THE REALIST AND REVOLUTIONIST TRADITIONS IN EXPLAINING ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM: THE CASE OF AL SHABAAB

By

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Abstract

This thesis will focus on the puzzle of al Shabaab's placement within International Relations theory – specifically the English School's three traditions. Due to the deficiency of scholarly theoretical research on al Shabaab, this thesis will attempt to fill this gap through placing al Shabaab at the intersection between the Realist and Revolutionist traditions of the English School. Because of the dearth and complexity of information on al Shabaab, the broad constellation of options available under the English School will be a valuable tool to evaluate the organization. Beyond the simplistic labeling of al Shabaab as a radical Islamic organization, this thesis will articulate al Shabaab's worldview by combining the Realism's violent upending of the current international order with the establishment of a new Revolutionist world order to explain the group's ideology.This research will provide a review of existing literature on al Shabaab before conceptualizing the group, followed by empirical chapters which will identify al Shabaab within the English school's Realist and Revolutionist intersection. This research is a starting point in analyzing al Shabaab through International Relations theory and better understanding the group as an interesting entity within the international system due to its complex nature and vague identification.I hope to realize a starting point from which to evaluate al Shabaab's worldview which can lead to future research which would provide invaluable knowledge on al Shabaab and its complex ideology and goals within the current political order.

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An Introduction to al Shabaab

In Somalia anarchy has reigned. Since Somalia's independence from colonial authority in the mid-20th century, the country has suffered from despotic rule, clan warfare, and Western-backed governance that has yielded little stability and peace for the Somali people. In this void, Islamic organizations have entered to offer hope to a population that throughout history has adhered to Islam due to its Muslim past. After the United Islamic Courts gained power in most regions of Somalia in 2006, various Islamic organizations within the country began to work together to achieve harmony and stability against a Western-backed transitional government and against African forces from neighboring Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya. However, a radical sect of the UIC decided to break away from its mother-organization because of philosophical differences; this group was named al Shabaab (the Youth). Al Shabaab is widely known in the West as a terrorist organization seeking to establish Sharia Law and form a universal Islamic caliphate, thus upending the current state system. In Somalia, its more radical goals clashed with the moderate UIC and, after the fall of the UIC, led to the emergence of al Shabaab as a major Islamic force against the Transitional Federal Government (TGF).[1]

While it is pretty straightforward to put al Shabaab within the framework of a Salafi fundamentalist terrorist tradition, there is still a key puzzle that must be solved. Why is this terrorist organization not only concerned with the waging of violence but also with establishing a viable political order that offers peace? The skeptics would say that the simple answer is that the Quran calls for the establishment of the Caliphate. However, in international relations scholarship, no research has been done to show how al Shabaab's worldview can be explained

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[1] "Who are Somalia's al Shabaab," *BBC World News*, May 16, 2014.

past the ideology of Islamic radicalism. This paper will place al Shabaab at the intersection between Realist and Revolutionist theory to explain the group's worldview and goals. An organization such as al Shabaab that attempts to blend Realist violence in a state of "anarchy" with a peaceful, cosmopolitan worldview needs to be examined further past the simplistic identification of calling it Islamic radicalism with the goal of universality; There is also a certain paradox in understanding how violence can be used to establish peaceful order.

This paper will begin with a literature to encapsulate the previous literature on al Shabaab and show that no previous theoretical work has been on explaining the group's worldviews. I will then propose my own theoretical framework; Firstly, a theoretical discussion of the three main traditions in International relations will be done to show the prism through which any state system – formal or informal- can be understood – through the Realist, Rationalist and Grotian traditions. A delineation will then be made to show how al Shabaab is at an interesting intersection between Realism and Revolutionism and in opposition to Rationalism. I will then follow with a historical look at Somalia's Islamic past to trace how radical fundamentalism has taken hold in the country and introduced such forces as al Shabaab, which deem it practical to start their world revolution in Somalia, a majority Muslim country. This historical narrative will provide the backbone for understanding the birthplace of al Shabaab's intersectional view between Realism and Revolutionism and provide an understanding of how the landscape in Somalia allowed for this group to gain power. Lastly, I will empirically place al Shabaab at the intersection between Realism and Revolutionism thus offering a novel approach to understanding the organization. This paper will make these arguments under the premise that empirical data is hard to find on the group, and thus definitive first hand source material is lacking as well as scholarly research. In addition, this Revolutionist/Realist framework will

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attempt to encapsulate al Shabaab withina wide framework that is needed because of the

paradoxical and inexact nature of the group's views.

1. A Review of Existing Literature and Theoretical Conceptualization within the Framework of the English School

1.1.*Review of al Shabaab in modern Literature: The Dearth of Theory in Contrast to Pragmatic Research*

There has been little scholarly literature written on al Shabaab. As a recent phenomenon that only began to rise in 2006, the group has not been deemed seemingly important to investigate until now with the Nairobi Westgate Mall shootings in Kenya in September of 2013 which killed thirty-nine people and wounded more than 150.[2] This deadly and efficient attack put al Shabaab on the world stage and showed their link to al Qaeda, one of the deadliest terrorist organizations in the world. What work has currently been done on al Shabaab has either dealt with its origins in Salafi fundamentalism and Somalia or pragmatically, in terms of its anatomy and how the organization can be defeated. No theoretical work has been done to understand how al Shabaab's view of political order, international order, and world order impacts its ideology, goals and practices. As an important entity in international relations – a terrorist organization – the group has received no heed from IR scholars when it is critical to understand how an informal network like al Shabaab can impact the international landscape through ideological violence.

There have been three main strands of literature on al Shabaab: its origins in Somalia and Islam, its organizational anatomy, and opinion on how the group can be defeated. Mary Harper, in her article *Somalia: Whose Country is it, anyway* provided a distinct look at the country's ethnic origins – discussing its history of oppression and tyranny and how clans have either worked together or fought to create a landscape that allowed Islamic groups like al Shabaab to

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[2] Jeffrey Gettleman, "Gunmen Kill Dozens in Terror Attack at Kenyan Mall," *New York Times*, September 21, 2013.

enter and take hold.[3] Foreign intervention was also discussed in the sense of it being antithesis to the proud and individualistic ways of Somalis who did not want external interference in their nation.[4] While Harper did give a good historical ethnic account of Somalia and its colonial history, no theoretical framework was provided for al Shabaab- an absent part of her paper in her attempt to locate the group within Somalia's ethnic and interventionist tensions. Pragmatically, she discussed the challenges for the country dealing with intervention and radical Islam but did not going into the various political orders that these different entities were trying to impose on the country.

In Christian Webersik's article *Differences that Matter: The Struggle of the Marginalized in Somalia* he also dealt with the ethnic tension within the country that had arisen because of intervention. Webersik argued that there was civil strife in Somalia because of the egalitarian nature of Somalia's ethnic population and its inability to jive with the corruption of Somalia's governments – mainly Siyad Barre's despotic regime and the ineptitude of the transitional federal government.[5]Webersik's analysis of Somalia, like Harper's, provided an insight into ethnic tensions and the emergence of al Shabaab but provided no analytic insight into how al Shabaab's worldview could be understood in a country so ethnically heterogeneous and full of entities that wanted to establish different political orders.

Peter T. Leeson also provided a look into Somalia's history arguing that the country would be better off stateless because of the ability of the population to fend for themselves through clan affiliation;[6] he noted the ineptitude and corruptness of the government and how al

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[3]Mary Harper, "Somalia: whose Country is it, anyway," *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 37 (Winter 2013).

[4] Harper, "Somalia."
[5] Christian Webersik, "Differences that Matter: the Struggle of the Marginalized in Somalia," *Africa* 74 (2004).
[6] Peter T. Leeson, "Better off stateless: Somalia before and after government collapse," *Journal of Comparative Economics* 35 (2007).

Shabaab entered the country but made no theoretical attempt to explain how al Shabaab's political world view was or wasn't a solution for a country in constant strife. Leeson basically argued for anarchy in Somalia and relied on ethnic cohesion to benefit the country through the use of data and no theoretical explanations.

Lastly, in terms of origins, Thomas Hegghammer wrote an article on how to typologically explain the various strains of Islamist ideology. In his piece, he provided an explanation of al Shabaab as an international group seeking to fight the West and create an Islamic state but provided no theoretical avenue through which to understand their ideology other than simplistically calling them a radial jihadist group, a typical explanation for anyone trying to explain al Shabaab's worldview.[7]

In Abdirahman Ali's article on al Shabaab, he provided an explanation of their anatomy – their structure, hierarchy and fighting force.[8] While providing a thorough explanation of their anatomy, Ali did not theoretically explain al Shabaab, instead focusing on the empirics of al Shabaab's structure and their goals and successes in Somalia. Paul E Roitsch and David Shinn wrote articles explaining the threat of Al Shabaab and how it could be curbed echoing the pragmatic approach of Ali. Roitsch, a former United States special forces commander with experience in Somalia, detailed how al Shabaab could be defeated through cutting down its revenue streams and offensive capabilities – his most important goal was to show how Islamic extremists could be kicked out of Somalia.[9] His article basically was a pragmatic view towards defeating the group with no theoretical background. Lastly, David Shinn also focused on the

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[7] Thomas Hegghammer, "The Ideological Hybridization of Jihadi Groups," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 9 (2008).

