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Implications of power of definition: Terrorism, insurgency and al-Shabaab

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I, Ida Hunstad, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

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ABSTRACT

Although terrorism is an ambiguous term lacking an internationally agreed-upon definition, designations of perceived terrorist groups are common practice for several states. Being designated as terrorists carry immense implications due to the defining power of terrorism, as well as the many workings of the word – as a label, phenomenon and definition. We can therefore speak of a considerable power of definition linked to terrorism. One group who has been designated as terrorists by six states is the Somali-based group al-Shabaab. After the first designation in March 2008, a change was observed in the group's strategy, as terrorist attacks against civilians increased, as well as the use of suicide bombings.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate terrorism and its defining powers, and to determine the implications of power of definition for al-Shabaab. To this end, the research question is as follows: *What are the implications of power of definition and defining al-Shabaab as a terrorist organisation as opposed to an insurgency?*

The research question is answered through a qualitative case study of al-Shabaab, in combination with primary and secondary sources. The primary sources have been collected through qualitative semi-structured interviews with respondents from governmental and non-governmental organisations and institutions. The responses of the informants and the review of secondary sources show that the implications of being designated as terrorists as opposed to insurgents are widespread. These results indicate that al-Shabaab's change in strategy post-March 2008 can be attributed the defining powers of terrorism, as it not only changed the perception of the group externally but also how the group started to perceive themselves. The thesis further adds that al-Shabaab is not a homogenous group, as often portrayed in the media, but rather made up of sub-groups and cells with different tasks. It is only some of these cells that carry out unmitigated terror activities, although counterterrorist measures are aimed at the whole group. The study therefore argues that a terrorist designation delegitimizes the whole group and has widespread political and social consequences, while only some sub-groups are responsible for terrorist activities. The thesis thus contends that al-Shabaab will not be defeated by military might alone, and that greater contextual understanding is needed.

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List of abbreviations

AIAI   Al-Itihaad al-Islamiya

AMISOM   African Union Mission to Somalia

EU   European Union

FGS   Federal Government of Somalia

ICU   Islamic Courts Union

TFG   Transitional Federal Government

TNG   Transitional National Government

UN   United Nations

Chapter 1. Introduction

The effects of terrorism and insurgency have received considerable attention over the past decades. Following the popularly called war on terror and an increased attention on terrorist groups, terrorism has been deemed the number one threat to international peace and security, and of utmost priority to defeat (United Nations, 2016). Accordingly, much research has been devoted to the investigation of terror groups, their aims and how they are able to attract support, to name a few. Being an essentially contested concept, terrorism lacks an internationally agreed upon definition, and it now exists more than 200 definitions of terrorism (Shanahan, 2010: 173). Although the international community is committed to fight terrorism, there does not exist a shared understanding of what terrorism actually entails. As an effect of the many definitions and a lack of understanding of how terrorism is to be understood, it can be argued that terrorism as a term has been reduced to a label used mostly by policy makers to further their claims (Ganor, 2010). The discourse on terrorism and how the term has come to be used consequently makes designating a group as terrorists perhaps the most powerful action a state can make. We can therefore speak of a considerable amount of power of definition linked to terrorism.

One group who has been designated as a terrorist group, is Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahedin. The general features of Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahedin, more commonly known as al-Shabaab has come to be well known. The group has claimed responsibility for several known attacks, such as the one on Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2013 (Williams, 2014: 907). In its simplest, yet highly complex form, al-Shabaab is a Somali based group, originating around 2005, operating mainly in Somalia. Over the past years, however, the group has shown an increased attention towards foreign attacks, mostly towards neighbouring countries of Somalia (Williams, 2014: 910). First designated as a terrorist group by the United States in 2008 (US Department of State, 2008), with United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and Norway making similar designations, it has been argued that in order for Somalia to rebuild stability and peace, al-Shabaab must be defeated. Ken Menkhaus (2014a: 161, 163) found that al-Shabaab is an important reason as to why successful institution building in Somalia has so far failed, and that this also prevents the government in being able

to build capacity and provide basic security and social services in Somalia. Al-Shabaab is therefore an important element in reaching a lasting solution for the country that has been described as the world's most failed state (The Economist, 2016).

Most research on al-Shabaab has focused on the group's history, its relationship with clan, and alleged affiliation with al-Qaeda and Boko Haram. Although knowledge of al-Shabaab is incremental to better understand the group's aims and goals, much of this research fails to recognize terrorism as a label or to highlight that terrorism is a strategy and not necessarily something existing on its own (Ganor, 2002: 298). Consequently, less attention has been paid to implications of terrorist designations. Boaz Ganor (2010) has argued that definitions are used with undue attention to implications, often grounded in particular political viewpoints. He further argues that a terrorist group also can be a national liberation movement. This highlights the discourses and narratives that have come to be embedded within the term terrorism, as well as the power of definition, and its consequences. The question therefore remains how terrorist definitions implicate the group being designated, both in terms of how they are understood externally but also how they understand themselves. With terrorism as a contested an ambiguous term and the power linked to it, it is therefore of interest to investigate what kind of implications a terrorist designation has beyond that of legitimizing foreign policy.

The aim of this thesis is to explore the relationship between power of definition, terrorism and al-Shabaab. By exploring these concepts in relation to al-Shabaab this thesis hopes to contribute knowledge about why there has been an increase in foreign attacks by al-Shabaab. It also hopes to develop an understanding of the workings of terrorism as a label contrary to terrorism as an external concept in its own right. By investigating these areas, the thesis aims to illuminate the implications of power of definition for al-Shabaab, including how others perceive them and how they have come to perceive themselves.

1.1 Research objectives

The main objective of this research is to acquire an understanding of the implications of defining al-Shabaab as a terrorist organisation, both in relation to how they have been defined by the International Community and how they define themselves. This entails exploring the concepts, discourses and narratives embodied in the power of definition. This thesis, through the main objectives and the four sub-research questions, therefore also aims at exploring whether al-Shabaab has been wrongfully designated a terror organisation, and whether the lack of a common, agreed upon definition of both terrorism and al-Shabaab is hampering a successful defeat. The claim of this research is that the American terrorism designation of al-Shabaab in 2008 and the subsequent shift in strategy both from the international community and from al-Shabaab is correlated to the definition of al-Shabaab, which altered how the international community understood the group and how al-Shabaab understand themselves. Research on the implications of power of definition in relation to al-Shabaab's internal and external understanding can therefore foster an understanding of why the change occurred, as well as the implications of power of definition.

1.2 Research questions

The main research question of this thesis is:

What are the implications of power of definition and defining al-Shabaab as a terrorist organisation as opposed to an insurgency?

The sub-research questions are:

1. *How does the international community define and understand al-Shabaab and how does it define itself?*
2. *Has there been a change in al-Shabaab's strategy after the first terrorist designation in 2008, and if so, how?*
3. *Does al-Shabaab resemble a terrorist organization more than an insurgency?*
4. *Has power of definition guided the understanding of al-Shabaab, and if so, how?*

1.3 Historical background

Somalia is situated on the Horn of Africa, neighbouring Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. For 27 years, the country has lacked a functioning government, after the collapse of President Barre's government in 1991 (Menkhaus, 2014a: 155). Three efforts have been made in trying to re-establish a functioning government – Transitional National Government (TNG) in 2000, Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in 2004 and the current Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) (Ibrahim, 2010: 284). Although FGS has been able to govern longer than its predecessors, it has been unable to develop the capacity to exercise authority over territory and deliver basic security and social services. According to Ken Menkhaus (2014a: 163), this is due to al-Shabaab constantly blocking successful institution building in Somalia.

To determine exactly when al-Shabaab formally was established is rather difficult, as various factors contributed to its formation, and there exists various explanations for when this took place. Some point to a meeting in Hargeisa in 2003, while others argued that it emerged after the Sharia Courts' attack on Kismayo in 2006 (Maszka, 2018: 69). Other accounts dates back to the 1973 oil crisis and Saudi Arabia's increased power in the Middle East, as the oil crisis led to a change in funds for missionary work and scholarships (Hansen, 2013: 16). These changes created divisions among Islamists, by opening up to new interpretations of the Quran, following a more Saudi Style Wahhabi ideology. A subsequent push in Somalia for Islamic unity drove the formation of al-Itihaad al-Islamiya (AIAI) in the 1980s, a group who became designated as a terrorist group by the United States and who later enlisted several of those who currently are or have been al-Shabaab's leaders (Hansen, 2013: 16). Allegedly, AIAI has roots in subgroups of radical veterans from the wars in Afghanistan (Hansen, 2013: 45). Furthermore, it could also be argued that al-Shabaab's establishment and rise to power was due to three structural changes taking place in Somalia around 2005. The first factor was the diminishing of the warlord system, which had been on decline for a very long time and broken down in smaller groups according to clan lines. The second factor was the increase in power of the Sharia Courts, organized in smaller unions of courts. The third factor was the aim of the courts to unify into the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). Al-Shabaab was seen as the most favourable partner for unifying the Sharia Courts, as it to a great extent had been successful in transcending the clans (Hansen, 2013: 33-34). These three factors,

combined with the Ethiopian invasion in 2006 created a fertile breeding ground for recruitment for al-Shabaab. The Ethiopian strategy to use heavy artillery, resulting in large-scale civilian deaths led many Somalis to view al-Shabaab as one of few actors being able to take revenge for the actions of Ethiopia (Hansen, 2013: 49). The establishment of al-Shabaab and its rise to power could therefore be seen in light of the formation of AIAI during the 1980s, the structural changes in the warlord system, and unification of the Sharia Courts, coupled with the Ethiopian invasion, arguably a policy mistake of the international community (ibid). The Ethiopian invasion/intervention in Somalia took place in July 2006, when TFG invited US backed Ethiopian troops to assist in TFG's fight against the ICU. TFG's decision became widely unpopular, and Ethiopian troops remained in Somalia fighting ICU until 2009 (Mueller and Stewart, 2016: 10).

The Ethiopian intervention in Somalia, requested by TFG, supposedly radicalized al-Shabaab (Wise, 2011: 4). When Ethiopian troops withdrew in 2009, and ICU members fled to neighbouring countries, al-Shabaab moved to the south of Somalia, where it started to organize attacks on Ethiopian forces and TFG officials, as well as anyone supporting either TFG or Ethiopia (Council on Foreign Relations, 2018). According to Rob Wise (2011: 3), the Ethiopian invasion was responsible for transforming al-Shabaab from a less important group part of a moderate Islamic movement, into the most powerful and radical armed faction in Somalia. The aim of al-Shabaab during the invasion and in the period after was to expel foreign presence on Somali soil, overthrow TFG, and establish an Islamic caliphate based on a rigid interpretation of Sharia law (Mueller and Stewart, 2016: 10). The focus on Islam can be seen in relation to Ethiopia being a Christian country, and serve as one reason as to why al-Shabaab continued to attack non-Muslims (Wise, 2011: 3). Up until 2008, al-Shabaab appears to be understood as an insurgent group both by the international community and within the academic literature on the group (Hansen, 2013: 49).

Accounts of al-Shabaab, particularly in the media, often portray the group as one homogenous group. However, since 2010 it has been structured as a rather decentralized organization, with both local and global aims (Hansen, 2014: 10). It is a complex organization, composed of multiple cells, units, divisions and figures with diverse powers, answering to a number of different leaders (Shuriye, 2012: 275).

Ahmar Umar is currently the leader, after the previous leader, Godane, was killed in a US missile strike in 2014. 2010 is said to have changed the structure of al-Shabaab, after the failed Ramadan offensive, where the group aimed to oust African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces in a frontal attack, which lead to al-Shabaab re-establishing itself as a decentralized organization. Among other structural changes, the training and command lines were said to be weakened (Hansen, 2014; 10). The Ramadan offensive also led to internal disagreements on issues such as strategy, Sharia implementation, and the control of power within the organization. According to Ken Menkhaus (2014b: 6), the Ramadan offensive and the retreat to the south after losing control of most urban centres, al-Shabaab today manifests itself in many different ways, such as a network, armed force and as an administration. The network part of the group, called the Amniyat, is an effective intelligence network and operational arm with units specializing in assassinations and explosives, while the armed force serves as the military command of al-Shabaab (ibid). The administrative part of al-Shabaab provides "basic administration including oversight of education and health sectors, policing, judicial and arbitrarian roles" (Menkhaus, 2014b: 6). Moreover, although al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for attacks on humanitarian and aid workers, some cells actually provide protection for aid convoys, while other cells continue to target them (Menkhaus, 2009: 228). The attack on aid workers are said to be a direct response to the 2008 US designation of al-Shabaab as terrorists, as well as the US missile strike in May 2008 killing the group's leader Ayro (ibid: 229). Furthermore, some cells of al-Shabaab are also said to provide education, security, food distribution, local-level administration, public works and employment. It also provides a justice system, although it is based on the group's interpretation of Sharia law (Mwangi, 2012: 525). It is as such a highly complex and multifaceted organization, which has performed several of the tasks the various governments have been unable to perform, although it also could be argued that al-Shabaab is one reason to the inability of the governments.

Currently, six countries (US, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Norway), the United Nations (UN) and European Union (EU) have designated the group as terrorists, the first being the US designation in March 2008 (Counter Extremism Project, n.d). Prior to the 2008 designation, al-Shabaab mainly directed its attacks against forces from Ethiopia and the African Union (Pham, 2011: 170) However, in

2007, al-Shabaab publicly praised Osama bin Laden, the then-leader of al-Qaeda, and also carried out its first suicide attack, directed against Ethiopian soldiers in Mogadishu (Counter Extremism Project, n.d). 2007 also marks the beginning of attempts of al-Shabaab to connect their aims towards a broader jihadist movement, by attracting foreign fighters and moving closer to al-Qaeda, although the focus seemingly remained on fighting foreign forces and TFG (Shinn, 2011: 207). The attempts in connecting al-Shabaab's cause to a broader jihadist movement was further made in 2008, after the US designation in March and a US missile strike in May, killing Ayro, the leader of al-Shabaab. Godane became the leader of al-Shabaab, who made a statement following the missile strike, stating that the struggle in Somalia was part of a global jihad (Stanford University, n.d).

