MALMÖ HÖGSKOLA

Al-Shabaab in Sweden

Perceptions of an Islamist extremist organization

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Abstract

Al-Shabaab is a Somalia-based Islamist organization. They militarily oppose the transitional Government of Somalia and constitute a threat to peace and stability in the area. An important part of the support from Shabaab comes from diasporic communities, whereas Sweden is one country from where fighters have been recruited. This thesis provides a description of the organization and its terrorist nature. By using small stories called narratives, collected from Somalis in Malmö, and comparing these stories to the grand narrative of Al-Shabaab in Sweden given by The Security Service, the thesis provides a description of how Al-Shabaab is understood in Sweden.

Keywords:

List of abbreviations

AIAI   al-Ittihad al-Islamiya

AMISOM   The African Union Mission in Somalia

ARS   Alliance for the re-liberation of Somalia

BfV   *Das Bundesamt für Verfassungschutz, t*he German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution

CISS   Coordination for International Support for Somalia

FOI   Swedish Defense Research Institute

ICU   Islamic Courts Union (also referred to as UIC)

IGAD   Intergovernmental Authority on Development

OLF   Oromo Liberation Front

SCB   Swedish Statistics

SDG   Somalia Donor group

Säpo   Swedish Security Service

TFG   Transitional Federal Government

TNG   Transitional National Government

UIC   Union of Islamic Courts (also referred to as ICU)

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1.   <u>Introduction</u>

Violence-promoting Islamist extremism is a phenomenon that since late 2010 has gained much attention in Sweden. On the 11th December a Swedish citizen became the first suicide bomber in Sweden, a country that many thought would be spared from becoming a target of Islamist terrorism, whereas other found Sweden to be naive not to expect such an event sooner or later. By coincidence the event took place only four days before the Swedish Security Service (Sw. Säpo) on the 15th of December handed to the government its report on violence-promoting Islamist extremist, ordered from the government as of February the same year. The report concludes that there are people in Sweden that are radicalized and then becoming supporters of violent Islamist activities, mainly in countries abroad such as Iraq and Somalia. However, the recent incident indicated that Sweden should be added to that list. As a result of the incident and the Security Service's report, questions have risen within Sweden about who these people are, where and why the radicalization and related activities occur, and how they can be prevented.

One of the countries mentioned in the report from the Security Service is Somalia. The ongoing conflict in Somalia seems to by one area Islamist extremists go to and from where recruitment and radicalization are driven. One of the most well-known Islamist extremist organization in Somalia is Al-Shabaab. It is also believed to be hosting activities in Sweden since a few years.

In January 2009 a Swedish speaking person conveyed threats in the name of Al-Shabaab against the Swedish artist Lars Vilks.[1] In December 2010, two Swedish Somalis were convicted for terrorist plot and sentenced to four years in prison.[2] They had been under sur-veillance from the Security Service for a few years. It has been confirmed that other Swedish citizens have traveled to Somalia to join Al-Shabaab prior to this. At least one is believed to have diseased. Some are upholding key positions within Al-Shabaab. As it seems, al-Shabaab is posing a threat from, and possibly towards, Sweden.

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[1] Youtube.com (2009-01-04a, b, c)
[2] Gothenburg District Court 8 Dec 2010

1.1   Problem formulation

The Security Service perspective and knowledge on Al-Shabaab is in part known to the public and in part held in secrecy. The Security Service's view on violence-promoting Islamist extremism, including its view on Al-Shabaab, has come forth in the Security Service's 15th December report, the 8th December Judgment from Gothenburg District Court, and in part in their annual reports.

In the report, there are actions and precautions suggested to be taken to prevent further radicalization leading people into organizations as Al-Shabaab. However, if the medicine is to be effective – the diagnosis must be right. That is, in order for taken measures to be effective to prevent from radicalization and support for the violence-promoting Islamist, they must be thoroughly understood.

The description of Al-Shabaab may vary among different context. There is an expression saying that "one's terrorist, is someone else's freedom fighter." That is, depending on who you ask, you may have a different view on Al-Shabaab. The Security Service's perspective is then just one of many views on, descriptions or stories about this group. Such stories may be referred to as *narratives*, a concept which will be used throughout this thesis. The Security Service's narrative will be referred to as the *Grand Narrative*. A further explanation of the meaning of the grand narrative follows in under the method section.

The question is then which the other narratives are, and if and how they differ from the Security Service's narrative about Al-Shabaab and its activities. And if they do differ, will this effect which measures should be taken to prevent and handle the group and its activities in Sweden?

1.2   Research questions [3]

The focus for this thesis and its research is to deepen the understanding for Al-Shabaab's activities in Sweden. The question to be answer in the thesis is:
- What is the Somali Islamist group Al-Shabaab understood and regarded as in Sweden?

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[3] The question and the aims have been formulated with regards to the scientific requirements "Feasibility", "Social importance" and "Scientific importance", Chabliss & Schutt 2010, p. 33.

In order to provide the reader with sufficient background to understand the discussion on Al-Shabaab as a violence-promoting Islamist extremist group and also, to operationalize the research question, the following operational questions are asked:

- What is Al-Shabaab?
- Are there any connections between Al-Shabaab and Sweden?
- Does Al-Shabaab constitute a threat towards Sweden in terms of terrorism?
- What is Security Service 's grand narrative about Al-Shabaab in Sweden?
- Are there any alternative narratives about Al-Shabaab in Sweden, among Somalis?
- Are there any problematic differences between the Grand and Small narratives?

1.3   Aim

The aim with this thesis is to give a *description* of Al-Shabaab as a terrorist group and its activities in Sweden based on different stories. The thesis also holds the *normative* aim to the differences in the narratives about Al-Shabaab will encourage the reader to further reflection on the implications this may have on actions taken to handle the problem of radicalization and support for violence-promoting Islamist extremist organizations in Sweden, as of which Al-Shabaab is an example.

1.4   Research design and method

A research design is "the plan of actions that link the philosophical assumptions to specific methods" whereas a method refers to the "techniques of data collection and analysis".[4]

The aforementioned concept *narrative* is in this thesis used as the basis for the research design. The inspiration for this is found in Björn Andersson's interpretation of Jean-Francois Lyotard's "Grand Narratives" in the latter's work *The Postmodern Condition: A report on Knowledge*[5]. A human's narrative or story is the basis for the understanding of the world. This personal narrative is created through the our understanding of the world, based on how we see it and the stories told to us about the world, helps us shape our own narrative. These individual stories are called the *Small Narratives*.

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[4] Creswell & Plano Clark 2007, p. 4
[5] Andersson 2001, p. 147

Whereas there are small narratives, there is also a *Grand Narrative*. The Grand Narrative is the reproduced stories, the stories and facts that are we consider as 'true' and that we then reproduce as own. The danger here however, is that the grand narrative is always accepted when our prejudice leads us to believe that a story is true, even though it might not be. This is in social science also referred to as "resistance to change"[6], making us accept information presented to us if it fits our own set of ideas, or narrative. As a result, the grand narrative, on which we build our own narratives and understanding of the world, may be held by myths, but understood as truths. This is the role of the Grand Narrative; the story aspiring to tell us what our world looks like. Andersson describes the Grand Narrative as shaped and created by man in a society:

> The grand narrative can be the source of total unfreedom and an way to liberation /... /The modern national state has used its narrative power over its citizens. This power limited both space for learning on the grand narratives level and the possibilities for human liberation.[7]

Andersson's understanding of the Grand Narrative and its limitations if left unquestioned, will be used as the starting point in the research.

The method employed is a somewhat simplified version of Hans Abrahamsson "confrontative triangulation".[8] The core of the confrontative triangulation is to confronted different actors with other actors' perceptions and interpretations of a given phenomena, giving them a chance to comment and relate to the alternative perspectives and interpretations. The "confrontation" in the research for this thesis has been limited and does not reflect Abrahamsson's intention of repeatedly confronting each actor with any new information and perspective that evolves throughout the research process, to build the case. Hence, a simplified version has been applied.

The confrontation is carried out through *conversations*, which basically is semi-structured interviews. The reason for this is the lack of sufficient access to ask Somali individuals to be interviewed about Al-Shabaab, assessed to be a somewhat sensitive subjects. Instead, based on encounters with Somalis in a prior study conducted during the fall 2010[9], the small

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[6] Chambliss & Schutt 2010, p. 5
[7] Andersson 2001, p.153-154. Translation from Swedish original by the author)
[8] Abrahamsson 2006, p. 15
[9] Andersson, Andersson & Fahlander 2010, p. 5-7

narratives of Somalis have been collected by going to a public location in Malmö, as well as an association where Somalis are known to meet, and then spontaneously engaging Somali individuals in conversations on the matter. Apart from the spontaneous conversations involving the Somalis, discussions involving one employee at Swedish Defense Research Agency, two Swedish individuals that work with Somalis and a Somali professional working with the peace process in Somalia. The confrontation with the Somali professional, have been labeled as discussions rather than conversations to separate it from the other Somali informants. A interview questionnaire has then served as a guidance for asking questions, which though may have varied depending on situation. For each encounter, the questions and topics have been somewhat adjusted, with regard to the informants interest in engaging in a discussion on Al-Shabaab and related issues. Also, as more information has been gained, the possibility to develop the topics and questions has increased, which also have impacted on the content of discussions and conversations as the process has evolved.

The *Grand Narrative* about Al-Shabaab in Sweden, is in this thesis represented by the Security Service's description of Al-Shabaab, as expressed in (1) the report on violence-promoting Islamist extremism from 15th December 2010; (2) the Security Service contributions to the trial against the convicted two Al-Shabaab affiliates on 8th December 2010; and (3) their annual reports regarding 2008 and 2009.

Regarding the conversation with the respondents, their answers are likely affected by the researcher. A willingness to please the researcher with specific answers, a skepticism towards discussion Al-Shabaab in general and the public locations with other possibly hearing and seeing the conversations, the informants may have adjusted their answers. However, their answers are treated as truthful, even though not exhaustive, and may thus be used for the intended purpose, being to provide alternative narratives.

1.5 Theory

A theory can be described as "a logically interrelated set of propositions about reality"[10] . To decide on which theoretical approach to use for this study based on confrontation of different narratives has been somewhat tricky.

