfare that al-Shabaab announced in a press release in 2012, stating, ''[t]he enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; He retreats, we pursue'' (UN Security Council, 2013, p.54).

7. Political Processes on the National Level

This part of the study aims to address the main research question from an empirical perspective. Before analysing the strength of the causal mechanisms, this chapter and the following chapters present empirical evidence. In accordance with the operationalization of this study, major changes and events are presented as evidence and their strength is assessed in the conclusion. Firstly, this chapter discusses the history and current relationship of the Kenyan government with its minority Muslim and ethnic Somali population, focusing particularly on occurrences of institutional exclusion and indiscriminate repression. Secondly, this chapter will go into Kenya's counterterrorism measures in reaction to al-Shabaab, highlighting Kenya's response to al-Shabaab's first international attack in Uganda and the first Prevention of Terrorism Act of Kenya. The concluding remarks of this chapter will assess the strength of the evidence and argue whether Kenya's political processes upholds Hafez' (2004) causal mechanism.

7.1 Kenya's Relationship with its Somali and Muslim Populations

The relationship between the Kenyan government and Kenyan Somalis is quite tensed and can best be viewed against the country's post-independence historical context. As Lind, Mutahi and Oosterom (2015) explain, the Kenyan government has historically viewed and treated Kenya's ethnic Somali population as the 'other', while jeopardizing lived experiences of citizenship and equality of rights. Particularly ethnic Somali population in the North Eastern Province (for a picture of Kenya see figure 7) and Somalis living in urban areas have been entangled in tensed relationships with Kenyan authorities since post-colonial governments maintained reinforced many pre-colonial legal provisions that ensured the isolation of these populations. Exemplary, a key strategy in the 1970- and 80s of the military to control and discipline Somali populations was 'collective punishment'. After the fall of the Said Barre regime in Somalia in the 1990s conflicts in Somalia unfolded, the Kenyan government expected spill over effects into Kenya and security concerns increased. Kenya's security institutions subjected surveillance, mistreatment and violence to Kenya's Somali populations. Somalis who have been living in Kenya for over a century are still targeted with Kenya's security measures today. Often, government actors promote and criminalize discourse on Somali identities, imputing linkages between Somali wealth and illegal activities. According to Human Rights Watch (2012), abusive behaviour of state actors against Somalis in Kenya worsened after an attack on a minibus in Eastleigh, Nairobi, on 18 November 2012. Indeed, forms of abuse such as arbitrary detention, extortion, rape, and sexual violence have become part of daily live for many Somalis

in Kenya. These abuses, together with long-standing screening exercises, have affected 'hierarchies in citizenship' in Kenya (Lochery, 2012).

Although most of Kenya's Muslims stem from its Somali citizens, the minority group is not homogeneous. Muslims in Kenya comprise different ethnic groupings, including Arabs and Arab-African descents, Somalis and nomadic groups. Before the 1998 terrorist bombing of the U.S. embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, Muslims were generally supported and included in the government through political parties. However, following the 1998 terrorist bombing, Muslims in Kenya faced governmental exclusion and widespread stereotyping as terrorists. Security measures intended against Muslims increased even more after the 9/11 attacks in U.S. and the start of the 'War on Terror' (minorityrights.org, 2018). As a consequence of the deepening crisis in Somalia and the increase of incidents involving Muslim extremists in Kenya, discrimination and intolerance for Kenya's Muslims grew and stereotyping of Muslims as 'terrorists' occurred even more frequently. A heavy-handed security response, including allegations of arbitrary, unlawful detention and torture followed (minorityrights.org, 2018).

Figure 7. Map of Kenya. Source: Geology.com.

7.2 Kenya's Response to al-Shabaab

Kenya has been vulnerable to terrorist attacks for many years but has increased its militaristic and security-focused approach more since the start of the 'War on Terror', following the attacks on 9/11 in the U.S. Indeed, Kenya's counter-terrorism measures do not stand alone, but are developed in collaboration with and sometimes under the pressure of Western countries (Mogire and Agade, 2011). As discussed in the section above, the Kenyan government increased political exclusion, marginalized its Somalia and Muslim population and constructed these populations as threatening to Kenya, to justify its violent security and counter-terrorism measures. However, as Lind, Mutahi and Oosterom (2015) emphasize, the breakdown of a central state authority and the rise of al-Shabaab caused a massive influx of refugees in Kenya and has been perceived as an even greater substantial threat to the country's peace and stability. Kenya experienced a major shift in its approach to combat terrorism, due to growing evidence of domestic radicalisation and the safe haven Kenya had become for terrorists. Ultimately, al-Shabaab's first attack outside of Somalia sparked the Kenyan government to implement several counter-terrorism laws such as the Prevention of Terrorism act.

7.2.1 Kampala Bombing

Although al-Shabaab had threatened to attack international targets since early 2007 and had become more internationalized over the years, the bombings of July 11, 2010, during the FIFA World Cup final match in Kampala, Uganda formed al-Shabaab's first international attack (Harnisch and Zimmerman, 2010). Two bombs exploded at two sites in the city, one in the Ethiopian Village restaurant and one in the Kyadondo Rugby club, where people had gathered to watch the final match. During the attack over 70 people were killed and about an equal number was injured. Within a few days after the attack al-Shabaab publicly took credit for the bombings, stating the attacks were a retaliation of Uganda's involvement in the AMISOM (OSJI, 2013). Immediately after al-Shabaab's claim of responsibility, the attacks became internationalized and Kenya, Tanzania and Somalia got involved. Kenya's Anti-Terrorism Police Unit detained three Kenyan men on July 23, 2010 and rendered them to Uganda as suspects of the bombings. During the following months, all countries involved continued renditions of suspected men to Uganda. Several civil society organizations raised questions considering human rights abuses on the accused attackers and alleged the countries involved of unconstitutionally rendering men to Uganda. During interrogations of Kenyan officials, rendition victims claimed to be threatened with death and of being physically abused. In addition, concerns were raised considering the Kenyan government using the threat of terrorism

to supress and/or harass minority groups, political oppositions and human rights lawyers (OSJI, 2013). Indeed, the World Cup bombing abuses marked the start sign for a larger pattern of human rights violations by the Kenyan government in the name of ‘‘fighting the terrorist threat in East Africa’’ (OSJI, 2013, p.12).