2008 in many ways marks a shift in al-Shabaab's tactics and strategy. Suicide bombings became a more frequently used method, as well as the targeting of civilians. This has been explained by some as an effort of aligning interests with al-Qaeda, moving closer to a fight against the West (Wise, 2011: 8). In revenge of Ayro's death and the missile attacks, al-Shabaab launched a violent campaign targeting US and UN targets in Somalia (Stanford University, n.d). Guerrilla tactics and terrorism continued to be frequently used against Ethiopian troops. In 2009, al-Shabaab publicly pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda. The shift in strategy is also evident in the increase in foreign attacks, such as the attack on Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya in 2013. The first foreign attack took place in Uganda in 2010 (Council on Foreign Relations, 2018).

Efforts to contain al-Shabaab, develop capacity of governmental institutions, as well as provision of security, peace and stability in Somalia has so far failed to achieve success. Although al-Shabaab has lost much of its territory, including the control of Mogadishu, it still holds sway in southern parts of Somalia (Stanford University, n.d). It has also increased its presence in semiautonomous Puntland, and although its retreat from Mogadishu in 2011 was regarded as a success by TFG and African Union troops, some argue it was a tactical move, and that the group in January 2018 controls more territory than since 2010 (Council on Foreign Relations, 2018).

One of the efforts to contain al-Shabaab is AIMSOM. Deployed in 2007 and backed and funded by the UN and EU, it is mandated to reduce the threat posed by al-Shabaab, enable political process, enable gradual handing over of security responsibilities from AMISOM to Somali security forces, conduct offensive operations against al-Shabaab, and engage with communities in recovered areas and promote understanding between AMISOM and the local population (AMISOM, n.d). AMISOM's mandate has been extended several times since 2007, and is currently mandated until the end of 2020. It has, however, started to withdraw with 1000 troops withdrawing in 2017 and an additional 1000 troops scheduled to withdraw during the course of 2018, with responsibilities to be gradually handed over to Somali national forces (ibid).

The international community has through the deployment of AMISOM, open-ended arms embargo imposed by the UN since 1992, and air strikes from the US made several efforts to contain al-Shabaab (SIPRI, 2017). Although AMISOM has achieved partial success in securing Mogadishu where the FGS is situated (Wise, 2011: 4), al-Shabaab continues to be capable and willing to carry out attacks both in Somalia and in countries in the region (Maszka, 2018: 112). As Anderson (2016: 56) argues, al-Shabaab remains a "capable organization and a dangerous military force, possessing extensive human, material and financial resources". It is as such still a threat to both Somali and Eastern African peace and security, and its importance should not be downplayed by the international community. In order to achieve success in Somalia it is incremental to contain al-Shabaab, as it continues to resist institution building (Menkhaus, 2014a: 161).

1.4 Outline of thesis
This thesis is structured into six chapters. Whereas chapter 1 provided the introduction, chapter 2 presents the theoretical and conceptual framework utilized in this research. For the purpose of this research, constructivism has provided the theoretical framework, in combination with labeling theory. The study has also drawn upon different concepts related to the concept of otherness, which will be explained in the same chapter. Chapter 3 will address the qualitative methodology adopted in this

research. It will also address the research design, data collection method and its limits, as well as validity and reliability. Limitations as it relates to the research will also be addressed. This research is a qualitative study of al-Shabaab, and therefore a case study based on a single case. Chapter 4 concerns the literature review, and will address the three key concepts embedded within this research – power of definition, terrorism and insurgency. This is done in order to identify what has already been conducted within this field of study, and situate this study within the field of existing research. The literature review also serve as an important element in answering the research question and the sub-questions, as this discussion highlights what is known about the research topic. Chapter 5 presents the findings of this research, related to the main research question and sub-questions set out in section 1.2. In order to answer the questions set out by this thesis, the findings have been thematically structured around the research questions. Section 5.1 presents findings and discussion related to power of definition, while section 5.2 aims at develop an understanding of how al-Shabaab is understood. Section 5.3 applies the power of definition, terrorism and insurgency to al-Shabaab and discusses the implications of these concepts. Chapter 6 is the final chapter of this research, and provides concluding remarks. It builds on the findings in chapter 5 as well as other elements discussed throughout this thesis. It also offers a brief account of the way ahead in the fight against al-Shabaab and towards restoring Somali peace, security and stability.

Chapter 2. Theoretical and conceptual framework

The theoretical and conceptual framework used in a research guides how concepts and phenomena are understood and comprehended. It is therefore key to any research to present the deployed theories and concepts, as all frameworks contain different sets of concepts, beliefs, assumptions and ideas. The purpose of this chapter is to provide explanation of the theories utilized for the purpose of this research, as well as concepts. This research has used the theory of constructivism to provide theoretical explanation for its findings. The subsequent sections will provide an overview of this theory, as well as other concepts drawn upon in this thesis. [1]

2.1 Constructivism

Constructivism is often referred to as an idealist framework that seeks to show how key aspects of the international system is socially constructed. Emerging as an alternative theoretical framework to liberalism and realism during mid-1990s, it is said to occupy a middle ground between the rationalist approaches of realism and liberalism, and interpretive approaches of poststructuralists and critical theories (Adler, 1997: 319). Its focus on underlying conceptions of how the social and political world works makes it an approach for social inquiry rather than a theory of international politics. Furthermore, it is premised on two underlying assumptions: "the environment in which agents act is social as well as material, and this setting can provide agents with understandings of their interests" (Checkel, 1998: 325). As such, constructivism sees the international system as one whose rules are produced and reproduced by human practices (Guzzini, 2000: 157). It also opposes the idea that phenomena can "constitute themselves as objects of knowledge independently of discursive practices" (Guzzini, 2000: 159). Hence, the aspects of the social and political world are a function of social construction, which constitutes the international system. Furthermore, it considers the realm of international politics to be a sphere of interaction, shaped by actors identities and practices, and influenced by changing institutional structures (Behravesh, 2011). As opposed to realism who argues that national interests are based on power, constructivism argues that the goal of a state is generated by social identities and how a state views itself in relation to other states in the international system.

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[1] Please refer to appendix 1 for operationalized conceptual framework.

According to Alexander Wendt (1999: 324), identities are constituted by internal and external structures. He further argues, "Identity is at base a subjective quality rooted in an actor's self-understanding". The meaning of such understandings depends on whether other actors represent that same actor in the same way. Wendt has identified four kinds of identities: personal, type, role and collective. For the purpose of this research, the concept of role identities is particularly interesting. Wendt argues that such identities only exist in relation to others, and that the self is seen through the eyes of the others (Wendt, 1999: 227). Thus, the identity of the self is constructed in relation to the other.

It is further being argued that identities are the base for which interests are decided. To quote Wendt (1999: 231) "Interests refer to what actors want, they designate motivations that help explain behaviour. Interests also presupposes identities because an actor cannot know what it wants until it know who it is". Hence, in the view of constructivism and Alexander Wendt, interests and identities are related to the extent that identities and interests are mutually reinforcing, as identities constitutes interests, and interests forms identities. Furthermore, as explained by Hopf (1998: 175), this is also due to identities implying a set of particular interests with respect to choice of action. One can therefore say that constructivism is concerned with ideas, interests and identities, and how these produce and reproduce practices and social structures.

With its focus on social construction through discursive practices, constructivism also highlights the interesting aspect of labelling. Through the example of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Guzzini (2000: 172) highlights how when IMF designates a country to the category of insolvent, that country automatically is disempowered in its social relations. The consequence of such a labelling is that other international financial actors change their behaviour accordingly. This can be seen in relation to the power of definition and designation of terrorist groups. When someone is designated as a terror group, other states in the international system are forced to change their behaviour. This can also explain why designation of one terrorist group starts with one state making a designation and other states following the same practice.

2.2 Labeling theory

The labeling theory is associated with sociologists like Howard Becker and is an analytical theory emphasizing the power of labels, characterizations and definitions. The theory further argues that labels applied to individuals ultimately influence their behaviour. Thus, according to the labeling theory, negative or stigmatizing labels promote deviant behaviour. According to Howard Becker, an American sociologist, the label of deviance has its roots in social groups, making social rules that define situations and kinds of appropriate behaviour (Becker, 1966: 1). Becker further argues that when such rules are enforced, the person who supposedly has broken those rules is seen as one who cannot be trusted, and ultimately labelled a deviant (Becker, 1966: 1). Deviance is therefore seen as created by society, as a social construction.

Furthermore, being labelled as deviant does not only have implications for how someone is understood by society, but also for subsequent behaviour by the labelled. Donald Shoemaker (2010: 259) argues that officially labelling someone as a deviant "can result in the person becoming the very thing he is described as being". According to labeling theory, labels have the power to alter the self-image of a person to the extent that he begins to identify himself as a deviant and act according to that self-image (Shoemaker, 2010: 260).

Labeling theory can be applied to the case of al-Shabaab, where a shift in strategy was observed after the 2008 US designation. From being mostly concerned with targeting Ethiopian forces, AMISOM and those associated with the government, al-Shabaab increased its use of suicide bombings, targeting civilians and began carrying out attacks outside the borders of Somalia. According to LeVine (1995: 49), this is due to the transformative power of labels, characterizations and definitions. Terrorism is one of such labels with transformative powers, which has acquired additional weight to the extent that its use has unanticipated and transformative consequences (LeVine, 1995: 49). Hence, it is not terrorism as a word or as a concept that contains power, it is the power of definition embedded within such a definition, which also serve as a morally degrading and negative label, that has transformative powers (LeVine, 1995: 49). Thus, according to labeling theory, when al-Shabaab was defined and labelled as terrorists, it altered the self-image of the group. The labelling as deviant and the negative self-image can say to consequently have altered the behaviour of al-Shabaab

to the extent that it identified with being terrorists and therefore started to build up under the impression of them as terrorists.

2.3 The self and the other

In addition to the theoretical framework of constructivism and labeling theory, as presented above, this thesis has also drawn upon the concept of otherness. This concept is found in literary works of Edward Said, Franz Fanon and Roxanne Doty, and has ties to the theoretical International Relations framework of postcolonialism. Postcolonialism addresses concepts of identity, race, unequal power, uneven representation and Eurocentrism. Briefly said, one can say that postcolonialism is a critique of the notion of the West as the primary subject in world history, and is hence a critique of a universalist, Western perspective (Sabaratnam, 2011: 787). Within the framework of postcolonialism is an aim of overcoming a self-other distinction, or a subject-object relationship, where there is an embedded objectified representation of the object as backward and undeveloped, in need of help from the West. This objectified representation reproduces Western hierarchical structures with colonial underpinnings (ibid).

Within postcolonialism, we find the concept of otherness, a self-other division. Edwards Said is one amongst several who have aimed at exploring the subject-object relationship and the distinction between the Self and the other, through the example of the Orient. Said (1978: 1), questioning a pattern of misrepresentation, argues that the Orient is the place of Europe's greatest, richest and oldest colonies, as well as the source of its civilizations and languages. However, it is also one of Europe's deepest and most recurring images of the other. According to Edward Said (1978: 2), the concept of orientalism represents and expresses both culturally and ideologically a mode of discourses. Within these discourses of orientalism are supporting institutions and colonial bureaucracies. Roxanne Doty (1996: 8) similarly argues that such representational practices results in the construction of a self and the other. In relation to this research, this can be applied to those who designate al-Shabaab and al-Shabaab as the designated or labeled. This relationship is of unequal power, where al-Shabaab is seen as the other, constructed in the image of the Western Self. Through these representational practices and discourses, the hegemonic position and legitimacy of

the West is reinstated, which simultaneously places it relative to the otherness of al-Shabaab. An implication of these representational practices and hegemonic positions is therefore the construction of the self and the other in binary terms – the West is what the South is not – the definer is what the defined is not. Misrepresentation and self-other images has therefore led to the West being seen as developed, superior and modern, while the South is inferior, backwards and traditional. As such, the Western self is able to maintain its upper hand (Said, 1978: 7). Moreover, this has led to the concept of otherness, where a priori presumptions of categories of identities have been constructed. According to Fanon (1952: 165) these a priori presumptions of categories positions the Other as objects and instruments of the Western Self.

The concept of otherness and misrepresentation are relevant to this research as it seeks to understand implications of definitions. It is therefore interesting to examine whether there are elements of a self-other dimension, and how that might influence power of definition. Although this concept has its roots in postcolonialism, it can be argued to be relevant to constructivism. As explained in section 3.1, constructivism is concerned with reality and knowledge as socially constructed and identity formation as the basis for interests and behavior. By drawing on the concept of otherness and the theoretical framework of constructivism, this research is better equipped to investigate implications of power of definition as it relates to al-Shabaab.

Chapter 3. Research methodology

The research carried out for this thesis has been premised on specific sets of approaches to research. This chapter will explain and discuss the various approaches that were chosen for collecting and analysing data in order to answer the main- and sub-research questions set out in the previous chapter. In order to address the various aspects of the research, there are four aspects that need to be addressed. This chapter will first explain the approach employed. Qualitative research can generate a comprehensive and in-depth account of the phenomenon under investigation. Case studies are proven to be particularly helpful when conducting research necessitating a detailed description and analysis, fostering a deeper understanding of how and why particular events take place (Ridder, 2017: 282). Through a case study of al-Shabaab, this research gained a deeper understanding of the group and the surrounding context. This approach also guided the collection of the research's primary data and respondents. The chapter will therefore also address how respondents were sampled and the selection criteria. As with all research, the issues of validity and reliability are important to ensure scientific rigour, which will be addressed in section 2.7. Lastly, the chapter addresses limitations and ethical considerations in section 2.8.