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[10] Chambliss & Schutt 2010, p.23

However, as a guidance for the discussion of terrorism of which Al-Shabaab according to many sources are an example, the general discussion on terrorism presents some introductory theoretical concepts of how to differentiate between different types of terrorism. Louise Richardson's and Tore Bjørgo's anthologies are used for the theoretical discussion.

The theoretical connections between terrorism and democracy, discussed by Leonard Weinburg, is intended to give some perspective on the preconditions for terrorism in general to grow in Sweden. Also discussed is the theoretical connection between Terrorism and Diasporas, based on the research of Gabriel Sheffer. As presented in chapter two and three, there seem at least to still be some connection between the ethnical group Somalis, and people that have affiliated themselves with Somalia in Sweden. Hence, the theoretical perspective will discuss the propensity for Somalis as a diaspora to be inclined to terrorism at all, or if the links between Somalis and Al-Shabaab have not ethnical and nationalist reasons, but others, as for example, mutual social networks within which Islamist extremist ideas have spread.

1.6   Material and Source Criticism

For chapter 2-4 presenting background information on Somalia and Al-Shabaab, as well as the theoretical concepts. The sources used are a official sources as the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia, resolutions from the UN Security Council as well as information from Swedish authorities with regard to Al-Shabaab in Sweden. Some other sources as thematic websites, newspapers or likewise may also have been used but then as supplementary information. In case of ambiguities, if any, this is mentioned in the notes. The UN sources are assessed authentic and reliable, and have been used as credible.[11] Whereas articles and websites are more problematic, they have been weighed against other sources to avoid false information.[12] However, in no cases have sources been used when deemed false, and of importance for the major points and line of analysis.

In chapter 5, the main source is the Security Service own information presented in their own reports, or in Judgments for cases where they have presented their information on a matter. The information should in this sense present the grand narrative, interpreted here as the narrative of the Security Service, and sources are hence unproblematic. It may be discussed

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[11] Tosh 2006, p. 93-96
[12] Ibid, p. 103

whether the Security Service really holds a role as a grand narrative, or if the selection of materials to present this narrative is suitable. This critique would though be directed towards the author rather than the material as such. Yet, it is the primary source, as informing on the perception and subsequent description of Al-Shabaab by the Security Service, that is of interest.[13]

With regard to chapter 6, the information is based on collected primary sources. As the intent is to use the information as representations of their small narrative, the information provided, unless they are lying, is relevant and correct. However, reliability as to if they really think what they say, cannot be judged. Chapter 7 and 8 are the analysis and conclusion and include no new sources.

1.7   Delimitations

Whereas Security Service 's report cover the phenomenon of violence-promoting Islamism extremism and not only Al-Shabaab; actually not much is explicitly referred to Al-Shabaab in the report; the focus on Al-Shabaab as an example of larger phenomenon is the first delimitation.

With regards to that Al-Shabaab is geographically bound to Somalia, and initially seems to have been a nationalist Islamist force, with most reported cases of recruitment in Sweden involving people with a Somali connection, using Somalis as informants was considered a limitation for the study. However, recruitment might involve people from all ethnicities, especially since the agenda is turning more jihadist[14].

In the Security Service's report the majority of the 200 persons involved with violence-promoting Islamist extremism are registered in the municipality of Stockholm, Gothenburg or Malmö. Delimiting the study to involve interviewees from Malmö is based on both that (1) there are confirmed association with Gothenburg and Stockholm as described in the judgment on terrorist plot[15] and in various media reports[16] but not yet with Malmö, and (2) that Malmö demands the least cost for in time and money.

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[13] Tosh 2006, p. 60-61
[14] See *3.2 Islamism* for further description
[15] Gothenburg District Court 8 Dec 2010, passim
[16] See for example Radio Sweden (2010-04-24)

The selection of Somali informants has been effected by (1) lack of access and (2) lack of time to build access. As the subject covered in this thesis is assessed to be sensitive for individuals, the decision to randomly select Somalis found in the places where the researcher went, was not optimal in terms of ensuring informants to talk to, but has worked sufficiently.

1.8   Outline

Chapter two contains a brief presentation of the history of the Somalia conflict leading up to the present situation, thereby also putting Al-Shabaab in a historical context and describing the organization and its links to and activities in Sweden.

In chapter three follows a description of the concepts Terrorism, Islamism and Radicalization. In chapter four, the above concepts are related to Al-Shabaab, and the theoretical approaches on how terrorism is linked to democracies and diasporas is discussed in relation to Al-Shabaab.

Chapter five presents a version of "the Swedish grand narrative of Al-Shabaab", creating the bases for the confrontative part of the study. Then in the sixth chapter, the findings from the confrontative interviews are presented and commented.

Chapter seven contains the analysis of the grand and small narratives, with regards to the background and key concepts and chapter eight provides the conclusions of the thesis.

2.   Somalia and Al-Shabaab

In this section follows as brief overview of the conflict in Somalia and a general description of Al-Shabaab as one of its actors.

2.1   The conflict in Somalia

Somalia first gained its independence on first of July 1960, through the unification of British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland. The country then formed a new constitution that lasted until the hostile takeover of the major General Said Barre in 1969, who dissolved the parliament and the Supreme Court, and suspended the constitution. Barre led Somalia, now under the name Democratic Republic, gradually towards the communist state it was to become in 1976, and through the Ogaden wars, until the collapse of his rule in 1991, when Barre fled the country. Somalia has been without a stable government since, and war has raged for now approximately 20 years.

After 1991, the fighting between rival factions began and continued over the UN intervention between 1992-1995, also including the US presence and withdrawal in 1994, No stable government emerged to take control of the country. A Transitional National Government (TNG) emerged in 2000, but soon lost power. The northern regions Somaliland and Puntland tried establishing semi-autonomous governments but gained no international recognition.[17]

The endless fighting and lack of control from governments created worries that terrorist were gaining safe havens in Somalia, and after the 2001 attack on World Trade Center, US as well as other states started to get involved in Somalia's affairs.

In 2000 the ICU was formed by former members of al-Ittihad al-Islamiya (AIAI) and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), which wanted liberate southern Ogaden from Ethiopia. The ICU later came to play an important role in the conflict.

In 2004, a Transitional Force Government (TFG) was installed after the so called 275-member parliament reached in Kenya, involving several of the warlords taking part in the fighting. Its head, Abdullah Yusuf, initially sought international military support but due to opposing

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[17] CIA World Factbook (2011-01-03)

forces within Somalia, no international support came in place until October 2006. In May 2006, the TFG warlords, and a group known as the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (ARPCT), were widely believed to be receiving money from the US, clashed with the ICU. ICU took control of Mogadishu and much of the Southern Somalia, driving Yusuf's TFG from Jowhar to Baidoa. By the time, ICU's forming of a conservative Islamic state had begun.

TFG and ICU leaders met in Khartoum in June 2006 for peace talks, but no deal was reached, possibly due to that ICU was composed of several different clans with potentially different goals. The fighting continued and in September 2006 a convoy carrying the TFG head Yusuf was attacked by a suicide car bomber in Baidoa. Yusuf survived the attack, but it appeared as if the TFG was going to lose Baidoa, the only major southern Somali city not controlled by the ICU.

TFG however began to fight back in early October 2006, possibly with support of Ethiopian forces.[18] In the following months, the rhetoric between the Ethiopian Government and ICU escalated, leading to several bloody attacks. On 7 December 2006, the UN Security Council voted to authorize an 8,000-strong peacekeeping mission built from the forces of members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and its then seven members Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda.[19] Unfortunately, the resolution had little effect of the secession of hostilities. The fighting between the ICU and the Ethiopia supported TFG continued until January 2007 when the Ethiopian government claimed victory over the ICU. As ICU split up, the former fractions took up their own agendas and one of these fractions was Al-Shabaab, starting their opposition against the intruders. The Ethiopians remained in Somalia until January 2009 when they had completely withdrawn.

Al-Shabaab continue to pose a major threat to the TFG which is having trouble holding the country together. The TFG also seems to lack influence in many parts of the Country. As an example of TFG's difficulties to rule Somalia, was when the prime minister Omar Abdirashid

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[18] Global Security 2010-08-03
[19] UN S/RES/1725, p. 2

Ali Sharmarke resigned in September 2010.[20] The governments internal problems is also believed to have hampered the fight against the insurgents.[21]

2.2   Roots of Al-Shabaab[22]

Most organizations labeled as terrorists by some, are by others call them freedom fighters. As with the Al-Shabaab case. Even though right and wrong, justification and legitimization of the organization is contested, most sources present them as a violence-promoting Islamist extremist organization. In an Al-Jazeera interview with a spokesman of Al-Shabaab displayed on the Youtube website, the goals and ambitions of the organization are expressed as globally aspiring:

> Once we are successful in ending Somalia's problems, then we shall spread God's mercy and his law to the rest of the world[23]

The ambitions for the organization are also by other believed to be dual as of December 2010: "it continues to use a hybrid of irredentism and global Jihad".[24]

The time for Al-Shabaab's founding is contested and differs between sources, but according to the UN Monitoring Group in Somalia, its first elements appeared in 2001, but became publicly known in 2005. It was formed by former members of AIAI, one of the groups that formed ICU.[25] It grew from an obscure militant group to become the militant wing of ICU in 2006, and after the separation from UCI, became an autonomous guerrilla force in parts of south central Somalia in 2007.[26] The organization has many known aliases[27] but using Al-Shabab or Al-Shabaab is the most common. The word "Shabaab" means youth and the definite article "Al" gives the translated name "the youth", indicating that the original members of the organization were mainly young men.

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[20] CIA World Factbook (2011-01-03)
[21] BBC 2010-09-21
[22] After this research was just finished, a paper with the title "the anatomy of Al-Shabaab" written in late 2010 came to the attention of the author. Due to lack of time, the details in this papers have not been possible to fully incorporated in this section on Al-Shabaab. There may hence be information is the paper that does not corresponds to the information in the report.
[23] The English translation as it appeared from the English subtitles on the video clip, Youtube 2009-01-14a
[24] Ali 2010, p. 8
[25] UN S/2010/91, p. 13
[26] UN S/2008/769, p. 18
[27] UN SC/9904

Al-Shabaab is centralized with a chain of command within its core leadership[28]. The leader is called the Amir, named Sheikh Mohamed Mukhtar Abdirahman "Abu Zubeyr" and the spokesman Mukhtar Roobow "Abu Mansur"[29]. Among the other few in the core group, is Fou'ad Mohamed Khalaf "Shangole".[30] The latter, also known as Fuad Shangole is a Swedish citizen reported to have recruited Muslims in a mosque in Rinkeby, before he returned to Somalia in the early 2000; the actual year for his return varies between different sources.

