



THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

**FROM ROVING TO STATIONARY ACTORS: UNDERSTANDING THE
TERRITORIAL LOGIC OF NON-STATE ARMED ACTORS**

MASTER THESIS

FELIX SHIHUNDU

MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

AUGUST 2022



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STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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Signature:



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

“It takes a village to raise a child” - African proverb

I proudly acknowledge all those in Kenya and Turkey who take it upon themselves for whom I am becoming!!!



DEDICATION

To my father and my beloved mother.



ABSTRACT

FROM ROVING TO STATIONARY ACTORS: UNDERSTANDING THE TERRITORIAL LOGIC OF NON-STATE ARMED ACTORS

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How do we understand the territorial logic of Non State Armed Actors (NSAAs)? Non state armed actors are increasingly becoming more assertive in the contemporary conflict environment. They are undermining the Westphalia state structure, challenging Weberian sovereignty and providing an alternative territorial complex. The research study utilizes primary evidence from original sources to shed more light in the understanding of the territorial logic of the NSAAs. The study gives critical insights in the demarcation of both physical and imaginary space by the NSAAs. The three main components of NSAA territorial logic which include governance, relations with the local civilian population as well as ideology, tactics and strategies are comprehensively analyzed to develop a topology of understanding the territorial logic of NSAAs.

Non-state armed actor governance is useful in understanding whether a NSAA is interested in territorial control. This is because the establishment of governance hierarchies and functions requires significant control of territory. In most cases, territory is required for the establishment of administrative orders and delivery of public goods and services such as health, education, finance (tax), security, public works, law and order. Non-state armed actors interested in consolidating and solidifying territorial hold engage in deliberate efforts to win the hearts and minds of the local civilian populations. To some extent they encourage civilian participation in their governance by creating structures of civilian involvement at different stages of the conflict. They also attempt to modify civilian behaviour (like homogenization) for legitimacy and effective control of the population and the territory. Non-state armed actor ideology, territorial tactics and strategies can also give critical insights into its territorial logic. Some NSAAs have a clearly defined ideology that points to their conceptualization and demarcation of space. For other NSAAs, territorial tactics

and strategies like employment of strategic violence towards minorities, who generally, pose little threat to the insurgency goals as well as mass sexual violence of females may be attempts to determine future citizenry of the controlled territories.

From the findings of control case studies, both Al Shabaab and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria qualify as territorial NSAAs with very different territorial conceptualizations and interpretations. Both utilize strategic violence and the strategic weakening of the state power and authority to expand their territorial quests. ISIS achieved significant territorial sophistication compared to Al Shabaab. All of them rolled out governance functions in the controlled territories and actively engaged in attempts to homogenize the populations for legitimacy and solidifying control over local people and territories. ISIS established much more elaborate administrative institutions compared to Al Shabaab and employed a lot more innovative and diversified territorial strategies and tactics compared to Al Shabaab. ISIS had a clear ideology well captured by its motto ‘endure and expand’ towards establishment of a caliphate. Al Shabaab’s territorial conceptualization is divided between religion and tribe, between establishing Islamic caliphate in East Africa and establishing a greater Somalia.

Key Words:

Non State Armed Actors, Territorial Logic, Governance, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Al Shabaab.

ÖZET

GÖÇEBELIKTEN YERLESİK AKTÖRLERE: SİLAHLI DEVLET-DIŞI AKTÖRLERİN ÜLKESELLİK MANTIĞINI ANLAMAK

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Devlet Dışı Silahlı Aktörlerin ülkesellik mantığını nasıl anlarız? Devlet dışı silahlı aktörler çağdaş çatışma ortamında giderek daha iddialı hale geliyor. Vestfalya devlet yapısını baltalıyor, Weberci egemenliğe meydan okuyor ve alternatif bir bölgesel kompleks sağlıyorlar. Araştırma çalışması, devlet dışı silahlı aktörlerin bölgesel mantığının anlaşılmasında daha fazla ışık tutmak için orijinal kaynaklardan elde edilen birincil kanıtları kullanmaktadır. Çalışma, devlet dışı silahlı aktörler tarafından hem fiziksel hem de hayali alanın sınırlandırılması konusunda kritik bilgiler vermektedir. Devlet dışı silahlı aktör bölgesel mantığının yönetim, yerel sivil halkla ilişkiler ve ideoloji, taktik ve stratejileri içeren üç ana bileşeni, devlet dışı silahlı aktörlerin bölgesel mantığını anlama topolojisi geliştirmek için kapsamlı bir şekilde analiz edilmektedir.

Devlet dışı silahlı aktör yönetimi, devlet dışı silahlı bir aktörün toprak kontrolü ile ilgilenip ilgilenmediğini anlamada yararlıdır. Bunun nedeni, yönetim hiyerarşilerinin ve işlevlerinin kurulmasının, bölgenin önemli ölçüde kontrol edilmesini gerektirmesidir. Çoğu durumda, idari emirlerin kurulması ve sağlık, eğitim, finans (vergi), güvenlik, bayındırlık işleri, hukuk ve düzen gibi kamu mal ve hizmetlerinin teslimi için bölge gereklidir. Toprak hakimiyetini pekiştirmek ve sağlamlaştırmak isteyen devlet dışı silahlı aktörler, yerel sivil halkın kalbini ve zihnini kazanmak için kasıtlı çabalar sarf ediyor. Bir dereceye kadar, çatışmanın farklı aşamalarında sivil katılım yapıları yaratarak yönetimlerine sivil katılımı teşvik ediyorlar. Ayrıca, nüfusun ve bölgenin meşruiyeti ve etkin kontrolü için sivil davranışları (homojenleştirme gibi) değiştirmeye çalışırlar. Devlet dışı silahlı aktör ideolojisi, bölgesel taktikleri ve stratejileri de bölgesel mantığına eleştirel bakış açısı kazandırabilir. Bazı devlet dışı silahlı aktörler, mekanın kavramsallaştırılmasına ve

sınırlandırılmasına işaret eden açıkça tanımlanmış bir ideolojiye sahiptir. Diğer devlet dışı silahlı aktörler için, genel olarak isyan hedeflerine çok az tehdit oluşturan azınlıklara yönelik stratejik şiddetin uygulanması gibi bölgesel taktikler ve stratejiler ve kadınların kitlesel cinsel şiddeti, kontrol edilen bölgelerin gelecekteki vatandaşlarını belirleme girişimleri olabilir.

Kontrol vaka çalışmalarının bulgularına göre, hem El Şebab hem de Irak ve Şam İslam Devleti, çok farklı bölgesel kavramsallaştırmalara ve yorumlara sahip bölgesel devlet dışı silahlı aktörler olarak nitelendirilmektedir. Her ikisi de bölgesel arayışlarını genişletmek için stratejik şiddetten ve devlet gücünün ve otoritesinin stratejik olarak zayıflamasından yararlanıyor. IŞİD, El Şebab'a kıyasla önemli bir bölgesel karmaşıklık elde etti. Hepsi kontrol edilen bölgelerde yönetim işlevlerini ortaya koydu ve meşruiyet için nüfusları homojenleştirme ve yerel halk ve bölgeler üzerindeki kontrolü sağlamlaştırmaya girişimlerine aktif olarak katıldı. IŞİD, El Şebab'a kıyasla çok daha ayrıntılı idari kurumlar kurdu ve El Şebab'a kıyasla çok daha yenilikçi ve çeşitlendirilmiş bölgesel stratejiler ve taktikler kullandı. IŞİD, bir halifeliğin kurulmasına yönelik "dayan ve genişle" sloganıyla iyi yakalanmış açık bir ideolojiye sahipti. El Şebab'ın bölgesel kavramsallaştırması, din ve kabile arasında, Doğu Afrika'da İslam halifeliği kurmak ve daha büyük bir Somali kurmak arasında bölünmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Devlet Dışı Silahlı Aktörler, Ülkesellik Mantık, Yönetişim, Irak ve Şam İslam Devleti (IŞİD), El Şebab.

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DEFINITIONS AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF TERMS

Roving actor	a non-state armed actor that constantly moves or shifts geo-political zone or space in a significant way.
Stationary actor	a non-state armed actor that establishes a permanent state like governance functions in a particular territory with a notable population.
Non State Armed Actor	Refers to organizations that militarily challenge the legitimate state monopoly of violence over a particular territory.
Territory	A controlled geographical area (either land, water, air or imagined) over which an actor exercises power.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

The role of non-state armed actors (NSAAs) in international security cannot be under estimated. To begin with, even though security is almost expressly a state solemnly responsibility, the NSAAs have a sway on how it is provided. Al Qaeda for instance, has changed the way security is provided by state actors after the September 2001 attacks on the United States. The NSAAs continue to emerge as critical characters in the contemporary conflict environment challenging both the Weberian and Westphalia tenets of the state such as sovereignty, legitimacy and territorial integrity. They not only provide a challenge to state building but also a challenge to the provision of security and resolving of most threatening conflicts in the world. Eliminating the challenge of NSAAs is critical to ensuring the effectiveness and the efficiency of the state in the modern era. Interestingly, the relevance of NSAAs in the international politics has increased because of their increased ability to threaten and jeopardize the Weberian and Westphalia order. One of the reasons they are able to pose a threat can be linked to the rivalry over control of territory which this study explores to find out their territorial control logic. Milliken and Krause are among the group of researchers who have acknowledged the increased challenge of the armed groups in the contemporary conflicts (Krause & Milliken, 2009).

Non-state armed actor control of territory is not entirely a new concept in international relations and security studies literature. However, the current increased appetite and enthusiasm of armed groups especially in the Middle East and Africa warrants further enquiry. The Breakthrough research by Mancur Olson in his *Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development* remain highly relevant in the occupation and control of territories by armed non-states actors. He coins the terms ‘roving’ and ‘stationary’ bandits to reflect the brute force, theft and blunder of resources under anarchy by armed groups that are not interested in controlling territory versus armed groups that control territory, monopolize revenue resources and as a result due to mutual beneficial interests in a particular territory provide public goods and establish a peaceful order (Olson, 1993).

Olson's views are widely regarded as the roots of NSAA state formation because once the groups transform from roving to stationary actors in a particular territory, they start providing governance functions such as security and economic control. Stationary armed groups set up a hierarchical relation with the population mutually providing state like functions in return of rents, loyalty and consent from the population. It is this aspect that brings a sharp contrast and competition with the Weberian state entities. The NSAAs that control a particular territory are more likely to win support and legitimacy of the local population away from the Weberian state as they provide for the welfare of the population and ensure resources remain available for the future. They are also more likely to mount a formidable resistance against the state as some of them innovate and improvise on the deficiencies of the existing home state to their advantage to incentivize the local population.

But what justifies the armed non-state actor change of status from roving to stationary or vice versa? This is a critical question in understanding the territorial logic of NSAAs. According to Beardsley et al, armed groups that lack the support of the local population have no option but to continue roving as a battle strategy against the state. In their analysis using the case studies of Sudan's People's Liberation Army (SPLM/A), Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and Mali based Tuareg rebels, they established a significant variation in the location of the armed struggle every year (Beardsley et al., 2015). The findings shift the attention to the necessary threshold for roving. The threshold for roving armed actors is highly contested with this study considering roving to imply a significant to a complete change of physical location and territory of an armed actor. However, with all factors held constant, armed groups tend to strongly want to control a stationary distinct territory rather than rove.

1.1 The Link between Roving and Stationary Non-State Armed Actors

Different explanations have been put forward by scholars as to why armed groups either rove or remain stationary. According to Buhaug, the geographical location of the conflict will influence the characteristics of the NSAAs and the objective of either moving or not. Buhaug, utilizing the 1946 – 2000 PRIO/Uppsala Armed Conflict dataset concludes that geography is very important in determining the winner and the means of the warfare (Buhaug & Gates, 2002). Geographical

factors such as the area of the state, distances to the borders of neighbouring states, availability of natural resources and duration of the conflict are very critical in determining movement/nature of an armed group irrespective of the objectives (secession or otherwise) or the ethnic or religious composition of the armed group. Buhaug continues to emphasize on the geographical factors of location, terrain and natural resources in subsequent studies. These factors influence the fighting capacity of the armed group and hence the nature and behaviour of the armed group (Buhaug et al., 2009). Although he uses complex statistical approaches to estimate in both studies, I find his arguments about geography influencing the nature of the armed group to be accurate and relevant. When geographical factors weaken an armed group it prefers to stay on the move as a survival tactic, on the other hand, armed groups that are strengthened by particular geographical factors are less likely to consider mobility.

Mamphilly insists that the motivations and the aims of the armed group determine whether the armed group will seek to establish governance functions, cultivate a relationship with the local population and consequently seek legitimacy and rule by consent (Mampilly, 2011, pp. 1–24). This is the textbook example of the process of formation of a new state. Armed struggles on behalf of a particular ethnic group and those motivated by the quest for autonomy and independence tend to be stationary in nature. Stationary armed groups invest considerably in the governance functions of the territory and for them defending the territory against local state is the main goal and priority. Roving becomes irrational and unattractive to territorial armed groups since they aim to firm up their control of the area.

Roving is also considered as a survival tactic especially for relatively weak groups. Becoming mobile for such groups eliminates the risk of a sounding defeat by the state which usually enjoys more resources and capacity than the armed groups. The shifting of the geographical location is also useful in evading eminent threats from other armed groups in the existing anarchy of a civil war. Mobility deflects the counterinsurgency measures of the state that would most likely target strongholds of the armed group, combined with guerilla battle tactics roving raises the cost of the war for the state sometimes to unsustainable levels. Roving is the only option for armed groups that have not well established a relationship with the local population and that are facing the strong counterinsurgency actions from the state (Beardsley et al., 2015). Interestingly, the state is more

likely to prefer the roving armed groups because they are not able to consolidate the support of the local population which is even more challenging for the state to dismantle as acknowledged by Kalyvas in his classical writing titled *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Kalyvas, 2006). The state can easily plan and manage resources to deal with groups on the run thus preferring to ruthlessly strike the strongholds of the armed groups at the earliest to scatter and displace them. The alternative is for the state to pursue containment measures which potentially afford the armed groups the opportunity to recruit, mobilize support and claim legitimate sovereignty of a particular territory. In some cases, even though the governments of the respective states may be able to afford the military and strategic costs of scattering the armed groups by striking the strongholds, containment is preferred because of the unbearable political consequences. The political costs are even higher when the armed group has established a strong relationship such as ethnic with the local population that potentially turns any form of violence from the state whether discriminate or indiscriminate into sympathy and support for the armed groups. The armed group in this situation does not just act to annihilate the state apparatus but acts in a manner consistent with the needs of the local population in order to maintain an image that wins the souls and minds of the population.

Beardsley also argues that the role of the external actors in the conflict and the strengths of the government of the competing state have a bearing on the movement of the conflict zones. A strong government that's capable of enforcing law and order will discourage stationary armed non-state actors compared to a weak one. On the other hand foreign military interventions and other forms of support from other foreign groups distort the conflict environment with the armed groups adjusting and realigning to the requirements of foreign actors to the detriment of entrenching strong ties with the local population which is a key ingredient and incentive for territorial control.

Olson's analogy linking roving and stationary armed groups remains authoritative in the discipline. He equates roving armed groups to the anarchical state of nature where there exists stiff competition for resources characterized by widespread stealing and lack of incentives to accumulate the resources for fear of it being stolen. A roving actor that monopolizes the stealing transforms into a stationary actor and starts to provide governance functions to expand and stabilize the resources available for extraction (McGuire & Olson, 1996). The new stationary actor that has seized territory, ensures law and order as well as provision of other public goods avails an

opportunity for the subjects to produce more thus accumulating more resources than roving actors. By eliminating the anarchy both the stationery armed group and the population benefit from increased stable incomes. However, scholars have put doubts on how quickly a bad predatory armed actor can change into a good non-predatory one providing much needed public goods. The new actor does not necessarily enjoy or establish a relationship with the local population hence presenting another phase of state fragility and failure. Other scholars have notably argued that the theft oriented roving actor may not be effective and successful as a stationery actor. Significant transformations are inevitable such as the redefinition of the group which may involve incorporation of new members, recognizing encompassing interests and the pursuit of those interests through provision of all-inclusive collective goods (Young, 2016).