3.1 Qualitative research

As previously mentioned in chapter 1, the primary aim of this research is to explore the implications the definitions of terrorism and insurgency has in relation to al-Shabaab. Part of the research is to understand how the power of definition works in relation to agent and structure, as well as exploring the implications related to each definition. A qualitative research approach has been chosen, as this research is concerned with the understanding of power of definition and al-Shabaab, making it a descriptive research. The aim is not to make generalizations, as is often associated with quantitative research, but rather gain a deeper understanding of implications of definitions as it relates to al-Shabaab. The methodological approach of qualitative research is well equipped to achieve the goals of this research, as it allows for description, interpretation and understanding of a specific phenomenon.

Qualitative research is employed in various fields of studies, including social sciences. In contrast to quantitative research, associated with numeric, qualitative

research is associated with meanings, concepts, characteristics and descriptions (Berg, 2009: 52). As this thesis is concerned with implications of definitions as it relates to al-Shabaab, one is through the adoption of a qualitative research methodology able to generate a deeper contextual understanding of the research question and the related sub-questions. A qualitative research is typically a small-scale study using interpretive techniques, thus taking a hermeneutic approach. A hermeneutic approach can be translated into a practice of interpretation and engagement, meaning that a hermeneutic study involves to some degree a level of subjectivity (Silbergh, 2001: 118). However, it should be noted that the level of subjectivity and interpretation involved in qualitative research does not automatically generate bias or research based entirely on subjectivity. As will be discussed later in this chapter, research is only limited or prone to bias when it is unbalanced and does not account for alternative views.

Qualitative research emphasizes the meaning of words in relation to data collection and analysis. This focus allows the researcher to observe the world and the interactions between agents and structures, thus maintaining a close proximity to the research being carried out (Bryman, 2016: 375). This active involvement throughout the research means that the researcher can continuously revise elements of the research, as to best fit the purpose of the study. As such, the researcher is not external to the research but first-hand engaged in the interpretation of data and findings (Cooper and White, 2012: 6).

Within the qualitative methodology there are several features beneficial in relation to conducting this research. Qualitative research is primarily concerned with *understanding* human behaviour and interpretation of phenomenon and events, as opposed to the quantitative emphasis on *explaining* (Cooper and White, 2012: 7). The epistemological position of this qualitative research, concerned with what is possible to know, is interpretivist, with an emphasis on "understanding the social world through examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants" (Bryman, 2016: 375), meaning that knowledge is generated through interpretation. Interpretivism also argues that all knowledge has context and therefore cannot be objective. Thus, knowledge is not separate from its contextual basis and should therefore also be seen in light of its context. Moreover, the knowledge generated from

this research should therefore be seen in light of the research question and the context in which it is situated. Related to this is the constructionist ontology, which states that people utilize categories in order to understand the world. However, these categories are not pre-given but social products constructed through interaction, which subsequently constructs meaning (Bryman, 2016: 30).

3.2 Research design
Bryman (2016: 40) states that a research design "represents a structure that guides the execution of a research method and the analysis of the subsequent data". It can further be defined as a plan for the research process, functioning as a roadmap. Due to this research being concerned with al-Shabaab and the implications of definitions, this research has adopted a case study as its research design. In general, a case study is used to contribute knowledge about cases such as individual, group, organisational and political phenomena (Yin, 2009: 1). The essence is to try to illuminate why decisions were taken, how they were implemented and the results of the decisions and implementations. As such, it is an empirical inquiry investigating a phenomenon within its actual context (ibid: 13). Thus, a researcher chooses a case study as the research design if the aim of the research is to gain understanding of a real-world phenomenon or case, and being able to study this case within its context. Context is important when doing a case study, as it is significant to understand the case in question. Contextual variables to investigate include political, economic, social, cultural, historical and organisational factors (Harrison et.al, 2017). The contextual variables to be investigated in this research are political factors, due to this research being concerned with power of definition and its implications in relation to al-Shabaab. Social and organisational factors will also be investigated, as the internal dynamics of al-Shabaab and its social implications will be explored.

The aim of this research is to investigate and understand the implications of defining al-Shabaab as a terror organisation or as an insurgency. As a case study contributes knowledge about a specific phenomenon and allows it to be studied within its context, this has been adopted as the research design. This is due to the nature of a case study and the understanding it aims at generating. The aim of this case study is to contribute

to an understanding of the power of definitions as it relates to al-Shabaab and the actors involved influencing how it should be defined and portrayed.

3.2.1 The case study

As previously stated, this case study is concerned with the various definitions of al-Shabaab and the implications that follow. Involved in this single case study is al-Shabaab and the actors involved in fighting them through military means: AMISOM forces[2], United States, United Kingdom and the European Union. There are several operations in Somalia, both on-going and completed. This thesis' focus on actors conducting military operations is due to the narrative embedded within the discourse on the war on terror, where terrorism and terrorist organisations are all those who conduct attacks who fit within a definition of terrorism (Mueller and Stewart, 2016). As such, actors may be prone to define groups as terrorists due to embedded discourses and the legitimizing factor such definitions entail in terms of means available to counter the alleged terror organisation in question.

As previously stated, the first designation of al-Shabaab as a terrorist group was the US designation in February 2008. According to the Global Terrorism Database, six attacks categorized by the database as terrorist attacks occurred before the 2008 designation, all taking place between February and December 2007 (Global Terrorism Database, n.d). Prior to the US designation, al-Shabaab publicly praised Osama bin Laden in 2007, the then-leader of al-Qaeda, a group that has been on the US terror list since 1999. The al-Shabaab attacks in 2007 targeted primarily Ethiopian forces in Somalia, who invaded Somalia in 2006 and withdrew in 2009 (Hansen, 2013: 5). The previous and continued attacks makes al-Shabaab an important actor, both on the Horn of Africa and Somalia. Its foreign attacks impinge on African peace and security, while its attacks on Somalia and the continued fight against the government undermines AMISOM's efforts to strengthen Somali government and national security forces. As such, al-Shabaab is an important organisation within the context of Somali and wider African peace and security.

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[2] Burundi, Cameroon, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia. The majority comes from Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone (AMISOM, n.d).

The case of al-Shabaab, how it is defined and the actors that are involved in defeating them, is interesting for several reasons. Firstly, there is no agreed-upon definition of al-Shabaab, as only six countries have designated the group as terrorists. Similarly, there is no shared understanding of what constitutes terrorism. The case of al-Shabaab can therefore be said to feed into the debate about what constitutes terrorism, where virtually every country in the world is committed to fight terrorism, but no universal agreement or definition exists about the term.

3.3 Method of selection

For this research, purposive sampling was utilized. According to Bryman (2016: 410) this is a "non-probability form of sampling" where the goal is not to sample respondents randomly, but rather sample strategically. The goal of strategic sampling is to ensure that all respondents are relevant to the research question. For this thesis, purposive strategic sampling ensured that all informants had extensive knowledge about Somalia and al-Shabaab, in order to be able to generate primary data, which would offer insights into the research questions asked and better aid the answering of these. The secondary data in this thesis are written sources such as journal articles, media accounts and governmental documents, such as press releases.

As this thesis is concerned with the question of how al-Shabaab has been defined and defined itself, it was deemed important to incorporate respondents who have extensive knowledge about al-Shabaab and implications about definitions. Criteria of relevance, academic/personal experience and knowledge were therefore kept in mind when selecting respondents. This thesis therefore focused on selecting participants who are employed at organisations or institutions that carries out work targeted at terrorism, insurgency and Somalia. These criteria were selected because these participants would then have sufficient expertise and knowledge to provide insight into the implications of definitions and al-Shabaab. Hence, the participants were purposefully sampled due to their knowledge and information on this research. By sampling participants from different organisations and institutions, these participants could offer alternative accounts of the issue in question, and provide useful information to help answer the research question. The total number of respondents

selected was five. Although the number of participants was low, they offered relevant and interesting information, which contributed to answering the research question. The participants were recruited through email and phone calls. Moreover, the low number of total participants made the integration of secondary data in the research important. By incorporating secondary data, this thesis ensured that alternative accounts of al-Shabaab were offered, as well as being better equipped to answer the research questions.

Keeping in mind the selection criteria, the first informant is from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with an expertise on Africa. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was important to include, due to its work on Somalia as well as its role in fighting terrorism. Ministries of Foreign Affairs are also often consulted in relation to foreign policy and designation of terrorist groups, and as such holds a considerable amount of power in terms of power of definition. The second informant is a Somali national working at a Norwegian university. This informant was selected due to his extensive knowledge about Somalia and al-Shabaab, as well as conducting research on terrorism, extremism and organized crimes. The third informant is also a Somali national, working within the field of economics in Norway. The informant was selected due to his experience as a Somali, living and studying in Mogadishu for several years. This informant also has direct experience with the implications of al-Shabaab in Somalia, therefore being able to offer more personal accounts of al-Shabaab. The fourth informant is employed at the Nordic International Support Foundation (NIS). NIS has several projects in Somalia, such as installing streetlights in Mogadishu, rehabilitating roads and government buildings, and building markets electrified with solar energy. The informant has multiple years of experience with conflict and post-conflict countries and an expertise on the Horn of Africa. The fifth informant is employed at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and was selected due to the same reasons as the first informant.

3.4 Data collection method
There are several ways of collecting data in qualitative research, such as interviews, participant observation, discourse analysis, or reviewing archives. The difference between these methods is that they generate different kinds of data – primary and

secondary. Primary data is the data collected first-hand by the researcher. This kind of data collection can be generated through interviews or participant observation. Secondary data, on the other hand, is already published material, such as journal archives, Internet sources, books, policies, government documents, and judicial decisions. By combining primary and secondary data and analysing these, triangulation was achieved in this research, as different aspect of the same phenomenon was investigated. This better aids answering the research question and to determine the implications of terrorism and insurgency definitions of al-Shabaab.

The data collected for this research entails both primary and secondary sources. As this research is a case study it was deemed favourable to collect primary data through interviews, as it gives an opportunity for getting rich accounts of the issue in question, as well as an opportunity for each respondent to give their personal views. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the method of interview. These kinds of interviews are favourable because they involve flexibility in how to structure the respective interviews. Although an interview guide was created and all questions asked in a similar manner to all of the respondents, semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to tailor the interview to the respective respondents. By doing this, each respondent is given the opportunity to add information. The emphasis is on how the interviewee understands the issue in question, and what they deem as important for answering the questions. These kinds of interviews also allow the interviewer to ask follow-up questions not necessarily in the interview guide (Bryman, 2016: 467). By utilizing semi-structured interviews, deeper insights into the interviewees' understandings can be generated.

3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews
Qualitative semi-structured phone interviews were conducted during March and April 2018. Before the interviews commenced, an interview guide with a series of questions was prepared[3]. All questions were asked to all of the respondents, but as semi-structured interviews allows for tailoring to take place, they were not always asked in

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[3] Please refer to appendix 2 for the interview guide.

the same order, as follow-up questions and the respondent's response made it naturally to change the order of the question.

Before each interview, the participants were informed of the overall purpose of the research. They were also informed of anonymity and confidentiality being ensured, as well as the interview being sound recorded. The participants were also made aware that they could withdraw their consent. After providing this information, along with answering other questions the participants had, they were asked to give verbal consent of their voluntary participation, and for the interviews to be recorded.

3.5 Data analysis
Bryman (2016: 570) argues that one problem with qualitative research is that it quickly generates a large quantity of data. In order to be able to analyse and draw conclusions from the generated data, it needs to be reduced to the parts that are relevant, as not all collected data, both primary and secondary, fit the purpose of answering the research question. This research has done so through coding, a technique Bryman defines as where "data is broken down into component parts, which are given names" (Bryman, 2016: 689). For the purpose of coding and data analysis, a six-phase process of thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006) was followed. The six phases includes familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87). Braun and Clarke describe thematic analysis as "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 79). Themes are defined as capturing something important about the data in relation to the research question. There are various different ways of conducting Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis, depending on the chosen research paradigm. For the purpose of this thesis, theoretical thematic analysis and latent thematic analysis was utilized. The first refers to the ways in which the researcher codes. A theoretical thematic analysis is premised on coding for a specific research question, in this case being the implications of power of definition for al-Shabaab (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 84). Codes have therefore been developed in relation to the research question. Furthermore, a latent thematic analysis is related to identification of codes and at what level these are to be identified. This

can either be done at a semantic or explicit level, or as in this case, at a latent or interpretive level. Latent themes examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, conceptualizations and ideologies, which are understood as shaping and informing the content of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 84). Moreover, latent themes are associated with a constructionist paradigm, as meaning and experience are seen as socially produced and reproduced (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 85).

The conducted interviews were transcribed, due to them being recorded, and the process of coding immediately started. This is due to getting an understanding of the collected data (Bryman, 2016: 581). It also starts the first phase of the thematic analysis of getting familiarized with the data. By doing this at an early stage, themes, subthemes and possible codes emerged, although the actual coding process began when all data was collected and interviews transcribed. Throughout the process of coding and analysis, transcripts were read several times to ensure that nothing was overlooked or neglected.