[8] Abdirahman Ali, "The Anatomy of al Shabaab," June 2010. Unpublished paper.

[9] Paul E Roitsch, "The next step in Somalia: exploiting victory, post-Mogadishu," *African Security Review* 23 (2014).

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threat of al Shabaab to Somalia detailing its connection with al Qaeda and its draconian tactics.[10]

Again, Shinn only provided a empirical understanding of al Shabaab with no theoretical

background past its very simplistic origins in Islamic radicalism.

Overall, all work that has been done on al Shabaab in the scholarly world has focused

mainly on Islamic radicalism and the avenues through which the group can be defeated.

International relations scholarship has not attempted to explain al Shabaab's worldview and how

it can be interestingly seen as an amalgamation of theories which represent a historical analogy

to the religious wars of the past.

1.2.The English School of IR: a Blend of Revolutionism and Realism

To understand al Shabaab's paradoxical world outlook, a framework is needed that is

broad and open to conflicting ideas. The assumptions and prescriptions of using any strict

framework that relies on certain conditions would no due justice to understanding the complex

anatomy of al Shabaab. Classical frameworks are tot focused and not open enough to understand

a group that is not only soaked in religious ferocity but also containing paradoxical views on

achieving its goal of universal governance.

By using the English School of international relations and its three traditions I will be

able accommodate an understanding of al Shabaab because of the range of options available in

their theoretical base; The three traditions in a broad sense offer a loose but comprehensive

framework that is able to capture a variety of sometimes contradictory constellations and offer

interesting perspectives into al Shabaab's governance system. Al Shabaab's goal of violently

upending the existing order and establishing a universal alternative can be accommodated at the

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[10] David Shinn, "Al Shabaab's Foreign Threat to Somalia," *Orbis*(Spring 2011).

intersection of the Realist and Revolutionist traditions. If to take only one theory of international relations, it would not explain the paradoxes that are inherent in al Shabaab's ideology; for instance, the use of violence to create peace is one clear example.

As the three main traditions identified by the English School of International Relations, Realism, Rationalism, and Revolutionism flow along a spectrum from one radical endpoint to the other with Rationalism believed to be a pragmatic middle point.The English school traditions of international relations are composed of three interrelated political conditions – they are international anarchy, diplomacy and commerce and the concept of a society of states. International anarchy states that there is a multiplicity of sovereign states that have no superior and thus are in a state of anarchy; this relationship is regulated by warfare. Diplomacy and commerce speak of the organized relations between states in unwarlike endeavors- namely institutions and trade. Lastly, the society of states is a multiplicity of sovereign states that form a moral and cultural whole and are thus regulated by these norms.[11]

The three key terms of note that are constantly referenced and will need to be defined for the purposes of this paper are political order, international order and world order. They set the basis for how rules can be established and maintained through government in these types of orders. In Hedley Bull's seminal work on the English school of international relations, political order is defined as individuals or groups that seek to create a social order that promotes certain goals or values. Bull gives an eloquent example of political order in referencing a case of books. Arranging these books by author or subject can fulfill a certain function, thus creating order for the preceptor. However, from a different perspective this order can be seen as disorderly because it doesn't fulfill a different person's needs; another person might one want them arranged by year

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[11] Martin Wight, *International Theory: the Three Traditions* (Great Britain: Leicester Press, 1991), 7.

published.[12] Thus, inperceiving political order, varying perceptions define what is orderly or disorderly in the order of people, society, or states. Order, generally, is defined by three universal, societal goals according to Bull: 1) society seeks to ensure that life is secure and protected from violence that could lead to bodily harm or death 2) society seeks to ensure that promises are kept and carried out according to rules and procedures and 3) society pursues the goal of ensuring that possessions remain stable and are not threatened through challenges from other entities.[13] These goals are part of "a pattern of human activity that sustains elementary, primary or universal goals of social life."[14]

International order, which moves from defining one state's framework of order to defining the order that springs from the cooperative relationship of two or more states is defined as "a pattern of activity that sustains the elementary or primary goals of the society of states, or international society."[15]International order is a step up from political order because it encompasses more entities and brings new variables into the mix.

Bull, lastly, defines world order as "those patterns or dispositions of human activity that sustain the elementary or primary goals of social life among mankind as a whole."[16] Thus, it is an order that is universal and is not bound by state lines; it appeals to all of mankind and is sensitive to the inherent wants of the society of man. While international order is an order among states, a world order is a single political system that Bull argues is morally prior to an international order.[17] World order is comprised of individual human beings, not states.

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[12]Hedley, Bull, *The Anarchical Society: a Study of Order in World Politics* Reprint, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995),19.
[13] Bull, *Anarchical Society*, 4.
[14] Bull, *Anarchical Society*, 4-5.
[15] Bull, *Anarchical Society*, 8-9.
[16] Bull, *Anarchical Society*, 19.
[17] Bull, *Anarchical Society*, 21.

Order, finally, must be created and maintained through government. Briefly, I will now outline the sevenfold functions of rules and how government administers them. The main tool for maintaining stability in a society that seeks to achieve its primary goals is rules. According to Hedley Bull, rules are established through institutions which carry out the following sevenfold functions:

> (i) The rules must be *created*
> (ii) The rules must be *communicated* to society
> (iii)The rules must be *administered* – for example structures must be established in a modern state as a prerequisite to the enforcement of these rules
> (iv)The rules must be *interpreted* – in this case through branches of government which judicate the meaning of rules
> (v) The rules must be *enforced* (i.e. by a police force)
> (vi)The rules need to be *legitimized* in the perception of a person or group to which it applies. In this case Bull particularly states that the rules need to be based on primary values so that they do not need constant enforcement to sanctions to keep order
> (vii)   The rules must be *adaptable* due to changing circumstances
> (viii)   The rules must be *protected* from them being undermined by a circumstance that would seek to have the rules broken down[18]

The government is the administrator of these rules – it seeks to manage the social environment in which these rules operate. Government, according to Bull, is defined as a broader institution that "promotes the effectiveness of elementary social rules."[19] The previous roles of the institution are thus brought up the ladder to the government which then controls these functions and implements the procedures needed to stabilize these rules, which once finalized by a legislature, are made law. The government attempts to preserve order so that it can remain in power.

These constructs are the bulk of English school framework in the three traditions. Now I will briefly summarize the three traditions of the English school to show their assumptions and prescriptions for order. Revolutionists, firstly, believe in the moral unity of the society of states or international society; the aim of their international policies is to create this universal state of

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[18] Bull, *Anarchical Society*, 54.
[19] Bull, *Anarchical Society*, 55.

mankind. For Revolutionists, international society is transcended by the cosmopolitan worldview of mankind – where all are one; this view lends a missionary character to the tradition which attempts to unite humans under one entity.[20] Martin Wight put it apply when he stated that Revolutionism "denies it past, to try to start from scratch, to jump out of history and begin again."[21] They attempt to overthrow the current international order and replace it with a new, universal order because they believe that the current system is corrupt and injustice.[22] Any infidel or nonbeliever is to be exterminated to accommodate this new world order.[23] In reference to the third political condition - the concept of a society of states - Revolutionists believe that there is a moral and cultural whole in mankind and that it transcends the idea of statehood. The Revolutionist tradition can be described as having a missionary character that seeks to propel the idea of universal law and governance.[24]

On the other side of the spectrum are the Realists who assume that the international system is in a state of anarchy with warfare as the regulatory practice; power politics is the name of the game in Realism.[25] Realism thus is mainly focused on the anarchy of power politics and warfare; the state is the main and only significant actor. Conflict is inherent in state dealings; "rivalry and some form of strife among nation-states is the rule and not a mere accident of backwardness in the past."[26] In reference to the Machiavellian tradition, Realists believe that states are part of a zero-sum game where one state's gain is another states proportional loss. In contrast to Revolutionism which attempts to realize the 'ideal,' Realism is more inductive and

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[20] Wight, *the Three Traditions*, 8.
[21] Wight, *the Three T*raditions, 12.
[22] Wight, *the Three T*radition*s*, 8.
[23] Wight, *the Three Traditions*, 28.
[24] Wight, *the Three T*raditions, 9.
[25] Wight, *the Three Traditions*, 15.
[26] Wight, *the Three Traditions*, 16.