Despite the strong core, Al-Shabaab's military organization is collective, decentralized and fluid. As a result, regional commands appear to operate independently of one another, and there is often evidence of friction between them.[31] The Shabaab is assessed as to have several thousand fighters loyal to them. Above this, it is reported that several sub-groups are affiliated with them, mentioned in the monitoring groups report.[32] Apart from these groups, it was reported that another renowned extremist group, Hizbul-Islam, have joined Al-Shabaab as of December 2010[33] whereas others report that they already have disintegrated.[34] Al-Shabaab and Hizbul-Islam are known to have cooperated before.[35] It has also been speculated in the relationship between AL-Shabaab and the Somaliland administration, in the most northern part. As of a alleged press release from the Puntland Government, located in Northeastern Somalia, the Somaliland Administration provides safe havens for Al-Shabaab militia.[36]

Even though al-Shabaab's organizational links to al-Qaeda are assessed to be weak and foremost ideological, the United States added in February 2008 the group to its list of foreign terrorist organizations.[37] Not Sweden, nor the EU have labeled Al-Shabaab as a terrorist organization[38] but through a United Nations resolutions, the UN members have been obliged to prevent its nationals from traveling to Somalia, as well as preventing transfer of money to, and subsequently freezing funds belonging to, organizations that constitute a threat to TFG,

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[28] For an exhaustive updated description of the leader structure, see UN S/2010/91, p.14
[29] Abu Mansur was interview by Al-Jazeera about Al-Shabaab in 2009. The interview was in December 2010 not possible to retrieve from Al-Jazeera but has been posted on youtube.com in three different clips (youtube.com 2009a, 2009b 2009c)
[30] UN S/2008/769, p. 19
[31] Ibid, p. 19
[32] Ibid, p. 18
[33] Garewonline 2010-12-25
[34] UN S/2010/91,p. 6
[35] UN S/2008/769, passim.
[36] Garewonline 2010-12-25.
[37] Hanson, 2010-07-28.
[38] EU Council Decision 2009/1004/CFSP

AMISOM or humanitarian assistance.[39] Al-Shabaab is as of decision reiterated in late 2010 one such actor:

> Al-Shabaab has engaged in acts that directly or indirectly threaten the peace, security, or stability of Somalia, including but not limited to acts that threaten the Djibouti Agreement of August 18, 2008, or the political process; and, acts that threaten the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs), the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), or other international peacekeeping operations related to Somalia./…/ Al-Shabaab has also obstructed the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Somalia, or access to, or distribution of, humanitarian assistance in Somalia.[40]

Fighting against large parts of the international community, Al-Shabaab continues its struggle. According to reporting it is reversed by clan groups, which has proven more successful than the TFG.[41] On the other hand, the group still control the logistical key points as the port in the town of Kismaayo also becoming a source of revenue. [42]

Affiliates with Al-Shabaab, as its ideological or economical supporters, are reported to freely move among diaspora communities, where their influence has grown. The foreign recruitment is also reported to continue, as "small but significant numbers of ethnic Somali youth have been inspired to travel to Somalia as fighters and suicide bombers". As it seems, the report also mentions the risk of individuals engaging in acts of violence in their home countries.[43]

Active supporters of Al-Shabaab engage in fund-raising in Somali diaspora communities and in propaganda activities. They manage a number of websites as well as Internet video channels and forums monitored by the Monitoring Group.[44] The diaspora plays an important role for all Somalia, and Al-Shabaab is no exception. Sweden is one of the countries were they seem to have found a base for support.

The capacity, structure and future of the group may be discussed, but even though it is reported to have little support for their Jihadist ambitions among the Somalis within Somalia and with its diaspora outside the country, Al-Shabaab do play a crucial role in the future of the

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[39] UN S/RES/1844
[40] UN SC/9904
[41] UN S/2010/91, p. 6
[42] Ibid, p. 11-12
[43] Ibid, p. 7
[44] UN S/2010/91, p. 25

country. As claimed in a document presented to the Djibouti conference[45] in December 2010, the spread of Al-Shabaab throughout Somalis is significant:

> …the Shabaab is, by some estimates, the undisputed ruler of more than fifty percent of the Somali soil, which is roughly the size of Texas.[46]

2.3 Al-Shabaab in Sweden

The reporting about Al-Shabaab in Sweden is rather limited, naturally, considering the nature of its activities. Most of the known information about its activities in Sweden has come as affiliates have been discovered when reported killed or arrested, and then subsequently presented in media. Much of this information has its origin in the collection of the Security Service. This could also be seen in the judgment from the Gothenburg District court, revealing the Security Service's assessment on Al-Shabaab, as well as its surveillance of some of its members.[47]

When Ethiopia invaded Somalia in 2006, several Swedish individuals were reported to have left the country for Somalia. According to a documentary by Oscar Hedin, in which he during the period 2005 to 2007 gained extraordinary access to radical environments in Gothenburg, one Swedish jihadist was killed in Somalia in 2007, to where a small group travelled to fight.[48] This could be a reference to an incident on 3 June 2007, during which a US warship shelled a group of militants in Puntland in northern Somalia[49].

Radicals have been reported having traveled from Sweden to Somalia for several years. During 2009, ten Swedish citizens were assess to have traveled to Somalia and gained training, ideological as well as military. The threat they constitute is foremost the risk of inspiring to violence-promoting Islamism extremism. The assessment is that people previous to 2009 also has received training from Al-Shabaab[50].

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[45] The Djibouti Conference was a meeting with Somali intellectuals discussing the future leadership in Somalia after the mandate for TFG ends in August 2010.
[46] Ali 2010, p. 7
[47] Gothenburg District Court 2010:passim
[48] Hedin 2007
[49] Jonsson & Berglund 2009
[50] Security Service 2010b, p. 32

The UN Monitoring Group's report as of March 2010, contains information on various links between Sweden and Al-Shabaab. As mentioned in the above section Sheikh Fuad Mohamed Qalaf, also known as Fuad Shangole, is believed to be a member of the inner core. He left Sweden for Somalia in the beginning of 2000 and is today according to report Al-Shabaab's Puntland network's leader, moving relatively freely between Mogadishu and Garowe.[51] He has also participated in discussions and propaganda for the organization on Shabaab websites, one being alqimmah.net.

Alqimmah.net is based in Sweden, and its salience for Al-Shabaab is emphasized as it was placed on top of the UN Monitoring group's list of Al-Shabaab websites. The Monitoring group is claiming that it does not only disseminate, but participate in making it an integral part of Al-Shabaab's *da'awa* (propagation) apparatus.[52] The website is administered by a Swedish citizen:

> The alqimmah.net website is registered in Sweden in the name of Abdu-Raouf (Ralf) Wadman (also known as Usama el-Swede), a Swedish convert to Islam based in Gothenburg, who has been linked to a variety of extremist figures and causes.[53]

Another key individual is Sheikh Hassaan Hussein, a 31 year old cleric now living in Kenya, engaged in the Al-Shabaab movement's recruiting and propagating on the internet. His visit to Sweden in 2009 was in the Monitoring group's report described as below:

> Early in July 2009, Hassaan visited another hub of opposition support activity, Sweden, where he attended the seventeenth Somali Islamic Convention hosted by the Bellevue mosque in Gothenburg. Hassaan's participation triggered demonstrations by Somalis in Sweden opposed to Al-Shabaab, but was defended by the mosque administration and conference organizers.[54]

Also members from the organization Hizbul Islam[55] have connections to Sweden. In the Islamic convention in Gothenburg, Yasiin Baynah, Secretary-General of ARS-Asmara and a founding member of Hizbul Islam also participated. Baynah operated a successful travel agency in Stockholm specializing in transporting pilgrims to Mecca for the annual Hajj, until

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[51] UN S/2010/91, p. 15
[52] ibid, p. 28-29
[53] ibid, p. 29-30
[54] UN S/2010/91, p. 28
[55] Hizbul Islam is as aforementioned believed to have close links to Al-Shabaab, possibly even being a part of it.

he in late 2009 was convicted in Stockholm of tax evasion, linked to the operation of an underground money transfer service[56].

The Swedish Security Service report to have approximately 200 violence-promoting Islamist extremists in its systems. Of these, 80 percent had some kind of connection in between, forming network of radicals. The report does not give any information or numbers on which international links these individuals have, other than to geographical areas that are of more interest, as Iraq and Somalia. [57]

From the judgment in Gothenburg, some figures that do have assessed connection to Al-Shabaab are mentioned as part of the evidence, e.g.Yassin Ismael Ahmed held lectures for youths at the youth center "Kreativhuset" in Rinkeby in Stockholm. In 2007, he began to propagate for violence-promoting Islamist extremism. He has also been actively debating on alqimmah.net, the Al-Shabaab website. He is believed to now live in Somalia[58]. From the same judgment, Shuaib Ali Sheik Mohamed who is believed to have been killed fighting for Al-Shabaab in Somalia during 2009, as well as Ali Yasin Ahmed are mentioned as examples of radicalized Swedish citizens joining al-Shabaab.[59] All three are born in Somalia and moved to Sweden after a few years. Consequently, they have all lived in Sweden for the bigger part of their lives.

According to the Security Service, an individual that wants to become part of Al-Shabaab needs contacts in Somalia or its neighboring countries. Contacts to within the organization is essential, and recommendations, seems vital for membership.[60]

In Sweden both recruitment and propagation on behalf of Al-Shabaab has been occurring. As for all violence-promoting extremists[61], the internet activities are assessed to be of significant importance also for Al-Shabaab.[62]

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[56] UN S/2010/91, p. 28
[57] Security Service 2010b, passim
[58] Gothenburg District Court 2010, p. 6-9
[59] ibid, passim
[60] ibid 2010, p. 165
[61] Security Service 2010b, p.10, 56, 69-71
[62] UN S/2010/91, p. 28-30

Other kinds of support as practical assistance, logistics and financial support would naturally follow other kinds of efforts to support Al-Shabaab. The Security Service's chief analyst Malena Rembe with the counter-terrorism unit in an article in Jane's Intelligence Weekly, was paraphrased saying that "members of several terrorist organizations are present in Sweden and that they are fairly active in providing logistical support to their organizations", not though mentioning al-Shabaab specifically.[63] Others assess that gains from drug trade are sent back to Somalia, where Al-Shabaab is a likely receiver.[64] Before Yassin Ali was convicted and sentenced to one year in prison for failing to keep any records for his combined travel agency and money service business in Stockholm, he had sent an estimated USD1.5 million to Somalia between 2004 and 2005.[65] Somali diaspora in Sweden then seems to make a substantial contribution to the Shabaab affair.