In addition to trustworthiness, triangulation was also applied to ensure scientific rigor. This was done to investigate possible alternative accounts of the research question, and used towards generating a deeper understanding towards being able to answer the research question. Triangulation was achieved by using primary data collected through semi-structured interviews, and secondary data collected through journal articles, official government documents and newspaper articles. The secondary data collected was integrated with the primary data. The thematic analysis of the interviews generated codes, which subsequently allowed for establishing themes. These themes were analysed thematically and in relation to the research question. The thematic analysis and the consulting of secondary data have better equipped this research in answering the research question.

3.6 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are integral aspects of all research (Brink, 1993: 35). In qualitative research, the data collected is interpreted and thus prone to subjective bias of the researcher. Thus, ensuring reliability and validity is integral to avoid clouding interpretations of data. In this context, reliability can be defined as being concerned

with the researcher's ability to collect, interpret and present findings without over-interpreting findings or adding meaning to the informants' accounts beyond that of the informant, or to make something up (Maxwell, 1992: 285). Validity can be understood as the accuracy and truthfulness of findings (Brink, 1993: 35). The researcher should strive to uphold these two concepts throughout the research and at every stage, resulting in reliable, valid and trustworthy findings. It is also on these factors one can assess the quality of the generated data. Ensuring scientific rigor is key to foster a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Another important methodological component of qualitative research is that of triangulation, closely associated with validity and reliability, working towards the aim of achieving and upholding scientific rigor. Without rigor, research is worthless (Morse et.al, 2002: 14). If the aim of a research is to generate a comprehensive and detailed account of a phenomenon, two or more methods are needed, as no single method will be able to highlight the different aspects of a social phenomenon or event (Torrance, 2012: 113). Seeing as the ontological and epistemological underpinning of the qualitative methodology utilized in this research is based on those of construction and interpretation, there will always be different accounts of the same phenomenon from various perspectives (Maxwell, 1992: 281). Hence, triangulation is essential towards the aim of investigating the research question from different angles, and towards achieving scientific rigor.

In order to achieve triangulated data it is necessary to utilize at least two approaches. This research has done so through analysing both primary and secondary data, in this case, interviews and already conducted and published materials such as electronic sources and legislation. Interviews and the collection of primary data allows a first-hand account and subsequent analysis of what other individuals consider to be integral to al-Shabaab and the power of definition. Although primary data provides direct insight, it only accounts for the interviewees understanding of the social world, which is likely to be influenced and biased from narratives and discourses. As such, the same phenomenon needs to be examined from a different angle. This has been done through secondary sources, such as scholarly journal articles, press releases from government bodies, news articles and judicial sources such as legislation passed by a national government and institutions. Moreover, the aim of triangulation is not only to

ensure that the phenomenon is investigated by different methods and from different angles, it is also to bypass personal bias of the researcher and the interviewees, as well as to overcome deficiencies (Brink, 1993: 37). Thus, triangulation does not only lead to a richer description of collected data but also increases validity of the research.

Generalizability is often cited as a concept upon which scientific rigor is judged. However, in the case of qualitative methodology and case studies, generalizability is not a goal in itself. This research does neither aim to generalize outside of the context on which it is premised, nor is it capable of achieving generalizability. As this is a case study based on a single case within a specific research, it cannot generalize the findings towards other cases of terrorism or insurgency (Azham and Hamidah, 2011: 35). Rather, the aim of this research is to achieve an understanding of the implications of definitions as it relates to al-Shabaab, and not other insurgent/terrorist groups. Furthermore, although it is not an aim to generalize, it is at the same time important for the researcher not to treat the findings as generalizable and draw broad conclusions. As such, this research must be understood within its context and its own parameters, and is as such not subject to broader conclusions.

This research has aimed to achieve scientific rigor by ensuring validity and reliability throughout the course of the research. This has been done by emphasising methodological coherence, where the question matches the method and the method matches the data and analytic procedure, as well as ensuring sufficient data is collected for all aspects of the research question, and that the sample is appropriate (Morse et.al, 2002: 18). The aim of understanding the implications of definitions and the power embedded within these structures, as well as how it impacts al-Shabaab, vindicates interviews with individuals with close proximity to the research question. This is due to primary data generating first-hand accounts of social comprehension of the world. Throughout the interviews, rigor has been ensured with a focus on descriptive and interpretive validity. This involves not distorting the description generated by the interviewees, and not adding meaning to the accounts given (Maxwell, 1993: 285-286). Triangulation has been achieved by analysing both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included collected data through semi-structured interviews. Secondary sources included press releases, newspaper articles, academic journal articles, and other online sources. By utilizing these two

methods of collecting and analysing data, a broader understanding has been generated compared to if only one method had been utilized.

However, as much as this research has emphasized avoiding self-bias, the research question, aspects and concepts emphasized are inevitably prone to bias as the researcher chooses what to include and what to exclude (Bryman, 2016: 141). As such, it cannot be argued that this research is completely free of bias. Discourses and narratives are inherent in our understanding of the social world, and guide both our choices and interpretations. Nonetheless, by being aware of how scientific rigor is achieved, and that research is prone to bias if standards are not upheld, this research has aimed at to the greatest possible extent avoiding producing bias-prone research.

3.7 Limitations of the research and ethical considerations

All research has limitations, as has this one. The first limitation concerns the number of informants. Preferably, the number of informants should have been higher in order to achieve scientific rigor to a greater extent, as well as applicability of this research. This prompted an even greater inclusion and dependence on secondary literature, such as governmental documents and scholarly journal articles. This slightly altered the intended methods of this research. However, qualitative research often is a combination of primary and secondary data, and rigor and trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation of combined methods and selection of scholarly, peer reviewed sources. Due to the low number of respondents, this study cannot be generalized and applied to similar contexts, and its findings need to be seen in relation to the specifics of this research.

Another limitation is related to some of the informants. While I was able to ask all questions prepared in the interview guide and receive answers on these, some of the informants gave very basic answers at first and were then more concerned with talking about issues not related to the topic of this research, and arguing for their inclusion. Although qualitative semi-structured interviews are flexible and encourages going off topic with the interviewees providing anecdotes, this was done to the extent that it was at times difficult to bring some of the informants back "on track" and get them to actually answer the questions asked. On the one hand it could be argued that

this led to rich and detailed data, but it could also be argued that credibility of the collected data was minimized due to the number of what could be categorized as conspiracy theories in two of the interviews. This nonetheless highlighted the complexity of the Somali situation and the alternative views of al-Shabaab.

Due to the geographical location of the informants as well as issues of scheduling a time, all interviews were conducted as phone interviews. Although the intention was to conduct face-to-face interviews with the informants and appointments made, they were in some circumstances changed several times. Two of the informants also suddenly had to travel abroad, which prompted phone interviews. This arguably also led to lower credibility of the collected data, as I was not able to read the informants' facial expressions and body language during the interviews. To compensate for this, follow-up questions were frequently asked, to ensure that I had understood the answers correctly.

Ethical considerations were kept in mind throughout the collection of the data. Before each interview, the informants were reminded about their identity being confidential and the anonymity of their answers. They were also asked to give verbal consent to being put on speakerphone and recorded. The informants were also informed that their answers would only be used for the purpose of this research, and all data and recordings being destroyed when this research is finished. In order to ensure ethical standards related to conducting research and interviewing informants, all transcripts and recordings were kept safe in order to avoid any harm.

Chapter 4. Literature review – Implications of definitions

This section will discuss the three key concepts within this research. Terrorism and insurgency are two contested terms, argued by some to have fused in the 21st century to the extent that it is no longer possible to distinguish them. They are, however, two separate and distinguishable terms with separate sets of characteristics and modes of operation, although a significant overlap exists. The third term to be addressed is that of power of definition. Definitions have great implications for how a subject is understood and categorized, aiding individuals to comprehend and make sense of phenomena. Hence, the power embedded in definitions can shape and influence both reality and truths, which subsequently can guide the course of action of behaviour. Definitions are in this respect of great importance as they influence how a phenomenon is understood and contextualized.

4.1 The power of a definition

Terrorism and insurgency are two accounts of definitions that can be deployed subjectively. Whether one chooses to define someone as terrorist or insurgent depends on several factors, including subjectivity, discourses and interpretation (Boeke, 2016: 916). As these terms lack an agreed-upon and universally accepted definition, as well as objectivity as to when to utilize the different terms, one can speak of a notion of power. As there is a high level of subjectivity, evident in certain groups being designated as terrorists and others as insurgencies by various countries, someone has projected their powers to decide which definition to be used in certain contexts (Ünal, 2016: 25). This typically involves actors enjoying a high level of legitimacy, such as judicial branches, powerful states and international organisations. We can thus speak of a power of definition, where legitimate agents use their ability to shape and influence our understanding of the social world, either consciously or subconsciously (Doty, 1993: 303). Definition can be understood as characterizations of a phenomenon's meaning based on specific features. Power in this context can be hidden, invisible or symbolic, and used to exercise influence over someone's behaviour, meanings or interests (Lukes, 2005a: 91). When these to terms are combined, power of definition comes to be understood as the dominance and control someone holds, to be used to characterize and adjudicate aspects about phenomena (Shanahan, 2010: 174).

Michel Foucault (1980: 119) understood power and knowledge as being inextricably linked. He argued that knowledge is an exercise of power, and power is a function of knowledge. As such, power and knowledge are closely linked. He further argued that power produces both knowledge and discourse, as well as subjects. Foucault's understanding of power points in a direction of power in certain contexts being so embedded within not only agents and structures but within knowledge, discourses and truths, influencing human behaviour and the social world on all levels. In his book *Power, A Radical View*, Steven Lukes (2005a) points to three dimensions of power. The first dimension is a simplistic view of power where "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" (Lukes, 2005a: 16). The second dimension of power concerns how power controls the agenda of politics and how certain issues are kept out of the political process. The last dimension offered by Lukes points to the fact that individuals sometimes act in ways that are contrary to their basic interests (ibid: 22, 25). While the first and second dimensions of power addresses how power can be used to coerce someone into doing what they might not want to, the third points out how power can manipulate others by changing their interests and their wants. Thus, power is linked to interests, and how we conceive of power influences behaviour in political contexts. Related to this is the power of definitions, which arguably serve the interests of certain agents. As such, definitions can be used to alter behaviour and wants. The third dimension of power is evident in the extent to which power impacts others' interests (Lukes, 2005b: 482). Essential to this view, then, is how power shapes and influences agents' interests and has the ability to fundamentally change it. Lukes' discussion and concept of power can be seen in relation to the implications following definitions, and the power embedded within it. If power is linked to interests and definitions are a product of power, then it can be argued that the implications of a definition is changing the interests of agents, and subsequently change behaviour.

Additionally, as explained by Roxanne Doty (1993: 315), power is productive and constructive, as it constructs and produces categories of normalcy and deviances. Through these constructions, actors are provided with categories through which subjects can be understood. The ways in which subjects are understood within their designated categories guides the appropriate behaviour and response. By placing someone within the category of terrorism, this category subsequently determines the

appropriate response of the actor (Zarefsky, 2004: 611). The response in case of the latter is often counterterrorist measures, including indiscriminate military violence focused on capturing and killing the terrorists. An alternative account of the group in question would have yielded a different response with other measures. Thus, the characterization of a specific group has great implications for the ways in which the group is understood and responded to (Zafresky, 2004: 612). Within the category of terrorism is a set of underlying assumptions of how these subjects can be known, understood and controlled. This is due to categories placing emphasis on certain aspects and characteristics while omitting others, closely related to power, which produces knowledge and discourse (Lukes, 2005a: 91). However, this process is essentially biased, as it ensures the triumph of one particular view while excluding other possible accounts (Bhatia, 2005: 10). Furthermore, what the process of constructing categories does is creating allies and enemies, as understood by Lukes' third dimension of power. Thus, power is not only present within the actual political context but also embedded within assumptions, biases and discourses that constitutes the political context in which categorization occurs.

Zarefsky (2004: 612) argues that "to choose a definition is in effect to plead a cause - advancing a claim and offering support for it". Dinerman (2004: 353) similarly argues, "Definitions are powerful in their ability to direct attention away from and toward many key factors". Definitions can thus be understood as tools of power, making it possible to frame a situation according to the definition. Defining al-Shabaab as a terrorist organisation frames the al-Shabaab situation as one of chaos, lacking legitimacy and making all remedies available to defeat al-Shabaab as possible and legitimate. A definition does not only categorize and characterize the group, but also provides a course of action, how the situation should be framed and understood (Boeke, 2016: 916). The context established by the definition further guides the response, legitimizing actors' measures and responses. As such, definitions are powerful tools of persuasion (Shanahan, 2010: 174). Furthermore, having the ability to define and have that definition accepted by a wider audience holds great power (Bhatia, 2005: 9). As such, the power of definition does not only entail the power to categorize someone in accordance with a certain view, but it also entails a projection of power over an audience, such as other policy makers or a population. Thus, when an actor proposes a definition, power is not only present within the definition itself

but also the ways in which the audience comes to understand and conceptualize it. The concept of power of definition does as such not only relate to the very act of defining, but also the subsequent implications that sort of power have.