deals with the current situation rather than what could happen.[27] One of the prescriptions to deal with violence in the Realist tradition is the idea of a balance of power between states which would create coalitions that would join against any potentially aggressive state. This mechanistic theory of international politics attempts to create symmetry and equilibrium between states.[28] To sum up, Realism describes international relations in sociological terms unlike Revolutionism which is ethical and more prescriptive.[29]

The middle point in the spectrum is the Rationalist tradition which believes that man, while prone to warfare, and accepting of a state of anarchy, is rational and willing to have intercourse with others to foster peace and stability. Rationalism believes that reason is a source of knowledge superior to sensory perception; Reason is valued above all as an avenue through which to obtain true knowledge.[30]The Rationalist prescription to deal with the assumption that the international order is in a state of anarchy is to cite natural law. Natural law assumes that all humans have the same moral constitution which is transcendental and thereby inherent; law, thus, is a tool of compromise to defer from warfare and establish peace due to the ability of humans to be 'rational' and to understand what is best for a people that share the same moral values.[31] In contrast to Realists, it can be said that Rationalists are more optimistic about international relations while Revolutionists are *too* optimistic and thus utopian. In addition, the ability for man to reason in the Rationalist view is an avenue through which to avoid warfare through reconciliation and compromise; unlike the Realists that believe violence is inherent in the system, Rationalists believe it can be avoided through international intercourse although they

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[27] Wight, *the Three* T*raditions*, 17.
[28] Wight, *the Three Traditions*, 18.
[29] Wight, *the Three Traditions*, 24.
[30] Wight, *the Three* T*radition*s, 13.
[31] Wight, *the Three Traditions*, 13-14.

are not as optimistic as the Revolutionists in believing that warfare can be avoided altogether through the creation of a universal utopia.

What is of interest to note in analyzing the three traditions of the English school is that they overlap creating interesting intersections. In a sense, they are paradoxical. But what theory of humanity isn't? It would be too simple and incomplete to create solid, square boxes that could properly explain human interaction through international relations. The ability of various political philosophers over the centuries to use these various traditions and amalgamate them is a clear example of the openness and receptiveness of the English school's three traditions to explaining various phenomena in international relations.

Religious Revolutionism through the offshoot of Protestantism and namely through Calvinism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is an illustration of the intersection within the three traditions of the English school, namely Revolutionist and Realism; these two traditions go hand in hand in explaining the goal of toppling the current international order through violence and replacing it with a new, religious world order. The Protestants argued that the society of states was corrupt and perverted, thus needing to be reformed; this reform or purge was going on at the time, the Protestants argued, through God's providence and would bring about a new society of states.[32] Protestantism was classically expressed through the Calvinists – a religious sect that had formulated theories of power based on popular consent and the right of resistance against royal governments and tyrannicide, although popular consent was paradoxically nullified by Calvin in his edict that all men, even kings, were subject to the sovereignty of God and thus under the rule of his moral law.[33]Thus, if a king or magistrate commanded his people to do immoral or irreligious acts, it was the people's natural duty to

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[32] Wight, *the Three Traditions*, 8-9.
[33] Wight, *the Three* T*raditions*, 9.

disobey and depose said king.[34] To encapsulate Calvin's strict theocratic belief, Martin Wight eloquently stated that theocracy in practice was the "rule of those who claim to speak 'in the name of God.'"[35] Calvin's beliefs adhered to a mystic or transcendental thought process that believed in the idea of supernatural morality and the doctrine of grace.[36]

Calvin believed that mankind was naturally good and destined for salvation; however, there was a divide between those willing to accept the faith – the 'elect' – and the recalcitrant – the reprobate – who needed to be exterminated because of their infidel status.[37] Calvinism combined utopian doctrines with the Rationalist idea of just war and the Realist methods for ruthless terror. In this sense, Calvinists were hard Revolutionists who favored violence as a means to achieve their new world order – at the intersection between Revolutionist utopianism and Realist violence.

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[34] Wight, *the Three Traditions*, 11.
[35] Wight, *the Three Traditions*, 12.
[36] Wight, *the Three Traditions*, 12-13.
[37] Wight, *the Three Traditions*, 12.

2. A History of al Shabaab's Salafi Roots and Emergence through Somalia's Islamic Past

2.1. Salafi Fundamentalist Doctrine in al Shabaab's Thought

By looking at al Shabaab's origins in Salafi fundamentalism and through Somalia's Islamic history, a clear illustration can be made between the origins of al Shabaab's view of order, in this form religious, and to understand how Somalia's history created the landscape for this new world order to emerge as a clear representation of Calvinist world order and its intersection between the Realist and Revolutionist traditions. In comparison to Calvinism, Al Shabaab's doctrinal law can be found in Islamic constitutional law – a doctrine that directly influenced Salafi fundamentalism – a conservative and strict interpretational strand of Islam which is the ideological mother of al Shabaab. Calvinist religious law and Islamic constitutional law both condoned aggression – Islamic law did this by dividing the world into Dar-al-Islam, the abode of Islam, and Dar-al-Hab, the abode of war; it was the goal of Islamic followers to conquer these infidels through Jihad.[38] Al Shabaab's goal of establishing a universal caliphate can be traced back to their Salafi-Islamic roots. Salafi Islam, in a general sense, is the more extremist doctrine of Islam that calls for strict adherence to the Quran and the conversion or extermination of dissidents. Al Shabaab's goal, as a global Jihadist movement, is to revolutionize the world order in the sense of Martin Wight's depiction of Calvinist fundamentalists during the Protestant Reformation.[39] Under this revolutionary approach of global jihadi-Salafism, al Shabaab distinguishes themselves typologically from the other four main strands of militant Islam:

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[38] Wight, *the Three* Traditions, 223-224.
[39] Wight, *the Three* Traditions, 9-12.

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irredentist, pan-Islamist, vigilantist and sectarian.[40] Al Shabaab does not prescribe to the ideas of

citizenship and national borders. It believes that all of mankind are the children of Allah, meant

to be together in a universal religious state; this ideology is the backbone of Salafi-Jihadism.

Ashley Elliot and G-S Holzer defined al Shabaab as a "populist group with a Salafist

orientation."[41] The term Salafi denoted those who followed the example of the Prophet

Muhammad's followers. Salafis also prescribe to the Wahhabi creed which emphasizes the unity

of God above all else.[42]Like Calvinism, al Shabaab adheres to the principle of a universal

mankind under God's providence. Taken from the Quran, this belief is part of a strict

interpretation of the document which leaves little wiggle room for more modest or modern

interpretations.

Within the Quran, the Sharia, a comprehensive body of rules established in history by the

Ulama provides a framework for how all Muslims should act including politics. Under Sharia

law, al Shabaab has taken a strict interpretation which dictates that the state will not attempt to

modernize or adapt to contemporary norms but instead abide by the traditional values of Sharia

Law.[43]

The Salafi goal of a Global Jihad denotes the importance of viewing the entire world as

an open battlefield between Muhammad's followers and non-Muslims in the pursuance of an

Islamic Caliphate.[44]The prophet Muhammad led his armies in person against the enemies of

Islam in his quest of establishing the Islamic World Order – in direct similarity to Calvin who

fueled the Protestant religious wars against the infidel Catholics. After Muhammad's death his

successors, the Caliphs, continued Islamic expansion which formed empires throughout the

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[40]Hegghammer, "The Ideological Hybridization of Jihadi Groups," 28.
[41]Abdirahman Ali, "The Anatomy of al Shabaab," 16.
[42] Ali, "The Anatomy of al Shabaab," 16.
[43] Michael Shank, *"Understanding political Islam in Somalia," Cont Islam* (2007): 91.
[44] Ali, "The Anatomy of al Shabaab," 34.

Middle East that strictly adhered to the Quran.[45] This warp back in history clearly illustrates the conservative fundamentalism of al Shabaab and its adherence to Revolutionist philosophy, which interestingly in this group's case, can be found at the intersection with Realism in IR theory which bases its theories on the pertinence of war in inter-state dealings.