7.2.2 Prevention of Terrorism Act

Kenya passed the first anti-terrorism legislation in October 2012. The act outlines offences ranging from ‘commission of a terrorist act’, ‘provision of weapons to terrorist groups’ and ‘recruitment of members of a terrorist group’, to investigation rights including the ‘power to arrest’ and ‘power to gather information’ (Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2012). Immediately after the bill passed, civil society organizations raised human rights concerns. Governmental fear of terrorism had previously led to ethnic profiling and indiscriminate attacks of security forces against Muslim, Somali communications and other minority groups in Kenya (as discussed in previous sections) and organizations worried the act would increase discrimination, repression and violence against these groups (OSJI, 2013; Ssempogo, 2009). Indeed, Omar Hassen, the former commissioner of the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNHCR), stated about Kenya’s approach to fight terrorism (Hassen, 2012[5]; quoted from OSJI, 2013, p.28):

> The [Kenyan] government is looking for what’s convenient rather than upholding the rule of law. The public is so fearful of the terrorism threat and is prejudicial towards certain communities it became acceptable for the government to do what public opinion allows. But the law isn’t as fashionable.

According to human rights defenders and civil society organizations such as the Open Society Justice Initiative, the Kenyan government has been unable to develop relationships with communities and civil society groups from which al-Shabaab members have been recruited (OSJI, 2013). Moreover, Kenya’s security forces have repeatedly disregarded international rule of law and have disrespected human rights. Orina (2016) warns for challenges that arise with the Prevention of Terrorism Act and discusses how the law has given way for Kenya’s police officers, elite Anti-Terrorism Police Unit and the military to carry out inept security operations, leading to Muslims and ethnic Somali citizens being harassed or mysteriously killed. Human Rights Watch (2012) reported in the same vein how round-ups and beatings of large numbers

[5] Hassan Omar Hassan, former commissioner of the Kenyan National Human Rights Commission, speaking at the first annual Convention on Counter-Terrorism Practitioners in Eastern Africa and the Horn (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia), May 22–23, 2012.

of Muslims and ethnic Somalis have become part of a pattern of violence and indiscriminate responses of the Kenyan police and military to increased threats of terrorism. Certainly, many Kenyan Muslims view the Prevention of Terrorism Act as a dangerous sign of the Kenyan government's readiness to pursue counterterrorism strategies that are in conflict with the rule of law, while indiscriminately targeting specific minority communities (OSJI, 2013).

7.3 Causality of Kenya's Political Processes

Hafez (2004) explains that institutional exclusion on the one hand and reactive indiscriminate repression on the other threaten organizational resources and individual lives of Muslims, that may cause problematic consequences. Repressive political environments such as these force Muslims to undergo a process of radicalization, that eventually cause the rise of exclusive mobilization structures and ideological frames to motivate violence – as will be discussed in subsequent chapters. Here, the question remains whether the evidence as presented is strong enough to uphold the causal mechanism. A historical pattern of increasing tensions between ethnic Somalis and Muslims and the Kenyan government can be observed. The attacks of 9/11 marked the start sign of years of indiscriminate and heavy-handed security responses towards ethnic Somalis and Muslims and formed the ultimate justification of Kenya's violent security and counter-terrorism measures. Certainly, Kenya's increasingly problematic relationship with its ethnic Somali and Muslim population, its response to the Kampala bombing and the Prevention of Terrorism Act characterise both active and reactive indiscriminate repression and exclusion of ethnic Somalis and Muslims in Kenya. Importantly, since the beginning of al-Shabaab's insurgency, Kenya has been functioning as a pool for recruitment. Studies that focus on radicalization and Kenya's role in the fight against al-Shabaab show how Al-Shabaab has certainly benefitted from rising tensions between Muslims and Kenya's government (ICG, 2012; 2014). Due to Kenya's harsh and repressive counter-terrorism measures, ethnic Somali and Muslim communities have become further distanced and, as Hafez (2004) theorizes, susceptible for radicalization. This will be further discussed in the next chapter that covers mobilization structures of al-Shabaab.

8. Mobilization Structures of al-Shabaab

This second analytical chapter covers the mobilization structure of al-Shabaab. As Mueller (2018) argues, the rise and expansion of al-Shabaab in Somalia is strongly related to its internal organization and relationship with Somali citizens and is therefore crucial for understanding the movement. In accordance with the operationalization of this study, several episodes with a severe impact on the development of al-Shabaab are presented. For this aim this chapter firstly outlines al-Shabaab basic governance style in context to its changing relationship with Somali citizens. Secondly, in accordance with Hafez' (2004) theory, changing forces in the organization's leadership, al-Shabaab's membership requirements and recruitment processes in Kenya are discussed. The concluding remarks of this chapter assesses the strength of the presented evidence to uphold Hafez' (2004), and highlights causality between Kenya's relationship with its Muslim population and recruitment possibilities for al-Shabaab in Kenya.

8.1 Basic Governance Style: al-Shabaab in Controlled Territories

Although specifics about the composition of al-Shabaab remains largely unknown for outsiders, a picture of the general structure of the organization can be acquired through an analysis of al-Shabaab's governance in their controlled territories. Al-Shabaab has set out a network of Islamic administrations that stand under control of a central counties, in the 'Islamic Amirate of Somalia', or 'Islamic Provinces' (Harnisch and Zimmerman, 2010; Hansen, 2013). These local administrations of al-Shabaab have used Islamic law very strictly to build 'relationships', albeit mainly through intimidation, with Somali citizens during early years of expansion and relative success. The organization developed a three-tiered justice system consisting of militia, checkpoints commanders, local- and regional courts. In particular the militia courts controlled behaviour and social norms according to al-Shabaab's perception of Sharia, exemplary through dress regulations, separation of sexes and restrictions on alcohol. Local courts handled cases such as (domestic) violence and rebellious acts. Regional and higher courts took care of murder cases (Hansen, 2013). To make sure al-Shabaab's radical version of *Sharia* was carried out and followed by the public, public punishments would often occur. These included whippings and amputations for minor crimes such as incorrect use of Islamic dress codes or small theft (Harnisch and Zimmerman, 2010).