4.2 A labelling game? Unpacking "terrorism"
According to Jackson (2008) there have in general been three approaches to defining terrorism. The first approach, utilized by political leaders and security officials, is to define terrorism as an ideology or movement, evident with the –ism suffix in terror*ism*. This associates terrorism with ideologies like capitalism, communism and Marxism, suggesting that terrorism contains its own set of ideas, assumptions and belief systems, making it a phenomenon existing on its own and in its own right (Bonham, 2007: 6). Associating terrorism with ideology also fails to account for the fact that terrorism often occurs within the context of a wider political struggle (Jackson, 2008). This approach leads to an understanding of attacks carried out by al-Shabaab as premised on the fact that terrorism is a phenomenon in its own right, defining the group in question. Related to this is the approach of defining terrorism as actor-based, where terrorism is seen "as a particular form of political violence committed by non-state actors who attack civilians" (Jackson, 2008). Again, this approach excludes state terrorism with the claim that only non-state actors can function as terrorists due to states having sovereign rights on the use of force (Laqueur, 2003: 237). The approach would also claim that terrorism is the defining feature of a group. Another implication of such an approach is making terrorism indistinguishable from other forms of political violence, such as insurgency and guerrilla warfare (Jackson, 2008, Phillips, 2015: 225). Any non-state actor carrying out political violence is by this approach seen as terrorists, regardless of the wider political, social or economic aims. With an actor-based approach, the act of political violence is what constitutes a group, making no distinction to what the parameters of political violence is.

The third approach, Jackson (2008) argues is conceptualizing terrorism as a violent strategy employed by actors in pursuit of particular political goals. In contrast from the two previous approaches, terrorism is by this approach understood by the "nature and characteristics of the act itself rather than the nature of the actor" (Jackson, 2008).

Terrorism then becomes a strategy of political violence that any actor can employ, including states. This approach to terrorism is supported by Charles Tilly and Boaz Ganor. Tilly (2004: 5) defines terrorism as "asymmetrical deployment of threats and violence against enemies using means that fall outside the forms of political struggle routinely operating within some current regime". On the one hand, this definition moves past the two other approaches by excluding conventional warfare, but it still includes violent behaviour such as political assassinations and political rioting (Senechal de la Roche, 2004: 2). Moreover, Ganor (2002: 294) defines terrorism as "the intentional use of, or threat to use, violence against civilians or against civilian targets, in order to attain political aims". As Tilly, Ganor sees terrorism as a strategy and therefore not a defining feature of the actor carrying out the violence (Ganor, 2002: 298). It then becomes difficult to argue that anyone carrying out political violence is a terrorist, because terrorism is a strategy and not a defining feature (Richards, 2014: 221). The problem in the aforementioned actor-based approach to defining terrorism is overcome by Ganor's approach, with arguing that what determines whether something is terrorism or not is the intended victims (Ganor, 2010). By explicitly distinguishing between victims, Ganor also overcomes the problem of not distinguishing between forms of political violence, such as insurgency and terrorism. According to Ganor (2010), intended victims of terrorism is civilians, while the intended victims of insurgency is military personnel, who are not regarded as civilians. For an act to be defined as terrorism as opposed to other forms of violence, its primary, intended victims need to civilians. Moreover, Ganor also argues that collateral damage where civilians are wounded or killed, either as human shields or to cover up military activity, does not quality the act to be defined as terrorism (Ganor, 2010). It solely depends on who the intended victims are (Richards, 2014: 221).

Although it lacks an internationally agreed-upon definition, there are certain elements that are common in most attempts to define terrorism. One is terrorism as threat of or use of violence, such as in the UK definition: "the use or threat of action where the use or threat is designed to influence the government, or an international governmental organisation, or to intimidate the public or a section of the public…" (UK Terrorism Act 2000). Some have however questioned the inclusion of "threat",

arguing that threat perception is subjective, opening up the term to abuse (Richards, 2014: 215). Furthermore, most definitions place emphasis on the intention behind the act, often portrayed as being political, ideological or religious (Gibbs, 1989: 330). Ganor (2010) argues that the motivation behind a terrorist attack is irrelevant, as the aim of an attack is always political. Gibbs (1989: 330) questions the inclusion of intent or motivation, and asks, "Is terrorism necessarily undertaken to realize some particular type of goal?" Senechal de la Roche (2004: 2-3) further problematizes this, questioning how one possibly can know the motives and goals of terrorist attacks, when they are not readily observable features. Nonetheless, several definitions include such distinctions, as Chomsky (2001), arguing that terrorism is "the use of coercive means aimed at civilian populations in an effort to achieve political, religious, or other aims" (Shanahan, 2010: 175). Most definitions also emphasize the fact that actors of terrorism are non-state actors, such as Roberta Senechal de la Roche's definition (2014: 2), arguing that terrorism is "nongovernmental, unilateral violence with a high degree of organization and a logic of collective liability", or Jones and Libicki (2008: 3) stating that terrorist groups are a "collection of individuals belonging to a nonstate entity that uses terrorism to achieve its objectives". These definitions fail to recognize that states can be terrorists as well, and that the violence carried out by designated terrorist groups is not distinct from the violence carried out by states (Meisels, 2009: 337). Bruce Hoffman and Walter Laqueur, on the other hand, argue that state terrorism should not be included in terrorism definitions. For Hoffman (1998: 35) this is due to state terrorism being defined as war crimes, while Laqueur (2003: 237) argues that states are sovereign entities with monopoly on the use of force. It could also be argued, however, that although states are sovereign and have monopoly on use of force, the force needs to be legitimate. One example of such illegitimate use of state violence is the 1985 bombing of the Rainbow Warrior, when French agents sunk a Greenpeace fleet in New Zealand on its way to a protest against French nuclear testing. The sinking was later condemned as a terrorist attack (Greenpeace, n.d).

Furthermore, it is not only the very definition of terrorism, or the parameters on which it should be judged that lacks consensus. There also exist debates on how to understand components of terrorism definitions, such as civilians and whether non-

combatants should be regarded as such, as well as on the understanding of terrorism as being indiscriminate and random. Meisels (2009) has problematized this through Waltzer's understanding of terrorism as choosing its victims randomly. According to Meisels (2009: 343), the victims of terrorist attacks are chosen carefully and are of high symbolic value. Through the example of 9/11 and the attacks on Twin Towers, Meisels also questions whether all victims should be regarded as innocents. He argues, "US adults associated with Manhattan's centre of finance are not innocent of complicity in the grievances confronted by Islamic terrorists" (Meisels, 2009: 344). Meisels point to the fact that Twin Towers were chosen due to its status as symbols of US capitalism, and to actors of political violence choosing their victims carefully and according to their symbolic value.

Meisels further argues that to claim that terrorism is indiscriminate and random contradicts the description of terrorism being political purposefully (ibid). For example, Sandler (2015: 2) has defined terrorism as "premeditated use or threat to use violence by individuals or subnational groups to obtain a political or social objective..." Similarly, CIA (2012: 2) understands terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence, perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents". The elements of premeditated violence, and Waltzer's emphasis on the randomness and indiscriminate nature of terrorism does not only highlight the ambiguity and confusion around the term, but also serves as evidence for a lack of a general understanding of what actually constitutes terrorism. Drawing on Meisels (2009: 343), the same phenomenon cannot be both premeditated and random. Thus, if terrorism targets the innocent specifically due to its symbolic value, it is not random. However, it could be argued that the element of indiscrimination stems from acts of political violence and the nexus between life and death being outside of the victims' control. This is, however, based on subjective accounts and not to the inherent nature of terrorism.

As demonstrated by the previous discussion, terrorism is an essentially contested concept, lacking a universal agreed-upon definition and understanding of what terrorism actually is and what it is not (Shanahan, 2010: 173). The ambiguity of the term has led to its application to cases previously described as hijackings, bombings, assassinations, kidnappings and sabotage (Jackson, 2004: 5). The meaning of

terrorism has thus been broadened and extended to include cases of violence in general and not specifically terrorism. As long as there is a civilian component, terrorism can be applied (Rapin, 2011: 163). The ability to extend the application of terrorism has widespread implications, on various levels (Heradstveit and Pugh, 2003: 1). One implication is the legal aspects of being designated as terrorists, leading to trial in specialized courts, denial of access to counsel, and restrictions on freedom of expression (Setty, 2011: 3). These implications can be attributed the negative connotations associated with the term, seeing as terrorism today is regarded as illegitimate, unlawful, and immoral, carried out by the misfits of society (Boeke, 2016: 916, Jackson, 2011: 116). The negative connotations associated with the word and the subsequent legal implications as described, can be seen in relation to another implication of the current usage of terrorism, related to the discursive practices that produce and reproduce knowledge about terrorism (Hülsse and Spencer, 2008: 527-573). Constructivism argues that definitions, conceptions and classifications of terrorism "are not objective and impartial but constructed to reflect ideas, beliefs and geopolitical interests of the most dominant powers" (Butko, 2009: 191). Understandings of terrorism are politically and socially produced, where the applied meaning is determined by social actors (Doty, 1993: 302). As such, those who are defined as terrorists are not necessarily those who actually are, but those who are perceived to challenge the dominant position and strategic interests of the dominant powers within the international system (Butko, 2009: 192, Doty, 1993: 310). As such, terrorism cannot be understood external to the discursive practices that gives the word meaning (Hülsse and Spencer, 2008: 573, Jackson, 2011: 117).

The discursive practices have further given rise to a third implication – terrorism as a label. Although terrorism is supposed to objectively describe a phenomenon, the discourses and narratives on terrorism has led to the development of terrorism being applied as a label (LeVine, 1995: 49). Within a discourse, labels provide quick identification for what is labelled, and also give meaning to what is abnormal and acceptable (Tuman, 2010: 46). This is done in comparison to what is normal and acceptable (Doty, 1993: 315). The implication is that where definitions are supposed to be objective accounts, providing parameters to understand the defined, labels are subjective (Tuman, 2010: 56). By turning terrorism into both a label and a definition has further implications of the ability to simultaneously empower and marginalize,

and create a contrast between us and them, as it describes what is normal and what is deviant (Baker-Beall, 2013: 215). The construction of otherness can be said to stem from the construction of a shared identity between those who designate and those who are being designated. The balance of power is skewed, creating a division between the self and the other, premised on the construction of a counterpoint of the self. This otherness is then further used to create a base of knowledge, rationalizing and legitimizing invasion, occupation and colonization (Tuman, 2010: 59, LeVine, 1995: 49). What is evident is the amount of power embedded within terrorism as a definition and as a label, and the ways in which it constructs a sense of common identity of those who hold powers, and their subsequent ability to remove the legitimate powers of whoever is defined (Lukes, 2005b: 477-478).

Ultimately, terrorism has been reduced to a rhetorical tool through the discourse on terrorism, such as war on terror, legitimizing extraordinary measures (Bonham et.al, 2007: 7). As Ramsay (2015: 211) argues "terrorism is not a helpful analytical concept but merely a label used by those with power to mobilise opinion against violence of which they disapprove". Its current workings have made it impossible to understand terrorism objectively and external to its social construction and discourse. Being aware of its implications and subjective nature, however, Boaz Ganor's definition as discussed previously, represents an attempt to conceptualize an understanding of what actually constitutes terrorism. The elements in Ganor's definition – the focus on political aims, the intent, civilians as primary targets, and the stressing of terrorism being a strategy and not a defining feature of an actor – makes it a preferred definition to this thesis, and a definition upon which subsequent discussion on al-Shabaab in relation to terrorism will be based.

4.3 Insurgency, a more "legitimate" warfare?

Just as there are several definitions of terrorism, there are a wide variety of definitions of insurgency. Bell and Evans (2011: 376) defines insurgency as "a contest for grounded space including both a territorial struggle for the land and a popular struggle for the population", highlighting that insurgencies fight for acquiring the land and winning the population. Whether they want to seize control of the land or just "own" it, is not made explicit. Kilcullen (2005: 603) suggests that insurgency is a "popular

movement that seeks to overthrow the status quo through subversion, political activity, insurrection, armed conflict and terrorism". Thus, according to this definition an insurgency challenges status quo, i.e. the government and its structures, wants to seize control of the government and thus that through a variety of means including terrorism. However, Kilcullen also argues that insurgencies can also favour a strategy of provocation and exhaustion, and not necessarily displacing a government (Kilcullen, 2006: 115). Thus, there is no common understanding of what constitutes insurgent groups or the aims of such. As such, both the very term and the definitions therefore vary greatly in their objectives, aims and strategies.

There exists a great deal of confusion between terrorism and insurgency – two seemingly similar terms with relatable concepts but yet inherently different. Politicians often mention the two terms interchangeably, such as when Ed Miliband in 2009 in an interview with Roger Cohen stated, "counterinsurgency is a counterterrorist strategy" (Cohen, 2009). Some scholars have also argued that the two terms have fused do the extent that they can no longer be distinguished (Boyle, 2010: 335). However, it can be argued that insurgency differ from terrorism in first of all, their objectives. According to Louise Richardson (1999: 209-210), the objectives of terrorism are revenge, renown and reaction. The attacks on 9/11 in 2001 were allegedly driven by the objectives of revenge due to US support of Israel, the sanctions posed against Iraq, and the presence of American military in Saudi Arabia (BBC, n.d). Similarly, the 2005 suicide bombings in London were not carried out due to the belief of it leading to an establishment of an Islamic caliphate, but rather as revenge for Britain's actions in the Middle East (Burke, 2005). Furthermore, the 2011 terrorist attack in Norway by Anders Behring Breivik was carried out due to hatred against Islam and to prevent Muslim immigration to Europe (Therkelsen, 2012). What these have in common can be related to Louise Richardson's understanding of terrorism, "politically motivated violence…designed to communicate a message to a broader audience" (Richardson, 1999: 209).