To trace back al Shabaab's ideology, one can look at the laws of the Sunni Islamic kingdoms of old which believed, in a very strict fashion, that God made the law of the land under which humans would live. In the early years, four schools of religious law developed – the one that al Shabaab currently abides by is the Ibn Hanbal school (780-855) who viewed Quranic law in a literal fashion which left little room for any type of interpretation, adaption or willingness to concede to the modern world.[46] In the 18th century, Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab, a Saudi Arabian, took hold of Hanbal's utopian ideas and convinced the ruler of Saudi Arabia to take his version of Hanbalism as the official faith of the state. The term Wahhabism came to symbolize the need for strict adherence to Islamic Law. The terms Wahhabi and Salafi can be used interchangeably to describe the ultra-conservative ideology of these Sunni Muslim sects. Under Wahhabism, war against infidels is allowed for the moral pursuance of a true Islam.[47] In this sense, Wahhabism, the ideal behind Salafi Fundamentalism blends the Realist and Revolutionist tradition. In the Realist sense, it accepts violence as a way to establish its preferred order, merging with it the ideal of a moral state of mankind (Revolutionist).[48]

To accept this mode of violence, Wahhabism cites the Quran stating that war made against unbelievers, which began in the first centuries of Islam, is a historic legitimation of its purposes. Even non-Wahhabi Muslims, under these principles, must be brought under the guise

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[45] Patrick Lang, "Wahhabism and Jihad," *America Magazine*, March 10, 2003.
[46] Lang, "Wahhabism and Jihad," March 10, 2003.
[47] Lang, "Wahhabism and Jihad," March 10, 2003.
[48] Wight, *the Three Traditions, 9.*

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of orthodox religious practice or face death.[49]Wahhabi Islam's non-tolerance towards other sects has never changed, unlike the split in Christianity between Catholics and Protestants, which eventually led to peaceful cohesion. While Wahhabism faced backlash in the Islamic world leading up to the 20th century, by 1925 it had established itself in Saudi Arabia and influenced prominent radical Islamists such as Osama bin Laden who spread his creed to Salafi organizations such as al Shabaab.[50] Al Shabaab now propels the Wahhabi Jihadist mission with a keen interplay between the idea of a peaceful Islamic Caliphate and the use of violent jihad to reach this utopian goal.

2.2. Somalia's Muslim Roots and al Shabaab's Emergence

Since the late 1980s Somalia has been a land of anarchy with no stable central government. It has been the forum for multiple international interventions in the form of state-building, peacekeeping and disaster relief. Into this hole have stepped numerous actors attempting to take control of a nation which is strategically placed in the Horn of Africa and the Arab world – these actors have included Somali warlords, Western peacekeeping forces, African interventionist forces, and most importantly for this study, al Shabaab.[51] By process tracing the history of Modern Somalia, I will show how anarchy and instability paved the way for al Shabaab to introduce its revolutionist ideology and legitimize violence in the country to condone its goal of overthrowing the current order.

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[49] Lang, "Wahhabism and Jihad," March 10, 2003.
[50] Lang, "Wahhabism and Jihad," March 10, 2003.
[51] Harper, "Somalia," 161.

As Mary Harper argues, Somalia is a land of "proud and independent people who are traditionally hostile to foreign military presence and political interference."[52] However, Somalia's current government is dependent on foreign aid from the West and most recently, from Turkey, which has established a large humanitarian effort in the country for what some see a political ploy to gain international acclaim.[53] The current unstable situation in Somalia, where al Shabaab, the African Union Forces (ANISOM), and the West are vying for control can be traced back to Somalia's Islamic history, its colonial upbringing and eventually its despotic existence under former President Siyad Barre which led to the current anarchical state situation.

It is of popular belief that Islam entered the Somali region in the time of the prophet Muhammad. In the late seventh century, Islamization strongly propelled itself into the Horn of Arica when Umayyad conquerors from Damascus, holders of a vast Islamic Caliphate, came to teach the Quran to the people and ensure loyalty to the Umayyad Empire.[54] This indoctrination was part of what Martin Wight termed imperial indoctrination which spread the moral word of one great power to the world.[55] Muslim migration to Somalia continued at a steady pace up until the tenth century, which was the height of the Islamic empire when it stretched from the western shores of the Atlantic Ocean to the vast plains of Central Asia in the east. By the end of the Islamic golden age in 1400 AD, Somalia had become a majority Muslim country. After the fall of the Umayyad Empire, a new Islamic empire, called the Audal Kingdom ruled until the end of the 16th century and continued the Islamic indoctrination of Somalia. Even after the colonial conquering of European powers in the 17th century, Somalia retained its Islamic heritage and

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[52] Harper, "Somalia," 162.
[53] Harper, "Somalia," 165.
[54] Shanks, "Understanding Political Islam," 92.
[55] Wight, *the Three Traditions, 43.*

remained a vestige of the revolutionist ideology of fundamentalist Islam.[56]The glory days of the Islamic empires of old had always been in the minds of the Somali people. With the negatives of European colonialism and US/African intervention combined, the Somali people yearned for an Islamic state – which is what al Shabaab was willing to offer.

After Somalia reached independence in 1961, their worst period of governance came under the despotic rule of Siyad Barre from 1969 to 1991. His military coup launched a twenty-year reign of corruption, human rights abuse, and "organized thuggery."[57]Why is it important to mention Barre's regime as a precursor to radical Islam in Somalia? Well, the instability that would lead to the United Islamic Courts and eventually al Shabaab's entrance into Somalia politics would spark the revolutionist ideology that would seek to overthrow a corrupt Somali system and install a more harmonious governance structure. Through violence, al Shabaab would take control of major parts of Somalia and indoctrinate its people – in clear comparison to Calvin's whose Protestant creed called for indoctrination, whether it was through peaceful conversion or aggression.

After eight years of stable democratic governance after the independence of British Somaliland and Italian Somalia, the Republic of Somalia came under the rule of an oppressive military dictatorship. Because of influence from the Soviet Union - an atheist world power that did not abide by Islamic teachings - Barre was able to transform his dictatorship into a socialist government which brutalized the Somali people slaughtering innocent civilians who posed any threat to the government.[58]According to the Africa Watch Committee "both the urban population and nomads living in the countryside were subjected to summary killings, arbitrary arrest, detention in squalid conditions, torture, rape, crippling constraints on freedom of movement and

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[56] Shanks, "Understanding Political Islam," 92-93.
[57]Leeson, "Better Off Stateless," 690.
[58]Leeson, "Better Off Stateless," 692.

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expression and a pattern of psychological intimidation"[59] which further drove Somalis away from a Socialist government, which unlike its historical predecessors, did not in any way appease the inherent Islamism of the people.

Few resources were left for public investment after the government spent most revenues on military and police expenditure to quell resistance and maintain power. By 1990, the government was in severe debt and facing major inflation because of its corrupt financial practices. By 1988, the Somali people had had enough and civil war broke out in northern Somaliland. In January of 1991, a coup d'état overthrew Barre's regime. After that period Somali governance was mostly peaceful and stable although there was sporadic clan violence. However, by 2006, the attempted establishment of a new government by Western powers led to the emergence of a moderate Islamic fundamentalist organization, called the United Islamic Courts, which would eventually breed a more radical wing called al Shabaab, the true bearer of revolutionist ideology in Somalia.[60] The popular support initially for Islamic fundamentalism in Somalia was the product of previous instability and degradation under Barre and violent clan warfare.

After the corrupt and inefficient governance that Somalia faced since 1969, the United Islamic Courts provided an option for a majority Sunni Muslim nation to live a peaceful life. The UIC, the forerunner of al Shabaab, combined the Realist and Revolutionist traditions of International Relations theory in a simple but clear message: If the people of Somalia wanted a stable and peaceful life under Islamic governance, they would first need to use violence against the corrupt transitional government in Somalia to achieve power. In this sense the Revolutionist tradition of establishing a state for all Somalis would need to be achieved in Hobbesian fashion,

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[59]Leeson, "Better Off Stateless," 692.
[60]Leeson, "Better Off Stateless," 695-96.

through violence in an anarchical system that saw no true superior in the region. However, a distinct difference must be made between the UIC and the future al Shabaab – the UIC did not preach for a global jihad to establish a universal caliphate, it was more moderate; instead, it only called for peaceful Islamic governance in Somalia through the use of revolutionary violence to overthrow a Western-supported transitional government.

Perhaps, the biggest propellant of Islamic governance in modern Somalia was the Christian opposition of Ethiopia and the United States. Somalis perceived these external forces to be a threat to their security and livelihood because of their penetration into Somali lands and their ideological differences.[61] In Somali eyes, God's providence only befitted Islamic believers - not those of other faiths – a clear comparison to Calvin who opposed the doctrines of Catholicism and supported a changing of the world order based on Protestant doctrine. The UIC used Islam as a political tool to unite Somalia's Muslim majority against external intervention. Michael Shank put it apply when he said that "political Islam was the shield behind which disparate clans found refuge; it was a manifestation of the culture of "brothers, cousins and I" who formed a wide network to "hedge against a host of natural and sociological uncertainties."[62]

To even further boost the case of revolutionary Islam in Somalia, in 2006 the US and UK galvanized the Somali population through anti-Islamic rhetoric. Somalis saw what violence could achieve when the US and Ethiopia successfully invaded Somalia and established a transitional government. Thus, Somalis were willing to follow the lead of the UIC when they called for violence to eventually lead to a peaceful, stable state. The UIC used Ashgar jihad to legitimate this violence. From the Quran it was stated that Muslims were allowed to protect themselves from external threats, "to fight the enemy until there is no persecution", and to "protect Islam and

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[61] Shank, "Understanding Political Islam,"96.
[62] Shank, "Understanding Political Islam," 96.