1.2 Why and How Non-State Armed Actors Control Territory

The question of why NSAAs control territory is a critical one and many stakeholders are interested in understanding the compelling reasons. Non-state armed actors are widely believed to control or be interested in controlling territory fundamentally because of their strategic objectives, security and order, access to resources, desire to build state like structures and the provision of services to the local population. The cases of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Islamic States of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Taliban Afghanistan demonstrate the relationship between armed groups territorial control and revenue since these armed groups controlled and utilized large territories to accumulate wealth before counterinsurgency action. Armed groups territorial control gives them access to more resources, increased population for taxation and a range of other useful commodities in the territories such as natural resources like oil fields for ISIS. Territorial control determines the level of diversification of the revenue sources of an armed group with armed groups that control small and shrinking territories more likely to have a complex network of diversified revenue sources compared to those that control significant territories.

Scholars largely agree that NSAAs control territory to establish state like structures that are responsible for security and order as well as the important function of public service delivery to the population. Florea stresses on the internal characteristics of the NSAA arguing that armed groups that are united and cohesive internally are more likely to establish and provide governance

functions as opposed to the fragmented ones which suffer from leadership and uncoordinated objectives (Florea, 2020). Perhaps the organizational structure of the armed groups gives us the basis of understanding why there are so many armed groups but only a handful are interested in controlling territory. The provision of governance functions is just one of the ways NSAAs utilize to control territory and regulate affairs in the jurisdiction.

Armed groups also manage to control territory by investing in the local population by providing essential public goods and services that have an overall impact of building the reputation of the armed group vis a vis that of the home state. The relationship of the armed group with the local population therefore becomes very critical for the territorial armed groups as they depend on the population in return for resources and potential support and protection against counterinsurgency operations. Instilling love to the population under their effective control or the science of winning the minds and the hearts of the population is aimed at the armed group reputation building which is useful in building international popular support or sympathy as well as attract resources and new recruits into their ranks (Akcinaroglu & Tokdemir, 2018). Armed groups mobilizing resources through popular support from the population are the most detrimental to the state as this is the clearest signal of their legitimacy. The local population in a particular territory will give loyalty and support including financial to the side that responds to their immediate needs and its ugly when they choose the armed group over the state. However, armed groups enjoying significant acceptance and support from the population are behaviorally shaped by the population to tactically and strategically act in a more civil and organized manner (Freeman, 2011).

1.3 The Elusive Theory of Non-State Armed Actors

Scholars focusing on the armed non-state actors have been criticized for not developing a widely accepted theory of understanding the actions and behaviours of NSAAs like the international relations theories that focus on the state behaviour. This is not surprising because the state is the main actor in the international system save for the emerging assertive role of the NSAAs. In the current global politics NSAAs influence on both internal and external state processes such as the provision of security to the population and foreign policy decision making. While attempting to theorize this field with a particular focus on intelligence, (Gentry, 2016) acknowledges the

similarities in the intelligence requirements of the state and NSAAs arguing that the armed groups organization, gathering, processing and use of intelligence differed from that of states. The immediate deduction of his findings is that non state armed groups approach to issues is different but not far away from that of the state, there are notable similarities albeit with different outcomes.

The differences amongst leading scholars in the discipline combined with the many diversified NSAAs have both contributed to the difficulties in theorizing the field. The differences arise from as far as in the terminology used to classify the non-state actors leave alone the divide which is already in the definition of the actors in the study of international relations. The elusive theorization of the field is not always negative as it has offered an opportunity for researchers focusing in this area to innovate and explore different methodological approaches leading to new interesting insights especially in the field of research itself.

1.4 Importance of the Research Study

Non-state armed actors influence nature of contemporary conflicts and peacebuilding efforts and they will potentially influence the future provision of security by the state to the population and critical state infrastructure and institutions. It is therefore important to understand their logic especially when it comes to conceptualization of territory. Understanding NSAA territorial logic is useful in organizing effective countermeasures that will save the lives and property in the protracted conflicts.

The state centric international relations often leaves NSAAs with limited options to sovereignty and legitimacy despite effectively controlling significant territories and providing critical governance functions to the population. The state centric international system pushes NSAAs to the periphery since it only recognizes sovereign states as the sole providers of order and security as well as all public goods. The realization that NSAAs are posing a challenge to this traditional paradigm necessitates research to gain more insights and understanding both at the academic and policy level.

The study will be useful in understanding the impact of the NSAAs on state behaviour. States facing action from armed groups have often struggled to respond effectively since conventional methods have proved not to produce the desired results. In terms of protecting civilian rights and respect for international humanitarian law or international law in general NSAAs are not meaningfully involved in the process despite of controlling territory and servicing civilians. The current trends and the resulting humanitarian crisis calls for all parties state and non-state to find innovative ways of eliminating suffering of civilians without any of the parties getting into an awkward situation. There is an urgent need to understand how the actions of the armed groups influence the reactions and the behaviour of the state.

The control of territory is in the contemporary conflicts largely seen as a success prompting non-state armed groups to spare nothing in realizing the strategic goal of controlling territory. For territorial armed groups territory is not just enough for survival. It is the ultimate measure of success thus calling for both tactical and strategic reterritorialization and de-territorialization to meet the ultimate goal. Some other groups use territory as a war resource in itself and as a means to exploit or access resources for the war effort with the state. However, just like state actors others use territory to provide the public goods and services to the population under effective control. The study will be significant for the state actor to remain tactics and strategies ahead of the insurgent armed groups that are only interested in wrestling state power and authority for sinister motives.

1.5 Objectives of the Research Study

The main objective of the study is to develop a useful topology for understanding the territorial logic of the NSAAs. The study intends to extend the scope of studies in NSAAs by developing a new original framework that will be useful in the analysis of the NSAAs and even in the future research in the field. The framework of understanding the territorial logic of armed non-state actors brings together the related components of armed non-state actor governance, relations with the civilians and the operational tactics and strategies.

The study will provide a tool for the scholars of international relations and students to measure or accurately estimate the territorial logic employed by the armed non-state actors in the world politics. This is likely to improve the analysis of global security events following the increased role of the armed groups. The research does not only provide a new perspective but strongly overhauls methodological approaches in the discipline for the benefit of future studies.

The methodological approach is necessary because only a few comprehensive studies have been done to understand the territorial logic of the NSAAs but most of them without constructing a formidable framework of analysis. The construction of the framework of analysis and the subsequent application to the two original case studies crowns the academic objective of this research study. Most studies involving actor demarcation of space have focused on the state territorial demarcation and territorial jurisdiction. It is therefore, necessary to break ranks and focus on the non-state armed groups.

1.6 Methods and Data

In order to come up with more generalizable results, the study starts by exploring the literature on the concept of territoriality both in the philosophical state centric sense and from the perspective of the NSAAs. The findings from the existing literature are innovatively analyzed for the development of a useful topology of understanding the territorial logic of the NSAAs. The study then moves into a testing and confirmation phase using two original and most relevant case studies from the Middle East region and Africa respectively. The significant control of territory by a NSAA is an important criteria of inclusion. These case studies provide an opportunity for applying the arguments and framework developed by the author while reading and interacting with the literature to be confirmed or otherwise thus providing more insights into the territorial logic of the armed groups.

In analyzing the case studies, the research relies mostly on verifiable and reliable primary empirical sources of original evidence such as the non-state armed group's own productions of video, texts, imaginary or any other kind of original evidence. Where the original evidence was in a language other than English, the research relied on its credible English translation. Secondary empirical data

was also utilized mainly to verify and support original arguments and ensure reliability and credibility in the study. The kind of data analyzed was both qualitative and quantitative where useful verifiable numbers and figures were available. The study effectively overcome challenges associated with time and the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic on academic research work.

However, the study acknowledges that a field study to collect primary, original and new data from the field would have been more suitable in the development of the framework of study and this option remains open in the future inquiries. Owing to the existing grey areas in understanding the territorial logic of non-state armed groups and the limited studies in this area, developing a multi-dimensional framework was necessary and the most important reason for pursuing this study that potentially eliminates the shortcomings in future studies and analysis. This leads to a better understanding and analysis of the contemporary conflict environment.

The two case studies importance cannot be overstated as they give more depth and light on the specifics of the analysis which forms the bulk of the study (Kohlbacher, 2006). The study could also benefit from the specific insights of more case studies but due to limitations of time only two were explored comprehensively providing us the leeway at least for comparative analysis. The study settled on the two case studies representing the closest contemporary cases of armed group's territorial control covering the key tenets of the study which are governance, relations with the civilian population and the exhibiting of varying territorial control tactics and strategies. The diversity of the case studies was an important factor for the study so that the results could be analyzed independently without unnecessary overlaps. The diversified ranges of the case studies also provided insights into the unique details of the NSAA conceptualization of space. The differences in the types of governance, the nature of relations established with the local civilians and the diverse territorial tactics and strategies could easily be captured. There is a lot of concurrence in the literature that ISIS was mainly focused on controlling space and establishing a caliphate hence the most likely case of a territorial non-state armed actor in this study. Al Shabaab, on the other hand, elicits mixed opinions whether the group still controls any significance territorial control inside Somalia especially after the United Nations – African Union hybrid military mission was launched in Somalia. In this study therefore, Al Shabaab appears to be the least likely case of NSAA controlling territory.

The main distinctive pieces of information that were critical to the research are the ones that directly deals to the three components of non-state armed group's territorial logic. The first component useful for the study is the governance component. Armed groups with the objective of establishing Westphalia like governance functions tend to have a different territorial logic as compared to those with other objectives. The second critical component to the study is the non-state armed group's relations with the local civilian population with the serious territorial NSAA prioritizing the wellbeing of the civilians under their area of control. This has the effect of the civilian population shaping the behaviour of the non-state armed group in the conflict with the state and other challenging actors. The final important component that also determined the collection of evidence for the study is the operational tactics and strategies employed by the armed groups in order to challenge for the control of the territory amongst other actors. Some territorial groups have relied on deadly violence while others focus on strategically winning the hearts and minds of the civilians living in the contested territorial jurisdictions. The different tactics and strategies employed have a bearing on the territorial logic of the NSAA involved. The three main components combined with their critical sub components formed the main search for data and information for analysis in the study. The researcher believes that it is more useful to construct a topology of limited but key components rather than try to be exhaustive with the large and diversified number components of the NSAAs.

1.7 Structure of the Study

The research study is organized into five chapters with chapter one introducing the problem of research and expounding on the link between roving and stationary NSAAs as well as locating their place in the literature. The objectives and the importance of the study are also well elaborated in this chapter. The following chapter on literature review intertwines the traditional Weberian territorial logic and the NSAAs to give us a solid background of focusing on the territorial logic of NSAAs and developing the topology in chapter three. Understanding the classical Weberian logic and the Westphalia logic, all of which put the state at the center of their analysis, provides us with a good foundational knowledge and literature for exploring the territoriality of the NSAAs.

Chapter three is the main pivot of the study because it is the chapter that develops a multi-dimensional framework of analyzing the territorial logic of NSAAs. The multi-pronged topology brings together the closely interrelated concepts of NSAA governance, relations with the local population and the operational tactics employed in the areas under control or in areas only targeted for influence. The combination of these plus other necessary variables are innovatively explored to come up with a framework of analysis applicable to the critical need of understanding NSAA territorial logic.

The following chapter provides us with an opportunity to test our analytical tool on two case studies of Somalia based Al-Shabaab and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The case studies are selected because they represent some of the latest deliberate attempts by NSAAs to control and interpret territorial logic. Their geographical scope is also considered of great research interest because Africa and the Middle East are some of the regions in the world that have endured the turmoil of the NSAAs in the contemporary history. Al Shabaab continues to challenge and undermine the authority of the government in Mogadishu, seeking legitimacy by providing essential governance services to populations under their effective control. ISIS emerged with a complicated, adventurous and more curious territorial interpretations which combined both Weberian and new innovative models raising more questions as to what really was the territorial logic of the NSAAs.

The final chapter is a critical analysis of the findings arising from the testing of the framework from the two case studies. The analysis in this chapter helps us to make academic and policy meaning out of the findings of the research study. The analysis also locates and appreciates the evolving role, actions and behaviour of the state in relation to the territorial logic of the non-state armed groups. This chapter, being the apex of the study, is also responsible for useful counter-insurgency understandings for the state and stakeholders. It also highlights on the academic areas for further research and discourse development.

CHAPTER TWO

NON-STATE ARMED ACTORS AND PHILOSOPHICAL WEBERIAN TERRITORIAL LOGIC

2.0 Introduction

The contemporary conflict environment has brought into sharp focus the relationship between territorial conceptualization of the state and the NSAAs. This chapter explores the literature on the concept of territoriality, tracing its origins in the Weberian and Westphalia state logics to the contemporary international politics and conflict environments that are characterized by the increased number of NSAAs.

2.1 The Concept of Territoriality

The authors Atzili and Kadercan acknowledges the return of territorial politics after a period of both academic and policy stillness arguing that the contemporary conflict environment has necessitated a new rethinking of old seemingly established concepts. They bring forth the recent examples that have challenged the traditional understandings leaving even established powers struggling with issues of territorial integrity. The examples include China's unconventional artificial borders in the South China Sea, Russia's abnormal annexation of Ukrainian Crimea region and of importance to this research, alternative territorialization of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria all of which have signaled a red alert in the international politics (Atzili & Kadercan, 2017). Their territorial designs framework seeks to understand the logic, interactions as well as local and international consequences of different territorial arrangements. They argue that territoriality in international politics is not just a product of powerful actors alone but a result of interactions of multiple actors with differing capabilities, incentives and design strategies. However, the uniqueness of their study is the focus on the role modern technology plays in the formation of new territorialities.

The modern state has lost relevance, displaced and become archaic because of the challenges in controlling territory which traditionally is the source of both military and economic power for the state. NSAAs have turned around the tables in the face of post-cold war arguments that the future

of conflicts will not be about territory. Territory continues to significantly influence the contemporary conflict environments despite of the advancement of ideas like globalization and innovations in science technology (the internet). Evidence from the armed groups suggest that even though post-cold war conflicts largely moved within state boundaries (interstate), territory remains one of the most salient issues. The emerging conceptualization of territory by the armed groups challenges the projections of prominent scholars such as Ruggie who unbundles the three phases of territoriality in world politics namely; pre-territorial, Westphalian territoriality and post-territorial phases respectively (Ruggie, 1993). Ruggie also observed the decreasing importance of territory due to agreements such as military alliances and globalization practices like common markets, monetary unions and trading regimes among others. For the NSAAs territory is a frontier of expressing dominance over the state both physically or conceptually. To borrow the language of Elden, territory is the technique for the economics, politics and security of the actors without which the strategic objectives will not be realized (Elden, 2013, p. 10).

Agnew talks about territorial trap that characterizes the conventional thinking which the armed groups dismantle. According to him states are characterized as fixed units of sovereign space, internal and external polarity and as the organizers of societies (Agnew, 1994). His criticisms goes on to the discipline itself prioritizing territoriality for the state as the spatial demarcation of space for the exercise of state power as compared to the exercise of power and authority itself thorough hierarchical political institutions. This understanding which he links to the shortcomings of the system makes the state institution vulnerable to innovations to the concept of territoriality by the armed groups. He argues that the discipline's focus on the relations between territorial entities to be 'international relations' does not take into consideration the processes going on within the territorial boundaries of the state such as the emergence and formation of armed rebellion. The NSAAs challenge the state's total sovereignty over its territorial space, an act Agnew argues gives the state it's most powerful justification for the use of lethal and deadly force in a world characterized by only fragmented territorial states.

Another concept that has a close relationship with territoriality is the border concept. Despite the borders being linked directly to territory, there exists also a non-visible border conceptualization that is tactically and strategically explored by the non-state armed groups to undermine the strictly

territorial interpretation of borders that characterizes the Weberian state. The armed groups have been more flexible and willing to try out new border concepts, logics and imaginaries apparently taking into effect the evolving perspectives. But even territorial states acknowledge the fluidity of the borders preferring to use the shifting 'line in the sand' motif rather than the more solid 'line in the ground' (Parker & Vaughan-Williams, 2009), (Parker & Vaughan-Williams, 2012). In general, the armed non-state actors have been more active in bordering and re-bordering without caring much whether the borders are sovereign or just any other type of limits and boundaries (Salter, 2012). Taylor is more blunt linking territoriality directly to sovereignty due to its state centric nature and further arguing that territory can be manipulated by different actors and its character designed to suit the objectives and purposes of the time (Taylor, 1994). He paints a bleak picture of the future of the state comparing the territorial state to a leaking container and everything the state does weaken and put the state under existential threat.