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[63] Jonsson & Berglund 2009
[64] Hebelius Svahn 2010-05-07; Krogh 2010-02-06
[65] Larsson, Jonsson och Artzi 2010, p. 5

3.   <u>Terrorism, Islamism and Radicalization</u>

In the Security Service's report on Violence-Promoting Islamist Extremism, Islamism and radicalization are key concepts. Both these concept are related to terrorism as one is the motive for, and the other one a process towards, the use of terrorist methods. In the following section, a description of how they are related follows.

3.1   Terrorism

> Terrorism is a crime against all humanity. It endangers the lives of innocent people. It creates a climate of hate and fear. It fuels global divisions along ethnic and religious lines. Terrorism constitutes one of the most serious violations of peace, international law and the values of human dignity. Terrorism is an attack on democracy and human rights. No cause justifies the targeting of civilians and noncombatants through intimidation and deadly acts of violence. We firmly reject any ideology that guides the actions of terrorists. We decisively condemn their methods. Our vision is based on a common set of universal values and principles. Freedom and human dignity. Protection and empowerment of citizens. Building and strengthening of democracy at all levels. Promotion of peace and justice.[66]

The above statement was made by Club Madrid[67] in March 2005, bringing together various stakeholders in their mutual efforts to find ways for democracies to handle terrorism. This effort was new, sprung from the terrorist bombings in Madrid 2004. But the phenomenon hardly is. And whether one discusses terrorism as political, religious, ideological, cultural or other kind, most scholars agree that it is a mean to achieve higher goal - and seldom a goal in itself. The fact that there is no universal definition on the concept, due to is wide range of root causes and the many ways terrorism is used, is a problem. For example, lack of an accepted definition within has prevented the adoption of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism within the UN.[68] The known idiom "one terrorist is another freedom fighter" applies here, expressed by the Organization of the Islamic Conference emphasis on the importance "to make a distinction between terrorism and the exercise of legitimate right of peoples to resist foreign occupation."[69]

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[66] Club the Madrid 2005, p. 7
[67] Club Madrid is an independent organization dedicated to strengthening democratic values and leadership, it's members being former Heads of State and Government from 56 countries.
[68] Hudson Institute 2010a
[69] Hudson Institute 2010b

In spite of the lack an established definition, the term 'terrorism' obviously needs some common features in order to make it possible to use in a wider context than the individual. In her anthology *Root Causes of Terrorism*, Harvard Dean Louise Richardson relies on the US Code for her definition:

> Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.[70]

Defining terrorism and thus saying what it is, also gives away what it is not. In the above statement, terrorism is reserved for "sub-national groups or clandestine agents", leaving out states as perpetrators of terrorist. Whereas the US has claim several Arabic states as being sponsors of terrorism,[71] the US is by others claimed to have supported terrorist activities on several occasions[72]. Both fit the above given definition.

The Norwegian professor Tore Bjørgo concludes that despite the wide range of definitions on terrorism − he mentions a number of 200 − most scholars and governments agree that terrorism is a "set of methods or strategies of combat rather than an identifiable ideology or movement", and that in involves intentional violence "against non-combatants in order to achieve a psychological effect of fear on others than the immediate targets."[73] This definition includes the targeting on a certain target of individuals in order to effects others. The motives for conducting the terrorist act may then be political as in the US code definition, or be labeled as something else like religious, economical etc. This thesis is limited to the violence promoting Islamist extremism, an example of religiously motivated terrorism, which in the following is closer discussed.

3.2 Islamism

The term Islamism is synonymously used to Islamic fundamentalism or political Islam.[74] This then includes the intent to spread and implement Islam on all levels of society. The Security Service emphasizes the complexity in using the term, as in then refers to a very large number

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[70] Richardson 2006, p. 2
[71] Sheffer 2006, p. 121
[72] Mamdani 2002, passim
[73] Bjørgo 2005, p. 2
[74] Esposito 2006, p. 145

of group of individuals, with considerable differences in between.[75] The German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) uses a similar definition for its work.

> With reference to the original Islam of the 7th century, its adherents - the Islamists – are calling for the 'reinstitution' of an 'Islamic order', in their understanding the only legitimate state and social order which is to replace all other orders.[76]

With regard to Islamism, not all Islamism is violent. According to John Esposito, it is important to distinguish between mainstream and extremist movements, whereas the former participate within the political system and the latter engage in terrorism in the name of Islam.[77] The German BfV categorize Islamist in three categories depending on their methods and means used to achieve their objectives. The differentiation seems to be (1) *jihadist* with terrorist methods on a global field of activities, some with Al-Qaida affiliation; (2) *nationalist*, with efforts to change social system and conditions of domination in their countries with violent means; and (3) a group of individuals and organizations that through legal means from within a political system, aiming to increase the potential Islamist activities within a country. The last category can be labeled as *constitutionalist,* trying to adjust the system's frame through non-violent means. The specific labels used herein – jihadist, nationalist and constitutionalist – are though not used by BfV in its recent reports, it previously has been.[78]

But even though many Islamist organizations do not utter violence-promoting methods for their aims, they still constitute an important outpost. Lars Nicander, Head of the Centre for Asymmetric Threats and Terrorist Studies at the Swedish National Defense College, points out that even though some organizations, as the global Salafsist group Hizbut Tahrir, do not use violence themselves, they sympathize with the antidemocratic ideas that many violence-promoting Islamist extremist groups share.[79] Hence, such organizations may serve as ideological educators of those who latter to become terrorists. Such a pattern has been seen in the UK, where participants in the terrorist attacks in London 2005, previously had been recruited by and engaged with Islamist networks.[80]

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[75] Security Service 2010, p. 28
[76] BfV s.a
[77] Esposito 2006, p. 146
[78] Discussion with staff from Swedish Defense Research Agency (FOI) Stockholm, 20/12 2010
[79] Nicander 2010-12-31
[80] Glee & Pope 2005, passim

3.3   Radicalization

The transfer from being an Islamist (within the political system) to becoming an Islamist extremist is in a wide meaning referred to as radicalization, that is, when a person becomes radical in its exercise of beliefs. For Islamists then, it is when the individual become radical in his or her exercise of Islamism. A more narrow definition of radicalization would then be when the individual goes through a process of violence-promoting radicalization.[81] In seeking the root causes for terrorism, radicalization in the wide sense may be useful to understand the transformation a person is going through. In a security perspective, especially when it comes to crime prevention, radicalization is understood as the more narrow transfer into violence-promoting activities.[82]

Though the process of radicalization is an eye of a needle which must be passed for all terrorists, the background of individuals vary; if you are not radicalized in some way, you will not become radical. The Security Service has identified mutual characteristics as (1) perceived injustice and offences towards the self or other with whom one identifies; (2) a simplified division of the world into good and bad forces, and (3) the sense of belonging in groups standing up for the "good", with violence if necessary. At the same time, the prime mover (driving force) are the search for meaning, perceived injustice in the world and contacts through which the radical environment is presented.[83] Whereas ideology does matter for the radicalization, it is the social and emotional bonds that are the most prominent, as express in the description of radicalization before the Gothenburg district court in December 2010.[84]

In the "Rosengård Report" conducted during 2008 and early 2009, the factors potentially effecting radicalization were found to be several, for example perceived injustice and lack of integration, subdivided into local factors as climate in schools, controllers of attitudes that oppress those who question the radical views, as well as haltering information for newly arrived immigrants[85]. The report has been criticized for not revealing its sources and acting more like intelligence service than the academic institution it is.[86] When filmmaker Oscar Hedin was given the opportunity to follow Swedish radicals in Gothenburg in a documentary, he found that the mutual denominator for the radicalized persons in the film was social

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[81] Ranstorp & dos Santos 2009, p. 5
[82] Security Service 2010c, p. 30
[83] Security Service 2010-07-28
[84] Gothenburg District Court 2010, p. 165
[85] Ranstorp & dos Santos 2009, p.12-ff
[86] Fürstenberg 2009-01-29

isolation or the a feeling of being an outsider. Also, a missing father figure and a history of drugs and criminality may have been factors.[87]

Germany's Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution has in a report from 2007 expressed that integration is a mean to prevent extremism and terrorism, and subsequently tried to frame the individuals at risk by a typology of Islamist radicalization and recruitment. The report concludes that integration deficiencies and Islamist milieus causes individuals to renounce the host society and instead integrate into subculture groups. Being recruited the Jihad is then being integrated into the "community of the likeminded" where more violent Islamist ideas prevail. According to the report, successful integration is in this way a measure to prevent development of extremism and terrorism.[88] These findings also correspond with the conclusions from the Security Service's report and Rosengård Report.

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[87] Hedin 2007, expressed in the '*director's comments'*.
[88] BfV 2007: passim

4.   Relevant theoretical concepts

4.1   Swedish Islamism and Al-Shabaab

In the section above some factors leading to radicalization were presented. Some of them are what Tore Bjørgo in his discussion on levels of causation for terrorism[89] refers to as *Structural causes*, like globalization, demographic imbalances and class structures. Other causes may be *Facilitator causes* making terrorism – and radicalization – possible due to transportation and modern news media. *Motivational causes*, that may be seen as symptoms of the fundamental causes, are the grievances that people experience; through rhetoric and interpretation of the structural causes – like global injustice or deprivation or a conflict – "leaders" persuade people about how things really are. In this sense, motivational causes may arise from the structural causes. Numerous example of possible situations and milieus where motivational causes may arise, are given in the 'Rosengård report'.[90] Possible example of situations where transfer of structural into motivation causes may have occurred, relating to Al-Shabaab, are in Stockholm where Fuad Shangole was active before his return to Somalia, and in Gothenburg in July 2009, when Hassaan visited Sweden, to attended the seventeenth Somali Islamic Convention hosted by the Bellevue mosque in Gothenburg. Hassaan's participation also triggered demonstrations by Somalis in Sweden opposed to Al-Shabaab, but was defended by the mosque administration and conference organizers .[91]

The last category in Bjørgo's levels of causation are the *Triggering causes,* which may be momentous or provocative events, political calamity, an outrages act committed by the enemy or some other event that call for events. Examples in the Al-Shabaab case may then have been the Ethiopian invasion, in relation to which ten persons left Sweden for Somalia. Many Muslims also reacted to the caricatures depicting of the prophet Mohammed by Lars Vilks, which by some was taken as a motive for attacks[92] and then could be categorized as a triggering factor.