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Muslims from harm."[63] This lesser jihad was focused on defending the Somali Muslim community against non-Muslims.[64]As long as there was a perceived external threat to Somalia, Somalis would continue to instinctively fight for their lives through the expedient mechanism of political Islam.[65]By offering stable governance and welfare programs such as educational assistance, housing assistance, low-cost medication, and most importantly for Islam - the facilitation of inexpensive mass marriage ceremonies - the UIC was able to meet the primary goals of society and remain popular politically.The UIC's message of lesser jihad would later transform under al Shabaab who would call for a more radical mission of global jihad in the pursuance of their revolutionary/realist approach. However, this ability to coerce Somalis through religious doctrines was not a historical precedent – Calvin also achieved it in his speeches which argued for a new world order under Protestantism that wouldn't be unfair like Catholic doctrine.

In Peter T. Leeson's article aptly titled *Better off Stateless: Somalia before and after Government Collapse*, he makes the argument that Somalia, due to the incompetence of government, would be better of stateless under anarchy according to 18 key indicators which show the progressiveness of welfare in the country after the despotic rule of Barre and the lasses-faire governess post-reign.[66] However, Leeson's argument misses out on the point that Somalis, as a majority Muslim people, would only be better off stateless if they were not under the rule of a popularly supported Muslim government. As previously stated, the history of Somalia is soaked in Islam; any government, especially one sponsored by the Soviet Union, was never going to attest to the religious wants of its people. The introduction of the UIC and al Shabaab

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[63] Shank, "Understanding Political Islam," 97.
[64] Shank, "Understanding Political Islam," 96-97.
[65] Shank, "Understanding Political Islam," 97.
[66]Leeson, "Better Off Stateless," 690.

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was possible because the people preferred a stable peaceful governance structure, not a Western supported establishment that would not do justice to its Islamic culture.

The formation of al Shabaab began with the UIC's entrance into Somali politics in 2006. As a moderate grouping that did not seek to establish a radical interpretation of Sharia law, the UIC was never going to blend coherently with its most radical wing. Due to this instability within the ranks, al Shabaab formed. In late 2006, the UIC controlled most of Somalia except the transitional government's capital Baidoa; it was manned by Ethiopian troops who had entered the country under the auspices of protecting the unstable transitional government. However, the influx of U.S. military and monetary support quickly pushed the UIC out of Mogadishu and exposed its inept strategic planning.[67] Because of this, the UIC's head of the executive council, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed called for an insurgency to fight the Ethiopian and U.S. backed government. In late 2007, the UIC attended a conference of factions in the capital of Eritrea, Asmara, to form an alliance among the various insurgent factions who had up to that point been incapable of wresting control of the country from the Western backed forces.[68] The future leaders of al Shabaab boycotted the conference and openly disagreed with the newly formed Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) over ideology. Al Shabaab preferred a more radical global jihadist ideology which not only sought to take control of Somali lands but also the whole world and establish a universal Islamic caliphate.This ideology clearly blended the need for Calvin-like terrorist violence to upend the current international order with the goal of establishing a new world order. The conference was the last straw for these Islamic radicals; After the President of the UIC, Sheikh Sharif, had attempted to reconcile with the United States, European Union and United Nations; Sharif also joined the Khartoum peace talks with the TFG

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[67]DaveedGartenstein-Ross, "The Strategic Challenge of Somalia's al-Shabaab: Dimensions of Jihad," *Middle East Quarterly* (Fall 2009).
[68]Gartenstein-Ross, "Strategic Challenge of al Shabaab."

thus cementing his position as a moderate – far from the radical ideology of its right wing faction.[69] This new faction, named The Youth (al Shabaab), recruited fighters in Somalia and from abroad and began implementing a strict version of Sharia law in the areas it controlled.[70]

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[69] Ali, "Anatomy," 31.
[70]Gartenstein-Ross, "Strategic Challenge of al Shabaab."

3. Al Shabaab's Structural Composition

Al Shabaab's leadership and organizational structure is the backbone and the ideological base of their efforts to use Realist violence to create a new Revolutionist world order. In leaders such as Abdi Ahmed Godane, this intersection is seen clearly as an ideology that drives al Shabaab. In addition to Godane, the other Somali and foreign leaders follow this Islamic ideology, which in comparison to Calvinism, recognizes God's providence in establishing a new world order by 'cleansing' the current international system of opposition.

Al Shabaab's growth into a major terrorist force in Somalia was due to their cohesive ideology, hierarchical structure, external funding and the ability to recruit professional manpower that rivaled armies in the region. It can be stated that al Shabaab's current force is as well trained as the ANISOM forces that have invaded the country and better than the unreliable security forces that the TGF's currently employs. Ideologically, al Shabaab is at the intersection of Revolutionism and Realism- an entity that attempts to violently upend the current world order replacing it with a universal alternative, the Caliphate. This goal, however, comes with questions. How does al Shabaab go about achieving its aims in terms of ideology, structure, governance ability and various other logistical imperatives? Isn't there a paradox between 'terrorist' violence and the attempt to establish peaceful life? This question will be further looked into to explain this puzzle. And lastly, how do these machinations show a worldview at the intersection of the Revolutionist and Realist traditions?

Structurally, al Shabaab's hierarchy can be compared to a corporation. It has a board of executives and an established hierarchy with various chains that perform certain duties. Al Shabaab's organization has three leaders composed of the top leadership (qiyadah), foreign

fighters (muhajirin) and local Somali fighters (ansar).[71] The top leaders include Ibrahim Jama

"al-Afghani", Ahmed Abdi Godane, and Fuad Mohamad Khalaf "Shongole." The leadership is

strongly influenced by external ties – chiefly to al Qaeda. The chairman of the board is Fazul

Abdullah Mohamed, from the Comoro Islands, the commander in chief and al Qaeda's leader in

the Horn of Africa since 2009; The finances are handled by Sheikh Mohamed Abu Faid from

Saudi Arabia. Godane's main advisor is Abu Suleiman al-Banadiri, a Somali of Yemeni

ethnicity; The Director of training is Abu Musa Mombasa, who is from Pakistan; Omar

Hammami is in charge of financing foreign fighters, chiefly from the United States of America;

these American fighters come chiefly from the Somali diaspora in Minnesota. Mohamoud

Mujajir is in charge of the recruitment of suicide bombers; he is another foreign member, from

Sudan. The eighty-five member executive council consists almost equally of Somalis and

foreigners; 42 of the former and 43 of the latter. According to the International Crisis Group, the

radicals in al Shabaab, mainly foreign jihadis who have previously experience fighting for al

Qaeda in Afghanistan have enormous influence and access to resources thus dictating policy in al

Shabaab.[72]Importantly, the Somali leaders of al Shabaab come from Somali clans thus

representing an equal representation of clans in the power division.[73]Minority clans have

received fair representation in al Shabaab leadership thus showing the group's ability to look past

clan dogma and appease all Somalis who see The Youth as an Islamic representation of the

country.[74]Godane and his close deputy al-Afghani are members of the Dir/Isaaq clan which

controls the Northwestern regions of Somaliland; Aden Hashi Ayrow, the former Amir and

Abdullah Ma'alin Ali Nahar Abu 'Uteyba, a former security chief, and Sheikh Hussein Ali

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[71] Ali, "Anatomy," 18.
[72] Shinn, "Foreign Threat," 209.
[73] Ali, "Anatomy," 19.
[74] Ali, "Anatomy," 20.

Fidow, the current political chief come from the Hawiye clan who hail from Mogadishu;

Mukhtar Roobow Ali Abu Mansoor, a top commander, is from the Rahanweyn clan, which is in

South-Western Somalia; lastly, Fuad Mohamed Khalaf Shangole hails from the Daarood clan in

North-Eastern Puntland.[75]The leadership of al Shabaab's goal is to establish a new universal

order by violently overthrowing the current international system, an ideological intersection

between Realist violence and Revolutionist universality.