Insurgency on the other hand, is concerned with the liberation of a people or a territory (Bell and Evans, 2011: 376). While terrorist groups in general have no aim of overthrowing a government, insurgents are fighting towards the aim of establishing a new government or a regime by defeating the existing government (Bell and Evans,

2011: 376). As such, the insurgency is often protracted as the insurgent group seeks to wear the government out until it is forced to surrender. The means available in achieving the goals set out are many, and include guerrilla tactics, terrorism, propaganda, and provision of public services to the population to maintain or gain support. It has been argued that what constitutes terrorism is the attachment of a political motive to the attack (Sandler, 2015: 3). As such, any attack that is politically motivated falls under the category of terrorism. However, it has also been argued that terrorism is a tactic available to a range of actors, including insurgents, and that insurgents deploy terrorist attacks in an attempt to achieve their goal (Findlet and Young, 2007: 380, Ganor, 2010). In this case, terrorism is not an end to itself but a tool available to achieve the specified end. It can further be argued that the position one sympathises with ultimately rests on how one understands terrorism and insurgency, which subsequently guides the understanding of whether terrorism is a tool or a phenomenon in its own right. This will arguably also guide whether one understands insurgency as a separate phenomenon, which deploys terrorism as a tactic, or whether it is fused into terrorism to the indistinguishable.

The discussion in sections 4.1 and 4.2 about the implications of defining someone as terrorists highlighted that there are severe implications of such labelling, due to the underlying assumptions and negative connotations associated with the term terrorism (Ganor, 2010). Defining a group as insurgents does not involve the same negative connotations, illuminating the implications of power of definition and the power attached to a terrorism definition (Ganor, 2002: 296). Moreover, the implications are also evident in the ways research is carried out on terrorism and insurgency. While research on terrorism tends to treat it as an ideology, research on insurgencies focus on terrorism being an available tactic (Findlet and Young, 2007: 380). Research on insurgency also focus on the *political struggle* that insurgency is, or the fight for legitimacy (CIA, 2012). While the debate and research on terrorism highlights the unlawfulness and immorality of terrorist attacks, the same attacks are described as a tactic available to the insurgent group as they fight for liberation or against the government (CIA, 2012: 2, Byman, 2013: 355, Bell and Evans, 2010: 378). Thus, the essence is in the two definitions, guiding terrorism to be understood differently based on the prior definition. Although both insurgencies and terrorist groups carry out terrorist attacks, only in the case of insurgency is terrorism frequently described as a

tactic and the group described as "representing the hope and possibility of a new beginning" (Bell and Evans, 2010: 378), while terrorist attacks are described as the defining element of a terrorist group, as what constitutes the group, although terrorism is in the tactical repertoire of insurgent groups (Kilcullen, 2005: 603). This can be related back to Boaz Ganor's (2010) arguments on terrorism not being an ideology but a strategy, and that the term terrorism has come to prevent objective accounts and understandings of the term. Simply put, terrorist and insurgent groups carry out the same kind of attacks, involving deaths of non-combatants, targeting civilians, suicide bombings and trucks with bombs. However, only within the research on terrorism is the unlawfulness explicitly emphasised, while the emphasis within research on insurgency is placed on terrorism being a tactic and the political struggle they fight. As such, the ways in which a group is defined carries with it immense implications for further understanding and conceptualization.

4.4 Similar terms, similar implications?

The purpose of this chapter has been to present and discuss the three key concepts within this research – power of definition, terrorism, and insurgency, as well as identify gaps in the literature in which this research situates itself. The discussion on these three concepts have highlighted that a vast amount of research has been carried out on each individual concept, as well as some research on insurgency and terrorism combined. However, very little research has been carried out combining these three concepts, and investigating the implications of deploying definitions in this context.

The previous discussion of the three concepts has revealed that definitions have wide implications for how something is to be understood and contextualized. This can be attributed to the power embedded within definitions, as well as the very concept of power of definition. As section 3.1 highlighted, power can be hidden, invisible and symbolic, and embedded within political contexts which influences policy makers' behaviour. As such, definitions produce and construct knowledge through truth claims, narratives and discourses. Moreover, the power embedded within definitions influences and shapes individual's understanding of phenomena and the social world. It is thus important to be aware of the power of definition, as it guides subsequent behaviour.

Boaz Ganor (2010) argues that terrorism and insurgency often serve as "alternative designations of the same phenomenon", where actors fail to differentiate between the two terms. As this chapter has emphasized, the implications of defining a group as terrorist and not insurgent, or vice versa, has great implications. Terrorism has come to be understood as morally wrong, illegitimate and lawful, and is perhaps the most powerful designation to be made (Boeke, 2016: 916). By defining someone as terrorists simultaneously delegitimizes the groups' actions regardless of the motivation behind the attacks, as well as laying the groundwork for how the group is to be understood, conceptualized and dealt with. The negative connotations associated with terrorism produce and reproduce discourses and narratives about the designated group (Ganor, 2010). If that same group were to be defined as an insurgency, however, it would be more likely to be conceived of in more positive connotations compared to terrorism, as an insurgency often is seen as fighting for a cause and national liberation. Although both insurgent and terrorist groups carry out similar violent attacks, the attacks are viewed differently, depending on the definition of the group. Thus, it is important to highlight the symbolic, hidden and invisible power embedded within definitions, and to be aware of the implications of various definitions of the same phenomenon (Ünal, 2016: 25). Being aware of these aspects regarding definitions are essential when researching the implications of defining al-Shabaab.

Chapter 5. Power of definition and al-Shabaab

5.1 Definitions, power and implications
Steven Lukes (2005a: 25) writes that a decision "is a choice among alternative modes of action". The decision to define someone or something in a certain way is a deliberate choice among several alternative possibilities. Each of these choices has embedded assumptions, connotations, narratives and discourses. The action of defining a group in one way instead of the other, influences how people understand and conceptualizes that group, due to the embedded features in each definition. This is why we can speak of a power of definition. Within a definition is a notion of power, linked to conceptualization of the defined phenomenon. The way in which that phenomenon is portrayed to the world through a definition provides the basis for knowledge and comprehension. As such, definitions are powerful tools (Shanahan, 2010: 174).

According to Zafresky (2004: 611) "characterizations of social reality are not "given", they are chosen from among multiple possibilities". This means that reality is socially constructed, as are knowledge. Constructivism argues that phenomena are not able to constitute themselves as knowledge independently of discursive practices (Guzzini, 2000: 159). As definitions are ways in which to understand phenomena they are also objects of knowledge. According to constructivism, they have not become such objects of knowledge without discourses and narratives that have influenced the ways in which those definitions are understood. The discourses that are embedded in a definition construct concepts, categories and metaphors through which meaning is created (Doty, 1993: 302). It can be argued that through the discourses and narratives that are embedded within, definitions not only reproduces discourses but actively engage in them. These kinds of practices are arguably powerful as they maintain the ability to shape and reshape social reality and knowledge of phenomena.

5.1.1 Definitions and identity formation
The power in a definition constructs categories of normalcy and deviances (Doty, 1993: 315). Definitions does therefore not only produce and reproduce discourses and narratives, but also have the ability to construct categories which decides what is normal and what is deviant behaviour (Tuman, 2010: 54). If someone is defined in a

certain way, which brings along categories of normalcy, the opposite definition simultaneously defines deviance (Becker, 1966: 8). Moreover, discourses within definitions also produce subjects and objects. The ability to define and have that definition accepted holds great power over the one(s) being defined (Bhatia, 2005: 9). Furthermore, subjects and objects are constructed in relation to the power of definition, through its construction of normalcy and deviances, discourses, narratives and categories. Edward Said (1978: 3) argues that it constitutes practices of misrepresentation and the creation of a distinction between the self and the other. This can also be seen in relation to construction of categories of identity, as articulated by Frantz Fanon (1952: 165), where the self through taking the role as the definer and the subject, maintains its role as the superior, positioning the self relative to and above, the object being defined. These discursive and constructive practises produce and reproduce discourses of the socially constructed reality.

Building on the concepts of Fanon, Doty and Said, a definition does not only have the ability to construct reality, but also construct and maintain identities (Tuman, 2010: 58). This is due to the discourses within self-other practices creating and reflecting identity. Identity is, as with reality, not something that is given and existing independently of the process of construction (Baker-Beall, 2013: 216). As such, definitions are one way of maintaining identities. Having the ability to designate someone as terrorists does not only characterize the group in question as deviant but simultaneously characterize the behaviour of the designator as appropriate, legitimizing the action of designation. According to constructivism, identities are also the basis for which interests are constructed (Wendt, 1992: 398). The interests and identities of an actor are also linked to power, as interests and identities are motivational factors of agents. Thus, identities are maintained and shaped by interests, and definitions are partly based on the identity and interest of an actor.

As previously mentioned, different definitions have different narratives, categories, connotations, assumptions and discourses related to them. This is also the case for terrorism and insurgency. David Kilcullen (2005: 605) argues that terrorists are seen as misfits within society, criminals whose methods and objectives are unacceptable. Insurgencies, in comparison, are regarded as "representatives of deeper issues or grievances within society" (Kilcullen, 2005: 605). Although insurgents also carry out

terrorist attacks, they represent grievances that are seen as legitimate compared to those of terrorists. This can be explained by discourses and narratives related to terrorism, which have become so embedded that it is difficult to see beyond them. Designating a group as terrorists is today perhaps the most powerful action taken by a state, as it condemns the actions and aims of the group (Gibbs, 1989: 329). A terrorist group may have legitimate grievances but their actions are seen as so morally wrong that they are unable to communicate them. When asked about implications of definitions, informant 1 stated, *"groups carrying out terror tie up less terroristic motives, tie them up so that they are unable to communicate its more legitimized claims and wishes"* (Informant 1, 27.03.2018). This can be seen in relation to the construction of the terrorist other (Baker-Beall, 2013: 219). The terrorist other has become embedded within the discourse of terrorism to the extent that a designation of a group as terrorists automatically constructs a terrorist other, positioned relative to the non-terrorist self.

During the interviews with the different informants it became evident that the connotations of terrorism are related to themes of illegitimacy, morally wrong and sinful. Some of the informants also highlighted how definitions can guide behaviour. Informant 4 stated *"Definitions categorize groups and puts labels on them, which to some extent guides further actions"*. Informant 1 interestingly argued:

"If a regime manages to define someone as terrorists, then in many ways they have won the struggle. Because if they win the fight on getting a group defined as terrorists, then it will be difficult for the rest of the world to provide support, help with negotiations, etc. So the war on the definition is very important, that is obvious" (Informant 1, 27.03.2017).

This highlights the social construction of definitions, and the power embedded within a definition. The above excerpt from informant 1 does not only illuminate that a terrorism definition and the construction of the terrorist other guides behaviour of the rest of the international community, but also that governments are mostly concerned about getting the group designated as terrorists, and that there is a war on definitions. This further highlights the socially constructed reality, as advocated by

constructivism, and that knowledge is indeed socially constructed by agents, guided by the maintenance of identity and interests.

An interesting example of construction of the terrorist other and a reproduction of terrorism discourse and practices can be found in Norway and the somewhat controversial Penal Code paragraph 145, introduced by law June 2016. Paragraph 145 states,

"Anyone illegally involved in military activities in an armed conflict abroad is punished by imprisonment for up to 6 years unless they participate on behalf of a governmental force. Anyone who intends to commit an offense as mentioned in the first paragraph, commences his journey to the area or performs other acts that facilitate and points to the execution of such acts, shall be punished for attempt. The attempt is punished less than a completed infringement"
 (Lovdata, n.d Translated from Norwegian).

The interesting aspect about paragraph 145 is the general criminalization of anyone involved in military activities abroad, or who attempts to carry out such acts, feeding into the construction of the terrorist other. The paragraph makes no distinction between insurgent forces and terrorist groups, nor does it distinct between illegal forces and other more reputable oppositional forces (Høgestøl, 2018: 32). With a criminal generalization, the Norwegian Penal Code paragraph 145 also criminalized anyone who travels to an area of armed conflict abroad, and engages in the conflict although the individual is providing humanitarian assistance without the support of a governmental force, such as the provision of food. With this paragraph, anyone who travels to an armed conflict abroad can be punished with imprisonment for up to six years, regardless of the intentions or the actions carried out by the individual. As such, paragraph 145 feeds into the discourse on terrorism, where the terrorist other is constructed and the non-terrorist self is maintained as the superior. Although it should be noted that this is not to argue against the paragraph itself but the general criminalization and the lack of division. It could also be argued that this is yet another way for a state actor to be able to quicker define acts as terrorism.

The abovementioned paragraph 145 is an example of the widespread implications of terrorism as a concept and a label, as well as its ability to define and delegitimize. It also illuminates the power of definition and how one can find cases of its function not only in direct relation to terror groups but also within judicial branches. With paragraph 145, a terrorist other is constructed without making division between insurgency and terrorism, treating the two as inseparable. It does as such not carry any weight if al-Shabaab had been defined differently by Norway, as paragraph 145 results in a general criminalization and construction of the terrorist other, illuminating its ability to function as an instrument of foreign policy rather than an objective description (Richardson, 1999: 210).

To summarize the findings in this section, the power of a definition is widespread. Through discourses and narratives, a definition is able to produce and reproduce discursive practices. This is done through the social construction of reality and knowledge. Definitions are in many ways the basis for knowledge of a phenomenon, a starting point for how to conceptualize and develop an understanding. It can therefore be argued that definitions are objects of knowledge. According to constructivism, these objects of knowledge do not exist independently of constructed reality, but through inter-subjective meanings. Furthermore, definitions also produce subjects and objects, as well as a self and a relative other. Through discursive practices, a self is constructed relative to the other. In the case of terrorism, one can speak of the terrorist other, which is simultaneously constructed through the designation of a terrorist group. It is also constructed by law, such as through paragraph 145 of the Norwegian Penal Code. The construction of the terrorist other, the discourses that are embedded within and the ways in which definitions decide normalcy and deviance, ultimately not only decides how a phenomenon is understood but also how it should be treated. As such, the power of definition is visible through its ability to influence actors and structures on every stage in the international arena.