It seems reasonable to assume that preconditions for growth of Islamist extremism, including violence-promoting types, have changed in recent years. In 2006 Leonard Weinburg's analysis on the relationship between democracy and terrorism mentioned Sweden and other

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[89] Bjørgo 2005, p.3-4
[90] Ranstorp & dos Santos 2009, passim
[91] UN S/2010/91, p. 28
[92] Security Service 2008a, p. 34

Scandinavian countries as examples of that socially homogenous countries have very low frequencies of terrorist activities.[93] Weinburg refers to Jan Oskar Engene's analysis, that would also explain the lower frequency as a result of more evenly distributed income. According to Engene, the correlation is also stronger for ideological terrorism, than for example ethnical terrorism.[94] Given the delimitation for this thesis, focusing on Islamist extremism and the case of Al-Shabaab, here categorized as religions or ideological terrorism, the theory is applicable. Engene's conclusions would then imply that income distribution has changed in Sweden, a causality which however cannot be further analyzed in this thesis.

According to Weinburg, occurring radicalization created opportunity for entrepreneurial bands may cause an outbreak of terrorism; the duration is depending on the response from the authorities.[95] But caution is needed in choosing the response; to strong responses may evoke new attacks, in Bjørgo's analysis called triggering factors. On the other hand, to weak responses may leave the field open for continued attacks, as the radical individuals remain with their structural and motivational causes, some ready to act again and continue recruitment, and yet other in need of just new triggering factors. Weinburg concludes that calibrating the right response must (1) be aimed at separating the small band from its potential mass constituency; (2) deny the means of recruiting new generations of members; and (3) prevent from spreading into other locations in the country.[96]

Even though radicalization caused by violence-promoting Islamist extremism may have increased in recent years in Sweden, until the an explosion in Stockholm on December 11th 2010, labeled as a suicide bombing, no jihadist terrorist attack had been successfully conducted in Sweden; not to say that the performed attack was a success in the eyes of the perpetrators. Though, in terms of affecting an audience other than the one attacked, the act was an act of terrorism, with at least some affect on the Swedish society. The motives for the attack are not all clear but from the recording left by the suicide bomber, the motives were Lars Vilks' caricatures and Swedish engagement in other countries. The caricatures was previously known to create resentment among Muslims, but the Swedish foreign engagement or national politics in general has been assess to have low importance for the Swedish radical

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[93] Weinburg 2006, p. 47
[94] Engene 2004, p. 87
[95] Weinburg 2006, p. 49
[96] Weinburg 2006, p. 50-51

Islamists.[97] The perpetrator, a middle aged Swedish citizen of Iraqi origin, had though lived in Luton, UK, where resentment of military engagement abroad has constituted a more common motive among the large number of radicals there[98], which possibly inspired his motives or could be seen as he was a radical offspring of the UK environment rather than or as well as the Swedish.

4.2   The role of diasporas in terrorism, and for Al-Shabaab

For the situation in Somalia, the diasporas play an important role. As concluded in the UN Monitoring Group's report:

> The distinction between Somali residents and diaspora communities is exceptionally blurred. Many Somalis living abroad retain such strong links to their homeland that they are essentially "binational", travelling regularly and remaining active in social or political issues in Somalia. /…/ Several key Shabaab and Hizbul Islam leaders, as well as a growing number of their foot soldiers, have lived abroad and retain active linkages to their host countries.[99]

According to Statistics Sweden's *(Sw: Statistiska Centralbyrån)* report for 2010 presenting numbers for 2008, 25.159 of the Swedish citizens were born in Somalia, and another 10.728 had parents from another country with at least one being Somalia. In the same year, 787 were naturalized aliens, that is, receiver of Swedish Citizenship and 1.080 were asylum seekers[100]. Concluding, the number of Swedish citizens with Somali heritage is significant.

Professor Gabriel Sheffer analyses diasporic communities and their connection to terrorism. He claims that "one of the most common features /…/ is that they are others in their homelands".[101] He categorizes diasporic entities into 5 different groups, that are: (1) tourists, (2) refugees and asylum seekers, (3) legal and illegal, unorganized, newly arrived migrants, (4) Members of organized, transstate ethnonational diasporas, Integrated, but not assimilated in their host countries, and (5) cultural and religious transnational diasporas. They reside outside their homelands. They share the same beliefs, yet they are composed from different ethnic and national background.

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[97] Swedish Security Service 2010b, p. 84
[98] Glee & Pope 2005, p. 30
[99] UN S/2010/91, p. 25
[100] Sweden Statistics 2010, p. 105-ff
[101] Sheffer 2006, p. 118

Sheffer goes on to make three essential distinctions.[102] The first distinction is between pure nationalists with national agendas, and pure religionists with religions agendas. A recent pertinent trend according to Sheffer, is to lump together all Muslim diasporic communities and to attribute them solely ultra religious motivations and purposes to their violent actions. Some are possibly connected to religious causes and cooperating with Al-Qaida, but still closely connected to their respective ethnonational homelands and act in accordance with their perceived grievances[103]. As far as Al-Shabaab is concerned, they may be an example of both. Whereas propaganda and rhetoric have taken jihadist articulations with their goals being to spreading Islam worldwide[104] there are still reports of middle- and low rank members that are assessed to prioritize clan struggle and money over the jihadist cause[105].

Another distinction Sheffer makes is that between diasporas acting in their homelands, or acting in their host lands. Al-Shabaab is not reported to have actually conducted terrorist attacks outside Somalia, whereas it has many different supportive activities in their host countries, especially in the countries in geographical vicinity, like Kenya or Ethiopia.[106] In the Swedish context it cannot be said whether Al-Shabaab affiliates could act in Sweden. This may be depending on whether the agenda for the actual perpetrator or group involved is nationalistic or religionist. However, based on the pattern of known Al-Shabaab radicals, they belong to the homeland category.

The third distinction is that between state-linked and state-less diasporas. According to Gabriel Sheffer himself, as stated in mail correspondence from January 2011, to little research is conducted on the matter as to make a distinction between the two. In the description of the categories, Sheffer finds that as a result of full or partial integration and tendency to observe the law and the inclination to protect and promote multiple cultural, political and economical interest in their host countries, most diasporas in the state-linked category are less inclined to use terrorism. These diasporas also refrain from the use of terrorism also because of the restraint imposed on them by their homeland's governments.[107]

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[102] Sheffer 2006, p. 122-123
[103] Sheffer 2006, p. 122
[104] Youtube.com 2009a, 2009b,2009c
[105] UN S/2010/91, p. 15
[106] UN S/2010/91, passim
[107] Sheffer 2006, p. 123

From Sheffer's distinction, he concludes that the most active supporters of terrorism, are ethnonational and stateless diasporas and the second most relevant category, appears to be those attempting to improve the cultural, political, and economic conditions in their homelands[108]. Al-Shabaab fraction on Somali diaspora was earlier in this thesis categorized to be an religionist rather than ethnonational diaspora group; neither they are state-less in a technical sense, whereas ongoing conflict, limited access to its country of origin may be discusses. In this sense, the propensity for attacks would be deemed low. The second category, to try to affect conditions in its homeland, then seems closer.

Sheffer presents several *causes* as to why diasporic entities would engage in terrorism[109].This involves expulsion from the home country, struggles for separatism in the home country and systematic discrimination of a group in the home country. None of these seem applicable to Al-Shabaab. Also, discrimination in the host country, legal and political prosecution in home country and connection to organized crime are others. As far as the sources for this thesis are concerned, information to assess these categories are deficit. There are no presented facts on that the drug traffic financing Al-Shabaab would be significant enough to spur terrorism in Sweden; discrimination of Somalis may be an individual perception, and possibly causes as alienation and lack of integration contributes in this sense, but discrimination of Somalis specifically is at least not found in this background research. Whereas most of these causes are ethnonational drivers – and do not fit Al-Shabaab (from information in this thesis) – the alternative explanation would then be that AL-Shabaab are religiously motivated; Sheffer explains this is the case for Al-Qaida and some other organizations.[110] Yet, this is not a stunning discovery. Quite the contrary, this indicates that Sheffer's theory provides what was already known for AL-Shabaab. What the theory does though, is to conclude that Somalis as an ethnical group, lack motives for terrorism. And as Sheffer himself concludes, "nobody should postulate that entire diasporic communities partake in terrorist activities or support them.[111]

Whereas the 11th December bomber in Stockholm was unlikely affiliated with Al-Shabaab, the two men convicted in Gothenburg on the 8th December were. The two men, both Swedish citizens – one born in Saudi Arabia and the other on in Somalia - were sentenced to four years

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[108] Sheffer 2006, p. 125)
[109] Sheffer 2006, p. 123-125
[110] Sheffer 2006, p. 125
[111] Sheffer 2006, p. 128

in prison respectively fort terrorist plot. The intended activities were not explicit in time and place, but were assessed to be aimed towards the Somali state and/or international actors in Somalia[112]. Most jihadist organizations are a global movement and appeal to Muslims of all nationalities to join their cause – as do Al-Shabaab[113].

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[112] Gothenburg District Court 2010, p. 7
[113] Youtube.com, 2009-01-14a

5.   The Grand Narrative: The Security Service's perspective

To frame and present the complete picture of Al-Shabaab in Sweden is naturally impossible. And as described by Björn Andersson, Grand Narratives are a perception of truth that is spread to the citizens and through which they create their own truth about reality[114]. In this thesis, the aim is to understand different views on Al-Shabaab in Sweden. To do this, the grand narrative about Al-Shabaab is hereby represented by the narrative held by the Security Service. The presented Grand Narrative is based on the Security Service's annual reports from 2008 and 2009[115], the judgment against the two men convicted for terrorist plot, as well as extracts from the recent report from the Security Service on violence-promoting Islamist extremism.