The most important person of note is Ahmed Abdi Godane who controls the intelligence

service and has caused rifts inside of al Shabaab's leadership leading to assassinations and

instability. His emergence as the main character in al Shabaab shows that the group, because of

Godane's strong ties with al Qaeda, will not be happy with only retaining Somalia and

establishing an Islamic theocracy; they will also want to continue a global jihadist campaign to

overturn the world order. The intersection between Revolutionist religious ideology and the use

of Realist violence to achieve this goal is embodied in Godane. Godane, considered once a child

prodigy for his excellence in Islamic school, has imposed a Taliban-style regime in al Shabaab

controlled territory. It is well known that his goal is to expert his brand of Islamist violence to the

wider world in the goal of creating the universal Caliphate. Internal strife has been a hallmark of

his reign as moderate rivals have been either killed or sidelined as the group has brutally

oppressed any dissension in the ranks and throughout its controlled territories.[76] Any Somalis

that defied his edicts have been met with stonings and amputations for doing such things as

listening to music, dancing or even watching football – activities, which under Godane's strict

interpretation of Sharia Law, are immoral. Godane has advertised Somalia as a base for

extremists to launch global jihad; his previous experience in finance as an accountant for an

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[75] Ali, "Anatomy," 21.

[76] Colin Freeman, "Ahmed Abdi Godane: the new 'Mad Mullah' bent on Jihad," *Telegraph*, September 28, 2013.

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airline has enabled him to recruit foreign righters who have swelled the ranks of al

Shabaab.[77]Godane is symbolically the embodiment of al Shabaab's goal to wage violence in an

effort to overturn the current world order and replace it with their brand of Islamic governance.

Below the leadership power structure, local Somalis constitute the majority of foot

soldiers which have ranged in capacity from 7,000-10,000 men total; a viable force which equals

the output of ANISOM, which is currently in the range of 8,000 men.[78] Above the Ansar, the

Qiyadah are the leadership structure on the ground composed of hundreds of field commanders;

a ten member Shura Council, which is the consultative body, logistically supports them. The

members of this body are mainly foreigners with battlefield experience in Afghanistan, Kashmir

and Chechnya, thus already indoctrinated in the art of global jihad.[79]

Financing is the tool through which al Shabaab enables its ideology to grow throughout

Somalia. Just like the Protestant Wars that needed to be funded by kings to spread the Calvinist

ideology, al Shabaab needs funding from various sources, including similar ideological

networks, to expand its grasp and install its new world order. Finances figure prominently in al

Shabaab's ability to fight ANISOM and TFG forces. Because of their adherence to global jihad,

they are able to attract Islamic donors, namely al Qaeda. Monetary funds allow the group to

acquire weapons, equipment, manpower, fuel, food, and intelligence information for combat and

combat support purposes.[80]Funding sources also include ex-patriot communities who collect

money from a number of benefactors. Although no longer in control of the port of Kismayo, al

Shabaab has been able to garner funds through seaports and airports through the use of landing

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[77] Freeman, "Godane."
[78] Ali, "Anatomy," 18.
[79] Ali, "Anatomy," 18-19.
[80]Roitsch, "Next Step in Somalia," 11.

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and docking fees. Al Shabaab also taxes the regions it rules.[81] The loss of the port of Kismayo in October 2012 denied al Shabaab funds of up to $35million in annual income.[82] While this was a steep loss for al Shabaab, external financing and taxation has helped to keep the group alive and continue its global jihadist campaign.

As previously outlined in the theoretical framework, government is the tool through which rules are created, legitimized, and maintained. These rules in terms of al Shabaab, and in comparison to Calvinism, are religious and based on the doctrine that God's will is the ultimate law of the land – above kings and other tyrannical rules. Government legitimation is achieved through violence, propaganda, and ideology. Targeted populations are coerced into abiding by Sharia Law through the direct threat of violence. In the areas where al Shabaab had seized control, mainly in Southern Somalia, Sharia law was installed. The banning of many forms of entertainment were thus enforced.[83] In Barawe, a southeastern port town in Somalia, people were banned from watching television because it harmed their Islamic principles; the townspeople were ordered to hand over their televisions and satellite dishes to al Shabaab officials. Prominent residents such as Mursal Yarisow, a 54 year old traditional elder did not understand the edict saying that TV was not harmful to the religion.[84]Yarisow saw the ban as a pretext for preventing people from staying informed – "they want people to stay ignorant of the hatred Somalis and the world have against al Shabaab, and they want the residents of Barawe to be people who ears and eyes are covered"[85] he said, a direct contradiction to what al Shabaab had established under strict sharia law and an insight into the opposition many Somalis have towards al Shabaab because of their strict practices that don't necessarily jive with moderate Islamic Somalis. Perhaps the

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[81]Roitsch, "Next Step in Somalia," 11.
[82]Roitsch, "Next Step in Somalia," 11.
[83]Dahir Jibril, "Al Shabaab uses Islam to justify television ban in Barawe," *Sabahi Online*, November 6, 2013.
[84]Jibril, "Al Shabaab uses Islam to justify television ban in Barawe."
[85]Jibril, "Al Shabaab uses Islam to justify television ban in Barawe."

biggest accusation made by Yarosaw was to accuse al Shabaab of criminal behavior saying that they hill people without cause and question the belief of Somali Muslims because of their interest in television and modern entertainment.[86] Many residents in the village also concurred with Yarosaw's statements calling the bans radical and stating that the group has trampled on their human rights. Al Shabaab's Islamic beliefs were also called into question when a resident stated that they have "no roots or traces of Islam and everyone knows they are lying about Islam."[87] Al Shabaab's inability to establish its new world order in towns like Barawe is a clear indication that although toppling the previous government through violence was necessary, the threat of violence is still needed to keep people under the strict doctrines of Sharia law; any disobedience would lead to beheadings or other forms of harsh punishment.

People were also harassed in Barawe after a secret US Navy Seal mission attempted to capture a senior al Shabaab official from the town- Abdulkadir Mohamed Abdulkadir. Houses were broken into by al Shabaab fighters and residents were forced to hand over their cell phones under the pretense that it could lead to spying by residents wary of the group.[88] Although al Shabaab promised stability after taking over southern Somali towns, residents had become afraid of the group and called for the TGF to intervene and rid the area of any Islamic radicals; A resident of Barawe said "I am calling on the Somali government to come and rescue us and free us from al Shabaab as soon as possible"[89] - a clear indication that al Shabaab's new Islamic order is too radical for moderate Muslim Somalis.

Al Shabaab's main goal is to use savage violence, also known as terrorism, to overthrow the TFG and begin the installation of the Caliphate – the new world order. This "state of

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[86]Jibril, "Al Shabaab uses Islam to justify television ban in Barawe."
[87]Jibril, "Al Shabaab uses Islam to justify television ban in Barawe."
[88]DahirJibril, "Al Shabaab ratchets up scare tactics in Barawe following US raid," *Sabahi Online*, October 15, 2013.
[89]Jibril, "Al Shabaab ratchets up scare tactics."

savagery" hoped to create an anarchical land that will make the Somali people yearn for peaceful life – thus entering al Shabaab as the stabilizing alternative.[90]This use of violence serves two purposes in comparison to Calvinism- to overthrow any resistance and to legitimize this violence through the word of God. Thus Realist violence is used to topple the current system in Somalia and then used to maintain the new world order which is run under Sharia law.

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[90] Ali, "Anatomy," 42-43.

4. The Ideological Intersection in the English School of IR in al Shabaab's Worldview

4.1. Ideology regarding Human Nature and Infidels

Al Shabaab's theory on human nature, interestingly, can be seen as a separation of two judgments: one of Muslims, who they believe have the will to live under Sharia Law and the second of Westerners and infidels, who must be terminated in order to free the world for the rule of Islam. In this delineation, al Shabaab's opinion towards fellow Muslims is optimistic and Revolutionist while its opinion towards infidels is violent and Realist. The enemies, or infidels, of Islam are, in the nearby radius of al Shabaab, the Somali, Kenyan, Ugandan, and Ethiopian governments. Al Shabaab sees them as the enemies of Islam. To defeat them, al Shabaab uses terrorist attacks, a form of violence inherent in Realist theory, to defend their followers. This realist form of violence against the inherent bad natured infidels of Somali's adjacent neighbors is a form of defense and attack that will eventually lead to the creation of the Revolutionist utopia, the Islamic caliphate.

The TGF has been one of the main targets of al Shabaab as it has been seen as a heretical threat to the group and portrayed as an illegitimate, Western- backed government. Numerous attacks have been launched against the government;Al Shabaab recently killed ten security officers as they stormed the Somali parliament building.[91] A spokesman for al Shabaab, after the attack, labeled the dead as members of the African Union and various forces of the "so-called

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[91] Feisal Omar, "Al Shabaab attacks Somali parliament, at least 10 dead," *Reuters*, May 24, 2014.

Somali government"[92] – a direct barb at its illegitimate state in Al Shabaab's eyes and a legitimation of the violence needed to overthrow Somalia's political order.