Furthermore, in territories controlled by al-Shabaab the organization used Islamic law and taxation to gain income from local populations. Particularly practices of *zakat*, that is one of the pillars of Islam that demands for a 2.5 percent contribution of every individuals' wealth to the

wider community, but also *sadaqah* (voluntary contributions) and jihad taxes improved al-Shabaab's level of control in territories and securitized income rates (Weber, 2015). Although most of al-Shabaab's revenue was spend on fighters to stand against the TFG and AMISOM, public services such as roads, health care centres and schools were repaired, activities that resulted in more local economic activity. During its early years of success, al-Shabaab took over educational institutions in controlled communities and replaced Sufi programs with hardliner Salafist interpretations of Islam (Hansen, 2013). Al-Shabaab ensured the spread of its ideology through Ministries, such as the Ministry of the Interior (*Maktabatu Siyaasada iyo Gobolad*). Systems to promote Sharia law and spread information were build, including several radio stations, TV and websites (Hansen, 2013). Exemplary, in controlled areas propaganda justifying the organization's (violent) actions and vilifying their enemies was send out (Curran, 2011). In other words, al-Shabaab has used its radical interpretation of Salafist Islam to control citizens and securitize income. The organization gained strong momentum and control in Somalia, seemingly taking over the national government.

8.2 Al-Shabaab's Leadership

Although al-Shabaab's closed nature makes it difficult to precisely determine who leads the organization, several executive bodies and commanders can be distinguished. Al-Shabaab consists of multiple organizational cells, units, divisions and powerful figures. The movement is organized according to a strong hierarchy, albeit consisting of independent components. Al-Shabaab's head consists of the supreme central commander, the Amir, and the executive council, known as the Shura Council, that have authority over local administrations and direct al-Shabaab's policies that concern the entire organization (Harnisch and Zimmerman, 2010). The Shura Council regulates the militia forces, overall strategy, and offenses. The most visible office of the Council is the 'Office for Supervising Foreign Agencies', that regulates external networks such as aid organizations in Somalia. The most prominent branch of al-Shabaab is the military branch, that consists of two sub-units. The first is the 'army of hardship and suffering' (*Jaysh Al-'Usr*) and the second is the judicial, social and economic branch (*Jaysh Al-Hisbah*), that is responsible for upholding al-Shabaab's law and moral principles in society and oversee general public welfare (Menkhaus, 2009). As Menkhaus (2009) emphasizes, the leadership of al-Shabaab is decentralized to regional commanders that manage specific geographic regions, but that makes it difficult to monitor the movement. Nevertheless, the assassination of Aden Ayro in 2008 clearly shaped the development and trajectory of al-Shabaab. Ayro was the original leader of al-Shabaab and it is believed he was trained as a fighter in Afghanistan in the

1990s (Gartenstein-Ross, 2009). After the U.S. designated al-Shabaab as a terrorist organization in February 2008, Ayro was killed in his own home in May the same year, by an American missile strike (Shinn, 2010). Ayro 's successor, Ahmed Godane, has been the Amir of al-Shabaab since 2008 and has impacted the organization to a great extent. Godane changed al-Shabaab from a movement of nationalists that focused on Somalia, to an international organization that aligned with al-Qaeda. In 2008, al-Shabaab 'took its war online' to enable the movement to speak more directly with jihadists and other sympathizers all over the world (Hansen, 2013). Reports indicate that Godane was relieved from his position as Amir of al-Shabaab on December 24, 2010, but he has remained a prominent and influential figure in the organization (Chothia, 2011). The successor of Godane was Ibrahim al Afghani, former leader the northern branch of al-Shabaab (Harnisch and Zimmerman, 2010; Shinn, 2009). Furthermore, Muktar Robow has long been al-Shabaab's spokesman but has been replaced by Ali Mohamed Rage as Robow became a key commander of the organization in the Bay and Bakool region (Dagne, 2010). Importantly, Hansen (2013) discusses two deeply divided oppositional faction that exist in the organization. The first faction, the 'trans nationalists', focus on doctrinal purity and spreading al-Shabaab's ideology throughout the horn of Africa at the least. Former Amir, Ahmed Godane, has been a prominent figure in this faction, and has increased al-Shabaab's engagement in the global fundamentalist movement to a great extent. Secondly, the faction of 'nationalists' remains dedicated to the national movement and more to adapting Islamist doctrine to local circumstances and creating an Islamic state in Somalia. Former spokesmen of al-Shabaab Muktar Robow has been a prominent figure here and implemented very strict Sharia law in local Somali towns. Factional disagreements came to a height in 2010, when Robow withdrew militia from Mogadishu as a protest to Godane' s policies (Hansen, 2013).

8.3 Al-Shabaab's Members

In 2011, al-Shabaab's total number of fighters was estimated between 3000 and 7000. McGregor (2013) describes a typical al-Shabaab fighter as, ''as a poorly educated local youth in his late teens or early twenties uniformed in plain, often dark, clothing and the red scarf which is drawn across their face when in action that has given them the local nickname of 'the masked men'''. Although little specifics are known about the radical ideologies of al-Shabaab's members, several authors claim al-Shabaab attracts thugs and opportunists more than ideological radicalists. In the same vein, Hansen (2013) indicates the recruitment process has

no place for opportunists, as new members go through long training programs where radical Islam is indoctrinated onto them.