Sassen helps us differentiate the closely related terms territory and territoriality. According to Sassen defining territory as what is within state authority has been naturalized but it runs the risk of neutralizing the concept of territory. Writing in *When Territory Deborders Territoriality*, Sassen argues that territoriality is a 'legal construct' and the concept of territory could not be confined to legal constructs, because some of its elements de-borders the authority of the state. States construct the concept of territoriality based on the law. For instance, private law for the United States and both public and international law for Germany territoriality logics (Sassen, 2013). The contribution by Sassen supports and aligns well with Agnew's 'territorial trap' which refers to the territory conceptualizations that do not explain processes beyond state borders.

Taylor contributes by defining territory as a wealth demarcated 'bounded' space whose contents and character can be manipulated and re-designed by an actor. Territoriality on the other hand is the behaviour of an actor with regards to the use of the territory (Taylor, 1994). This is an important departure as noted by Sassen because it disassociates territory with the state directly instead basing it on the resources/wealth. Territory is a space that is open for use by all the actors only that the state has played a significant role in the organization of territory and strengthening the link between territory and the people.

2.2 Territoriality and Non-State Armed Actors

Keating acknowledges the increased competition over the conceptualization of economic, social, and political space arguing that this is caused by the diminishing right and ability of the state to define territory (Keating, 2017). He emphasizes the importance of identities such as language and culture both in the process of de-territorializing and re-territorializing because they require spatial proximity. The use of social identities has been utilized by the NSAAs to demarcate their perceived boundaries and define the audience with ethnic and religious identities playing a critical role in the contemporary conflict environment. According to Penrose territory is created by boundaries which divide everything contained in it and the process of constructing the territory allows people to harness the potential of the space both emotionally and materially (Penrose, 2002). The Islamic State and other affiliated armed religious groups have capitalized on the emotional and psychological appeal to new audiences challenging them to move away from the land of the evil where they are looked down upon to the liberated land where they will exist in freedom. Penrose further argues that territorialization gives both physical and symbolic meaning to the people and the resources along the notions of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ among other notions that apparently lead to the cohesiveness of the territorial society. Understanding territorial logic is at the heart of contemporary conflicts especially when the state and the NSAAs lay claim to the same territory or even how to draw new boundaries after a successful secession of the NSAA from the home state. Non-state armed actors just like the state seek to express political authority not just over the person but importantly over the space.

Territories are critical in the development of an identity and a sense of patriotism. Penrose explores the four dimensions of this relevance potential of territory. Territory is constructed, conceptualized and promoted as a natural division by the actors which can be re-enforced by the physical features such as islands. The presentation of territories as natural is very convincing to the population and a potential source of legitimacy for the armed actors. The NSAAs also conceptualize territory as bonds and relationships between the people and the places that support and sustain their natural existence. Ties and strong bonds to the natural homeland are cultivated and nurtured overtime and the people develop a sense of responsibility and natural care for their home. The third one is often used by the non-state armed groups to displace hostile populations out of an area by

conceptualizing territory as having an emotional connection to some sections of the population that feel more at peace and at home with the space and the others should not live where they do not belong. The last emotional development of territory is one that involves the myths and misconceptions of the origins and pasts of the people which binds generations together with a strong link to a particular territory (Penrose, 2002). The earlier territorial theorization by John Locke emphasized the natural people's rights to property potentially giving rise to people's rights over the territory where the property belongs (Locke, 1988). On this background, NSAAs may claim the right to a particular property of significance and make it their goal to challenge the legitimate authority of the territory until they bring the property into what they perceive to be its rightful and natural jurisdiction.

According to Fidler's *Theory of open source anarchy*, NSAAs have weakened the ability and the functioning of the modern state especially in the execution of security and economic mandates (Fidler, 2008). The unstable state becomes highly limited in providing public goods, maintaining healthy product demand supply, provision of high quality health care and the combating of collective threats such as environmental degradation, global warming, climate change and disease pandemics. The open source anarchy primarily considers how the increased resource capacity of the NSAAs and the strengthening of their divergent and alternative ideas of the state are shaping the international relations and the role of the state altogether. Fidler argues that anarchy is not just a characteristic of the relationship between states, but anarchy has been transformed by the ideas and material capacity of NSAAs and in the contemporary international relations anarchy is also a characteristic of the relations between states and NSAAs. This remains the case despite some theories such as realism not considering the transformative role of the NSAAs in the international politics among nations.

The strengthening of material capacity of the NSAAs to the level of posing a challenge to the state is linked to the end of cold war rivalry and the advent of globalization that resulted in the increase in capital flows, widened access to financial services and advancements in communication technologies. The counter attempts by the state to degrade the material capabilities and ideological agenda of the NSAAs runs the risk of delegitimizing the state agenda. For instance, the United States international brand and prestige suffered heavily in the Muslim world during the country's

hot pursuit of Al Qaeda terrorists in Afghanistan. NSAAs possess the capability to change relationships between power and ideas, and indeed the anarchy save for the disrupting role of the state and the ability of the state to influence dynamics in favour.

According to Kratochwil, the continued erosion of the territorial integrity of the state complicates the process of resolving the contemporary conflicts. This is because territorial sovereignty is one of the most significant organizing principles of international relations as a measure of actor recognition (Kratochwil, 1986). Perhaps, this observation by Kratochwil point to the existing challenges of finding lasting solutions in conflicts involving state and NSAAs which are normally unrecognized as legitimate actors within the international system.

While analyzing the current use of drones in the counter-insurgency operations against the non-state armed groups especially in Iraq and Afghanistan, Kindervater argues that the drone strikes have led to the reshaping of territoriality and sovereignty as concepts in international politics but the significance and traditional meanings of the two concepts remains unchanged (Kindervater, 2017). According to Kindervater, drone warfare represents the emergence of ‘mobile and ephemeral sovereignty’ since it is capable of overcoming territorial limits. The change to drone tactics can explain one of the reason why NSAAs are shaping the behaviour of state entities.

2.3 Theories of Territoriality and the Emergence of the Territorial State

Several theories have been put forward to help in understanding the concept of territoriality but the most widely used is the *Westphalia hypothesis* of the emergence of the state with territorial sovereignty. Randall Collins build on the *Weberian logic* to come up with his geopolitical theory arguing that the legitimacy of the leadership of a particular territory is determined by the power and prestige of that territory abroad/at the international level. Collins argues that territorial power comprises of organizational resources for military use and territorial configuration for the exercise of the military power (Collins, 1981) (Collins, 1999). The territorial power is geopolitical in nature and it is determined by the state boundaries.

Collins's *geopolitical theory* can be summed up into four main principles. First is that, territorially large states with huge resource endowment and population growth are more likely to expand than territorially small and resource deficient states. Second, states surrounded with only a few challengers and only in a few directions, what he refers to as 'marchland' states, are more likely to grow and expand compared to states surrounded by adversaries from all sides, referred to as 'interior' states. Third, although controlling a significant amount of territory is a source of power, this principle warns against over expanding which according to Collins it increases the costs of operations and complicates logistics for controlling distant territories potentially leading to unbearable territorial losses. The fourth and last principle is that, the interior states due to pressure from the many challengers on almost on fronts tend to fragment running the risk of becoming spheres of influence of the many surrounding actors. Resources make territory valuable and attractive, otherwise a large territory without resources can breed internal rebellion as the leaders will not be able to mobilize and extract enough resources for the state to achieve the legitimacy, power and the prestige associated with its sizable territory. The capacity of the state administration to mobilize territorial resources is critical to the geopolitics of the state.

Acharya and Lee base their analysis of the emergence of the modern territorial state on the economic gains. They do not shy away from disputing the Westphalia theory of territorial state origin that is dominant in the disciplines of Political Science and International Relations (Acharya & Lee, 2018). Their *market for governance theory* argues that the purpose of the emergence of the territorial state is to manage competition in the governance of the market. Bureaucratic hierarchies and advancements in military technologies enable the state to control expanded market territories. The rulers increased their political and economic complexity dividing the markets based on different territories for easy of governance. Acharya and Lee argue that cooperation in overlapping territories raises the value of governance and lowers the cost of providing governance to distant territories. Territorial states maximize the economic gains while limiting competition for governance. They also deter new entrants into the governance market for the fear of losing the profit margins.

The *ideational theory* argues that the territorial state emerged from the interaction of new ideas and the transformations and the fundamental changes in norms and ideologies. According to

Ruggie, for instance, the way people imagined a political community was transformed to a thinking of a new social order (Ruggie, 1993). According to this theory, it is the revolutions in the ideas that precedes the emergence of a new political order. Conceptualization of the idea comes before the actual change. Existing ideas can also be reformed and transformed to different situations. The French Revolution is an example of evolution of political ideas that led to a better understanding of the concept of legitimacy and territorial sovereignty according to Osiander who dismisses the Westphalia logic as just a myth (Osiander, 2001). Political geographers Elden and Agnew also examined the construction and development of the ideas about territory and territoriality throughout history.

The *evolution theories* focus on the differences in the capabilities of the state compared to the other political organizations and institutions that led to the emergence of the territorial state as a winner over the other formations. The state prowess especially in organization of trade for revenues led to the elimination of the other political forms such as the church, city states and empires. The competition and selection also favored the sovereign territorial state due to the superiority of its institutions to wage war. The political organization and authority of the territorial state was much stronger and incompatible with the other political forms making it easy for the state to ignore any of their demands. The sovereign territorial states delegitimized other actors and political formations lacking territorial integrity and an internal hierarchy of authorities. The shrewdness and enormous resource mobilization capacity exhibited by the state eliminated the non-territorial actors (Spruyt, 2021).

The formation of nations and the growth of nationalism is also another hypothesis that is used to explain the emergence of the sovereign territorial state. The formation of strong ethnic, linguistic and religious connections among the people made it extremely difficult and costly to annex parts of the territory and dictated the formation of the borders of the modern territorial state. The costs of governing these territories changed leading to the emergence of the state system. Tilly argues that the control of the sovereign state involves the control of culture, linguistic, history and traditions found within the national territory of the state (Tilly, 1994).

The *military and war theory* has also been used to explain the emergence of the modern territorial state with scholars such as Tilly arguing that ‘war made states’ (Tilly, 1985). The theory is hinged on the claim that coercion determines the number and size of the states within the international system. Abramson argues that the territorial state is a product of commerce and capital interests supported by the ability for large scale collective violence (Abramson, 2017). The dominance of the territorial state is as a direct result of economic control which Abramson argues it had been neglected in the previous studies plus military war making capabilities that dominated most of the analysis. Unlike military arguments which correlate the size of the territorial state to military innovations, Abramson associates the territorial differences amongst states, specifically European states, to urban growth and the development of economic activities.

2.4 Understanding the Territorial State from Westphalia

The end of the Thirty Years of War in Europe is the beginning of the modern state system through the Treaties of Westphalia in 1648. The peace of Westphalia delivered the supremacy of the territory in all matters of the prince of an empire (Nathan, 2002). Territoriality was the main outcome of the peace. The idea of a natural territorial border was concretized during the demarcation of the boundary between France and Spain in the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659). However, it was the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815) that resolved the ambiguities of Westphalia by defining the exclusive territorial authority of all actors. The French Revolution doctrine notably stated the sovereign equality and sovereign authority of states over a clearly defined territory.

Max Weber is renowned for his definition of the state and the legitimization of its authority. For Max Weber, the state maintains uncontested legitimacy over the use of violence over its territory (Weber, 2009), (Hurst, 2018). The NSAAs have challenged this aspect of the state. The armed groups have improved their capability to wage war against the state and dislodge the Weberian state as the sole monopoly over means of violence in a given territory. Article 1 of the 1933 *Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States* outlines and qualifies the state as an international legal person, a ceiling that NSAAs rarely succeed to break. The role of the state in both in the international relations and international law is clearly defined. According to the Montevideo Convention, the state apart from having a functioning government, a permanent

population and capacity to enter into relations with other states, the state must occupy an elaborately defined territory.

According to Branch the state is the main foundation of political organization in the international system. It is only the state that legitimately represents political authority. The political authority originates the ideas and practices that shape the international system and constrain or incentivize all the other actors within that system. Non-state armed actors represent some of those actors constrained. Branch introduces and analyzes the significant role of cartography in the development of modern territorial sovereignty (Branch, 2013). His detailed analysis captures medieval political structures, contemporary state system as well as other possible political structures.

Branch discusses the different variations in territoriality arguing that for the modern state territorial authority is defined theoretically by fixed and discreet boundaries which might be conceptualized differently in real practice. The type of territorial authority differentiates the medieval rule by the empires which focused on rule over collection of spaces versus the modern state which pays attention to the rule over political spaces. Another variation is in the differences in parts of the spatial claim which denotes territoriality as either homogenous or differentiated.

The post-Westphalia state sovereignty has been described as largely spatial because the geographical territory of the state represents the legitimate bound of its political power, jurisdiction, exploitation of resources and control of borders. In his analysis of territoriality claims in supra-state polities, Weinzierl underscores the importance of territoriality arguing that territoriality is an important component of political authority because it links the geographical space, the people and the normative power (Weinzierl, 2021).

2.5 The Significance of Territory and Territoriality

The significance of territory for state entities is a topic that was well summarized by Gottmann in his classic writing *The Significance of Territory* in which he highlighted how territory was important for the population, for security, progressive opportunities and advancing happiness (Gottmann, 1973). The occupation of territory gives an actor two things, one is the effective and

meaningful control of the territory in question which translates to the actor having acquired internal sovereignty. The second outcome of territoriality is the recognition of the authority of an actor over the territory in question by the international actors and this gives external sovereignty. Non-state armed actors make significant progress in achieving the internal sovereignty but attempts towards achieving external sovereignty remain a tall order within the state centric system. History has countable examples of NSAAs that achieved external sovereignty which is followed by the integration in the international system and processes. Among the few NSAAs that realized both internal and external sovereignty is the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) that gave rise to the Republic of South Sudan after a violent struggle with the government of Sudan based in Khartoum. Thus with territory comes authority which Branch claims can be either territorial or non-territorial whereas the nature of the authority can be exclusive or overlapping (Branch, 2013).

Non-territorial authority includes claims by actors over persons or populations without taking into consideration the territory they currently reside in. Non-state armed actors can lay claim to ethnically, religiously or ideologically connected groups regardless of their spatial location. The claims can also be about particular issues or some transactions alone. Ideally, states maintain exclusive authority over subjects under its territory but the challenge posed by the NSAAs can transform some issues and subjects out of the state authority bringing about the idea of overlapping authority pitting the state against NSAAs.

Another significance of territoriality can be realized in the elimination of violence. An interesting research measuring regicide and identifying relationships in the early organization of Europe established a correlation between state territorial capacity and violence. The increase in the territorial state capacity leads to a reduction of both interpersonal and military violence. Also this study established evidence between the killing of ruler and the loss of territory. According to the research the killing of a leader more likely results in the loss of territory and consequently reduced territorial capacity (Baten et al., 2021). This particularly findings fit well within the current counter-insurgency practices by the states towards non-state actors. Contemporary conflict environments have been transformed by drones targeting and eliminating top leaders of the NSAAs and like for the case of the Islamic States it resulted in territorial losses. The killing of the leaders

of the NSAAs though does not solve the conflict, it reduces the territorial capacity of the armed group going by the results of the research.

Territory is also important for stability both of the state and the international system. The changes in sizes and shapes of the boundary of a state have a bearing on the stability of the state in what Li calls the dynamics of the territorial state power. According to Li the dynamics of territorial state power are derived from the control of critical territories and valuable resources that are found within the geographical location of the state. The lack of control or weak control of critical territories and valuable natural resources is a recipe for state fragmentation and chaos (Li, 2002). Non-state armed actors often target strategic and critical territories and areas with valuable resources to stage contests with the state. The selection of such locations by the armed groups is rational as it provides the best opportunity of weakening and disenfranchising the immense state power. It is only the states with strong territorial power that will be able to maintain territorial integrity and internal cohesiveness.

Territory is considered an integral part of state power as captured by O'Sullivan. He argues that the power of the state is determined by the territorial power of the state and the missionary power of the state. Territorial power is derived from the control of national territories and the missionary power is a product of maintaining control over the spheres of state influence. The dilemma is in ensuring a balance in resource allocation to maximize on both sources of power by the state (O'Sullivan, 2014).