In 2008, three persons were arrested in Sweden suspected of sending financial support to Al-Shabaab. In the annual report from 2009, the organization is describes as follows:

> Al-Shabaab is an armed Islamist organization which has claimed responsibility for a number of attacks – including suicide bombings – against civilian targets in Somalia. In statements from Al-Shabaab representatives these attacks have been justified referring to the same ideology as the one advocated by al-Qaida.[116]

In 2009, around ten Swedish citizens, commonly young men, were reported to have trained with Al-Shabaab in Somalia, getting ideological and military training. In the annual report from 2009, the description of Al-Shabaab is identical with the previous year. The report also states that the organization uses violence to take power in Somalia, that it want to establish a rule based on a very strict interpretation of Islam, with the ambition to include "Somali areas in neighboring countries". The interest from individuals in Sweden to go to Somalia was reportedly continued, but limited. This was believed to be a consequence of Al-Shabaab strengthening its capacity to attract foreigners and spread propaganda outside of Somalia. The threat these individuals pose is mainly directed towards Somalia. If their intentions change the may instead constitute a threat in Sweden[117]

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[114] Andersson 2001, p. 150
[115] The annual report for 2010 had not been published when the thesis was written.
[116] Security Service 2009, p. 30
[117] Security Service 2010a, p. 32-33

On the 8th of December 2010, Gothenburg district court sentenced two Swedish men, one born in Somalia and the other one in Saudi Arabia. In the trial, the Security Service played an important role, providing evidence collected on the defendants, having followed them for two years. In the information about Al-Shabaab presented in the judgment, a more detailed historical overview is presented, stating that Al-Shabaab gained a broad support as fought Ethiopians in 2006, which diminished after the Ethiopians left in 2008. Al-Shabaab has gradually become more jihadist in its propaganda and continue to target civilians.[118] With regard to Sweden, the Security Service believes that there is a large Somali group that has been active for a long time. Initially, the Somali group was dedicated to financial issues, but lately the intent to travel to Somalia has increased.[119]

In the report on violence-promoting Islamist extremism, Al-Shabaab is a part of a larger phenomenon, but is explicitly described in some sections of the report.[120] It is expressed that violence-promoting Islamist extremists mainly intend to support foreign Islamist extremist groups, of which Al-Shabaab is one named;[121] that there are direct contacts between people in Sweden and people at different levels within foreign terrorist groups, of which Al-Shabaab is one.[122] In the report it is also mentioned the problem with radicalization, which is focused on mainly younger men. Radicalization take place in various environments, physical but also virtual. One virtual forum mentioned is al-Qimmah (see section 2.2-2.3 above) and its importance for recruitment for Al-Shabaab is not to be underestimated[123].

What the Security Service thinks valid for violence-promoting Islamist extremist groups and preceding radicalization, is foremost applicable for Al-Shabaab. However, as it is general and not explicitly accurate for Al-Shabaab, it will not be formulated as a part of the Grand Narrative.

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[118] Gothenburg District Court 8 December 2010, p. 161-162
[119] Ibid, 8 December 2010, p. 162
[120] Security Service 2010b, p. 71, 77, 80 and more.
[121] Ibid, p. 77
[122] Ibid, p. 80
[123] Ibid, p. 71

6.   The small narratives

In this chapter follows a summary of the confrontations used to find the *Small Narratives*. The confrontations have been categorized as either *discussions* or *conversations*. *Conversation* refers to random encounters with Somali informants in places visited with the intent to meet Somalis to talk to about Al-Shabaab. *Discussion* indicate that the meeting has been arranged in advanced and that the informant used is not randomly selected.

The confrontations have been conducted as semi-structured interviews. As the informants in the conversations have been picked randomly and without planned meetings, certain questions have not been possible to ask, either because the informant left early or the question has been deemed too sensitive to ask. As a result, the Small Narratives include different amounts of information about Al-Shabaab in Sweden. Except for the presented confrontations, many more were made. However, due to reluctance to answer questions about Al-Shabaab or language barriers their narrative about Al-Shabaab have not been accessible. The informants are made anonymous to protect their identity.

6.1   Confrontations on December 15th

The first round of interviews were aimed to be held at a place in Malmö where Somalis are known to circulate, according to experiences from previous study.[124] Apart from one employee, there were few people circulating during the day, and only one was willing to be participate.

6.1.1   Discussion with Swedish employee 1

The Swedish employee said he did not want to engage in discussions to much on Al-Shabaab. He said that he thought it could be sensitive to ask people randomly about the group. He had no experience on Al-Shabaab and potential activities in Sweden. He believed that many Somalis felt discriminated and that there is a lack of political engagement for the exposed situation for many immigrants. Possibly this could be seen as an explanation to why people are radicalized. Overall, he had little to say about Al-Shabaab.

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[124] Andersson, Andersson, & Fahlander 2010

6.1.2 Conversation with Somali A[125]

During the interview a voice recorder was used after permission.

The person has no experience of Al-Shabaab in Malmö. He has heard about their whereabouts in Stockholm and Gothenburg, but not in Malmö. He has seen on television broadcasts about Al-Shabaab recruitment and supporting activities in Sweden, and that "everyone is trying to do", is to tell youths and to hold lectures, which he believes is wrong. He says that Jihad is important for all Muslims, but that it is about being a good person and not doing bad things, that Jihad is about resisting temptations as wasting your life on meaningless things, and has nothing to do with "blowing oneself up".

He thinks that youths are the most vulnerable group for recruitment. The reason is that young people may have a feeling of being outsiders in society, when "they have failed in school, are unemployed, do nothing and just hang with their friends". He also thinks that there is an anger relating to the US invasion of Iraq that may play a role. The Swedish engagements however are probably not a problem. He goes on to say that Al-Shabaab's recruitment is if existing not overt:

> There is no one here to tell you that Al-Shabaab is recruiting youths, but they know that it will go to hell, even the Somalis don't accept it [recruitment], so they use a different strategy, to recruit youths. Their targets are the outsiders and the unemployed.[126]

When asked, the informant does not believe that there are Somalis in Sweden that are thankful towards Al-Shabaab for example driving the Ethiopians out, "They just bomb and slaughter the people". The informant thinks that there is mainly one thing to do to stop the radicalization and recruitment:

> Well, it is lectures by famous Sheiks, famous Sheiks from Somalia for example. That they give lectures about the religion. All that Al-Shabaab stands for have nothing to do with Muslims. That is what they [youths] must understand. It is the only way.[127]

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[125] Conversation with Somali A, 15/12 2010
[126] Swedish original: "det finns ingen som kan säga till dig att Al-Shabaab är här för att rekrytera ungdomar, men de vet att de ska gå åt helvete, tom (inte ens) Somalierna accepterar det, så de använder en annan strategi, för att kunna rekrytera ungdomar. Deras mål är de som är utanför och arbetslösa".

When asked what the police and Security Service can do, considering that they are following the matter and have written a report, he thinks that they must work with voluntary organizations, Arabic and Somali, and hold lectures. He also thinks that a group of youths should be educated and function as ambassadors for other.

About the future for Al-Shabaab in Sweden, he thinks that they may continue to try recruiting people, especially people from Southern Somalia where Al-Shabaab is active. He has no really opinion in which environment recruitment may take place, but concludes that it generally must be through "youths in contact with youths".

When asked about the caricatures of the Prophet made by Lars Vilks, he believes that it is wrong and he has little understanding of why it is allowed. He also believed this may be something that makes Muslims become radicalized. If true this would be an example of the Bjørgo's *triggering causes* for terrorism, discussed in section 4.1:

> What will they [people like Lars Vilks] do? Only to be seen on TV and then irritate people - this is not good. It has surpassed freedom of speech, well, you could say that it is incitement to racial hatred, as you insult millions of Muslims. So, such things as he who says so, you don't win much, but a lot of people gets pissed off and blows themselves up. [128]

Towards the end, he again says he has no understanding of Al-Shabaab.

> And they will teach people a religion, when we have been Muslims for a million years /…/ I don't get which religion they are talking about /…/ they shall not tech people and say that 'you can take up weapons. Weapons against who? Against Somalia, against other Muslims? [I] think it is so stupid.[129]

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[127]Swedish original: "Asså, det är föreläsningar av kända shejker, kända shejken i Somalia till exempel att de ger föreläsningar om religionen. Allt det som Al-Shabaab sysslar med har ingenting att göra med muslimer. Det är det som de måste fatta. Det är det enda sättet, asså"

[128] Vad ska dom göra? Bara för att de ska synas i tv och sen irritera folket, det är inte bra detta. Det har gått över yttrandefrihet detta, ja, detta kan man säga att det är hets mot folkgrupp, för att man förolämpar asså miljoner muslimer. Så såna saker som den som säger så, vinner man inte mycket, men att massa blir förbannade och spränger sig i luften.

[129] Swedish original: "Och hur ska de lära folk en religion när vi har varit muslimer i en miljon år /…/ jag fattar inte vilken religion de pratar om /…/ Dom ska inte lära folk och säga att ni får ta vapen. Vapen mot vem? Mot Somalia, mot de andra Muslimerna? Tycker att det är helt dumt."

6.2   Confrontations on December 17th

The confrontations were held at the same place as during 15th December, intended to follow up from the first occasion where only two confrontations were made. As there are again very few people present at the site, a discussion was initiated with one employee. Afterwards, one conversation with a Somali was conducted.

6.2.1   Discussion with Swedish employee 2

The informant thinks that people on the highest levels of society lack knowledge   and have been naive not to expect incidents as the Stockholm suicide bomber and that it will arrive people with values that differs from the Swedish, considering the amount of immigrants coming to Sweden. She believes that it is serious when these attitudes attack. Swedish politics, as with the military presence in Afghanistan. Also, she was critical towards the caricatures of the Prophet, also mentioned as motive for the suicide bombing in Stockholm:

> One may have opinions, you know, with the Mohammed pictures, one can ask oneself why he is doing it /…/ I do not wish to call them [people reacting against the caricatures] terrorists because, that you get onto their heart issues when it comes to religion and their perception of world- and society.[130]

She goes on to say that freedom of speech is sacred, but has its limits, and that within the multicultural society, respect has to be shown if cultures are to live side by side. About radicalization, her experience says that this is not a new phenomenon and occurs in many different environments, and that it is easier to recruit those that experience an exclusion from society, that have no belonging anywhere else.