During its early years of insurgency, al-Shabaab expanded its network inside Somalia, where it was increasingly able to call on assistance and mobilise troops in specific regions in the country (Shinn, 2011). Foreign fighters, particularly those coming from Kenya, became an important asset for the operational successes and rise of power of al-Shabaab during this time. Indeed, foreign fighters of al-Shabaab were generally more resourceful, better educated and more motivated as compared to Somali recruits (Ani and Ojakorotu, 2017). By 2008 al-Shabaab used foreign fighters to promote their cause as an international jihadist group that fought against the West. Foreign fighters brought al-Shabaab wealth, special skill sets and importantly, became a major source of suicide bombers (Shinn, 2011). Fighters that were initially attracted to Somali by the ICU now joined al-Shabaab, but the connection with Kenya grew as well. Many foreign fighters in Somalia fighting for al-Shabaab came from Kenya, as Hansen (2013) explains, during its early insurgency al-Shabaab established contacts with Kenyan organizations, such as the Kenyan Muslim Youth Centre in the Majengo area in Nairobi. Importantly, al-Shabaab established a discussion frame in the context of the harsh living conditions young Kenyan Muslims faced under their government. This frame was initiated by former Amir Ahmed Iman Ali, 'Abu Usama' but was soon spread over different regions in Kenya. Al-Shabaab provided young Muslims in Kenya with support but imposed a sense of Muslim solidarity that might be needed in times the *ummah* was directly attacked by the West as well. The Muslim Youth Centre in Nairobi became exemplary for the impact of al-Shabaab's recruitment strategies in Kenya. To illustrate, Mohamed Juma Rajab or 'Qa Qa aka Kadume', was one of the centre's activists and became member of al-Shabaab as early as 2008. According to a martyrdom video, he died at Bardale. As illustrated in a video that was released by al-Shabaab in February 2012, Muslims in Kenya were referred to as ''sons of Sa`d and Sa'id and Ali ibn Abi Talib and alBara' ibn Malik. With these videos al-Shabaab invoked the historical memory of prominent companions of the Prophet Muhammad onto young Kenyans, and subsequently Abu Hajer promised to launch attacks, including "martyrdom operations," inside Kenya while standing in front of a banner that declared, ''[t]errorism is a duty in Allah's religion'' (Anzalone, 2012, p.10).

8.4 Causality of al-Shabaab as Exclusive Organization

According to Hafez (2004), exclusive organizations are usually loosely structured and lack central leadership. Different sections emerge that hold their own resources and commanders, while no central organizational and clear-cut procedures for action are present. In accordance

with Hafez' theory, al-Shabaab's basic governance style during the early years of insurgency appeared focused on regional and local administrative networks in Somalia, although local leaders stood under control of central counties. Yet in contrast with Hafez' (2004) theory, overall trajectories of al-Shabaab are defined by the highest leader, the Amir. Exemplary, the 2008 change in Amir amplified the organization's focus from national to international and thereby its future organizational and procedural course of action. Furthermore, since the movement originates in Somalia and finds its early of development in this country that has known years of lawlessness and has functioned as a 'failed state', limited causality can be appropriated between indiscriminate repression and institutional exclusion on the national political level, and the emergence of al-Shabaab as an exclusive organization. However, al-Shabaab has effectively established connections within Kenya, contacting young Kenyan Muslims and providing them with an alternative to their harsh living circumstances in Kenya and a wider mission to fight for the global *ummah*. As discussed in chapter 7, political circumstances for Muslims in Kenya and the country's violent counter-terrorism measures may have attributed to al-Shabaab's possibilities of recruiting members in Kenya.

Last, Hafez (2004) argues that exclusive organizations establish strict membership criteria. Only those who share the beliefs of the organization and meet a high standard of conduct can be accepted as members. In the words of Hafez (2004, p.110) an ''exclusive organization usually requires the recruit to subject himself to organization discipline and orders and draws from those having the heaviest commitments''. It is crucial all parts of a person's individual live become infiltrated in the organization. While only a general image of al-Shabaab's internal training program is known, al-Shabaab seems to divide opportunists and ideological radicalists, only allowing the latter to dedicate to the cause and become a member.

9. Ideological Frames within al-Shabaab

Just as important as the discussions in the previous chapter for understanding al-Shabaab's destructive pattern of attacks against civilians, is the organization's use of ideological frames to justify and motivate violence against civilians. In accordance with the theory of Hafez (2004) this chapter firstly outlines anti-system frames of al-Shabaab, specifically looking into', ''conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action'' (Hafez, 2004, p.156). Secondly, this chapter looks into moral disengagement as an outcome of antisystem frames, that contribute to legitimizing anticivilian violence. The presence of three mechanisms, including *ethical justification, advantageous comparison* and *displacement of responsibility* in al-Shabaab's communicated justification, will be discussed. As laid out in the research design, this chapter will primarily look at statements and communications of al-Shabaab and highlights major events that may have impacted the course of the organization's development of antisystem frames. Last, the concluding remarks of this chapter will assess the strength of the evidence presented to uphold Hafez' (2004) theory.

9.1 Antisystem Ideologies

The ultimate goal of al-Shabaab is to establish the Islamic State and implement *Sharia* law in Somalia, while spilling over its ideology throughout the Horn of Africa. As will be further explained in this section, al-Shabaab's main enemies include those who actively seek to impact or attack al-Shabaab, such as Ethiopia and Kenya. When al-Shabaab started expanding its focus more globally, framing its ideology and enemies mainly by adopting al-Qaeda's violent Jihadi ideology, the 'West' that particularly includes the U.S. and Great Britain, became an enemy as well. In understanding al-Shabaab's antisystem ideologies, it is thus essential to look at both its relationship with al-Qaeda as well as perceived enemies.

9.1.1 Al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda

In May 2008, al-Shabaab's newly appointed leader Godane proclaimed in a few statements that the organization should be viewed in the context of the global Jihadist movement, while striving to follow Mohammed's footsteps and establish an Islamic State in Somalia (Hansen, 2013). This message was repeated in February 2010, when al-Shabaab linked its jihad more closely to al-Qaeda, stating ''to connect the horn of Africa jihad to the one led by al Qaeda and its leader Sheikh Osama Bin laden'' (Childress, 2010, para 2). Certainly, al-Qaeda has inspired al-Shabaab's transnational focus. By actively placing its struggle in context of the global Islamist movement, al-Shabaab adhered al-Qaeda's transnational ideology and the prominent Jihadi-

Salafi strain of Salafi thought that has been promoted by al-Qaeda. The essence of Salafism revolves around the concept of *tawhid*, meaning 'the uniqueness of God'. For Salafists, *tawhid* means that humans an obliged to follow strict *Sharia* law as outlined in the Quran and Sunna. Other forms of guidance, such as human reasoning, lead away from *aqida*, doctrinal purity of Islam. Importantly, followers of Jihadi-Salafist such as al-Shabaab believe that a form of radical political activism or revolution is needed to establish Islamic States, so that the concept of *tawhid* can be strictly adhered (Wiktorowicz, 2006). Furthermore, al-Shabaab draws heavily on the concept of *takfir*, that is the act of declaring a Muslim an apostate (Wiktorowicz, 2006). Indeed, in his interview with Al-Jazeera Robow accused the TFG of wrongly claiming to be Muslim, since they accepted assistance from secular governments such as the U.S. and Ethiopia at the same time (Al-Jazeera, 2008).