Borders are very important in the organization of the social, economic and political forms of administration. The impacts and influences of the border to the adjacent territories and people living in the divided areas brings about the classification of borders into two categories 'thick' versus 'thin' borders. Thick borders provide both a physical and mental challenge to change them because they are associated with many functionalities and layers of boundaries over time. Thick borders are very rigid with a potential to simmer political disputes. Thin borders on the contrary are selectively permeable and allow the emergence and co-existence of different forms across the borders (Haselsberger, 2014). Borders shift overtime because of the elites bordering process that re-aligns functions across different territories. However, with the change of the limits a dilemma

still exists as to who really benefits when borders are maintained or when the borders are changed, the believe that only the NSAAs are maximizing their power does not take into consideration the fact that some state entities may actually benefit from border adjustments or otherwise. Despite the changes on the territorial borders overtime they tend to stick in the minds of people in the occupied territories and beyond who attach psychological meanings to the boundaries (Van Houtum, 2005).

Agnew while acknowledging that several meanings can be underpinned to the demarcation of the territorial space which cannot just be left to disappear, argues that the territorial demarcation results into two types of borders. The ‘enabling’ borders and the ‘disabling’ borders (Agnew, 2008). Enabling borders are critical for the governance process defining the beginning and the end of effective administration of governance and development related functions in a given territory. Disabling borders have nothing natural, physical or even social but they are just imposed notably along European or American conceptualization. They are just lines on the map rather than practices in space conceptualization that undermine human dignity and the pursuit of a decent life. The position held by Agnew correlates with the one held by Sack who defined territoriality to be both an enhancing and impeding action (Sack, 1983). Sack in his attempts to theorize human territoriality comes up with the tendencies of territoriality and a useful combination of consequences of territorial strategies.

2.6 Westphalia Territorial Sovereignty and Non-State Armed Actors

Griffiths responds to Atzili and Kadercan arguing that the different territorial designs past and future are determined at the international level by what he refers to us the international recognition regime (Griffiths, 2017). The states that control territory and are recognized by the international community as sovereign form a ‘club of good’ known as the sovereignty club. The club of good is extremely excludable and non-rival with members setting the rules of admission for all the other actors including NSAAs. The highly limited and exclusive membership secures voting rights in international organizations, access to finance, international trade, international posts amongst other benefits that are unavailable to those outside the ‘club of good’ such as NSAAs. The effects on the political influence of the state at the international level and the likely increased pressure on limited

international resources are some of the reasons for restricting membership to the sovereignty club. The members are also weary of setting precedence for uncontrolled fragmentation including of their own territories.

The territorial sovereignty arguments from the non-state armed groups are countered by norms and traditions. The sovereignty norms insist on the rights of the home state while the liberal norms focus on the rights of the individuals in the controlled territories. Secession calls from the armed groups are defended by upholding the right of the home state to maintain territorial boundaries and manage 'internal' affairs within it. This argument makes admission for the non-state armed group into the 'club of good' to somehow require the consent of the home state. Non-state armed actor recognition calls prove more challenging to counter but responses mainly revolve around the liberal rights of individuals in the rebel controlled territories to determine their future away from undue influences. The NSAAs manifest their presence in the black spots' challenging the effective control of the home state but without formal recognition from the international community. According to a topology developed by Stanislawski some NSAAs take formations that mimic those of the modern state such as 'as-if-states' (recognized states with limited territorial control) and 'almost states' which are unrecognized but have assumed effective control of a territory (Stanislawski, 2008).

The threat posed by the NSAAs to the territorial sovereignty of the state does not just have to be of internal nature within the international recognized borders of the state. This is because of the living nature of the state means that the state is transformative and cannot be confined to rigid territorial limits (Ratzel, 2008). The territorial security of the state extends to adjacent seas, airspaces and land territories whose occupation by an armed non-state state actor threatens the very existence of the state. The loss of control of the adjacent spaces (air, seas or land) by a state actor creates a bigger security emergence and concern amongst state actors to restore the effective control of the recognized state on the verge of losing territorial control. The state is always conscious of threats emanating from the extended territorial horizon to secure social, political and economic ideas and interests. The idea of territoriality extending beyond the geographical borders of the state is acknowledged by other scholars (Singh & Pani, 2012, p. 126) who argue that the

territoriality of a state goes beyond the recognized geographical areas to totally new domains that call for new institutions and projections of power.

The behaviour of states towards territorial threats such as those emanating from the armed non-state actors has been a major area of attention. Hong and Kim argue that the behaviour of the state leader in response to the territorial threats is very critical in understanding mass atrocities (Hong & Kim, 2019). This observation is very important because in the state – NSAA contest the high number of civilian casualties are more often blamed on the non-state armed groups. The state almost naturally is assumed to take the pacifying role whereas the challenging NSAA the role of the villain. Hong and Kim argue that the resulting genocide is because of the state policy responses to the territorial threats. The threats to territorial integrity both internal and external shape the state leaders decisions to employ deadly violence as compared to the other policy interventions. Territorial issues are more salient to the individuals and the state making threatened actors to be more belligerent. For the state external territorial threats are more likely to influence and distort domestic politics favoring excessive centralization and militarization of power. The ideological aspect to the genocide is underscored because the leaders utilize ideology to transform external territorial security threats into internal group hatred and fear.

Studies involving demarcation of space have evolved in complexity throughout history. Simmons notes the complexity of this evolution especially in the concepts such as territoriality, borders, boundaries and even sovereignty which are sometimes used interchangeably (B. A. Simmons, 2019). The complexity has implications on the contemporary governing of territorial limits. Simmons highlights three clusters of territorial governance, arguably the main sources of concern to both states and NSAAs. The three clusters include the determination of limits, securing of the territorial limits and effective filtering (screening) of subjects at entry/exit points and beyond.

Burak Kadercan amplifies the complexities and lack of definition for the term territory across different disciplines. Burak blames the difficulties of conceptualizing territory, especially in the field of international relations, to reification of the territorial state from the Westphalia perspective (Kadercan, 2015). Like Elden, Kadercan argues that the conceptualization of territory is self-evident at least in three different ways; first territory is conceptualized as universal, natural and

intrinsic phenomenon, second territory is assumed to be the physical, geographical and topographical elements, third and final conceptualization assumes the Westphalia logic of territoriality. The Westphalia assumption of territoriality has been dismissed as an illusion by the scholars such as Lambach (Lambach, 2021). Lambach holds that the significance of the Westphalia treaties is often overstated arguing that although they contributed to the conceptualization of territory, they should not take all the credit as the concept evolved over time. Kadercan's contribution is pessimistic just like Lambach dismissing all the three assumptions. For him Westphalia was an ideal which lacks universal acceptability since territory is not only demarcated for political purposes.

According to Kadercan, the heterogeneous nature of territory is a source of problems in world politics. The fixing of territorial limits empowers the state and institutionalizes the existence of the state. The three scholars Boaz, Atzili and Kadercan are in agreement that the process of fixing the state territorial limits positively contributes to peace and stability. However, in the areas with weak socio-political states such as Africa and the Middle East protracted intrastate and interstate conflicts are likely to emerge. This illustrates the uniqueness of territorial pressures as compared to the non-territorial ones for the state. The heterogeneous territories that are characterized by the emergence of fixed borders post World War II are recipe for internal and transnational conflicts unlike the homogeneous territories that existed with floating borders before the 1945 (Kadercan, 2015, p. 142).

Vaughan-Williams reconfigures the conceptualization of territorial limits to reflect the contemporary conflict environment. He bases his analysis in the works of philosophical thinkers like Foucault to define the emerging new relationship between territorial limits, security and sovereign power especially after the September 2001. According to Vaughan-Williams the study of territoriality and territorial limits should move away from focusing on the geopolitical border to 'bio-political' border (Vaughan-Williams, 2009, pp. 96–166). This is because the territorial limits of the sovereign state are expandable to forms of life. The territorial limits of an actor therefore are applicable to subjects in transit that the actor seeks to control.

Kadercan brings us to a very interesting line of thought. The debate on whether state power creates territory or whether territory creates a powerful state. In a nutshell, territories create power and at the same time power (political, social or economic) can influence the state relationship and configuration of space. Kadercan here contributes to the debate on the relationship between sovereignty and territoriality. Scholars hold differing views on whether a state can exercise uncontested total control of all subjects and transactions within the territorial limits. Agnew makes the strongest contributions to this debate with his four different categories of territorial sovereignty enjoyed by states. He classifies the first two as the ideal Westphalia logic and the imperialist territorial sovereignty regime that is prone to insurgencies from the NSAAs due weak central state control. The third and fourth sovereignty regimes according to Agnew include integrative which involves regional integration and global regime characterized by open spaces with a strong state. The conflict is a product of frictions among the sovereignty regimes (Agnew, 2017, pp. 127–178).

2.7 Territorial Rights and the Contemporary State

Stilz identifies at least five facets of a state's right to territory. They include the right to property and resource use control, the right to determine the nature of control through legislation, the right of adjudication within the boundaries, the right to alter or create new jurisdictional units and the right to enforce decisions within the established boundaries (Stilz, 2009). The other aspects of the state's territorial rights according to Simmons include the right to coerce subjects within limits, right to establishment of a tax system, right order movement of subjects and the right to limit or stop partition of the territory. Minus these rights the state cannot be able to maintain law and order, prevent secession and lay claim to the resources within a particular territory (A. J. Simmons, 2001).

The main scholars that are immensely credited for locating the territorial rights of the modern state are Kant and Locke. According to the 'Kantian theory of territorial rights', a non-usurper state can rightfully claim territory if the state is capable of implementing a system of law, with the peoples consent, to regulate property within the said territory. Importantly, Kant argues that the people can only give their consent if the law to be implemented guarantees their most basic rights. However, in the literature of the NSAA research, the people are obliged to obey the actor that exercises control over them because during the height of the conflict securing the basic right to life is

considered enough. This changes when the conflict continues to evolve and the people start demanding more rights. Kant equates the right of the individual to property to the right of the state to territory arguing that it is only when the state has absolute right to a certain territory that the property rights of the individual can be realized through protection of the state in control. A state that is not able to win the consent of the people to exercise authority over a particular territory, Kant argues it is not a 'true republic'. The emergence of the NSAAs has therefore made it difficult for some states to achieve the status of a true republic because they are unable to define and enforce territorial laws.

Locke differs with Kant holding that the territorial rights of the modern state are derived from the consent of the people. The people defer territorial rights to the state when they consciously come together to form a political authority. For Locke the territorial rights of the state are delegated by the people. Kant sees the state as a 'moral person' that can be held responsible for the actions and inactions. This is an important point of departure from the NSAA's territorial logic. The difficulty in the conceptualization of the Lockean territorial rights logic of a state is that non-consenting people are hardly allowed to secede. If the territorial right of the state depends on the consent of the people then the state should be at ease to allow those who do not consent to disaffiliate.

Debate continues to rage on whether the territorial rights of the state include the right to exclude. As for the NSAAs, some of them do not shy away from defining who should enter and reside in the controlled territories and who should not. Cara Nine asks this question in the article '*Do territorial rights include the right to exclude?*' arguing that the right to exclude is not justifiable (Nine, 2019). Nine's analysis builds on the earlier contributions of Sara Fine who pointed out that states enjoy a moral right to exclude migrants. Fine highlighted three main components of the right to exclude of the state. They include the right to restrict entry of aliens into the territory, the right to determine the length of stay and the right to limit the nature of activities available for the alien during the period of stay within the territory such as when to join participate in social movement activities (Fine, 2013). Fine, like Simmons both borrow their arguments from Locke's theory of territorial rights which Nine believes gives the state the right to control borders and exclude migrants because the properties and resources within the territory belong to individuals who retain the moral and natural right to exclude (A. J. Simmons, 2001).

Interestingly, territory also comes with a lot more challenges. Atzili argues that the advent of the Westphalia state with fixed territories is a recipe for chaos. He argues that the fixed borders provide incentives to exclude large groups of people who may end up taking arms and lead to the emergence of an internal security dilemma (civil war and conflicts) (Atzili, 2006). The resulting armed insurgency and counterinsurgency potentially draws in foreign actors with differing interests including economic and political influence. Following this analogy, the Westphalia peace logic that is anchored on the territorial delimitation is vulnerable especially in weak and fragile states in the Middle East and Africa. A permanent boundary is both the end and the start of armed conflicts. Part of the reason Atzili argues is because the small territories do not see a clear way they can overtake the large ones in the international system that has condemned them to the small size forever. The ‘norm of fixed borders’ is therefore a threat to international peace and security from both state and NSAAs.

Agnew remains influential in understanding the logic of bordering and de-bordering of the NSAAs. He correctly observes the trends in the internationally recognized state borders and notes how they are inspired by the Western European statehood (Agnew, 2007). The Eurocentric borders have been used by NSAAs to wage claim on the resources or even unite the people on either side of the ‘European’ border. He argues that the borders are either primordial or constructed to define pre-existing identities.

2.8 Legitimacy for Non-State Armed Actors

Legitimacy is associated almost entirely with the Westphalia state. Legitimacy and the process of legitimization for NSAAs remains unclear in international armed politics. Legitimacy as a concept is reserved for the population to decide which actor in the conflict context will be accorded. Non-state armed actors employ a variety of legitimization strategies even when they resort to violent tactics of territorial governance. Rebel legitimacy is one of the best strategies to manage the costs of the insurgency and it’s pursued within the wider territorial goals. Legitimization process in the captured territories relies on the delicate balance of both coercive and persuasive strategies (Terpstra, 2020b) (Kalyvas, 2006, pp. 100–105). Civilian legitimacy in the controlled territories is

critical in realizing the military and political goals of the insurgency. Legitimacy can be seen as a strategy and tactic for formidable territorial control. Non-state armed actors achieve legitimacy through engagement in governance and building relations with the civilian population in the occupied territories. Rebel strategies, governance and relations with civilians are both tested in this thesis based on the role they play in shaping NSAA territorial logic.

Podder argues that NSAAs strategically construct and deconstruct legitimacy internally, regionally and internationally. Apart from the fierce counter offensive from the home state, NSAA legitimacy in the controlled territories is threatened by internal rebel fragmentation. Podder conceptualizes how the nature of state - NSAA relations impacts on the legitimacy of the NSAA and to the extent the territorial logic. Collusion with the state tampers with the internal rebel legitimacy weakening territorial hold. Conciliatory relationship with the home state improves the international standing of the NSAA and positively contributes to its territorial control efforts. Rebel groups' conflictual engagement with the state weakens internal cohesion and legitimacy. However, excessive state coercive power can result to unprecedented civilian casualties, concerns of human rights violations and transfer of civilian support to the NSAA (Podder, 2017), (Duyvesteyn, 2017).

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter significantly traced the conceptualization of territoriality from the state centric Westphalia logic to the contemporary conceptualizations by the NSAAs. The chapter has discussed the roots of territoriality as a concept and the emergence of the modern territorial state. The significance of occupying territory and the threats and challenges posed by the NSAAs have also formed the analysis of in the chapter. Non-state armed actor territorial quest falls short of achieving external sovereignty because of the unwillingness of the 'club of good' to admit the NSAAs into the system. Different theories have also been put forward to explain the emergence of territoriality for the state, the significance of territoriality and the inherent territorial rights of the state. Non-state armed actor quest for territorial legitimacy has also been philosophically studied.

CHAPTER THREE

TERRITORIAL LOGIC OF THE NON-STATE ARMED ACTORS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter delivers the important framework of analysis that is used to make sense of the territorial logic of two NSAAs in the following chapter. The chapter finds a correlation among the NSAA concepts of territoriality which include governance, operational tactics and strategies and the relation with civilians. The three components together with their resulting subcomponents are innovatively used to develop a useful framework of analyzing the territorial logic of NSAAs.

3.1 Territorial Demands Logic of Non-State Armed Actors

For some NSAAs territorial demands keep shifting throughout the conflict life cycle. In order to understand this territorial demands of the NSAAs towards the state, ‘*Framing Territorial Demands dataset*’ (FraTerr) will be useful. The dataset contains territorial framing strategies and demands of regional actors after the Cold War (Elias, 2021). The dataset provides a predictable way of estimating the territorial logic and framing of the non-state armed groups. The armed groups can also adopt shifting territorial demands as a conflict strategic to influence power relations with the home state. The FraTerr dataset considers the implications of territorial change to the existing political systems to come up with four categories of actor territorial demands.