Recently, in March 2014, Ahmed Abdi Godane, the leader of al Shabaab urged Somalis to fight a holy war against the invading Ethiopians who were part of an African Union offensive against the militants in Somalia.[93] Ethiopia, as a main terrorist target of al Shabaab, has a negative history in Somalia beginning with an ill-fated war from 2006-2009 and in 2011. In 2013, Ethiopia joined the ANISOM peacekeeping forces that were tasked with stabilizing the Transitional Federal Government in Somalia, another direct enemy of al Shabaab. Godane, in remarks against Ethiopia, linked them to the United States whose monetary funds were backing the ANISOM forces in Somalia. Godane stated "Somalis, your religion has been attacked, your land divided, your resources looted directly and indirectly through the puppet government – our victory lies in Jihad."[94]This statement was in reference to a historic rivalry between Christian Ethiopia and Muslim Somalia. Godane's characterization of Ethiopia as one of many enemies was a direct attempt to legitimize terrorism against Ethiopia's people and army, thus placing them directly within the Realist idea of violence against those whose human nature is in direct conflict to al Shabaab – a human nature that could be characterized in the Realist sense as "plain bad."[95]

Another fierce enemy of al Shabaab is Kenyan – a country that also heavily participated in the invasion of Somalia and the uplifting of the Transitional Federal Government. Kenya has worked closely with the U.S. on military cooperation to hunt down al Shabaab.[96]Due to this Kenyan assistance in Somalia, al Shabaab launched a famous terrorist attack in the capital of

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[92] Omar, "Al Shabaab attacks parliament."
[93] Abdi Sheikh, "Al Shabaab leader urges Somalis to battle old enemy Ethiopia," *Reuters*, March 10, 2014.
[94] Sheikh, "Al Shabaab leader urges Somalis."
[95] Wight, *The Three Traditions*, 25.
[96] Nicholas Kulish, "Kenya Mall Carnage Shows Shabaab Resilience," *New York Times*, September 22, 2013.

Nairobi in Westgate Mall as a retaliatory measure. Godane stated that the aim of the Kenyan and Ethiopian forces was to "divide the remaining Somalia between (themselves) under the cover of the establishment of Somali states."[97]Godane articulated a point of view which placed these external forces within the paradigm of enemies which needed to be defeated; this was to be done through violence, as was seen through the Westgate terrorist attack.

In addition to the Kenyans and Ethiopians, al Shabaab also launched a terrorist attack against Uganda for contributing troops to ANISOM. In July of 2010, suicide bombings in Kampala killed more than 70 people watching a World Cup final soccer match at a popular restaurant among foreigners.[98]

The most prominent delineation al Shabaab has made in defining it enemies is the Muslim/Christian paradigm. Christian forces, such as Ethiopia, have been portrayed as oppressors of Islam in Somalia and have been thus legitimized as targets of terrorist violence to help suppress them in al Shabaab's attempt to further its goal of toppling the international order. One clear example of this was the suspension of al Shabaab's twitter account which it used as a major propaganda tool; in response to it being shut down, al Shabaab claimed that its Christian enemies had closed its account.[99]

On the other side of the spectrum, al Shabaab has been more lenient and optimistic of fellow Muslims – especially Somalis who are its main propaganda target. These Muslims, in the Revolutionist tradition, are a chosen elite of the human race who must "do battle with the slothful and backsliding mass of mankind."[100] From these statement one must ask what doing battle means if the goal of Revolutionism is to create universal peace throughout mankind? Well,

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[97] Sheikh, "Al Shabaab leader urges Somalis."
[98] World News, "10 things to know about Somali militants al Shabaab," *NBC NEWS,* September 22, 2013.
[99] Simon Tomlinson, "Somali terror group Al Shabaab accuses 'Christian enemies' of closing Twitter account it uses to parade dead bodies," *Mail Online*, January 25, 2013.
[100] Wight, *The Three Traditions,* 28.

to establish peaceful existence, violence must first be used to topple the current arrangement -

this is the intersection between Realism and Revolutionism that sparks al Shabaab. "In

Revolutionist practice, the duty of coercing the human race will often be fulfilled by the method

of extermination."[101]In this way, al Shabaab calls on the Somali people and fellow Muslims to

fight the heretics of Islam. Godane himself urged Somalis to help the fight against ANISOM

forces, led by Ethiopia, to keep out the heretical threat of Christianity and further the cause of

Islam in Somalia.[102]

These enemies of al Shabaab, clearly have no place in the future world order. Unwilling

to assimilate, these infidels would not have equal rights If took look at these infidels in the

Revolutionist sense of barbarism, then al Shabaab is the one with the initiative in toppling the

barbarian international order.[103] Similarly to the Protestant Revolution in Europe, al Shabaab is

seeking to take the initiative and topple the current international order to replace it with an

Islamic world order; this means that two avenues can be recognized based on perception – 1) of

al Shabaab being the barbarian attempting to overthrow the elite international order or 2) the

international order being barbaric and needed to be toppled. This Islamic resentment towards the

Western dominated political order creates a surge of radical violence, in the Realist sense, which

is backed by al Shabaab's moral condemnation of the TGF in Somalia that does not abide by

Islamic principles. Al Shabaab thus attempts to override barbarian domination through barbarous

activity (violence) – a paradox in and of itself emblematic of the intersection between Realist

violence and Revolutionism. Al Shabaab's brand of Revolutionism attempts to transform

barbarous international society into a Mosque – a religious idea different from state organization

and emblematic of the missionary fervor of al Shabaab. Thus, barbarism is combatted through

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[101] Wight, *The Three Traditions,* 28.
[102] Sheikh, "Al Shabaab leader urges Somalis."
[103] Wight, *The Three Traditions,* 85.

terrorist violence in the attempt to establish a religious world state under the auspices of the Quran.

4.2.Al Shabaab's Perspective on International Society

In terms of international society, al Shabaab does not believe that it should exist; they believe it is of no importance, in similarity to the Revolutionist tradition. Al Shabaab instead perpetuates the idea of a single Islamic Caliphate, or world-state. International relations is thus turned into domestic politics as there is only one government – the one that is under Sharia law. To create this super state, three prescriptions are offered by al Shabaab, in similarity to the Revolutionist tradition; they are uniformity through Islam, legitimated violence, a Realist prescription, by one power to create this universal state, and lastly, cosmopolitanism – the idea that world society can be actualized through a universal state of homogenous individuals under Islam.

Firstly, homogeneity among members is required for the universal caliphate to succeed; this includes doctrinal and structural uniformity, and ideological homogeneity. Doctrinal and ideological homogeneity can be grouped together under al Shabaab's worldview in the form of adherence to Sharia law – the strict and sacred law of Islamic doctrine. Al Shabaab has imposed Sharia law in various towns and on the outskirts of the capital, Mogadishu. This doctrinal uniformity includes certain rules: al Shabaab has called for businesses and shop vendors to remove English and Somali posters replacing them with ones in Arabic.[104] In addition, immoral forms of entertainment have also been banned such as musical ringtones, movies and dancing at

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[104] CrethiPlethi, "Al Shabaab Movement imposes strict form of Sharia Law across Somalia," *Al-Arabiya News,* September 6, 2011.

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weddings. In addition, residents of these al Shabaab-controlled areas have been forced to pay an annual Islamic donation to help fund the group.[105]Men are all forced to grow beards, no one is allowed to watch sports and women are not allowed to wear bras. Punishments for not abiding by these doctrines include the amputation of limps and execution by stoning, shooting, or beheading. Women are also not allowed to have contact with men other than their husband and can be beaten if they misbehave.[106]These restrictions and calls for donation are part of al Shabaab's implementation of Sharia law that calls for doctrinal uniformity and is a staple of the Revolutionist tradition.

The second prescription is the need for one entity to spread Islam throughout the world in the end goal of establishing the Caliphate. This primarily is done through violence in al Shabaab's ideology. Violence, in the Realist sense, is used by al Shabaab to spread its new world order, toppling regimes that do not abide by it. The main tool of violence for al Shabaab is terrorism. These have included attacks on Somali army forces, on UN and ANISOM headquarters in Mogadishu, on civilian targets in Kenya and Uganda, and lastly through assassinations to depose opposition leaders that pose a threat to al Shabaab's establishment of the new world order. Al Shabaab's fighting force numbers between 5,000 and 10,000 men, in similarity to ANISOM forces. To achieve its goal of indoctrinating the world, al Shabaab relies on a gradual takeover, starting first with the conquest of Somalia, and then through the support of al Qaeda and other terrorist networks, the takeover of the world.[107] This has been echoed in a U.S. central intelligence briefing that stated that the group's asymmetric attacks into Kenya and in Somalia are intensifying, a signal that the group is beginning to export its jihad a broad in its

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[105]CrethiPlethi, "Al Shabaab Movement imposes strict form of Sharia Law."
[106] R.C. Camphausen, "Sharia in Somalia: Al Shabaab rules just like the Afghan Taliban," *Digital Journal*, August 21, 2010.
[107]Kulish, "Kenya Mall."

mission to overtake the world.[108] These attacks have been aided by common interest groups such as Al Qaeda in Yemen and Northern Africa and the Boko Haram organization in Nigeria. These groups have shared tactics, techniques, training and financing strategies to enable their global jihadi pursuit.[109]This venture towards global jihadi through the use of terrorist violence is a clear example of al Shabaab's intersection between Revolutionist imperial doctrine and Realism.