9.1.2 The Relationship Between al-Shabaab and Enemies

Ethiopia's invasion in December 2006 was framed by al-Shabaab as an attack, that demanded defensive jihad and accordingly, a religious war against Ethiopia and AMISOM was called (Hansen, 2013). Since the early days of al-Shabaab, the organization has consistently framed its fight as one against the 'occupation' of Christian or African crusaders, particularly including Ethiopia, Kenya, Burundi and Uganda. Exemplary, when Kenya invaded in Somalia in 2011, al-Shabaab quickly communicated to citizens of Somali whether they would be ''ready to live under Christians'', while urging them to ''defend your dignity and religion (Howden, 2011).

On October 16, 2011, Kenya's operation Linda Nchi officially took off when the Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF) crossed the border of Kenya into southern Somalia. A Kenyan battalion as well as an air and armored vehicle support with a total of 1,500 military personnel crossed the border from Kenyan to Somalia in the Lower Jubba region and immediately, air strikes targeted Al-Shabaab bases in and around the jungle and Kenyan Army units entered Somalia to create a 100 km buffer zone (Zimmerman, 2012). The mission was twofold, aiming firstly to capture Kismayo and secondly, to completely wipe out al-Shabaab (Anderson and McKnight, 2015). Operation Linda Nchi was a significant cross-border military intervention and became the largest military operation since Kenya's independence in 1963. An ongoing refugee crisis at the Kenyan-Somali border that worsened due to a devastating period of drought in mid-2011; the continuous attacks of al-Shabaab on aid workers in Kenya; and the recent successes of AMISOM in Mogadishu, pushed the Kenya government to invade in Somalia (Chothia, 2011). The operation was thus officially justified by external stresses and built on the securitisation of Somali refugees in Kenya that had been since the 1990s but had heavily increased since 2006

when Ethiopian and U.S. forces started fighting against the ICU (Lind, Mutahi and Oosterom, 2015).

Al-Shabaab started fighting back to the Kenyan forces immediately. The day after Kenya crossed the border, al-Shabaab hit a patrol boat of Kenya with a rocket propelled grenade, injuring three people. On October 18 (a couple days later) al-Shabaab planted a bomb in a car near the Foreign Ministry in Mogadishu as the Kenyan Defence Minister and Foreign Minister had a visit planned – yet the attack failed due to changes in the Minister's program. During the following weeks, while Kenya was making slow progress, al-Shabaab attacked Kenyan soldiers and killed two Ministry officials. Attacks continued all throughout November and December and occurred in Kenya as well, including ambushing Kenyan convoys, throwing hand grenades into a church, killing tourists, and assaulting Kenyan police and government officials (Zimmermann and Khatib 2012). Indeed, figure 4 (as discussed in chapter 6) shows how immediately after the start of Kenya's military operation in Somalia, the number of attacks in Kenya heavily increased.

One of the goals of the operation, to gain control over the port of Kismayo, was reached by the KDF in September 2012. A combined operation of ground, air and sea forces, with both Kenyan and Somalian troops and the local Ras Kamboni militia terminated al-Shabaab's occupation of Kismayo. By taking over Kismayo al-Shabaab lost the last major city it controlled. This action has thus been key in the fight against al-Shabaab, as McGregor (2013) emphasizes, due to the long-term presence of Kenyan militants in Somalia (although the operation was taken over by AMISOM in February 2013), al-Shabaab no longer had the opportunity to regain control over the port of Kismayo and thus its charcoal export trade. In combination with other revenue sources steadily drying up in Somalia, ''Godane has decided the time is right for drastic measures to drive out the Kenyan presence'' (McGregor, 2013, p.20).

9.2 Legitimizing Strategies: Attacking Civilians

For the justification of their actions, al-Shabaab often refers to Qurantic versus or Islamic Prayers. For example, in an interview with the Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF), Ali Dhere stated (GIMF, 2012, p.2-3),

> [w]e were ordered by the messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, to do jihad against the polytheists with our wealth, souls and tongues. In the authentic Hadith narrated by Imam Ahmed, Al-Nassai and others from Anas, may Allah be pleased with him – that the prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "Fight against the polytheists with your wealth, hands and tongue.

Al-Shabaab repeatedly stated its aim to securitize self-determination for Somali citizens and establish an Islamic State accordingly to Islamic norms and values (Channel 4 News, 2013). Clearly, the frame of the movements' struggle also justifies its use of violence. In an interview spokesperson Ali Dhere stated that the conflict in Somalia was an ideological one as it was al-Shabaab's aim to unite Somalia in a Quran-based state while eradicating its crusader enemies (GIMF, 2012, p.3),

> [w]hen we look at the conflicting parties in Somalia we realize that they are at odds, for example you have Muslims and the Mujahedeen forefront on one side, and on the other side there is Uganda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya and their militias allies as well as the apostate government that is loyal and allied with them in the war against Islam and Muslims, so where is the common ground between all these bodies?

When asked two years later, Ali Dhare stated, ''[o]ur [al-Shabaab] objective is to free our country, to govern people under Islamic law and to free our people, our country and our religion.''. In the same interview, Dhare strongly maintained foreign interventions should stop and Kenya's army should leave the country, stating (Channel 4 News, 2013),

> [f]oreigners are not interested in what's good for Somalis, it's better for us if they leave. It's better for Somalis, we don't need them. Our country is rich, we are Muslims, Sharia law and religion are enough. We don't need them, they should leave us alone.

The perceptions of who al-Shabaab views as a target and who should be protected are reflected in the movements' use of violence. Within the time period of this thesis most of al-Shabaab's attacks against civilians took place across south Somalia, yet the deadliest attacks took place in major foreign towns or capitals, of which now a couple will shortly be discussed.