The first category refers to the territorial *demands for the re-distribution* of the authority of the home state between different territorial levels. The different territorial levels framing may include demands for total independence or demands for the restructuring of the existing territorial framework. The authors also capture them as demands for fundamental reforms versus demands for just a modification of existing territorial interpretation (Elias et al., 2021). The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) struggle for independence from the larger Sudan falls into this first category of actors demanding independence hence a significant change to the existing territorial logic that resulted to the new state of South Sudan. Other armed groups especially ethnic ones that are found in areas endowed with resources may demand just a modification of the existing territorial framework for the region to benefit more from the resources. The territorial framing of

such groups tend to lean towards complete decentralization from the home state. Perhaps, this might give some meaning to the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, whose resource endowment has motivated armed groups to seek more political and resource control at the decentralized levels without necessarily demanding complete independence from Congo.

The second category of territorial framing includes *demands for empowerment* of the territory without altering the territorial framework. This includes territorial demands for external intervention and demands for external non-interventions. Religious and ethnic armed groups have sometimes called on the external actors to intervene in a conflict where they believe the religious or ethnic minority group is targeted by the majority in a particular territory. In Uganda, the Lord Resistance Army (LRA), an armed non-state actor that strongly depends on roving for survival has on several occasions called for non-intervention from external actors to protect its positions in whatever country they are operating. For instance, when in South Sudan they call on the authorities in Uganda not to intervene in South Sudan. The reverse is also true when the LRA are in Northern Uganda they implore on South Sudan not to intervene.

The other territorial framing categories according to the authors Elias et al include *general territorial demands* and *unspecified territorial demands* whose implications on the existing territorial framework are challenging to measure but they seek to change the existing territorial logic in some way, may be known only to the territorial framers at the time. This last territorial framing strategy is anchored in use of narratives. The narratives are coded based on identities and interests to provide support and legitimize the territorial demands of an actor. The borders here can be emotional, non-physical, psychological among other categories applicable to achieve strengthened territorial goals.

3.2 Framing of Territorial Limits for Non-State Armed Actors.

According to Haselsberger, NSAA territorial limits are framed on four main discourses which include the geopolitical, socio-cultural, economic and biophysical discourses (Haselsberger, 2014). The framing discourses are not independent of each other, they are interconnected and interchangeable to suit the objectives of the territorial framer i.e. they co-exist in an

interrelationship. The *geopolitical discourses* are framed around the physical demarcation of space and territorial sovereignty for security and defence as well as political governance of the population. Actor framing here may include the projection of absolute power and control of the territory, establishment of governance functions as well as the formulation and implementation of both the domestic policies and international relations of the areas under control. The NSAAs may also create perceptions for the public to reinforce their territorial framing through the establishment and control of the media, creating a territorial identity through profiling of allies or adversaries and unveiling of common symbols such as the hoisting of territorial flag.

The *socio-cultural discourses* focus on the commonalities such as religion, ethnicity, language and other social and cultural group commonalities. Whereas geo-political discourses may determine who can enter a particular territory, the socio-cultural discourses will determine who can live in the said territories. The socio-cultural territorial framing is useful in maintaining and protecting the interests of the NSAAs such as the tradition, history and ideologies. The framing and perception development is achieved through the definition of membership of a particular territory and strict control from external influence through knowledge management initiatives and strategies that ensure the group identities and shared interests and values are passed to the generations.

The *economic discourses* easily change as compared to the geopolitical and the socio-cultural discourses of territorial framing. The economic discourses are framed around the ease of creating wealth or gaining access to certain valuable resources in a particular territory as compared to others. The NSAAs frame and create the public perception by challenging the effectiveness and undermining economic development in state controlled territories. The population in the areas controlled by the armed groups are characterized as industrious compared to the lazy and corrupt state employees. The leaders of the armed groups strategies include advertising and luring foreign investors thorough offers of ensuring uninterrupted flow of returns on investment, security of equipment and safe passage of the personnel of the international investors in the territory. The NSAAs may also adopt a currency for the areas under their control apart from undertaking to improve infrastructure facilities, open crossing points and good relations with the investors.

The *bio-physical discourses* of NSAA territorial framing are shaped by natural physical features such rivers, lakes, mountains, valleys, oceans etc. The environmental features can be shaped by both the internal and external causes. Notable NSAAs that framed their claims to territory based on environmental features include the defunct Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) and Sabaot Land Defence Force (SLDF) whose agenda and strategies included creating a perception that the territory along the coast and the slopes of Mount Elgon in Kenya belong to the armed groups respectively. The overwhelming defeat of the two armed groups by the Kenya security forces can be associated with the ‘fuzzy’ nature of this kind of territorial framing. The geopolitical framing discourse is responsible for the demarcation of the ‘hard’ space while the socio-cultural and economic framing discourses effectively demarcate the ‘soft’ space.

3.3 Interpretation of the Conceptual Framework

Understanding NSAAs’ territorial logic is very critical in the contemporary conflict environment. Rebels are believed to give a glimpse of their nature of territorial occupation based on the way they relate with the local civilian population, the structures of governance they establish and the tactics and strategies they employing in the territories. An exploitation of these three areas in the context of this thesis will lay bare the underlying territorial logic of most armed groups with increased appetite of controlling territory in all its senses.

In the comparative analysis of rebel governance, the focus is on the capability of the non-state armed group to establish governance hierarchies, which territorial administrative structures can be seen for comparative analysis, how different they are from those of the state and the limits of the NSAA governance. The research adopts NSAA governance component in the context and sense expounded by Mampilly. Mampilly’s Conceptualization of Non-State Armed Actor Governance is as follows;

“... the development of institutions and practices of rule to regulate the social and political life of civilians by an armed group. This system can include a police force and judicial structure, health and educational systems, a tax regime to regulate commercial activities, and even representative structures that give civilians a voice in governing themselves. It

also includes the maintenance of infrastructure such as road networks and supply lines for food, medicines and other basic commodities. In addition, armed groups often devise symbolic practices, such as the adoption of flags and anthems in order to lend the rebel government an air of legitimacy” (Mampilly, 2011), (Mampilly, 2014).

On the second component of the relations with the local civilian population, the research analyses focuses on how the NSAAs utilize this component to entrench the hold on territory or even expand and gain strategic territories. Most analysis has focused on how the armed groups improve and provide services with the civilians for purposes of achieving both internal and external legitimacy. Legitimacy further increases and strengthens the hold on territory. Analysis have also shown that improving relations with civilians is one of the reasons for the rebels to establish governance functions. However, engaging in governance by the armed groups does not only take care of the welfare of the civilians, it is a strategy by the armed groups to establish and consolidate control over both the people and the territory. The connection between rebel governance functions and the local civilian population is very crucial. This is because it determines to some extent the nature of outside intervention whether humanitarian to support the usually weak structures or military to protect civilians.

The third component puts focus on the operational tactics and strategies of the NSAAs. Understanding how targeted violence and/or indiscriminate deadly violence influences the territorial logic of the armed group is an important step in the counterinsurgency operations. Other operational issues such as recruitment into the armed group, the roles of different factions such as women and even the involvement of foreign fighters or the propagation of a certain ideology and use of certain symbol are all important aspects of the daily operational issues that are useful in grasping the rebels’ conceptualization of the territory they occupy.

3.4 Governance Component of Non-State Armed Actors

The provision of social public services is a strategic way NSAAs use to discredit and erode the state legitimacy. It is also as strategic way of evading counterinsurgency measures from the state because the provision of the NSAA public services cannot be stopped or sanctioned without severe

consequences to civilian population that relies on them. Counterinsurgency operations run the risk of further alienating the people by preventing the provision of public services by the NSAA without formidable alternative provision. The vulnerable population may likely be radicalized and pledge loyalty to the institutions of the NSAA governance in the contested territories. Undermining the social contract between the state and the people enables NSAA territorial control. Non-state armed actor governance is based on the general understanding that apart from the military contest (violence), provision of public goods is equally a potential means of attacking the state power (Grynkewich, 2008). Provision of governance services to the population in the controlled territories is a means of undermining state authority and consolidate NSAA control of the occupied territories. Engaging in governance enables the group to build a reputation both domestic and internationally beyond the controlled territories (Asal et al., 2020).

Non-state armed actor governance transforms the conflict environment from chaos and anarchy to some form of order. Rebel governance can also be a reflection of the current dynamics in the conflict environment because it is designed and shifts according to the power realities on the conflict environment. The institutions of the rebels redefine the interactions between the rebels and other actors including the civilians living in the controlled territories. Non-state armed actor governance sets the parameters for the civilian – rebel interactions and behaviour. The civilians may in some cases understand and know the expectations of the insurgency. The institutions are also critical in ordering relations amongst the insurgencies themselves. The institutions check and constrain absolute power by individual rebel members. The power like the state entities is transformed to the established rebel institutions (Justino & Stojetz, 2020).

Staniland's works are instrumental in understanding the political orders during the conflict between the state and NSAAs. He compares the conflict process to an effort towards competitive governance that is shaped mainly by political orders and not solely by military wins or losses. The orders are the norms, balances and state - NSAA bargains across the territory. The resulting overlapping heterogeneous governance is motivated mainly by the need to manage violence rather than the monopolization of violence to the either party. The parties enjoy segmented and fragmented sovereignty in different areas of the territory (Staniland, 2012).

Non-state armed actor governance is a very important aspect in understanding of the logic of violence and conflict of most territorial groups in the contemporary asymmetrical skirmishes. Importantly, NSAAs do not apply a uniform or similar types of governance. They differ just like the states especially in the level of civilian control and participation. Bamber and Svensson identify at least for main types of rebel governance. They include rebel collaboration, civilian inclusion, alliance structure and repression. The level of civilian participation and inclusion differs across these types of governance which significantly influences the hold on territory. Furlan contributes by developing a multi-pronged topology that focuses on style of governance and the level of civilian involvement to understand NSAA governance (Bamber & Svensson, 2022), (Furlan, 2020b).

Non state armed actor governance is mainly motivated by the ideological and strategic concerns of the armed group. Some armed groups build on the existing political orders and civilian structures towards the desired government while others completely dismantle any forms of precious political orders. ISIS for instance, dismantled the existing political orders for new institutions of power consolidation deemed appropriate in achieving of the strategic goal of establishing an Islamic Caliphate. Mampilly and Stewart identify the four ways in which armed non-state actor governance may vary taking into consideration the level of integration with pre-existing structures and civilian interactions. They include power sharing, integration, innovation and inclusion. The extent of innovation of NSAA governance is the most threatening to the Westphalia state as they deviate from the most basic tenets of sovereign statehood. The level of transformation that occurs to the Westphalia political order prompts collective action of states towards armed non-state actors deploying innovative governance (Mampilly & Stewart, 2021).

Recent studies in armed group's governance have shade light on how governance functions relate to rebel occupation of territory. Loyle and Kasfir for instance, have introduced the issue of rebel multilayered governance. They argue that the armed groups do not govern the territory alone, they engage in collaborations with multiple actors to consolidate their power. ISIS defied this observation when it was at its strongest point militarily (Loyle et al., 2021), (Kasfir et al., 2017).

The operationalization of governance functions is believed to be the main motivation of the armed groups to seek to control territory just like state entities. However, recent studies and research has shown that governance did not depend on territory entirely. It is possible for armed groups without any significant territorial control to carry out limited governance functions to maintain the support and loyalty of the population. The home state, despite controlling the territory enjoys little support amongst the population, where a NSAA is able to perform limited governance functions without controlling territory. In a workshop presentation, Bagdanov and Lechartre shade some light on this dynamic of rebel governance. According to their research armed groups deploy symbolic power (*symbolic governance*) such as references to common history, mimicking the state, display of high moral authority among others to gain legitimacy and ‘authoritative control’ over the population. The authoritative power enables the armed groups to carry out limited governance functions without territorial control (Bagdanov & Lechartre, 2021). For this research, governance and territory are not distinct, it is territory that facilitates governance. Effective governance is facilitated by a number of aspects and most territorial armed groups mimic or establish new parallels. Huang identifies the key functional aspects of governance which include the following; establishment of an executive, legislature, judicial systems, tax system, security apparatus e.g. police and military force, education and health care provision, media and foreign relations (Huang, 2016).

3.4.1 Tax Regime

The non-state armed groups are in constant need of resources to advance the war efforts and significantly to provide governance services to the populations living in the controlled territories. Non-state armed groups therefore engage in taxation for this reason and for protection of vulnerable groups (protection tax). Some are highly successful in rolling out a tax system that is passed on to the new state in the event the non-state actor acquires recognition by the international community. However, for many other armed groups taxation remains a hoax with leading scholars such Mampilly linking NSAA taxation to pure extortion of the local population. Mampilly broadens the logic of NSAA taxation to include non-economic rationals while maintaining that rebel racketeering falls short of being referred to as tax (Mampilly, 2021).

Armed groups that depend on civilians to produce income or aid in the war effort will find themselves involved in organizing the economy in areas of concern. These areas of concern will also require a strong hold to facilitate important activities such as markets and transport. Apart from taxation, other sources of revenue for rebel governance as identified by Huang (2016) include; civilian aid, remittances, foreign aid, natural resources, appropriation of state resources, sub-state autonomy resources, looting and other criminal enterprises. However, civilian aid for rebels is not free, it comes with huge civilian expectations and demands for basic governance amenities from the rebels.

Armed groups taxation is not solely about generating revenue for institutional building and exercising of authority by the armed group. Taxation is also used strategically to achieve ideological goals of non-state armed group, foment legitimacy and establish meaningful control over civilian populations. The establishment of credible control over the civilian population may likely translate into effective territorial control for the armed group. *Ideological taxation* is targeted towards shaping individual behaviors and establishing a common group identity with the subjects within the territories under control. Although taxation is an exclusive right of the Westphalia state, non-state armed groups implement strategic tax regimes to gain legitimacy among the populations living in the areas under control. The local civilian population that decides to give taxes legitimizes the control authority of the armed group over the territory. Finally, the amount of civilian information required to be collected to establish an effective tax system provides the non-state armed groups with much needed information to control civilian lives, economy and consumption behaviour for products and goods. Al Shabaab, for instance, maintains an accurate list of owners of business and wealth estimates of people living in their controlled territories to determine the amount of tax they should pay (Bandula-Irwin et al., 2021).

3.4.2 Establishment of Executive Hierarchies

Non-State Armed groups that establish civilian bureaucratic structures tend to be strongly territorial controlling firmly both the people and the territory. The process of establishing civilian bureaucratic institutions usually begins informally because the armed groups face legal problems of recognition hence establishing rule based organizations. The state centric international law fails

to recognize even the rebel soldiers as combatants. The achievement of an orderly civilian-rebel participation in the new structures legitimizes them. Non-state armed groups like Taliban created both vertical hierarchical organizations according to their Islamic beliefs and horizontal hierarchies that resonated with the ethnic-cultural backgrounds in Afghanistan.

Al Shabaab established administrative hierarchies such as those responsible for social affairs, adjudication, development, law and order. The *Wali* was responsible for coordination of established offices supported by representation of clans *Shura Council*. The *emir* was the central authority controlling all administrative hierarchies. Law and order was implemented by the police who cooperated with the Al Shabaab courts to punish offenders (Skjelderup, 2020).

3.4.3 Legislative Councils

They are mandated with legislative roles in the rebel held territories. Some of them are representative of the diversity of the occupants of the rebel controlled territory whereas others are mainly made of the members of the rebel ranks. Both ISIS and Al Shabaab as territorial NSAAs established shura councils comprising of representation from the diversity of the controlled territories. However, even though representations in the shura councils is the diversity of the controlled territories, both Al Shabaab and ISIS ensured the membership was only given to those deemed to support the groups goals and ideology. Opposing clan elders were left out for the case of Al Shabaab in Somalia. Shura council mainly serves an advisory role to the leadership of the NSAA and interface with the local civilian population on critical issues in the territory (Skjelderup, 2020), (De Graaf & Yayla, 2021).

3.4.4 Justice System

The armed groups establish justice systems to address the complaints and dissent of the civilians in the occupied territory. The judicial systems can also be used to solicit civilian cooperation and compliance. The judicial instruments utilized to reciprocate (conciliatory) or to coerce for civilian support include court trials, commissions of inquiry, reparations and amnesty agreements (Loyle, 2021), (Loyle & Binningsbø, 2018). The efforts to right the wrongs during the conflict wins the

armed groups legitimacy to govern in the controlled territories. Civilians can bring up cases against rebel soldiers in the rebel courts whereas in some cases captured enemy forces can be tried in the rebel courts in accordance to the rebel legal code. However, NSAAs judicial systems do not meet international legal standards. It's only a mimic and in most cases used strategically for the armed group's advantage of building authority. Although, the courts do not meet the principles of international law, both international humanitarian law and international human rights law do not prohibit the formation and operationalization of such NSAA justice systems (Willms, 2012).