Lastly, al Shabaab's cosmopolitan ideology is an example of Revolutionist cosmopolitanism. Al Shabaab rejects the idea of the international system and believes that mankind is united under Allah. This idealism creates a brotherhood of Muslims who must overthrow the unjust international order and create a new world order under the Caliphate. Omar Hammami, an al Shabaab military commander, released a video calling for jihadists to declare a global Islamic caliphate to prevent the West from dividing and conquering the disparate jihadist movements and defeating them individually; "Muslims worldwide must unite under the leadership of one Muslim leader called the Caliph. This then is the…ideology of the global jihadists."[110]Al Shabaab's cosmopolitan ideology calls for all Muslims to unite and establish the Caliphate, the third prescription of the Revolutionist tradition in international theory.

4.3. Al Shabaab's Legitimization of Powerthrough Sharia Law

For al Shabaab, power is legitimized under Sharia Law through Allah's providence. In the Realist sense, Muslims do not trust man to use power so instead man is restricted by God, who directs power from above, in a transcendental form.[111]Al Shabaab puts all power in the

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[108]Kulish, "Kenya Mall."
[109]Kulish, "Kenya Mall."
[110] Bill Roggio, "Omar Hammami calls for establishment of global caliphate," *Long War Journal*, May 27, 2012.
[111] Wight, *The Three Traditions*, 99.

hands of God, in the Revolutionist Calvin tradition thus creating an intersection between Realist distrustfulness and Revolutionist religiosity. Doctrinal power, in al Shabaab's case, through Sharia law is primary and the domestic scene is embodied in this doctrine which also determines foreign policy. Al Shabaab's universal Caliphate can be described as a power structure which very anti-political and distrustful of power in the hands of man. Power, in al Shabaab's view takes on a militant missionary character which understands that warfare and struggle are inevitable; thus, Realist violence is necessary in the cause of revolution. Fundamental Islam thus engages in politics for the sake of religious doctrine and not in terms of power scheming.

Al Shabaab clearly follows a Revolutionist doctrine in assuming the solidarity of humanity under Islam. Thus, the interest of the universal is amalgamated into a whole that seeks through progress, global jihad, to pursue its interests with its power capabilities which are legitimated by the Quran and fed through funding by various Islamic networks and domestic taxation of adhering Muslims. Al Shabaab's interests are divided into two sequences: the first dealing with the attainment of the universal Caliphate and the second with its maintenance. The former is done through Realist violence in the interest of establishing the Caliphate and the latter maintains the Caliphate through strict adherence to Sharia Law which regulates the population's practices. Doctrinal adherence was made possible by the training of Islamic judges. In August of 2013, a training workshop was held in the Islamic region of Galguduud, which offered judges a refresher on judiciary and adjudication of civil disputes under Sharia law. Islamic scholars taught the course; Al Shabaab's chief judge, Shaykh Abdulhaq, urged these district judges to serve society under Sharia.[112] These judges are the backbone of enforcing al Shabaab's interests in maintaining their revolution in occupied areas of Somalia.The right to administer power in al Shabaab's universal caliphate is doctrinal – through sharia law. Al Shabaab has created

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[112] "Somalia: Islamists conduct workshop for sharia judges," *BBC Monitoring Africa,* August 26,2013.

normative standards by which the people must abide; any objection to these norms by the people or another entity is met with hostility. This revolutionist doctrine is aided by Realist violence to maintain the status quo. An illustration of these normative standards can be seen in al Shabaab's believe that all must submit to God in practice.[113]Any act by mankind must be in the service of God in adherence to sharia thus legitimizing any action by al Shabaab that may seek to suppress dissenters.

Calvinism, a hallmark of the Realist and Revolutionist intersection, had the rudiments of universal law, which eclipsed international law because of the *civitas maximus* (Wight, 235). Law was indoctrinated into mankind under the auspices of God. Al Shabaab, similarly, enforced the same type of universal religious law through sharia. Universal law is a fundamental norm which brings harmony to mankind under God's universe; man's personality is integrated between physical and moral law which governs his actions.[114]This harmony guarantees stability and peace harmonizing man's external behavior with his internal nature under the universal system of sharia. Harmonization is achieved by submitting to God alone and claims that no man should have lordship over another – thus the need for violence to overthrow tyranny in the Calvinist sense. Those who deviate from this universal law are punished by it and thus judged by God.[115]

Sharia harmonizes human life with the general law of the universe through obligation and ethics. These obligations include prayer, fasting and Hajj – the required pilgrimage to Mecca.[116]The people that follow these obligations are part of the Islamic society, the followers of Islam who abide by its belief and ways of worship, its laws and organization, and its moral and manners

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[113]Qutb, "Milestone," *SIME Journal (2005):* 59.
[114]Qutb, "Milestone," 60.
[115]Qutb, "Milestone," 61.
[116]Qutb, "Milestone," 64.

(norms). Those who do not follow the obligations of Islam are the jahili. Islamic society is thus, by its nature, the only "civilized" society and the other barbaric, which has been detailed previously. Sharia law is thus Calvinist in its universal ideology and Realist in its punishment of the jahili.

Concluding Remarks on al Shabaab's Placement within the English School's Traditions

Al Shabaab is the new terrorist threat on the global scene. Because of the Westgate Mall shooting and the acclaim it received in the world, the group has begun to be studied intimately by scholars to understand its ideology, goals and practices. Al Shabaab will continue to dominate the news because of its coherent structure, radical ideology and affiliation with al Qaeda. Especially in the West, al Qaeda is the prime target of news coverage and military suppression. al Shabaab is the radical sect in Somalia which furthers the al Qaeda networks goals and attempts to further Islamic fundamentalism.

International relations scholars have not sufficiently entered into discussion of this al Shabaab to format it within the traditions of international relations. The English school, however, provides the best framework through which to understand the group because of its openness and paradoxical nature – which is inherent in any theory that attempts to explain human activity. Revolutionism is the key Wightian conceptual theory that explains al Shabaab's utopian worldview of creating the universal caliphate. Realism, on the other hand, provides the means through which to topple the international order and cement the new world order – through violence. The Revolutionist tradition can be seen throughout the history of international relations from the Protestant Reformations to the French Revolution and through the contemporary thinkers of the period such as Jean-Jacque Rousseau all the way to the modern 20th century where revolutionary Communism made a large impression on the international stage because of the Soviet Union. Al Shabaab is a continuation of this Revolutionist tradition in the form of radical Islam. Adherence to the Quran and Sharia Law has embedded in al Shabaab a utopian ideology which predicts a new world order that will emerge with the toppling of the current international order. At this intersection between the destruction of the current order and the

creation of a new universal order is the Realist tradition which is the violent tool to destroy any initial resistance. Under the assumption that warfare is needed to regulate internationalrelations al Shabaab uses terrorist violence to not only depose the Transitional Federal Government in Somalia but also to expand beyond its borders and overthrow the West and moderate Islamic states that do not abide by a strict interpretation of the Quran. This complex ideology is conveniently placed within the wide grasp of the English school of International Relations which provides a more open playing field through which to analyze al Shabaab. With a blend of violently upending the international order and replacing it with a religious world order, al Shabaab mimics Calvinism in its emergence at the intersection of Revolutionism and Realism and provides a novel theoretical interpretation of the organization which goes beyond simply labeling it as a radical fundamentalist group and at the same time provides a different avenue from which to theoretically analyze the group.

Within this intersection, much analysis has been done of Islamic radicalism without placing it within the framework of international relations theory – thusly denying it the possibility of being explained in a more expansive and deliberate fashion. This paper has attempted to fill this gap by introducing the English school's three traditions and comparing al Shabaab to Protestant Calvinism – a historical analogous representative of the group. Al Shabaab's brand of violence and utopian ideology is characteristic of mainly radical Islamic groups in North Africa, Pakistan and the Middle East which need to analyzed further to understand how their world views can be synced with existing theory. While this paper does not go into other groups, such as Boko Haram and al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, it provides a theoretical explanation of al Shabaab, a paradigmatically radical Islamist group within the al Qaeda network. Future research would be beneficial for studying the other radical Islamist

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groups through IR theory in an attempt to delineate them from al Shabaab and possibly provide a

different outlook on their world-view in contrast to The Youth's.

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