The first attack that al-Shabaab carried out that directly involved civilians was in Bosaso, Somalia, on February 6, 2008. Although the grenade attack took place in Somalia, the vast majority of the 90 injured and 24 casualties were Ethiopian workers. Al-Shabaab claimed this location was specifically chosen because "some Ethiopian soldiers who fought in Mogadishu live there" (Al-Jazeera, 2008). The attack was framed as a warning for those who supported the Ethiopian army, the 'historical enemy' of al-Shabaab. At the time, Ethiopia was military present in Somalia and still had control over Mogadishu and indeed, from 2007 until 2009, al-Shabaab primarily assassinated high-profile people of the Somali government or AMISOM (Harnisch and Zimmerman, 2010; Wise, 2011). After al-Shabaab's first international attack in Kampala, Uganda (see chapter 7 for a detailed discussion of this attack), spokesmen Ali Mohamed Rage

stated it was a retaliation for Uganda's involvement in AMISOM. The attack was presented as a warning, threatening that if troops would not leave more attacks would follow (Rice, 2010). Furthermore, as discussed in chapter 6, Kenya was often attacked by al-Shabaab in 2011, 2012 and 2013. The first major attack in Kenya that involved civilians was in Garissa in July 2012, whereby 17 citizens were killed and about 40 injured. This attack – in contrast to many other times – aimed to target churchgoers that do not follow Islam and that al-Shabaab stated would continue to attack until such practice is eliminated (Khalif, 2012). In September 2013, before the major Westgate Mall shooting, al-Shabaab killed at least 17 people during a bombing near a restaurant in Mogadishu. Spokesmen Abu Muscab reportedly stated that the restaurant was targeted because government and military officials would frequently visit the restaurant (Hussein and Sheikh, 2013). Al-Shabaab also engaged in violence against Muslims in Somalia. While the organization claimed responsibility on governmental or military attacks (e.g. in Mogadishu) it has been reluctant to make claims or insisted it had targeted governments when actually targeting citizens.

9.3 Causality of al-Shabaab's Ideology and Anticivilian Attacks

In terms of ideology and the use of violence, al-Shabaab seems to primarily target people and institutions based on their characteristics, dividing between 'those that have to be protected' and 'enemies'. People that al-Shabaab claims to protect are Muslims of Somalia and sometimes Muslims all over the world, while enemies are mostly foreign governments and militaries. Non-Muslim and non-Islamic worldviews are furthermore part of the enemy and often presented as a threat. The overview of attacks and al-Shabaab's justification provides – in most cases – a coherent view of those who as seen as a legitimate threat and thus target of violence. Particularly outside of Somalia, a pattern occurs where al-Shabaab seems quite strict about who is a legitimate and illegitimate target. In Kenya, al-Shabaab often targeted civilians based on their religious characteristics and mainly targeted Christians. In their communications, a simple 'Kenyan' or 'foreigner' fulfils the classification of an enemy.

Hafez (2004) argues that movements seek to oust foreign forces and portray their insurgency as a total struggle for social and political transformation. Accordingly, antisystem frames support a gradual process of deactivating self-inhibitory moral codes against murder. As Apter (1997, p.2) notes, ''[p]eople do not commit political violence without discourse. They need to talk themselves into it''. More specifically, violent groups such as al-Shabaab employ mechanisms of moral disengagement to disactivate norms against brutality and allow anticivilian violence as legitimate mode of contention. Relying on violent Jihadist frames, al-

Shabaab seemingly employs *ethical justifications* for its violence against civilians, as illustrated by the divide between enemies and the claim of protecting Muslims in Somalia. However, al-Shabaab's violent actions are very often framed as retaliation against foreign intervention. Exemplary, chapter 6 shows how the number of attacks carried out by al-Shabaab in Kenya heavily increased after the start of operation Linda Nchi. More than justifying their actions that fit in Hafez' frames, al-Shabaab's violent attacks are presented as a threat, that if foreign forces will not retreat more attacks will follow. Although an essential part of Hafez' (2004) causal mechanism are national political processes, these tensions between foreign intervention and the attacks carried out by al-Shabaab are not explicitly included in the causal mechanism and can thus not be assessed to uphold the theoretical framework.

10. Westgate Mall Shooting

This chapter covers the analysis of the Westgate Mall shooting. Following previous chapters that analysed the impact of (national) political processes, mobilization structures and ideological frames of al-Shabaab, the strength of these causal mechanisms in the Westgate Mall shooting case are considered in this chapter. First, an overall view of the events during the attack is provided. Secondly, external, and internal conditions of al-Shabaab will be laid out. Third, this chapter looks at al-Shabaab's legitimization strategies in the Westgate Mall shooting.

10.1 Events of the Westgate Mall Shooting

The Westgate Mall shooting in the capital city of Kenya in September 2013 was one of the most high-profile attacks of al-Shabaab. On September 21, five heavily armed militants of al-Shabaab entered the shopping mall while shooting civilians. All of the attackers were killed during the attack. The attackers were ethnic-Somali, but one had dual nationality as Norwegian citizen (Williams, 2014). The Westgate mall was a shopping centre in the Westlands area of Nairobi and was visited predominantly by upper class citizens of Kenya, government officials, and expats. During the attack, at least 67 people were killed and over 150 people wounded (Blanchard, 2013). Six Kenyan soldiers were killed, and a number of elite-soldiers were heavily wounded. Among the civil victims of the attack were a cousin of Kenya's president Kenyatta, many other Kenyans, and foreigners coming from Britain, the Netherlands, China, and France. A witness report states that the attackers asked questions about Islam to those captured, to separate Muslims and non-Muslims before attacking them (Selsky, 2013). In a later interview Abu Muscab said that "[w]e released all Muslims when we took control of the mall" and that the perpetrators attempted to "separate the Muslims from the Kuffar [disbelievers]" before carrying out the attack (Selsky, 2013). The immediate picture that emerged from the Kenyan government was a disorganised response from authorities, with a handful of Kenyan officers to fight heavy armed militants. Indeed, after four days of police and military commands trying to take control of different sections and floors in the mall, booby traps were disposed and removed and with a combination of explosions and gunfire attacks, president Kenyatte declared ''the operation is now over''. As the president stated (Howden, 2013),

> The agents of terror, themselves craven wretches and lowly cowards, had the agenda of perpetrating grievous mayhem in our country, senselessly killing, maiming, and traumatising harmless, innocent people. […] The criminals found us unafraid, as we ever shall be. We cannot be conquered. Our confrontation with the terrorists at Westgate mall left 240 casualties.