Islamic States (ISIS) challenged state centric concepts such as the rule of law, judicial independence and impartiality but established a hierarchical judicial institution with different levels of court systems to deliver justice to the population in occupied territories. Other territorial armed groups such as Taliban dispensed justice by establishing a court system with mobile judges for efficiency of handling the cases. They also set up prison services to discipline and punish the convicts in the controlled territories (Terpstra, 2020a).

3.4.5 Security Apparatus

Non-state armed actors establish security apparatus as a matter of priority during the armed conflict. Depending on capacity, they perform both internal security (policing) to deal with threats emanating from within the controlled territory and external security to mitigate threats from outside the controlled territories. ISIS established an elaborate security apparatus including religious compliance police, intelligence and public security police. Islamic State Police earned ISIS legitimacy within the local population by providing the much desired security to the people. The police implemented local agreements between the populace and the caliphate while the caliphate army of fighters was focused on external threats. Both internal and external security operations were well supported by intelligence services (De Graaf & Yayla, 2021).

3.4.6 Education System

Non-state armed actors while prioritizing security, they also set up social service institutions such as schools and other educational and training institutes for the civilians in the occupied territories.

ISIS completely set up a new education system by changing the curriculum, writing new textbooks and hiring new teachers. Education was at the heart of ISIS indoctrination of children living in the controlled territories to ensure the future loyal population and citizenry of the caliphate. ISIS caliphate transformed the education system and introduced a new ideologically oriented curriculum in addition to appointing a minister responsible for education and teaching in the controlled territories. Administration of education was completely overhauled with a new calendar and re-written textbooks for teaching. There was also a reorganization of the university departments and programs (Arvisais & Guidère, 2020).

3.4.7 Health Care Services

Emergencies especially health emergencies provide NSAAs with the opportunity to project their governance of the people and territory as credible and legitimate. The Covid 19 pandemic provided armed groups with the opportunity to solidify territorial control because most of the interventions and responses required to stop Covid were local. The armed groups set up isolation centers and controlled movement within the territories under control as well as providing public education on other health issues to the civilians. Proving health is an important priority for territorial groups. Some announce unilateral ceasefires and safety of humanitarian convoys in territories under their control in addition to allowing rebel fighters to directly assist civilians during health emergencies. Al Shabaab for instance, improved the health facilities as well building new health infrastructure in their territories. The group also established a health council comprising of health care professionals (Breslawski, 2022).

Health care governance especially during a pandemic is more likely beneficial to non-state armed territorial actors than the state. This is because unlike the state which is expected to prove *absolute* governance in all situations, NSAAs prove governance capacity at home and abroad only on *relative* terms. The act of carrying out health campaigns in the controlled territories is easily taken as a measure of competence, credibility and legitimacy of the NSAA governance (Furlan, 2020a).

3.4.8 Media

The media has become a critical tool for churning NSAA propaganda. The media communication is tailored for different audiences using a variety of media tools such as print media, social media, radio and TV broadcasts aimed at speakers of different languages. The objectives are wide ranging from disinformation, to educational or even just announcing new territorial gains and cause adjustments. Media is a key tool in publicizing NSAA governance capacity and legitimacy. It is mainly aimed at undermining the home state and winning over populations in the controlled territories.

Islamic State is famed for the administration of media propaganda to unprecedented levels. The group consolidated a sophisticated online magazine '*Dabiq*' targeting speakers of different languages and different geographical regions. Published by al-Hayat Media Center, Dabiq publication had significant territorial implication. It derived its name Dabiq from a small town in northern Syria where ISIS believed the last Muslim battle with the enemies took place. The territorial significance of the name of the publication was important in the strategic vision of establishing an Islamic Caliphate. The choice of the name Dabiq, a publication with wide circulation, was critical in framing the contest and winning ISIS religious legitimacy (Andersen & Sandberg, 2020).

3.4.9 Diplomacy and External Relations

Diplomacy for the non-state armed groups is mostly done in a clandestine manner to reach out to external partners. Clandestine diplomacy is also useful in territorial escapes as the armed groups may utilize it to galvanize support from groups controlling other territories. Forging relations with international actors provides opportunities for critical supplies including finances and recruits, flow of information and exchange of rebel practices as well as opportunities for rebel mentoring and collaboration. Territorial NSAAs are more likely to seek international support to achieve legitimacy as compared to other types of insurgents such as revolutionaries (Podder, 2017).

The Islamic State deployed emissaries especially in the Middle East and North Africa to establish close personal ties with other actors. ISIS used diplomacy as a strategy of territorial expansion. The emissaries opened up communication channels, negotiated for ISIS on the possibilities and timing of pledging of allegiances by other groups. To achieve the objectives, ISIS emissaries who mostly included covert operatives, dangled both sticks and carrots for desired outcomes (Gartenstein-Ross et al., 2016, pp. 63–65). ISIS in particular places extra importance on establishing external relations for exporting jihad and protecting the caliphate according to the excerpts of its administration documents. The excerpt below indicates the role of external relations to ISIS governance;

“external relations are the first foundation for building every nascent state, and they are among the foundations that show the strength and might of the state, and they should constitute for it, a general stance in everything that happens in the world with the people of Islam and be for it an external hand protecting its dealings” (Ingram, 2021, p. 47).

3.5 Non-State Armed Actor Relations with Local Civilian Population

Paul Staniland argues that social control of the people is fragmented through the control of territory. Understanding how civilians are treated by a NSAA gives hints on the territorial approach of the group. Forms of *violence* against civilians such as sexual violence, displacement, torture, bombing and massacre are all crucial leads to understanding territorial logic. Establishing a relationship with the civilian occupants of a particular territory is very important for armed groups’ harboring territorial ambitions. In some cases violence against civilians can pass as a form of poor organizational discipline within the rebel soldier ranks. This thesis focuses on violence executed by armed groups as part of the process and strategy to realize the groups’ main goals. Territorial non-state actors’ prioritize *non-violence* means such as negotiation with civilians to build a relationship of based on trust. Schwab argues that military force is not always preferred even when it is less costly especially towards militarily less powerful groups (Schwab, 2021). Civilians also influence the conflict by determining where the armed groups direct anger/guns to minimize loss of life and loss of civilian occupied areas especially to rival groups. Building relations with the civilian population can be understood as a ‘constraint’ emanating from the

struggle against the state like Schwab puts it, but in the context of this thesis it forms part of the strategy towards the goal of rebel territorialization.

Apart from civilians influencing the war effort in occupied areas, territorial oriented NSAAs tend to establish governance models that prioritize civilian participation and inclusion. Civilians are provided with feedback channels useful in expressing discontent if any. This is the most formidable way of sustaining the insurgency as civilians feel valued and recognized hence cooperating and legitimizing the administration of the rebel group in a particular territory. Dissatisfied civilians mount resistance to the rebel rule or flee the territory altogether. Civilian resistance can take the form of violence i.e. taking up arms or non-violent disobedient of the rebel administration.

Non-State Armed Actors that forge harmonious relations with civilians and depend on the civilians for finance are more likely to engage in state building hence territorial control. Relying on the civilians to finance the war effort makes it possible for the civilians to demand governance services in return, for their own welfare and survival (Huang, 2016). Good civilian relations allows the armed groups to mainstream the struggle against the home state as the ‘people’s war’ which legitimizes their mobilization and fighting. Kasfir raises very critical points on why civilians either remain or leave the rebel held territory altogether. The civilian motivations to establish relations with the armed group are diverse. While some are threatened, others see an opportunity to utilize the rebel structures for private gain or family protection. Yet others simply buy into the rhetoric of the NSAA. Civilians in the controlled territories do not have the option of staying neutral (Kasfir, 2015). Civilian participation is achieved through deliberate creation or operationalization of governance structures like legislature in the rebel held territories.

The relations between the armed non-state actors and the civilian population in the occupied territory is largely shaped by the ideology of the group. Other factors include the goals of the group and resources available to the armed non state actor. Resources also include the time factor and the general sustainability of the armed struggle when compared to opening up new frontiers with the people. Armed groups with significant resources and time are more likely to explore ways and levels of involving the civilians in the controlled territories in governance process. Building the bond with the civilians is critical in realizing the war efforts. The civilians may provide food,

shelter, finances and the information that can effectively alter the dynamics of the conflict. Ensuring a less coercive relationship with the civilians is thus considered a priority of territorial non-state armed groups. The level of civilian participation preferred by the NSAAs is always the one that will maximize the main objective of controlling the territory at the minimum cost. Territorial rebel – civilian relations have shown variances depending on the level of civilian cohesion with strong bonds more likely to happen within the rebel constituency areas as compared to the areas outside the rebel constituency (Breslawski, 2021).

The motivations for civilian participation in NSAA governance is also an important factor. The armed group's strategies for building civilian relations seek not only to physically control the civilians in the occupied territory but also to mentally and ideologically influence the civilian population. Non-state armed groups generate value not just by seizing territories but also by seizing the people (societies) and establishing governance structures for effective hold and triggering of civilian voluntary engagement (Kubota, 2011). It is through relations with the people that non-state armed groups build legitimacy for the civilian population to accept control and governance by the NSAA. Territorial NSAAs strategically build legitimacy by using and engaging with the existing structures that relate to the people before dismantling or transforming them according to their goals. Collaboration with established, charismatic or influential civilian leadership, cultural or religious, gives the rebel a good understanding of the population in the newly occupied territory. Initial cooperation and collaboration gives the NSAA a humble time to lay out a raft of governance strategies aligned with their goals for effective hold of the territory (Kitzen, 2017).

Civilians employ both passive and active strategies to either resist, comply or influence the direction of NSAA territorial logic. Civilians living under rebel controlled territories are not just powerless or complicit with rebel rule but they constantly employ survival tactics and strategies. The civilian response may alter the ideology and territorial goals of the NSAA. They may also modify rebels' violence tactics in return for staying in the occupied territories (Gowrinathan & Mampilly, 2019).

Civilian agency organized strategically influences the distribution of territorial control during a conflict. Organized civilian agency is also an agent of change to the rebel governance in the

controlled territories. Increased *collective action capacity* of the civilian agency is capable of forcing insurgencies to direct war territorial gains into establishing and maintaining civilian security and service provision structures. Civilian population plays a strategic role in the gain or loss of territory by insurgencies. This is because the civilian social structures affect the organization of the NSAA and the effectiveness of its campaign and struggle against the home state (Rubin, 2018, pp. 73–85).

3.6 Ideology, Operational Tactics and Strategies of Non-State Armed Actors

Ideology gives the overall impetus and the overarching direction to the actions of the NSAA. Ideology plays a leading role in determining both the short term and long term goals of the insurgent. Secessionist motivated actors will prioritize territorial gains and control same as religious motivated non-state armed groups aiming to establish a caliphate. Anders establishes a link between territorial control and the actions of the NSAAs. He argues that when NSAAs gain territorial control they change their tactics and strategies from violent to non-violent. For him, NSAA gain in territorial control is a precondition for establishing non-violent political order (governance). Indiscriminate violent tactics (terrorism) are more common with roving NSAAs whereas conventional guerrilla strategies and tactics like ‘hit-and-run, ambushes, raids and small-scale battles’ characterize territorial groups (Anders, 2020). In addition, territorial non-state armed groups’ pursue civilian cooperation to consolidate the territorial gains and consequently the costs of administering the controlled areas (Arjona, 2017). Below are some of the rebel operational tactics and strategies that are likely to give a hint on their territorial logic;

3.6.1 Recruitment

Recruitment is very important in supplying the war efforts of the armed groups. It is a dynamic and strategic process that can be achieved either through coercion or voluntary means. Coercive recruitment is necessitated by the developments in military efforts such as the increased threats of losing territorial control or the likelihood of capturing more territory with increased insurgency deployment (Eck, 2014). Contrary to general assumptions, forced and coercive recruitment happens relative to the strength of the NSAA. Strong territorial NSAAs are more likely to engage

in coercive recruitment from the civilian population compared to weak non-state armed groups. One reason is because powerful insurgencies are more capable of dealing with the consequences of forced recruitment such as the punitive punishing of recruits' likely defect. They are also more likely to run social and ideological indoctrination and brainwashing campaigns and programs effectively unlike the weak rebels (Sawyer & Andrews, 2020).

Understanding the various tactics and strategies the armed groups use to add members to their ranks can give some insights on how they hold on territory. For instance, If an armed group recruits their insurgent armies/members with a promise of resource rents from the extraction of natural resources or minerals (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2008), the armed group will be expected to control the territory containing the said resource to ensure smooth flow of the rents to the members. The main motivation of the insurgent armies in this situation is the expectation of benefiting from the resource rents. On the contrary, an armed group that recruits by mobilizing popular discontent with home government policies is less likely to hold territory unless the discontent is related to land e.g. ancestral land. The motivation of the recruited members of the group will lean towards seeking a change in the existing policies say for inclusiveness, institutionalization and equality among others rather than taking control of the territory.

Abductions and kidnapping are also considered as non-state armed group's strategies and tactics for recruitment of members. Studies have established that kidnapping and abductions are rampant where the armed groups are taxing the people finance the rebellion (Gilbert, 2022). Because effective implementation of a tax regime requires both the population and the place, it is therefore important that armed groups that tax civilians control territory. Thus, we can deduce that armed groups that recruit through kidnaping and abductions to punish tax evasion or ransom possess territorial ambitions. Gilbert also argues that kidnapping requires the armed group to establish some forms of structures (Gilbert, 2020). The centralized structures are meant for specialized kidnapping, ransom/hostage negotiations and protection against counterinsurgency measures. These structures represent some semblance of governance. Governance therefore requires significant territorial control.

3.6.2 Sexual Violence

Non-state armed groups with territorial ambitions are more likely to involve in various forms of sexual violence such as cleansing campaigns. Sexual violence can also become part of armed groups' governance strategies in order to achieve a homogenous population in situations where territorial control is established for a longtime. Sexual violence practices such as forced marriages and sexual slavery are used to buy loyalty of combatants. Examples include the Islamic State slaving of Yazidi women for its foreign recruited fighters. Rebel governance sexual violence is also used as a rebel strategy to exercise social power on the population in the controlled areas. Insurgent sexual violence during the conflict is used in two fold; as a military tactical strategy to force cooperation in contested territories and importantly, to maintain and consolidate insurgent control in the occupied territories (Asal & Nagel, 2021).

Patterns of sexual violence are also considered as a recruitment strategy for future members of the armed group. Targeted mass rape of females that's aimed at ethnic cleansing ensures to be born children in the targeted territory are pedigree. This is a strategy to wipe out 'alliens' from a particular territory controlled by the armed group. However, not all forms of sexual violence have a territorial bearing. Some are cases of indiscipline and crumbling command rebel command structures (E. J. Wood, 2009).

Table 3.1: Territorial logic of non-state armed actors' recruitment

	<i>Logic of Recruitment</i>	<i>Logic of Territory</i>
1.	Promise of resource rents	High
2.	Mobilizing popular discontent	Low
3.	Kidnapping and abductions	High
4.	Female Mass Rape (ethnic cleansing)	High

Source: Author (2022)

3.6.3 Strategic Displacement

Population displacement is not just a humanitarian consequence of armed conflict, it is also a strategy deployed by the conflicting armed groups. According to Lichtenheld, three main strategies are used by armed groups to uproot civilians. They include cleansing, depopulation and forced relocation (Lichtenheld, 2020). These three strategies of displacement also have a bearing on the territorial logic of the armed group. Displacement is used to gauge loyalty and affiliation of the people. The population that stays or moves to the territories controlled by the armed group responsible are considered loyal while populations that move to neighbouring and territories controlled by other actors are considered to have chosen that affiliation in the conflict. Whereas depopulation and forced relocation may be for other purposes, cleansing is mainly employed to achieve territorial ends. Lichtenheld with his *assortative logic* alludes to the fact that territorial displacement strategy is more appealing compared to mass killing. Strategic displacement may also be used to homogenize the population for the armed groups to role governance functions.