5.2 Terrorists, insurgents or freedom fighters? How to define al-Shabaab

5.2.1 Al-Shabaab as terrorists

Rapin (2011: 161) argues that "the more murderous they are, the more terrorist they seem to us". Between October 2012 and February 2014, al-Shabaab was responsible for 15 attacks per month. In 2013, the UN estimated that at least two were killed each day, and 61 per month between October 2012 and March 2013 (Williams, 2014: 910). Judging by Rapin's statement, one could then have argued, quite simplistically, that al-Shabaab should be understood as nothing more than a terrorist group. Boaz Ganor (2010) argues that whether or not it is terrorism depends on who the intended victims are of the attacks. Since 2005-2006, al-Shabaab has attacked both civilians and uniformed personnel, although civilians have increasingly been targeted since 2008. As Informant 2 stated: *"Al-Shabaab is just terrorizing the people"*.

As previously discussed in section 4.2, Boaz Ganor (2002: 294) has defined terrorism as "the intentional use of, or threat to use, violence against civilians or against civilian targets, in order to attain political aims". Ganor further argues that the end does not justify the means (ibid: 288). As long as a group intentionally targets civilians it is by this definition terrorism. The question then arises of how one should understand a group that carries out attacks targeting both uniformed personnel, such as AMISOM forces, and who carries out attacks in public places, as well as performing several state-like tasks in the absence of a fully functioning government (Anzalone, 2018a: 16). According to Ganor (2010) it ultimately depends on who the *intended* victims of the attacks are, and should not be based on collateral damage of civilians.

All five informants in this research defined al-Shabaab as a terror organisation. The ways in which they understood the group and the emphasis on various aspects, however, resulted in relatively great variations within the definitions. Below follows excerpts from some of the informants' definitions:

"Al-Shabaab is actually a terrorist organisation, affiliated with al-Qaeda, based in Somalia" (Informant 2, 27.03.2018).

"It is a Somali based organisation who includes a diverse group of people, who fights foreign forces, the government of Somalia, and non-Muslims" (Informant 3, 04.04.2018).

"Al-Shabaab started out as a nationalist movement in Somalia, and has later developed into a jihadist organisation with a more national focus. It started out as an insurgency but has later developed towards becoming more like terrorists than insurgents" (Informant 4, 06.04.2018).

Although there is no universally agreed-upon definition of terrorism, or a common understanding of what al-Shabaab is, the informants' definitions of al-Shabaab captures significant aspects and major themes within academic definitions of terrorism, such as violence and fighting for political aims. Informant 2 also stated *"They use Islam as their politics, but the reality is they have nothing to do with Islam, because of their brutal actions"* (Informant 2, 27.03.2018). Informant 2 thus engages in the debate about religion and terrorism, and the discourse that has been established, linking terrorism and religion. Moreover, informants 4 and 5 engage in the debate of what really constitutes terrorism, and whether it is an independently existing phenomenon or a tactic. Informant 4 stated *"At the same I would say that terrorism is not necessarily something existing on its own, I'm not sure I would say that a group is inherently terrorist. I guess I would say that terrorism is a tactic and not necessarily something existing independently"* (Informant 4, 06.04.2018). Although all informants have defined al-Shabaab as a terrorist group, and engaged in existing scholarly debates within the topic of terrorism, one could argue that the informants highlight the essence of the debate. Terrorism has come to be such a widely defined concept, where the lack of a common definition and understanding has resulted in an environment where everyone has their own understanding of what constitutes terrorism and terrorist groups, often grounded in particular political viewpoints (Ganor, 2010).

Moreover, what is evident is that due to the attacks carried out under the name of al-Shabaab and those who the leaders of al-Shabaab publicly claim responsibility for, al-Shabaab taken under one is regarded as a terror group. Thus, the terror activities of

certain sub-groups within al-Shabaab lead to a popular understanding of the group as terrorists. Informant 5 captured this by stating, *"...when they carry out the attacks that they have, killing innocent people and harming civilians, then it does not matter what they are defined as because of the attacks"* (Informant 5, 05.04.2018). It can then further be argued that the actions of al-Shabaab, hereunder terrorist attacks, to a greater degree influences how the group is understood by individuals, than the way in which it is defined by states or the international community.

If one applies Ganor's (2002: 294) understanding of terrorism – "the intentional use of, or threat to use, violence against civilians or against civilian targets, in order to attain political aims" - to al-Shabaab, only those attacks who have been targeting civilians can be characterized as terrorist attacks. The group has also frequently targeted uniformed military personnel, which by Ganor's understanding does not constitute terrorism. It can then further be argued that the defining powers of terrorism, as well as the construction of normalcy and deviance and the discourses associated with the term, "overshadows" the fact that al-Shabaab targets both civilians and military personnel. Although this thesis agrees with Ganor in terrorism not being a defining feature of a group, the term has been applied so broadly and frequently to the extent that it becomes nearly impossible on the international arena to conceive of al-Shabaab as anything other than terrorists. This thesis would also argue that the current use of terrorism as a concept and defining feature fails to account for variations and the complexity within al-Shabaab, as some sub-groups protects the same aid workers other sub-groups targets (Menkhaus, 2009: 228).

5.2.2 Al-Shabaab as insurgents

The targeting of aid workers by some sub-groups and the simultaneous protection by other points in the direction of great complexity within al-Shabaab, as well as a terrorism definition not being able to account for this complexity. Some of the informants highlighted that al-Shabaab started as an insurgency and later developed into a terrorist group. Informant 5 stated that al-Shabaab is "a movement that started out as an insurgency with a nationalistic focus" (Informant 5, 05.04.2018). When asked what differentiates insurgency from terrorism, the answers were related to territorial claims, the aim of governing, and not intentionally targeting civilians.

However, the more one talked about the issue of terrorism, insurgency and al-Shabaab, the more confused some of the informants became of the division between the two concepts. Informant 3 stated, *"To my understanding, al-Shabaab is the only organisation who can be defined as terrorists in Somalia. But again I can also say that they are insurgents"* (Informant 3, 04.04.2018). David Kilcullen (2005: 603) has defined insurgency as a movement challenging the status quo through political activity, insurrection, armed conflict and terrorism. He also adds that "terrorism is a component in virtually all insurgencies, and insurgent objectives lie behind almost all terrorism" (Kilcullen, 2005: 604). It is therefore not given that a group carrying out attacks characterized as terrorism necessarily is a terrorist group. Again one can refer back to Boaz Ganor's understanding of terrorism as a strategy and that it depends on the intended victims of the attacks, as well as terrorism not being a defining feature of a group due being a strategy (Ganor, 2010). On the one hand it can be argued that al-Shabaab, who has targeted innocents and uniformed AMISOM personnel, to some extent is operating in a "grey area" between terrorism and insurgency with the combination of the group's overall aim, its operational tactics of targeting civilians *and* uniformed personnel, as well as providing public services, justice system and security in the areas it controls. According to Christopher Anzalone (2018b), al-Shabaab continues in 2018 to demonstrate that it is committed to remain a territorial rebel group, pointing in the direction of having insurgent claims and more legitimate grievances and wishes. It is as such a highly diverse and complex group, as captured by informant 1's emphasis on al-Shabaab having developed to encompass a variety of different subgroups, where some are carrying out unmitigated terrorism while others resemble insurgent groups. This can also seen in relation to a study carried out by Hansen (2013: 140), arriving at a similar conclusion, arguing that "there are ideological differences within the top leadership of the organization", as well as Menkhaus (2009: 228) and Anzalone (2018a: 16), highlighting the variety of tasks al-Shabaab carries out.

David Kilcullen's (2005: 603) understanding of insurgency, coupled with Boaz Ganor's (2010) understanding of terrorism as a strategy makes it possible to define al-Shabaab as an insurgent group. According to Anzalone (2018b), the group remains primarily interested with building an insurgent Islamist state, and is thus challenging the status quo in Somalia, as well as opposing the government. This does however

presuppose an understanding of terrorism as a strategy and not a defining feature of a group. The issue of definition is however made problematic with attacks targeting civilians, which according to Ganor (2002: 288) constitutes terrorism. Ganor emphasizes this by arguing that one cannot fight for the freedom of one population while destroying the freedom of others (ibid). But yet again it should be kept in mind the previous discussion of only some groups of al-Shabaab performing unmitigated terrorism, and the variations in sub-groups and their aims. It can therefore also be argued that neither a single terrorism nor insurgency definition is able to account for the whole group.

5.2.3 The complexity of al-Shabaab

Although the attacks get the most attention, al-Shabaab's role in Somalia has proven to be greater than the attacks they have carried out. Mustafa Bananay, a senior analyst at the Somali think thank Sahan research, observes that al-Shabaab "remains a viable actor for the provision of basic services and security and justice. At present, al-Shabaab presents itself as providing Somalia's only effective justice system" (Bananay, 2017). In 2014, Ken Menkhaus made a similar observation and argued that al-Shabaab provides basic administration, such as oversight of education and health sectors, policing, judicial and arbitrarian roles. Menkhaus also argued that communities under the control of al-Shabaab enjoy higher levels of law and order than those communities who are "liberated" by AMISOM and left under the control of Somali national armed forces, who are "predatory and poorly controlled" (Menkhaus, 2014b: 6). Recently, Christopher Anzalone (2018a: 16) observed that al-Shabaab, through its civil administration, continues to carry out governmental activities, as well as running sharia, medical education and other courses for women, teachers and pharmacists among others. This points to al-Shabaab's complex and diverse organizational structure, being comprised of multiple cells, units and divisions (Shuriye, 2012: 275).

 This complexity was captured by Informant 1, who stated:

"They have their roots in various different clans, different demands…it is still comprised of many different groupings", and *"the grouping is so broad that it*

encompasses a bit of everything. What on tabloid is called al-Shabaab can entail many different groupings that not necessarily has a lot to do with al-Shabaab, and the more unmitigated terror activities, and those who define themselves as the leaders of al-Shabaab" (Informant 1, 27.03.2018).

The aforementioned complexity further complicates the understanding of al-Shabaab in terrorist or insurgent terms. On the one hand, there is no doubt that the group has deliberately targeted civilians and caused great harm to the Somali population, as well as others when carrying out attacks abroad, such as in Kenya. In this sense, it fits the description and understanding of terrorism as proposed by Boaz Ganor by targeting civilians. On the other hand, however, al-Shabaab also fits the understanding of insurgency, as described by David Kilcullen, as it challenges status quo, targets military personnel and continues to govern large swats of territory (Anzalone, 2018a: 16). This is made further complex when the civilian and administrative roles and tasks performed are taken into account. It could therefore be argued that neither definitions of terrorism or insurgency accounts for the whole group, as there are elements of targeting civilians coupled with more insurgent-like claims.

What is evident is that al-Shabaab is nonetheless a highly complex and diverse group. There seems to be a general agreement about al-Shabaab starting out as an insurgency but later having developed into becoming more like a terrorist group. The reasons behind the change of understanding seems to be related to an increase in attacks on the civilian population, as well as a shift from a specific Somali focus towards a regional with attacks being carried out in neighbouring countries. Although it can be argued that the deliberate targeting of civilians "overshadows" the attacks on uniformed personnel in terms of how al-Shabaab should be understood, it can also be argued that this fails to account for the diversity of subgroups within al-Shabaab. It can further be argued that this leads to an operational strategy against al-Shabaab that does not address its insurgent claims. Rather, it is treated as a homogenous, full-fledged terrorist group without accounting for the variations within it.

5.3 Power of definition and al-Shabaab – what kind of implications?

The majority of the literature on al-Shabaab treats the group as terrorists. There seems to exist a notion that the terrorism label is pre-given or accepted without discussion. This has, in many cases, led to an understanding of al-Shabaab as one homogenous terrorist group, despite the fact that research[4] has found that al-Shabaab has developed into an organization with numerous sub-groups, and that only some of these sub-groups voice international jihad and unmitigated terrorism as the primary goal (Hansen, 2013: 140). This points to the discourse on terrorism, where the war on terrorism-rhetoric and the practice of labelling has fed into the wider discourse and narratives on terrorism to the extent that it has become impossible to see beyond the discourse. Roxanne Doty (1993: 303) argues that when policy makers operate within these discursive spaces, their words impose meanings, which creates reality. As this reality is constructed through narratives and discourses, it becomes impossible to think outside of it. As such, when a group is defined as terrorists, the contextual understanding of that group is based on discourses and narratives of terrorism. Furthermore, as the concept of terrorism is problematic, so is defining a group as such. The discussion on terrorism is neither politically neutral nor objective, but built on subjective perceptions, interests, and constructed reality and knowledge (Ramsay, 2015: 227). When defining a group as terrorists, these elements are brought into the process of defining, displaying the power involved.

5.3.1 Terrorism designation and identity formation

Currently, six countries have formally designated al-Shabaab as a terrorist group, along with the EU. Somalia is also on UN's arms embargo list where al-Shabaab is referred to as a terrorist group (United Nations Security Council, 2017). As previously discussed, it is today difficult to perceive al-Shabaab external to the context of terrorism. Examples building up under the perception of terrorism is attacks such as that of on the 12th of April 2018, when a bomb detonated during a football match in Barawe, a city located outside of Mogadishu. The bomb had supposedly been placed under the ground at the football stadium. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack, which killed five and injured ten, and said it was targeted at regional officials watching the match (Nor, 2018). The attack illustrates the change of tactics from

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[4] See for example Menkhaus (2011) and Felter et.al (2018).