10.2 Conditions al-Shabaab around the Westgate Mall attack

The Westgate Mall shooting occurred after a period of internal and external backlashes for al-Shabaab. First, years of internal disputes over the alignment with al-Qaeda, the *takfir* doctrine and central leadership prevented al-Shabaab from making progress and growth. Internal disputes came to a height in June 2013, when the two divided groups clashed in Barawe. Consequently, many of al-Shabaab's members that were loyal to previous Amir Godane, moved over to one of the opponents of al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab's military capacity was greatly reduced and the appeal for foreign fighters to join al-Shabaab dropped. Moreover, the dispute revealed the organization's struggle for local power (Maszka, 2017). At the same time, Somalia had gathered sufficient international support to move more actively towards national restoration. Certainly, with billions of international funding, the Somali government agreed to improve security, implement a new constitution, and general elections were planned for 2016 (McGregor, 2013). Furthermore, Al-Shabaab struggled with generating income and recruitment during this time (McGregor, 2013). As previously discussed, al-Shabaab had lost control over the markets of Mogadishu and the port of the Kismayo, and the organization's international operational mobility was threatened. Al-Shabaab had lost its main sources of financing and under constant pressure from African Union and AMISOM troops, ''have rolled the dice with a massive attack on civilians in Nairobi with the future of the Shabaab movement as the stakes'' (McGregor, 2013, p.18).

10.3 Al-Shabaab's Legitimization of the Attack

During the attack at the mall, al-Shabaab used twitter accounts to gain control over the narrative of the attack. The twitter accounts were used to justify the attack, create threats, provide news on hostages, and respond to other news. Although accounts were deleted by twitter several times, al-Shabaab continuously produced new accounts to disseminate its propaganda. Exemplary, in a total of 556 tweets, spokesmen of al-Shabaab communicated that the attack was ''retributive justice for crimes committed by their military" and that "over 100 Kenyan kuffar" were killed (Oremus, 2013). Mair (2017) analysed all of the tweets that al-Shabaab send out during the attack and concludes that al-Shabaab primarily focused on furthering its ideology, providing justifications for the ongoing attack and expressing disagreement with the Kenyan security forces and governmental response. The majority of the messages were intended for the general Kenyan population, a smaller number of messages pointed to the Kenyan government. A minority of the tweets that were send out were threatening in nature, for example against hostages held at the Westgate Mall, Kenyan security forces or the Kenyan public in general (Mair, 2017). The majority of the tweets focused on legitimization of al-

Shabaab's actions, including Kenya's military involvement in Somalia, persecutions of Somalian citizens, as well as religious justifications for the attack. Although a small number of tweets directed at al-Shabaab engaging in global jihad, the majority of the tweets concerned the Kenyan intervention in Somalia. In an interview that was later held with Al-Jazeera, spokesmen Abu Muscab claimed that the rationale between attacking this specific shopping mall was because a distinct group of shoppers comes to this mall: foreign diplomats and tourists, Kenyan government officials, Jewish and Americans (Mohamed, 2013). Furthermore, after the attack on the Westgate Mall, al-Shabaab declared that its ''target was to attack the Kenyan government on its soil and any part of the Kenyan territory is a legitimate target" (Selsky, 2013). Indeed, it appeared all three floors of the mall had collapsed. According to the Kenyan security services, al-Shabaab had planned to attract as many Kenyan soldiers as possible into the shopping mall and accordingly blow up the whole mall – yet this plan failed. Al-Shabaab's spokesman Shaykh Ali Mahmud Raage (a.k.a. Ali Dhere) insisted the movement was in contact with the fighters in the mall while making the reason for the attack clear: ''[w]e have several times told the Kenya government to withdraw its forces from the Muslim land of Somalia but they gave no attention to our warnings'' (McGregor, 2013, p.18).

11. Conclusion

The objective of thesis is to provide an answer to the main research question: *why has al-Shabaab resorted to anticivilian violence in the Westgate Mall Shooting in Nairobi, September 2013?*, and it thereby aims to contribute to answering the general question of *why terrorist groups resort to anticivilian violence?* This final section of the study provides an answer to the research question based on the findings of this study, while shortly summarizing the main findings of this study. Furthermore, limitations of this study are discussed. Last, an overview of the contributions of this study to the Hafez' political process approach and Social Movement Theory, and recommendations for further research are presented.

11.1 Causality of Theory for the Westgate Mall shooting

The Westgate Mall shooting can be viewed as both an outcome of strategic considerations by the reality of repressive contexts and as a sign of desperation from al-Shabaab. As findings of this study suggest, although a pattern of repression and exclusion for ethnic Somalis and the wider Muslim population in Kenya existed for many years already, the Kenyan government increased its militaristic and security-focused approach to a problematic extent in recent years. Muslims in Kenya have become part of pattern of violence and indiscriminate responses of their government. These circumstances have ultimately contributed to the emergence of exclusive structures and antisystem frames for al-Shabaab. Firstly, al-Shabaab effectively established connections within Kenya and recruited many young Kenyans as member of the movement during its years of insurgency. The movement provided an alternative to the harsh living circumstances for Muslims in Kenya and attracted many young Muslims who were prone to radicalization. Secondly, al-Shabaab employed Kenya's harsh counter-terrorism measurements and the country's intervention in Somalia to portray its insurgency as a struggle for social and political transformation. Kenya became a key threat and enemy in the eyes of al-Shabaab and thereby a legitimate target. This perception of Kenya as an enemy of al-Shabaab and therefore legitimate target reflected in the Westgate Mall shooting. During the attack citizens of Kenya were seen as an extension of their government and therefore a legitimate target – except for Kenyan Muslims. The attack was framed against the enemies of Somalia in their home countries and was set up as a direct consequence of Kenya's invasion in Somalia. Indeed, findings suggest that the causal mechanisms as identified for this study were present in the case of the Westgate Mall shooting. However, beyond the presence of these causal mechanisms findings of this study suggest there has been a continuous interaction between causal mechanisms of institutional exclusion, indiscriminate repression, mobilization structures and antisystem ideologies. The

causal mechanisms are dynamic processes that impact and reinforce each other and more importantly, that are influenced by external aspects and circumstances.