3.6.4 Tactical Violence

Violence has both negative and positive outcomes when it comes to NSAAs' control of territory. Violence may deny the armed group the critical civilian support that is needed for legitimacy in the long run. According to Woods, non-state armed groups are less likely to use violence both indiscriminate and selective when civilians in the controlled territories support them. On the other hand, when the level of civilian support is low the armed groups employ strategic violence as a way of punishing local civilian population in the controlled territories. A rebel with territorial ambitions must therefore be strong enough to restrict its own use violence against civilians and protect the very civilians from violence potentially from other parties in the conflict (R. M. Wood, 2010). Therefore, the depth of the local civilian support in some way determines the territorial logic of the NSAA. Territorial armed groups act rationally, investing significantly in encouraging and motivating civilian support and loyalty to achieve their aims hence less likely to prefer violence against the very civilians.

3.6.5 Targeting Minorities

Minority groups living in the rebel controlled territories most of the time do not pose a serious threat to the rebel's main objectives. Territorial rebels may strategically target such minority groups in an attempt to homogenize the population living in the rebel controlled areas. Homogenizing the society requires significant transformation of the original composition of the society. The minorities objecting to rebel transformation wishes may be subjected to stringent taxation to maintain their identity. Targeting of the minority groups might also be used by the armed groups to demonstrate their new capacity to identify, monitor and selectively punish individuals within the territory. Selective punishing often requires collection of significant amounts of personal data which is both costly and tedious for the armed group (Kalyvas, 2006). However, not all minority groups are targeted. The non-state armed groups use the *logic of outbidding* to identify which minority groups to strategically target. The logic of outbidding is centered on outwitting competition from other rival actors threatening the goals of the NSAA (Tschantret, 2018).

3.7 Synthesis of the Analytical Framework

Table 3.2: A topology for understanding non-state armed actor territorial logic

<i>Main Components</i>		<i>Sub-Components</i>	<i>Territorial Logic</i>		
			Low	Medium	High
1.	Governance	Functions (Tax, Security, Justice etc)			✓
		Type/System (inclusion/innovation)			✓
		(Exclusion)	✓		
		Revenue (Local civilians/natural resources)			✓
		(Foreign aid)	✓		
2.	Relations with civilians	Violence (Indiscriminate/Selective)		✓	
		Non-violence			✓

3.	Ideology, Operational Tactics and Strategies	Inclusion/Participatory/Involvement/integration	✓
		Civilian aid and finance	✓
		Exclusion	✓
		Forced Recruitment	✓
		Strategic Displacement (Cleansing Depopulation Forced relocation)	✓
		Strategic violence (limited/indiscriminate)	✓

Source: Author (2022)

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed and synthesized the analytical framework which will be applicable in shading light on the territorial logic of the NSAAs. The main pillars of the framework are governance, relations with the civilian population as well as the ideology, operational tactics and strategies. The main components have been supported by relevant applicable key sub-elements in the discussions for clarity. The opening highlights the logic of NSAA territorial demands and the framing of those demands towards territoriality.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE CASE STUDIES: TERRITORIAL LOGIC OF AL SHABAAB IN SOMALIA AND ISLAMIC STATE IN IRAQ AND SYRIA (ISIS)

4.0 Introduction

The chapter uses the case studies of Al Shabaab in Somalia and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria to test the analytical framework developed in the previous chapter. This is the opportunity to apply the framework in order to understand the territorial logic of the NSAAs. Al Shabaab and ISIS are representative case studies for the purposes of this research.

4.1 The Case Study of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

4.1.2 Understanding ISIS as a Non State Armed Actor

The existence of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria can be divided into four organizational periods guided by different aspirations. The first period between 1990s and 2006 was motivated by the leadership traits and the deep ideological roots of the founding leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The second period from 2006 to 2010 was a strategic phase for the group. Known as 'Islamic State of Iraq' then, the group adapted clandestine methods including its leadership to survive onslaught from US forces and Sunni Awakening groups. The organizational, strategic and leadership structures of the group were covertly build during this period. The period 2011 to 2016 saw the transnational and trans-territorial expansion of the group and the establishment of the Islamic State Caliphate in the territories of Iraq and Syria. The group attracted a significant number of foreign fighters during this time through its ideological propaganda. The leader of the group Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, announced the extra-territorial nature of the group in 2014. He established ISIS provinces across the world especially in Africa and Asia and released the doctrine of the group to align the provinces organizational structure and strategy of the group with the provinces. The final phase from 2016 to the present represent a period of shrinking of the group in the physical space. The ideological space still survives with motivated insurgencies in the Sahel region of West Africa

and parts of Asia. This period of decline in physical territory, resources and personnel was announced to the members of the group by Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, the spokesman in a strategic move (Ingram et al., 2020b), (Ingram et al., 2020a).

4.1.3 Islamic State's Relations with the Civilian Population

The Islamic State distinguished themselves for occupying territory with very limited involvement of the civilians living in the controlled territory in its governance structures. Only ISIS members were preferred to assume positions of immense responsibility. ISIS coerced civilian leadership into pledging allegiance and civilian governance institutions if any were dismantled by the group's 'Tribal Engagement Offices'. ISIS established institutions to address civilian grievances such as the courts were largely ineffective (Bamber & Svensson, 2022). The group highly oppressed civilians especially those opposed to their governance which was equated to the will of Allah. However, civilians with skills ISIS considered as crucial in their campaign, were dealt with leniently.

The Islamic States strictly controlled civilian behavior, changed civilian education curriculum and forced conversion and transformation of the civilians to achieve a homogeneous population that was in-tandem with the group's ideological legitimacy and governance authority. Civilian control was achieved in four main ways: "shari'i attire, travel restrictions, sex segregation, and religious education." (Vale, 2020). In addition to strict dress regulations especially for women, civilians were strictly required to devote to ISIS sharia interpretation without exception. ISIS embedded necessary administrative units within its governance structure to reinforce the desired level of civilian control and compliance. Apart from releasing *fatwas*, a dedicated group of morality police '*hisba*', was created to reinforce regulations on civilian dressing. Civilian defiance was heavily punished with among others a prison sentence.

Civilian movement was highly restricted especially movement outside the ISIS controlled territories to prevent escape of defiant civilians and entry of enemy rival groups. The group boasted of providing security and other services only to the population within the controlled areas 'true believers' and not the 'corrupt and unbelieving' infidels (outsiders). Civilians were generally

banned from travelling to the lands of infidels. ISIS reconfigured civilian public spaces into religious ideological indoctrination centers for both the children and adult civilians under their territories. Religious indoctrination of the civilian population was also a recruitment strategy for ISIS as both the children and the adults were required to help monitor and encourage others change behaviour to align with the group.

Recent research has shown that ISIS had some level of *civilian involvement* in their governance, with highly specialized employees' enjoying some latitude with the group. However, this was only to a limited extent. Civilian employees working in ISIS governance institutions both military and non-military are categorized into two; members of ISIS '*muba'yain*' and non-ISIS members '*munasirin*' which included employees who did not pledge allegiance to ISIS ideology. ISIS treatment of the member and non-member employees was also different especially in the positions they occupied and the remuneration they received for their work. Leadership and positions of responsibility like heads of ISIS Ministry departments were preserved for employees who pledged allegiance. The employees were enticed and coerced with both monetary and non-monetary benefits/consequences to pledge allegiance to ISIS. Some employees did not clearly know whether they were working for ISIS or the government as they continued working in similar roles and received salaries from both sides at least for a year in the case of ISIS Iraqi employees (Bamber, 2021).

ISIS projected itself to the people by engaging in 'competitive governance' vis a vis the governments of Iraq and Syria. Examples include the capture of Mosul where civilians were allowed to enter and leave the city for months before ISIS changed tact. This allowed civilians a humble time to gauge, compare and make decisions to leave the city for government controlled areas. ISIS used this time to engage in competitive governance providing health and sanitation services to the city which led to more than 75% of the population of the city remaining and staying under ISIS rule and governance. This is according to an original research that established some of the motivations for staying or leaving the territories occupied by an armed group (Revkin, 2021).

Islamic States territorial logic has also been framed as a struggle over the hearts and minds of the subjects which includes the population and the fighters to advance the insurgent cause. At the

center of the competition over hearts and minds is the liberation of Muslim territories occupied by infidels. The ideological slander guided the profiling and identification of areas for sophisticated media campaign and Islamic jihad. The territorial base of the group was designated at the heart of the Islamic Arab territories to be used as a launching base to liberate other territories across the world (Karmon, 2015).

Islamic State used its media to shape its relations with the population within controlled territories, population in near territories and populations in far and distant Western territories. The media was critical in recruitment of foreign fighters some of whom migrated with wives and families to join the lands controlled by the caliphate. Media propaganda to some extent, populated and depopulated the territories to ISIS desired levels. Dabiq online releases were mostly targeted to the population in far and distant Western countries to migrate to the caliphate (*Hijrah*). Another sophisticated propaganda media publication *Rumiyah* carried a convincing message to the population within the caliphate and near territories in the Middle East to participate in the war against infidels (*Jihad*). One of the aims of *Rumiyah* releases was the achievement of internal and domestic legitimacy of ISIS governance i.e. the acceptance of ISIS rule by the population within the controlled territories and in the nearby territories (Lakomy, 2021).

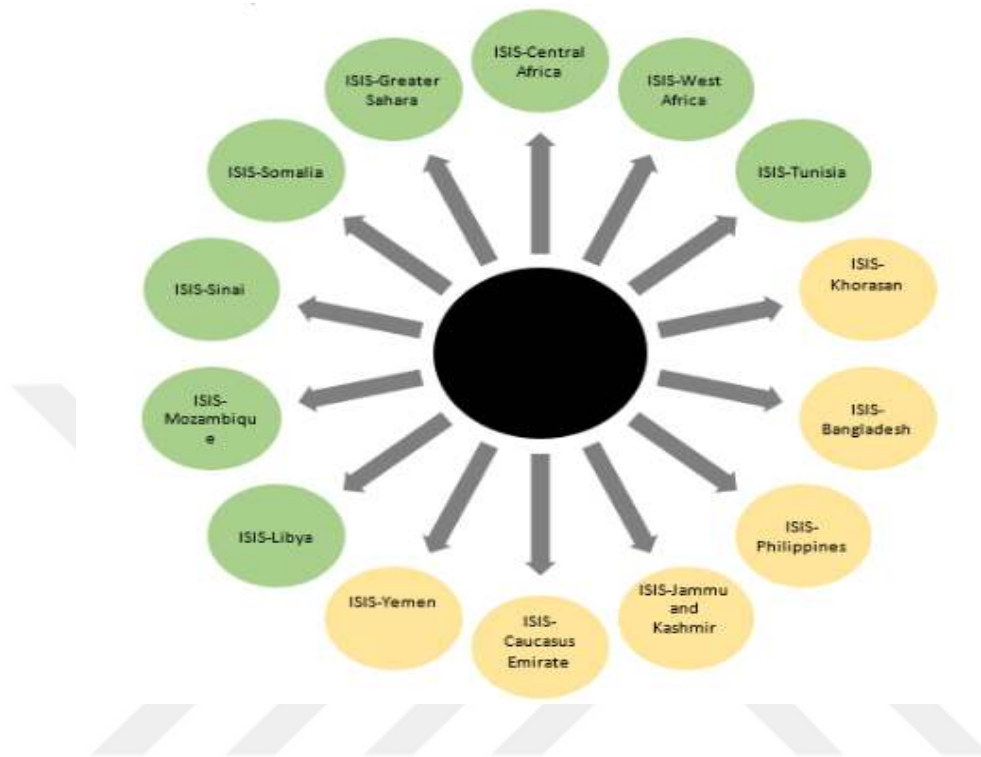
4.1.4 Islamic State's Approach to Territorial Governance

Islamic State governance is believed to have been influenced by the works of Abu Bakr Naji. He expounded on the tactics and strategies on the use of violence to realize a stable Islamic Caliphate in his writings titled '*The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage Through Which the Umma Will Pass*'. Although ISIS denied its leadership benefiting from the ideas in this book, most observers point out resemblance in the strategy and vision of the group to the texts in the book. Naji advises on the creation of Sharia in Muslim territories, provoke the super powers into a losing war and manage savagery through the establishment of Caliphate governance (Naji & McCants, 2006). Below is an excerpt from Naji's *Management of Savagery* that influenced ISIS governance.

“spreading internal security; providing food and medicine treatment; securing the region of savagery from the invasions of enemies; establishing Sharia justice among the people... raising the level of belief and combat efficiency during the training of the youth ... and so on” (Mello, 2018, p. 9), (Naji & McCants, 2006).

ISIS governance structure was a semblance of the contemporary state providing both for federal and provincial institutionalization. The head of the federal ISIS government was a top level executive known as a *Caliph*. The main role of the Caliph was to uphold religion and ensure visionary alignment of all ISIS functions to the strict Sharia interpretation. The most influential caliph of the group during its pick period was Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The Shura Council consisting of 6 – 12 clerics were charged with assisting and supporting the Caliph. The Council was also very critical in the succession of ISIS federal leadership by appointing the Caliph on a need basis. The legislative body referred to as the Delegated Committee of between 5 and 9 senior Islamic Clerics oversaw all ISIS provinces in addition to implementing ISIS laws. At the provincial level, the controlled territories in Iraq and Syria were divided into at least 19 administrative provinces headed by a Governor. The Governor was responsible for security and routine administrative functions of the province. He was an appointee of the Caliph and was oversighted by the legislative body. Each Governor was in charge of at least 14 ISIS ministries which included 6 specialized offices notably media operations and foreign members administration. ISIS established significant governance institutions in 13 out of the 19 provinces especially in provinces like Nineveh and Raqqa that were controlled for long with limited resistance (Bamber, 2021).

Figure 4.1: An Illustration of ISIS Provinces (Wilayat) in Africa, Asia and Middle East



Source: (Cengiz et al., 2022, p. 18)

Using a combination of primary ISIS documentary evidence, Al-Tamimi authoritatively concludes that ISIS established state like administrative hierarchies which included various functionally oriented ministries and departments (Al-Tamimi, 2015). The earliest ISIS governance structure in 2007 consisted of about 9 key ministries. Among the first ministries to be established were ministries directly charged with the ideology and security of ISIS. These included the ministries of war, public security, martyrs and prisoners and sharia committees. Galvanizing the media was also a critical aspect of ISIS governance and territorial control logic evidenced by the creation of the ministries in charge of public relations and media. The economic sustainability of the insurgency also guided the establishment of ISIS administration. Ministries responsible for productive economy of the occupied territories and service provision to the population were established. They included the ministries of oil (mining), agriculture, fishing and health care provision. Interestingly, ministries responsible for the productive economy and those responsible for service provision were headed by qualified professional technocrats. Prior to the declaration of

a caliphate the initial ISIS territorial logic was based on the concept of an ‘emirate’. This means that controlled territories before the declaration of the ISIS caliphate were declared as emirates.

ISIS administration after the declaration of the caliphate was greatly improved to include additional functional departments (Diwans) and more hierarchies covering the entire occupied territories as shown in the table below.

Table 4.1: Islamic States Caliphate Diwans and their Functions

Government Department	Function
Diwan al-Ta’lim	Education
Diwan al-Khidamat	Public Services (e.g. electricity, water, street cleaning). Management of public facilities (e.g. parks)
Diwan al-Rikaz	Precious resources (two known divisions: fossil fuels and antiquities)
Diwan al-Da’wah wa al-Masajid (wa al-Awqaf)	Da’wah activity and control of the mosques
Diwan al-Sihha	Health
Diwan al-Asha’ir	Tribal outreach
Diwan al-Amn (al-Aam)	Public security
Diwan Bayt al-Mal	Finances and currency system
Diwan al-Hisbah	Enforcement of public morality: Islamic police
Diwan al-Qada wa al-Mazalim	Islamic court, judicial matters, marriages
Diwan al-Alaqqat al-Amma	Public relations
Diwan al-Zira’a	Agriculture, environment
Diwan al-Ifta’ wa al-Buhuth	Fatwas, textbooks for training camp recruits etc.
Diwan al-Jund	Military and defence

Source: (Al-Tamimi, 2015)

The Islamic State governance in Iraq and Syria is divided into three phases i.e. 2004, 2008 and 2014 respectively. The most significant period was in 2015 when ISIS governed the largest territory, increased its revenues and like a state established a large outstanding army for territorial defence. The shifting goals and ideology of ISIS contributed to its loss of territory and eventual collapse. The armed group shifted from attacking the near territorial enemy to enemy anywhere in the world, from establishing governance in the territories of Iraq and Syria to establishing an Islamic Caliphate i.e. extra-territorial (Bamber & Svensson, 2022).