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previous years, when attacks by and large targeted military personnel. The change in strategy can be explained as an implication of power of definition. As explained by constructivism, the identity of an agent is understood intersubjectively in relation to others' perception of the identity of the same agent. Wendt has described this as seeing "the self through the others eye" (Wendt, 1999: 227). The designation of al-Shabaab by six Western, dominant countries, establishes an intersubjective understanding of them as terrorists. Constructivism further explains that this intersubjective perception of the identity of al-Shabaab guides how al-Shabaab sees itself. Moreover, this can further be explained by labeling theory, arguing that deviance is constructed by social groups, setting rules for appropriate behaviour (Becker, 1966: 1). Labelling someone as deviant can then result in alteration of self-image, to the extent that the labelled begins to act accordingly (Shoemaker, 2010: 260). Hence, the defining powers of terrorism, coupled with the transformative powers of labels and definitions, can lead to transformative implications (LeVine, 1995: 49). It can therefore be argued that as the increase in terrorist attacks occurred after the designation of al-Shabaab as terrorists is partly due to al-Shabaab building up under the "international" definition of them, thus engaging in an intersubjective understanding and acting according to the deviance-label. Although it could be argued that these processes cannot fully account for al-Shabaab's change in strategy from perceived insurgency to terrorist group, this thesis would argue that it should be regarded as an important element.

In relation to identity formation and intersubjective understanding, the aspect of time is also interesting in relation to when the US chose to designate al-Shabaab as a terrorist group. As previously stated in chapter 1, the US designation of al-Shabaab took place in March 2008. Prior to the designation, al-Shabaab publicly praised Osama Bin Laden in 2007, the then-leader of al-Qaeda who the US designated as a terror group in 1999 (US Department of State, n.d). Also prior to the US designation, al-Shabaab had not carried out attacks targeting civilians outside of Somalia. (Global Terrorism Database, n.d). When these elements are taken together it can be argued that a US designation of al-Shabaab was necessary due to the existing designation of al-Qaeda, as well as due to the terrorism discourse and the maintenance of US identity. Hence, the intersubjective understanding as the US as a leader in the war on

terror necessitated the designation of a group who publicly praised the leader of an already designated terror group.

5.3.2 Implications of terror definition

When asked about implications of a terrorist definition of al-Shabaab, informant 5 stated *"When we define someone as a terror group it puts a label on the group. Anyone affiliated with the group also ends up on terror lists. It therefore also decides how that group or those individuals are understood and treated. For example, we do not negotiate with terrorists"* (Informant 5, 05.04.2018).

Informant 4 similarly argued, *"By defining al-Shabaab as a terror group it puts a label on them, which makes it harder to negotiate or include them in processes"* (Informant 4, 06.04.2018).

The excerpts from informants 4 and 5 can be seen in relation to the concept of us vs. them, concept of otherness and labeling theory's construction of a deviant. The very definition of al-Shabaab as a terror group, and the power of definition, subsequently influences how they are perceived and understood. The discourse on terrorism also involves the widely agreed-upon understanding among governments that one does not negotiate with terrorists (Toros, 2008: 407). As such, they are excluded from being part of any negotiations as long as they are defined as terrorists due to the power embedded within such a definition. However, informant 4 (2018) also added,

"But at the same time, labels and definitions are just words and those who are actually involved in the process or operations know what they are actually about and hopefully can look past those definitions or labels. Definitions are more important to politicians than for those who actually are involved".

This points in the direction of foreign policy being built on discourses and narratives, and that power of definition has wider implications at the political level than the operational (Doty, 1993: 303). At the political level, definitions become tools for justifying or legitimizing actions, as well as conveying "truths" about what is actually taking place (Hülsse and Spencer, 2008: 572). Although definitions might play a

bigger role at the political level than at the operational, foreign policy is nonetheless decided at the political level. As Informant 1 (2018) argued *"…there are lists around the world which decides which targets are legitimized for bombings and drone attacks…and the drone operators in the US need something to operate by"*. Power of definition then becomes an integral part of legitimizing actions and drone strikes. In this sense, a terrorism definition aids in constructing social reality and knowledge about the target (Tuman, 2010: 56). It can therefore be argued that one implication of power of definition in relation to al-Shabaab is the ability to legitimize actions against the group, based on a definition.

As it relates to al-Shabaab, although only some sub-groups can be said to carry out unmitigated terrorist activities while other sub-groups resembles insurgent groups, a terror definition and subsequent terror designations of al-Shabaab constructs a terrorist other, which guides how they are perceived both internally and externally (LeVine, 1995: 49). By being understood as terrorists by countries like the US, who also holds the identity of being a hegemonic power, it can be argued that the definition also influences how al-Shabaab perceives itself in relation to others, as it is intersubjectively understood as a terrorist group (Becker, 1966: 1). The external definition then influences al-Shabaab's strategy, tactics and goals, in pursuant of and maintaining the identity of terrorists (Shoemaker, 2010: 260). Boaz Ganor (2010) argues that this is also due to the lack of a common definition of terrorism, creating situations where the same group is involved in terrorism and insurgency. With an internationally agreed-upon definition, he further adds, the group in question is forced to take cost-benefit analysis into account when choosing strategies.

Moreover, the construction of al-Shabaab as the terrorist other automatically excludes them from being part of the Somali solution. Hence, the power of definition implicates al-Shabaab in the sense of the dominating discourses and narratives restraining other states to lend a hand and invite them to dialogue and negotiations. It could also be argued that due to the nature of terrorism as a definition, it is difficult to conceive of al-Shabaab external to the discourses and narratives embedded within a terrorism definition, which hinders the group in conveying its more legitimate claims and wishes.

5.3.3 Implications of insurgency definition

When similarly asked about implications of insurgency as it relates to al-Shabaab, the informants conveyed more optimistic accounts:

"...insurgents are more like freedom fighters" (Informant 2)

"An insurgency definition kind of legitimizes a group's action…If a group is defined as insurgents they are more likely to be included in negotiations, have a seat at the table during discussions, and perhaps also included in the actual outcome"
(Informant 5)

"Defining a group as insurgents kind of legitimizes the group's actions, to a certain extent" (Informant 4).

Although some argue that insurgency and terrorism has blended to the indistinguishable, insurgency does not carry the same negative connotations as associated with terrorism (Ganor, 2002: 296). This is despite the fact that insurgencies often use terrorism as a strategy and illuminates the power of definition in general and the power embedded in a terror definition more specifically. Where insurgencies are seen as representatives of deeper grievances within a society, terrorist groups are seen as misfits and unrepresentative individuals (Kilcullen, 2005: 605). The definition chosen at the political level therefore influences the operational strategies available as well as how the group in question is understood by the wider population. As such, reality and the knowledge thereof are socially constructed.

If al-Shabaab had been defined as an insurgency, it is reasonable to believe that it would have been presented as a more legitimate actor in Somalia, with legitimate grievances and aims. It is as such also reasonable to believe that it would have been included in negotiations to a greater extent, and that a solution to the instability in Somalia naturally would have included al-Shabaab. However, this presupposes al-Shabaab refraining from carrying out attacks targeting civilians or harming innocents

to the extent that it becomes impossible for the wider international community to understand al-Shabaab as something other than terrorists.

Nonetheless, the power of definition implicates al-Shabaab in various ways. The terrorism definition has led to sub-groups resembling insurgency being overshadowed by the terrorist activities carried out by those groups who voice international jihad. As such, it is treated as a homogenous group without accounting for its internal dynamic or variations. One can therefore also say that the power of definition to some degree has implications of lack of context. As it relates to this research, this manifests itself in treating al-Shabaab as one terrorist group instead of one group with fractions of terrorist groups as well as insurgent-like groups. This can again be seen in relation to the discourses involved and the inability to see beyond those or think outside of the discourses and narratives at play. The behavioural constraint a terrorist definition puts on actors involved in Somalia excludes al-Shabaab from negotiations and dialogue, due to the perception of the terrorist, deviant other.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to investigate the impact of power of definition on al-Shabaab. This has been done through looking at terrorism and insurgency, applying them to al-Shabaab and examining the implications of the respective definitions. The thesis has found that although terrorism and insurgency often is said to be inseparable and describe the same phenomena, the implications of the two are different.

The findings of this study indicates that power of definition impacts the ways in which phenomena and issues are understood and conceptualized by the international community as well as the wider society. It further finds that due to the power embedded within definitions, they resemble deliberate choices rather than objective accounts of reality. Power of definition further manifests itself through the construction of subjects and objects and through patterns of misrepresentation, where actors engage in a war on definition. The findings of this thesis also indicate that this war on definition creates intersubjective understandings of actors, as well as maintaining identity. Definitions therefore serve as the basis for identity.

Al-Shabaab is a highly complex group, divided into-sub groups with different tasks and aims. Only some of these sub-groups voice international jihad. The agenda of al-Shabaab can therefore be said to be twofold – one with a national focus, directed against AMISOM personnel and the FGS, and one with a regional focus, carrying out attacks beyond the borders of Somalia. Findings suggest that it entails both insurgent groups and more unmitigated terror groups. It should therefore not be understood as one homogenous group.

Terrorism and insurgency is arguably two contested concepts, where terrorism lacks an international agreed-upon definition, and insurgency is said to a great extent describe the same phenomenon as terrorism. The findings of this research do however indicate that there can be elements of terrorism in insurgency and vice verca, but the implications of designating someone, in this case al-Shabaab, as terrorists compared to insurgents are vastly different. Firstly, defining al-Shabaab as a terrorist group ascribes al-Shabaab with a specific set of assumptions, narratives and discourses, and simultaneously positions them relative to the one(s) with the power to define. A

terrorist deviant other is therefore constructed, excluding al-Shabaab from any negotiations or dialogue with the Somali government.

Secondly, there seems to be agreement on al-Shabaab starting out as an insurgency and later developing into a terrorist organisation. These developments have taken place in relation to the terrorist designations from US, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Norway. The theoretical framework of constructivism and labeling theory has explained this as engaging in an intersubjective understanding of the self, in relation to the other. The change in operational strategy and overall aim can therefore be seen as correlating with building up under a portrayal of al-Shabaab as terrorists, the popular understanding of the group. This is also evident through the ways in which al-Shabaab chose to carry out its attacks before it was defined as a terrorist group by the US, as it focused on targeting Ethiopian forces and government representatives.

Thirdly, power of definition does not only have implications in how al-Shabaab is understood, but also how they are targeted and the measures chosen. A definition influences how a phenomenon is understood, and also guides how it should be acted upon. It is therefore also the basis for judging what the appropriate measures are, thus constructing and guiding foreign policy.

It is now 11 years since AMISOM first was deployed to Mogadishu. Troops have started to withdraw and national security responsibilities are gradually to be handed over to the Somali government. This is however said to depend on Somali conditions (Williams, 2017). Looking ahead, the threat posed by al-Shabaab and its strengths should not be downplayed, as it continues to control large swaths of territory (Anzalone, 2018a: 16). Its continued attacks and ability to adapt to changes proves that it is still a big threat to Somali peace and security. Such groups are seldom combated by power alone, but a combination of power and politics. Somalia needs a holistic approach, grounded in a Somali context, in order to achieve success, although that certainly is easier said than done.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1 – Operationalized conceptual framework

Counterterrorism: a mission focusing exclusively on fighting the terror organisation with little or no support to the government. Included is lethal and sporadic use of force and drone strikes (Boyle, 2010: 335).

Insurgency: as with terrorism, there are several ways of defining insurgency. Kilcullen (2005: 603) defines insurgency as "a popular movement that seeks to overthrow the status quo through subversion, political activity, insurrection, armed conflict and terrorism". As such, an insurgency is a struggle between a state and one or more non-state actors over a political space.

Counterinsurgency: while the aim of counterterrorism is widely agreed-upon, counterinsurgency (COIN) does not enjoy the same level of clarity. For some, COIN entails eliminating the threat completely and rebuilding the government and its capacity (Zambernardi, 2010: 22). Others argue that the intention is to return the overall system to normality and not necessarily reduce the threat or use of violence to zero (Kilcullen, 2006: 6). Nevertheless, however, one can say that COIN involves reducing the threat the non-state actor(s) pose, rebuild the government and its capacity, and strengthen the army and the police. As opposed to counterterrorism, COIN emphasizes discriminate use of violence, the civilian population, the government, and the non-state actor(s).

Power of definition: refers in this research to the concept and ability of defining objects as one see fit. It particularly involves state actors and international organisation that enjoy a high level of legitimacy and power. Their definitions are therefore often taken as truths, without questioning the reasons for it.

Discourse: means communication, either written or spoken. Discourses are the social use of language, and contribute to construction of reality and truths. Each statement about reality is based on and shaped by existing concepts and assumptions, which again influence each other and influence knowledge (Fairclough and Fairclough,

2012: 78). Those who hold the power of the discourse is able to shape and influence what people think and how they understand a certain phenomenon, which influences social behaviour, e.g. the ways in which al-Shabaab is talked about by actors influence how individuals perceive them.

Narrative: is constructed when associations and concepts are linked together and foster understandings of social events or phenomena. Associations are built between words, shaping our understanding of reality (Wetherall, 2001:16). The narratives constructed are produced and reproduced subconsciously, and thus sustained through discourses, such as the linking between al-Qaeda and terrorism, or terrorism and morally wrong.

Appendix 2 – Interview guide

1. How do you define al-Shabaab? Terror or insurgency?
    a. Why?
2. Can you think of any implications of defining al-Shabaab as such?
3. Would you say that political and military actions are to a great extent based on the definition of the aim of the action?
4. Do you think insurgency and terrorism is two separate phenomena or interlinked?
5. What are the implications of defining a group as terrorists?
6. What are the implications of defining a group as insurgents?
7. Do you think AMISOM and other operations in Somalia are primarily counter-terrorism or counter-insurgency?
8. Based on how AMISOM has conducted its operation against al-Shabaab, would you say that they are working from a terror definition or an insurgency?
9. Do you think a counter-insurgency operation can defeat a terrorist organisation, or vice verca?