Prior to 2008, al-Shabaab was military not strong enough to fight against Ethiopian forces and was administratively not capable to govern Somalia. Between 2008 and 2010, however, al-Shabaab grew considerable in both capacities. The movement began to engage with its enemies in battles rather than a guerilla warfare and began to gain control over territories in Somalia. Through public services and tight law enforcement, al-Shabaab was able to gain income through taxes and gather (foreign) fighters as it was taking over radio and other media outlets. The change in leadership in 2008, after Ayro was killed in a drone attack and Godane became the new Amir, marked a new period for al-Shabaab as the movements' international focus intensified, al-Qaeda became a greater influence and international fighters were recruited more often. However, after years as the most powerful force in southern Somalia, al-Shabaab lost its power to AMISOM and Ethiopian and Kenyan military forces. Kenya intervened in Somalia with operation Linda Nchi in 2011 and in the same year, al-Shabaab lost its control of Mogadishu and the port of Kismayo to Kenyan military forces. Meanwhile, disputes over leadership, ideology and strategy hindered the movement from reversing the downward spiral. Al-Shabaab was thus unable to fight against Kenyan troops that had merged into AMISOM, mainly due to internal disputes, fighters leaving al-Shabaab, the loss of essential territories and of income. Accordingly, the organization's use of violence transitioned in terms of methods, targets, and ideological justification. The movement had pointed to governments and armies as their main enemies for a long time, yet over the years civilians were increasingly seen as an extension of their governments. Al-Shabaab legitimized targeting civilians after attacks based on the threat civilians posed to their worldview, while at the same time the movement reverted to guerilla-style tactics. Certainly, the intervention of Kenya caused another backlash for al-Shabaab and an immediate increase in use of violence and attacks in Kenya. These findings indicate that al-Shabaab's loss of power has made anticivilian violence a strategy to survive. In this perspective, the Westgate Mall shooting can thus be interpreted as a sign of desperation that shows al-Shabaab fought not to win but to survive and remain a persistent threat.

All in all, the presence and influence of causal mechanisms of institutional exclusion, indiscriminate repression, mobilization structures and antisystem ideologies in the case of al-Shabaab and the Westgate Mall shooting can be confirmed. However, observations of this study suggest that causal mechanisms are not linear but form a dynamic, interrelated process. Moreover, other internal factors, such as the strong strategic and ideological impact of the Amir

and external factors such as immediate conflicts with intervening militaries, lie outside of Hafez' political process approach but may have affected causal mechanisms and ultimately, the use of violence against civilians. To conclude, through process tracing this study found moderate support for the theory in the case of al-Shabaab in the Westgate Mall shooting. It contends that the Westgate Mall shooting was both a strategic response and sign of desperation.

11.2 Limitations

Although the methodology and research design of this study have been carefully selected, several limitations can be identified. Firstly, a case study approach such as employed here necessarily limits the generalizability of the study. Ideally, this study would have employed a mixed method to establish causality more accurately. Nevertheless, causal mechanisms as identified for this study are difficult to evaluate in a quantitative study and perhaps more importantly, it is not the goal of this study to generalize results to a large extent. Rather, it aims to test Hafez' political process approach to the specific case of al-Shabaab and deepen the understanding of anticivilian violence during the Westgate Mall shooting in Nairobi, September 2013. Importantly, the results of this study suggest that applying Hafez' political process approach and SMT for terrorism more broadly to other groups may be valuable to heighten in-depth knowledge on al-Shabaab and their use of violence against civilians.

Secondly, due to space concerns and for the sake of greater clarity, this study has investigated several impactful junctures but has not covered all possibly influential aspects that may explain the use of anticivilian violence. Although a careful selection has been made – as reflected in chapter 6 – these choices may still have been biased since al-Shabaab carried out many attacks besides these, resulting in hundreds of victims who have been 'overlooked'. Nonetheless, it is unlikely that not included influential aspects followed such widely different paths or have had such a great impact that they cannot be compared to those who have been included.

Last, conducting a research based on secondary data comes with certain limitations. The validity of a study is enhanced when a researcher measures what it is supposed to measure and decreases when the study is based on secondary data. Indeed, availability of secondary data was limited for the case of al-Shabaab. Most of al-Shabaab's websites and other means of communication have been taken down. Moreover, this study could only include English or translated statements and information. While necessary information has been carefully selected, as outlined in chapter 4, there is no doubt that these limitations also limit the value of this study. Notably, however, this study has paid attention to the value of previous research. Exemplary,

leading figures in the study of al-Shabaab such as Hansen, Menkhaus and Gartenstein-Ross have been looked at and their findings are of great value for this study.

11.3 Contributions and Recommendations

This thesis contributes to broader literature by offering explanations as to why movements resort to violence against civilians. Specifically, it shines light on the convergence of political processes on the national level, mobilization structures and ideological frames within movements to reflect on the outcome of anticivilian violence. This study argues these mechanisms form a dynamic process that may heighten the understanding of why terrorist groups resort to anticivilian violence. In this way, it demonstrates both the scientific and social value of examining the impact and interaction of political, social, and cultural circumstances for movements more broadly. It indicates that combining related research fields may acquire valuable results, as is encouraged by Critical Terrorism Studies. Indeed, findings suggest that future studies on violent movement may move beyond strict religion-ideology or state-versus-insurgent levels of analysis and move towards a relational understanding why movements resort to anticivilian violence.

Furthermore, this thesis contributes to Social Movement Theory as it exposes that possible patterns of violence may be uncovered before a movement engages in large-scale anticivilian violence. Through a Causal Process Tracing research design, this study draws attention to early political processes and the developments of mobilization structures and ideological frames, that may correspond with future targets of violence. The core contribution of SMT to the study of terrorism is that it relocates violence to social contexts and links movements with the wider society, political systems, group structures and individual motivations. SMT essentially deepen CTS approaches to terrorism and in the same vein, goes beyond a simple explanation of violence as a consequence of ‘radical Islam’.

Additional observations indicate that many aspects outside the specific causal mechanisms of this study impact the use of anticivilian violence. For future research, it might therefore be worthwhile to examine in more detail which aspects influence violence committed by movements and how these relate to the theory used here. Moreover, future studies may look more closely to the relationship between the rise and decline of terrorist groups and their use of violence, and how such violence is justified. After all, this thesis timidly implies al-Shabaab’s use of violence was not only influenced by political processes, mobilization structures and antisystem ideologies, but by the will to survive even so.

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