The discussion was interrupted due to a telephone call that the employee received and was not possible to take up again.

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[130] Swedish original: "Sen kan man ju ha synpunkter, alltså, med Muhammedbilderna, kan man ju undra varför han håller på med det jag vill inte kalla dem terrorister därför att, det att man kommer in på deras hjärteangelägenheter när det gäller religion och deras världs- och samhällsuppfattning"

6.2.2 Conversation with Somali B

The conversation was held in a separate room in an association facility in Malmö. The informant did not which to be recorded, so hand notes were taken gradually. Conversation was held in English.

The informant had followed the public debate on "violence-promoting ideologies" in the news. He like most other persons met throughout this study meant that Islam was abused an used as an excuse to kill and harm people, and that "terrorism is cowardly".

He believes that younger people are susceptible for radicalization and recruitment, and that this is why they become members: "Kids choose the wrong side, they do not follow the religion but the other stuff /…/ they take drugs and get drunk and they and they have accepted Sheitan's[131] ideas". He then expressed that the depiction of the problem in media and by the police, is a contributing factor to radicalization:

> I think that police and politics give them a possibility to continue. They enlarge the problem. They should focus on just getting the guilty /.../ The attention given to the phenomenon makes more people interested.

Later in the conversation, he also comes back to say that: "There is a risk that attention on these issues increase the interest for them". When asked *What do you think about the future [for Al-Shabaab recruitment in Sweden]?,* he again returns to attention given in the public debate:

> The future depends on the government and media. Negative attention increases the risks. They must be caught directly. The language use in relation to these issues are also important. Using 'a person' instead of 'Muslim radicals' is better.

He believes that if someone goes to Somalia, he or she should not be able to come back. If they do come back, they should be arrested as a signal to others, whereas these kinds of journeys will continue.

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[131] Shaitan or Sheitan (arab: Shaytān) is the colloquial expression for Islam's "devil" (see for example Beeman 2005, p. 64)

He suggests that the police should provide information about how to get back on the "right side", and that bad role models must be stopped, or marked. The teacher has an important role for the children. Internet and groups of friends are irrelevant in the beginning. As for most informants, he also emphasize that Al-Shabaab is not a Muslim organization, and that the fighting in Somalia is not about Islam. The struggle for power feeds the violence

6.3 Confrontations on December 20th

6.3.1 Discussion with employee at Swedish Military Research Agency

The informant does not represent the standpoint of the authority but is used as a discussion partner to find alternative perspectives on the matter. The discussion main concerned theoretical approaches on different forms of Islamism and on the Background to the situation in Somali and the growth of Al-Shabaab there.

The informant reflected on what type of Islamism that Al-Shabaab was an example of. He thought that Al-Shabaab wanted to profile itself as a global jihadist organization, since there were mainly jihadist propaganda and rhetoric used for recruitment. Possibly, they might in some instances use those arguments as well, but it is the "al-Qaida-rhetoric" that is most frequent. And considering that they recruit people for Suicide mission, the definitely are jihadist.

6.4 Confrontations on January 3rd

The confrontations were sought in a public are in Malmö. There were some Somali that did not want to discuss the matters at all, some that spoke nothing but Somali. Many seemed avert to discuss about Al-Shabaab. No one would accept being audio-recorded when talking, seemingly suspicious.

6.4.1 Conversation with Somali C

The informant accepts to talk, but is explicit about that he does not want to mention Al-Shabaab, saying "Everything I say comes back to me." He explains that he has been contacted by the Security Service and other police services on multiple occasions. When discussion start, he do though make some comments.

He claims that those recruited in Sweden for Al-Shabaab "is no problem", because they don't do any difference in the conflict. Al-Shabaab has in his opinion nothing to do with driving out the Ethiopians and Al-Shabaab has not done anything good for Somalia. There can be no understanding for what they do.

6.4.2 Conversation with Somali D

The informant is talkative and likes to speak his mind. He believes that Al-Shabaab motives cannot be religious because what they do is against Islam, and that the roots to the conflicts in Somalia is clan-rivalry more than anything else, even though it's difficult to sort out today.

The government in Somalia is legitimate, but Al-Shabaab has no legitimization. He does not believe that people in Somalia support Al-Shabaab, but that those recruited are joining for economical causes. He has not himself met anyone that traveled to Somalia to join an extremist groups. He has only heard the reporting of it and has not personal experience of this.

In Sweden, he says that there may be various reasons of why to join. Friends, family and loyalty. He does however not mention money again. He thinks that those being recruited are likely young, because when you are young, you lack resistance to ideas. You need education to be able to resist. Later in the conversation, he returns to that the persons in Sweden that are recruited lack education and needs to be informed. Integration will happen if youth is educated, and have a chance to interact among themselves. It is also important to discuss issues of radicalization. Islam is not the problem, but the lack of education is the problem, among many other factors.

He does not think the political atmosphere in Sweden is a problem and do not think Swedish engagement in other countries as a problem for recruitment. "He says that the caricatures is a problem that might cause radicalization". He cannot say which tolerance is more important – tolerance for freedom of speech or tolerance for another person's religion. However, he emphasizes that one have to respect the law of the country in which you reside.

He thinks that Al-Shabaab and Hizb-Islam objectives can be to rule Somalia. He points again to that the best way to fight Al-Shabaab is to support the government. "As long as there is money involved, people will be recruited in Somalia".

He thinks people in Sweden should not be afraid, because Al-Shabaab is only in Somalia. He is hoping for peace in Somalia but does not have an idea of what is going to happen.

6.4.3   Conversation with Somali E

The informants is critical foremost against the united states and believes that many Muslims are provoked by the US invasion in Iraq and the operations in Afghanistan. Only one percent of all Somalis are bad, the most are very good. But when someone does something bad, all is blamed.

He believes that the US are controlling a big part of the global agenda, for example in the UN, which is a problem for Sweden as we have show obedience to the US. Swedish authorities in Afghanistan as well as in Sweden are influence by the US. He also believes that Al-Shabaab has no nationalist agenda and that the leaders are mostly foreign fighters. He rejects the idea that Al-Shabaab wants to isolate itself from the surrounding world.

He is convinced that people become radicalized because of injustice in the world. There cannot be said why every person is. He asks back "Do you know why people want to become Sweden Democrats?[132] Once you figure, you'll have the answer as to why people are radicalized"

The informant says that one reason as to why people are skeptical to participate in the interviews is because the thought the researcher came from the Security Service. They thought it was odd that someone asks questions about Al-Shabaab and hence did not not want to talk to them: "When you ask your questions, people think you are Security Service. And hence do not want to talk to you"[133]

6.5   Confrontations January 7th

The confrontations involved one discussion and one conversation. The discussion was held with a Somali working with questions regarding the rebuilding of Somalia, a person with which contact had been established in a prior study. During the discussion, he provided a not

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[132] Sweden Democrats is a party criticized for being xenophobic, during the elections 2010 for the first time gaining seats in the Swedish parliament.
[133] Swedish original: "När du frågar dina frågor tror folk att du är Säpo. Och då vill de inte snacka med dig"

preplanned telephone conversation with a Somali academic, to assist the research which he finds important.

6.5.1 Discussion with Somali professional

During the discussion he prefers talking about the process of rebuilding Somalia, rather than asking questions about Al-Shabaab. He does though express that he from sources in Somalia are informed that foreigners are on top of the Somali Leaders of Al-Shabaab, and that they are on control of the regional Al-Shabaab commanders.

6.5.2 Conversation with Somali F

The Somali is an academic who is interested in the research and is willing to discuss. Recording is not possible as the conversation is over telephone.

The informant says that there may be Al-Shabaab affiliates in Sweden, but that there must be very few. He claims a majority of the Somalis think it is wrong, that Al-Shabaab has chosen the wrong path, and that this path is a non-Muslim path. He adds that "all Somalis are laughing" when they see what Al-Shabaab does in Somalia[134]. What they do is wrong.

He is critical towards the authorities way of handling Al-Shabaab and other Islamists in Sweden. "How do they do when they go about and arrest people, they way they do is wrong." He claims that many Somalis think that CIA controls and directs the Swedish, which is seen as a marionette to US intelligence.

He thinks that there are discriminating against Muslims and/or Somalis and that should be very clear evidence against suspects of terrorisms, and that there presently is little confidence in the juridical process, saying: "We want to know the public way. Without the public processes, suspicion arises" This is also proven when he criticize the conviction of the two Swedes convicted in Gothenburg, but it turns out he had not read or heard the evidence used. He also thinks that the discrimination concerns statements by the police and the media:

> We are exposed when it comes to terrorism. The activities of the police creates more discrimination. When the police says someone is from Somalia, they Should think about the consequences.

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[134] "laughing" is interpreted by the interviewer as if they think it is so absurd, and that is why they laugh. The actions does not make Somalis happy.

The people working in the authorities are competent and skilled but they label them wrongly! He asks how it is that the two Somali men convicted in Gothenburg in December for terrorist plot, and also the suicide bomber Taimour Abdulwahab Al-Abdaly were labeled as "terrorists", but neither the "laser man"(Sw: *Lasermannen)* in Malmö in the fall 2010[135],nor the "laser man" in Stockholm during the early 1990's[136], were terrorists.

He does not believe that Al-Shabaab recruitment is focusing on Somalis. He says they do not believe in borders, ethnical entities or nation belongings, that can recruit anyone. "They can get any person from any country". He states about the Al-Shabaab recruitment that "they may use Somalis for their recruitment initially, but just to open the door for everyone". He explains that they would like to start with Somalis but then move forward.

On the question what he thinks about the capacity and future of Al-Shabaab he says that many Somalis believe that there are strong powers behind Al-Shabaab- whether it being right or wrong – they believe that strong forces are behind Al-Shabaab. They are believed to get support from all over the World. This is a opinion that is strong among Somalis, especially among the educated Somalis.

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[135] The "Laser man" in Malmö refers to the 38-year old man that was placed under formal arrest in November 2010, suspected of three murders and 10 attempted murders. Two of the murders were believed to have been committed in 2003.

[136] The "Laser man" in Stockholm refers to John Ausonius From August 1991 to January 1992 he shot eleven people in the Stockholm and Uppsala area, most of whom were immigrants, killing one and seriously injuring the others.

7. Comparison of the Grand and Small Narratives

An initial remark is that none of the informants said to have any own experience from Al-Shabaab's activities in Sweden and no one expressed to have firsthand knowledge.

7.1 Corresponding narratives

The Grand Narrative's description of an increased link between Al-Shabaab to Al-Qaida is also shared among the Small Narratives. During the discussion with the Somalis professional, he referred to information he had received from Somalia, saying that there is a group of foreigners leading al-Shabaab on top of the Somali leaders. 'Somali F' shared this view by saying that "most Somalis believe there are strong powers behind Al-Shabaab. 'Somali E' agrees that most leaders are foreigners and dismisses any idea that Al-Shabaab has a national plan for Somalia. One informant expressed that no Somalis are fooled by what Al-Shabaab do: "They just bomb and slaughter the people".

'Somali E' does not believe that Al-Shabaab recruitment is focusing on Somalis. He says Al-Shabaab does not believe in borders, ethnical entities or nation belongings, that can recruit anyone. "They can get any person from any country". This statement corresponds with announcements made by Al-Shabaab's spokesmen[137] and by the report on Al-Shabaab presented to the Djibouti conference in December 2010.[138] According to reports from the UN Monitoring group on Somalia, the role of foreign fighters though seems overstated. [139]

Regarding reasons to radicalization on a local level, there is an agreement between the Grand and Small Narratives. A perceived feeling of being an outsider, unemployment and difficulties in school are mentioned in the Small Narratives as believed motivations. 'Somali A' thinks that the reason is that young people may have a feeling of being outsiders in society, when "they have failed in school, are unemployed, do nothing and just hang with their friends", a view shared by Somali D.

'Somali E' does not believe that Al-Shabaab's recruitment is focusing on Somalis but is aimed at anyone who will support its cause. He does believe though that initial contacts may

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[137] Youtube 2009-01-14b
[138] Ali 2010, p. 4
[139] UN S/2010/91, p. 15

be with Somalis, in order to then move on to recruit others. This is in line with the Security Service's report, where the social contacts are both very important within Al-Shabaab[140] and that social aspects are important for becoming radicalized and making recruitment possible[141].

According to the Security Service, there are direct contacts between people in Sweden and people at difference levels within foreign terrorist groups, Al-Shabaab being one.[142] In the report it is also mentioned the problem with radicalization, which is focused on mainly younger men. Radicalization take place in various environments, physical but also virtual. One virtual forum mentioned is al-Qimmah (see section 2.3) and its importance for recruitment for Al-Shabaab is not to be underestimated[143]. None of the informants have mentioned the internet when speaking of radicalization. Possibly, this is due to that the majority of the informants were older person. They do though unanimously agree that there are younger men that run the risk of becoming radicalized.

With regard to Sweden, the Security Service believes that there is a large Somali group that has been active for a long time. Initially, the Somali group was dedicated to financial issues, but lately the intent to travel to Somalia has increased.[144] This is not commented by any Somalis; they express that they believe "there are a few" or that there "might be" Al-Shabaab affiliates in Sweden, but there were only sweeping remarks.

7.2   Differences between the Grand and Small Narratives.

Even though all the informants were negative towards Al-Shabaab and there were on no occasion anyone that expressed any understanding for Al-Shabaab's use of violence. Several expressed that they somewhat disagreed with the Grand Narrative to define Al-Shabaab as an Islamist organization, hence saying they are Muslims, since there is nothing in Al-Shabaab's interpretation of Islam that sanctioned suicide bombing or use of violence against innocent.

With regard to what drives radicalization in Sweden, the Grand Narrative has expressed that global context is of importance when people are radicalized[145]. This is a returning theme in

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[140] Gothenburg District Court 8 December 2010, p. 166
[141] Security Service 2010b, p. 11.
[142] Ibid, p. 80
[143] Ibid, p. 71
[144] Gothenburgs District Court, 8 December 2010, p. 162
[145] Ibid, p. 52-53

several on the confrontations. Lars Vilks depiction of the Prophet Muhammed has been questioned in almost all confrontation. Whereas they critically highlight the importance of tolerance, they do question where the line between freedom of speech and incitement to racial hatred is drawn. Finding this problematic is common among the Somalis as well as non-Somali participants in the confrontations. Somali A, B, and D, as well as the employee at the association and the researcher at FOI mentioned Vilks as a trigger for extremists:

> What will they [people like Lars Vilks] do? Only to be seen on television and then irritate people, this is not good. It has surpassed freedom of speech, well, you could say that it is incitement to racial hatred, as you insult millions of Muslims. So, such things as he who says so, you don't win much, but a lot of people gets pissed off and blows themselves up.[146]

Another frequent subject for discussion is the global injustice contributes to radicalization. The role and engagement by US in the world has often been questioned and criticized throughout the confrontations. Invading Iraq, and its attempts to "rule the world" have been seen as triggering factors for Islamist extremists.

In relation to this, 'Somali F' expressed that there is a widespread suspiciousness among Somalis against the Security Service. This is due to that many Somalis believe that the US commands and controls the Security Service's activities in Sweden. Possibly, this has got to do with that suspected Islamist extremists have been arrested and subsequently treated. Whereas this may have been an individual opinion, the suspiciousness against the Security Service came up in different ways. For one part, several Somalis were reluctant to be interviewed, which later turned out to be because the suspected the researcher to be a representative from the Security Service, as told by 'Somali E'.

'Somali F' further expressed that many Somalis thought that the Security Service and media were discriminating Somalis and Muslims:

> We are exposed when it comes to terrorism. The activities of the police creates more discrimination. When the police say someone is from Somalia, they should think about the consequences.[147]

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[146] Conversation with Somali A
[147] Conversation with Somali F

Possibly the critique against the Security Service is uncalled for, but the perception of being discriminated still prevails. As an example, Somali F asks how it is that the two Somali men convicted in Gothenburg in December 2010 for terrorist plot, and also the suicide bomber Taimour Abdulwahab Al-Abdaly were labeled as "terrorists", but neither the "laser man"(Sw: "*Lasermannen*") in Malmö in the fall 2010[148], nor the "laser man" in Stockholm during the early 1990's[149], were seen as terrorists. The feeling of discrimination might be shared by more people.

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[148] The "laser man" in Malmö refers to the 38-year old man that was placed under formal arrest in November 2010, suspected of three murders and 10 attempted murders. Two of the murders were believed to have been committed in 2003. All victims had some kind of immigrant background.

[149] The "Laser man" in Stockholm refers to John Ausonius. From August 1991 to January 1992 he shot eleven people in the Stockholm and Uppsala area, most of whom were immigrants, killing one and seriously injuring the others.

8. <u>Conclusion</u>

Al-Shabaab is a Somali jihadist organization with unspecified links to Al-Qaida, fighting against the TFG in Somalia to win power and then extend its fight to establish a global Caliphate. It developed as a local violent entity but have in recent years moved closer the Al-Qaida sphere.

Al-Shabaab has links to Sweden that traces back some years. Previously supportive and financing activities have likely been most common, but an increased number of Swedish people travel to Somalia to join the terrorist organization. During the fall 2010, two men were convicted for terrorist plot based on their plans to fight for Al-Shabaab in Somalia. One of the most senior Al-Shabaab leader is believed to be Swedish, and their most used propaganda website is hosted in Sweden.

Recruitment in Sweden still mainly serves to feed the fighting in Somalia. Also, given that Sweden still is a relatively homogenous democracy, this lowers the risk of attacks. Sweden has a significant Somalis diaspora; though, given that the imbalances are fairly small and that the diasporic community has little connection to Al-Shabaab, which increasingly is becoming a jihadist organization, the risk is fairly low. However, changes in certain causes or factors, as discussed in chapter 3 and 4, may change this situation.

The Security Service's Grand Narrative about Al-Shabaab is that it is an violent Islamist terrorist organization with roots in Sweden and that there is a risk for continuous radicalization and recruitment leading to increased threats in foremost Somalia but possibly also in Sweden.

As Somalis are mostly Muslims, they do not wish to call Al-Shabaab an Islamist organization as they do not consider what it does to be a part of Islam. The Somalis' Small Narratives reject Al-Shabaab's violent activities causing damages to innocent people and to Somalia. Even though the Small Narratives reject the violent methods, there is still a understanding for some of the underlying frustrations leading to radicalization, as insults against the prophet, global imbalances and perceived isolation from the society one lives in.

The Small Narratives corresponded well to the Grand Narrative, representing the Security Service's view on Al-Shabaab, as far as the information extracted on certain issues, corresponded for those specific issues.

Other interesting findings were that the Somalis did not want to label Al-Shabaab as an 'Islamist' organization, seeing that the way it uses Islam has in the eyes of the Somalis nothing to do with religion. Also, the Somalis, and other informants as well, did show an understanding for some triggering factors that may drive individuals to commit terror acts. Examples were foremost the painting by Lars Vilks which has angered many Muslims worldwide.

8.1 Reflections on the process

During the process of collecting the Small Narratives, it has become evident that many Somalis are reluctant to talk to the Security Service, whereas several also mention they have previous experience. This does to some extent indicate that an active presence from the Security Service is met with some skepticism. It appeared that the respondents both as Somalis and Muslims, felt discriminated in media and by the police. Maybe this was just a perceived reality, based on cultural "narratives" about the police, but yet, in order to prevent and handle radicalization, the confidence for the Security Service might need improvement.

Finally, in terms of the collection, there might have been interesting to find younger informants and ask more specific questions under more structures forms; the Somali respondents in this research were all men aged between 40 up to 70. This would require better access and more time but hopefully, the findings would be even more revealing in terms of Al-Shabaab recruitment and radicalization processes.

8.2 Suggestions for future research

The findings in this thesis are rather weak in terms of generalizability and representativeness. To further investigate how Al-Shabaab is perceived and hence could be countered – including how radicalization in related environment could be hampered, would need further and deeper research. Such research should include larger scopes of informant in lower ages to reach out to those most likely exposed for the recruitment and radicalization environments.

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