ISIS governance approach resisted collaboration with other armed groups. However, in the areas where the group was weak at the beginning it sought to collaborate with local armed groups. In the ISIS controlled areas, where the group had significant military strength and advantages, no collaboration was allowed. Instead, deadly violence was unleashed to the rival groups if they refused to join ISIS. However, the group's extra-territorial vision led to the establishment of alliances with other Salafi-Jihadi leaning groups across the world (ISIS provinces). Guided by the caliphate vision, ISIS dismissed Westphalia statehood, stopped all references to the names of Westphalia states, removed 'nation' from school syllabus and symbolically dismantled the Iraq-Syria border.

ISIS education reforms commenced immediately after the declaration of a caliphate with the appointment of a minister responsible for education and teaching in the controlled territories. The core cities of Raqqa and Mosul were the epicenters of ISIS education and curriculum reforms before rolling out to other controlled territories. ISIS released a key document titled '*Teaching Policy in the Islamic Caliphate*' to guide its administration of education. The document among other things spelt out the school calendar (Hijri), school going age, school holidays, class times, subjects and examinations. The education model of ISIS was organized like no other and even school textbooks were written in a special process to avoid influence from state syllabuses. University departments were either scrapped altogether or transferred with adjustments to years required for some programs. The curriculum office was charged with ensuring smooth transition by eliminating any lesson and ideological learning gaps (Arvisais & Guidère, 2020).

Media was a critical aspect of ISIS governance. It was mainly used to spread the group's propaganda. The propaganda was mainly aimed at spreading and legitimizing the ideology of the group, spread fear and intimidation to potential challengers and importantly for this research, the propaganda was used to achieve organizational propagation. This doctrine was about projecting the material (territorial) and human strength of the Islamic States to boast the morale of fighters and attract support globally (Ingram et al., 2020b).

Taxation was used to realize the ideology of ISIS and the main goal of controlling huge territories required to establish a caliphate. It was used to incentivize conformity to the group's ideology and

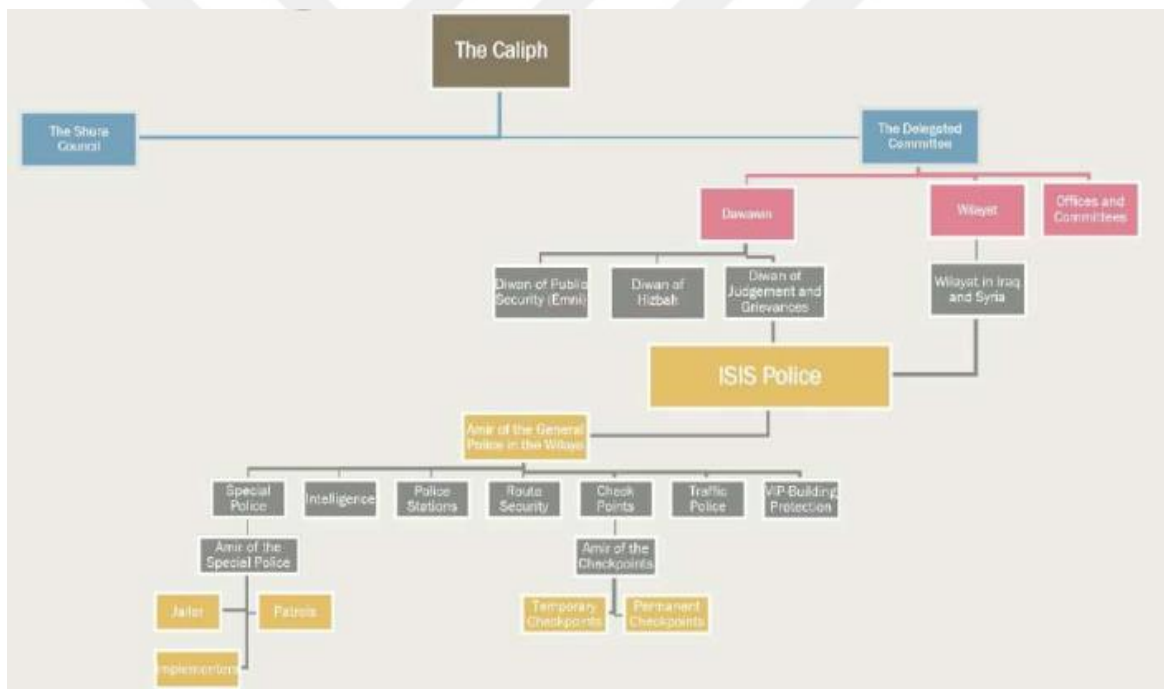
provide governance functions in the controlled territories (zakat tax). Taxation for ISIS was employed even when it was more likely costlier than the military action because it provided a proper way of consolidating both the territorial and populations gains. Christians, Jews and other religious minorities present in the occupied territories were taxed for security guarantees (jizya tax). Taxation strategy was anchored in the strict interpretation and application of the Sharia. People living in the ISIS territories were taxed for violating the strict behaviour and dressing code such as the wearing of colorful clothes for ladies and not trimming the mustaches for men. To directly support both offensive and defensive war efforts, ISIS imposed taxes on families of deserted ISIS soldiers and families who were unwilling to join the military ranks of ISIS. Other taxes were aimed at efforts of freeing ISIS prisoners and supporting jihad (Revkin, 2020).

ISIS sought to build a law based governance system on accountability and Islamic justice where the Caliph could be removed by the Shura Council on behalf of the people. This can be likened to Westphalia social contract. ISIS governance and legal codes were based on Islamic Theory of Statecraft (*siyasa shar'iyya*) that recognizes not only Sharia but also decisions from other legitimate authorities. It is on this backdrop that ISIS established both sharia and other types of courts. ISIS legal system highly regulated critical areas such as citizenship, warfare, trade, land among others. The main crimes that were targeted by ISIS territorial policing were crimes against Islamic State such as espionage, crimes against religion and morality like adultery and torts against individuals such as theft. ISIS court system was well established with courts in controlled territories organized in three branches. The complaints division *mazalim* dedicated to handling grievances against ISIS officials and fighters. Islamic courts dispensing issues related to violation of the group's laws and governance procedures and finally, Diwan al-Hisba who work with the morality police to handle moral related misconducts. Sharia council that includes the caliph provides the overall regulation of the judiciary bureaucracy. Prisons and other detaining facilities were also operated along the court system especially in Raqqa and Aleppo provinces (March & Revkin, 2015).

ISIS established an elaborate security network of police to effectively govern the occupied territories. Sections of the law and order team included the religious compliance police (*hisba*), intelligence and public security (*emni*) and the ordinary normal police referred to as Islamic State

Police (*Al-Shurta al-Islamiya*) that was very instrumental in consolidating ISIS territorial governance. Islamic State Police carried out duties of protecting and providing security to the people which earned ISIS enormous reputation and legitimacy following the weaknesses of Iraq and Syria governments. These police enabled ISIS to project an image of an efficient government to impress local civilian populations to their territories. Islamic State Police major task was to implement ‘*Document of the City*’ which was a binding agreement between the local population and the caliphate (De Graaf & Yayla, 2021).

Figure 4.2: Showing ISIS Police Organization Critical in Territorial Consolidation



Source: (De Graaf & Yayla, 2021, p. 52)

4.1.5 Islamic State’s Territorial Tactics and Strategies

For ISIS, the loss of territory was considered a strategic opportunity to redraw the group’s positions. Many counter-insurgencies interpreted ISIS loss of territory as a defeat. However, the group used it to strategically shift and re-position its territorial logic, for instance from physical

territorial logic to imaginary territorial interpretation through the creation of ideological narratives (Al-Tamimi, 2015). The excerpts of ISIS speech ‘*That They Live By Proof*’ shows ISIS strategic shifting of narratives and logics of territorial victory amid unprecedented territorial losses. Below is an example of an excerpt indicating ISIS geo-physical territorial logic transition to imaginary and psychological;

“Indeed, victory is the defeat of one’s opponent. Or do you, O America, consider defeat to be the loss of a city or the loss of land? Were we defeated when we lost the cities in Iraq and were in the desert without any city or land? And would we be defeated and you be victorious if you were to take Mosul or Sirte or Raqqa or even take all the cities and we were to return to our initial condition? Certainly not! True defeat is the loss of willpower and desire to fight” (Ingram, 2021, p. 21).

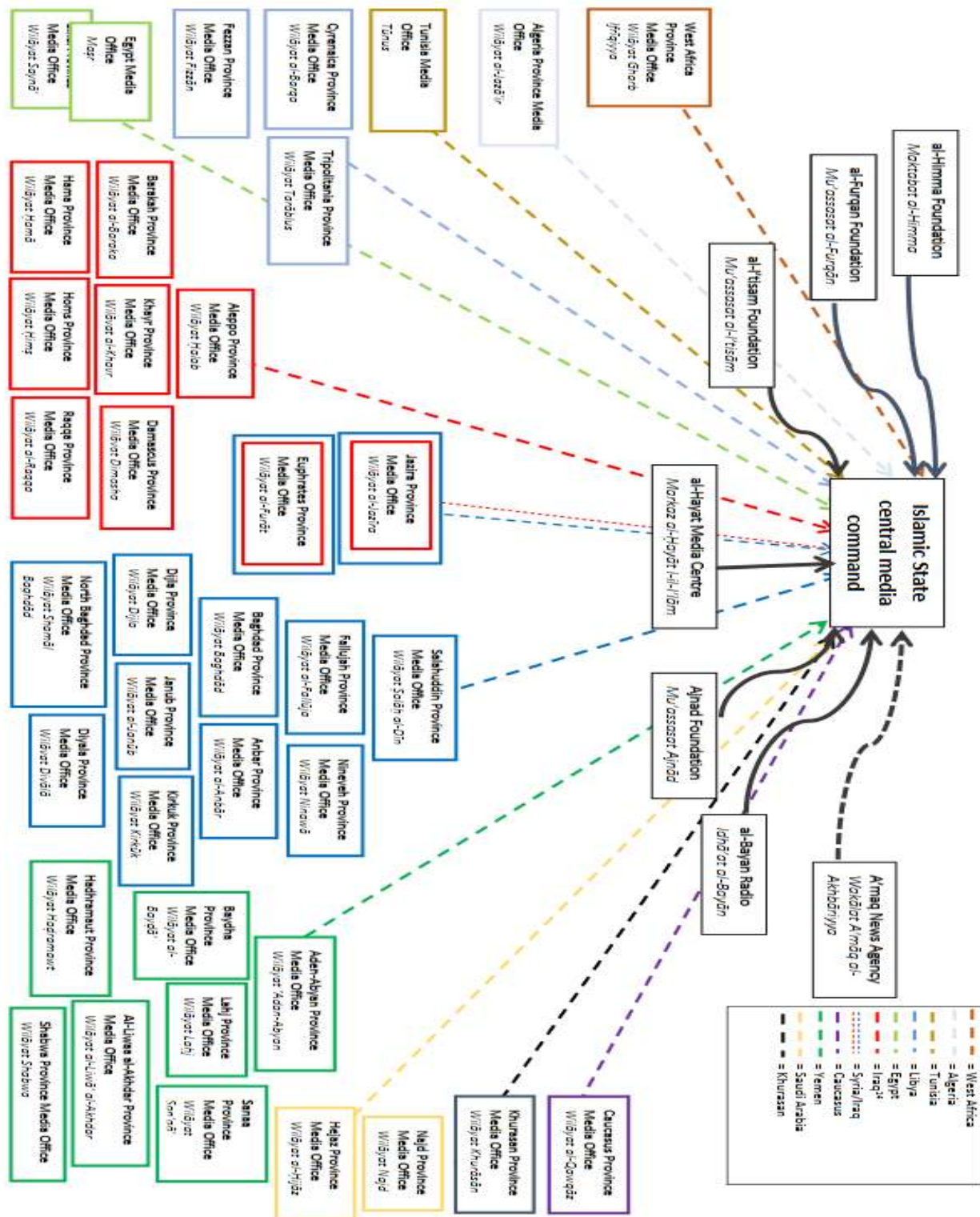
ISIS doctrine of territorial expansion and endurance was well captured in its first release of the Dabiq magazine. The strategy, which was organized in sequential phases, was to target weak and vulnerable societies and states as frontiers for territorial gain and expansion. According to the text ‘*From Hijrah to Khilafah*’ in the areas of limited state authority, ISIS was to quickly identify and take control, establish a population, train soldiers and explore opportunities for *hijrah* to the new territories. Long guerilla like campaigns were advised against strong states to weaken and force withdrawal, at least from rural areas where ISIS will quickly establish control and consolidate the gains in a long jihad struggle. This strategy is described in the excerpts of ISIS territorial control in doctrine ‘*From Hijrah to Khilafah*’ as follows;

*“...these phases include immigrating to a land with a weak central authority to use as a base where a **jama’ah** can form, recruit members, and train them. If such land does not exist or **hijrah** is not possible, the place can be formed through long campaigns of **nikayah** (injury) attacks carried out by underground **mujahid** cells. These attacks will compel apostate forces to partially withdraw from rural territory and regroup in major urban regions. The **jama’ah** will then take advantage of the situation by increasing the chaos to a point leading to complete collapse of the **taghut** regime in the entire areas, a situation some refer to as “**tawahhush**” (mayhem). The next step would be to fill the vacuum by*

*managing the state of affairs to the point of developing into a full-fledged state, and continuing expansion into the territory under the control of the **taghut**”* (Ingram, 2021, p. 20).

Interestingly media was an important aspect of ISIS territorial conceptualization. Recent researches has established a correlation between media messaging and territorial control. The diminishing territorial and military strength of the ISIS group also resulted in the same downward trend for the group’s media propaganda (Milton, 2016). The media was used to transform ISIS thematic changes and narratives during the counter-insurgency onslaught. Loss of territory in some instances resulted in the increased media activity by the group and sympathizers especially sharing online videos and messages. ISIS media was used, upon unprecedented territorial losses, to set and shape a contest between ISIS and far enemy, between Muslim lands versus the infidels. ISIS key publications aimed at expanding territorial logic included *Dabiq* targeting English speakers, *Dar al-Islam* for French speakers, *Istok* for Russians, *Konstantiniyye* for Turkish language speakers in addition to *Rumiyah* and *al-Naba* for Arab audiences (Kaczkowski et al., 2021). The media was a key component of ISIS territorial tactics and strategy. The depth and breadth of ISIS sophisticated media campaign is well visualized in the diagram below (see figure 4.3). Territorial expansion formed a big portion of ISIS media targeting and priming for audiences.

Figure 4.3: ISIS Media Coverage in Caliphate Earmarked Weak States and Societies



Source: (Winter, 2015, p. 16)

Brutal violence was an integral and strategic part of ISIS campaign. The group's cycle of violence was used to achieve three main goals of the insurgency. First, violence was used as a means for mobilization, deadly violence was also used as a survival strategy and importantly for this research violence was used as a tool to expand territorial gains and entrench ISIS administration in the strongholds of Iraq and Syria. Brutal violence was translated by the group to represent a source of power which was required to realize legitimacy goals (Rosiny, 2016). Brutal violence produced the logic of fear which aided ISIS territorial campaign. The logic of fear associated and spread by ISIS led to abandoning of resistance by some rival actors leaving ISIS to easily take control of the territory. The logic of fear spread by ISIS brutal violence was also strategically targeted towards local civilians for loyalty and total obedience of ISIS governance (Ganor, 2015). Violence as a strategy was also counter-productive. Violence necessitated resistance from the targeted actors and response from the international community which consequently led to ISIS loss of caliphate territories.

According to Whiteside, ISIS tactics and strategies for the caliphate followed the three main phases and principles of prolonged guerilla warfare identified by Mao. Without the group acknowledging in public, ISIS is believed to have taken lessons from Mao's writings on revolutionary warfare to win against enemies. To master its territorial revolutionary goals, the Islamic State insurgency campaign was divided into *building*, *expansion* and *decisive* phases in relation to the strength of the enemy actors. This tactic was aimed at reducing over-reliance on the military doctrine and incorporate political, economic, social and psychological doctrines to re-define the territorial logic. ISIS building phase involved the process of formulating the doctrine, indoctrination and recruitment of members, public branding and profiling of high visibility targets. The expansion phase was characterized by establishment of governance institutions, military sophistication including aerial and artillery, economic sustainability and sharia administration. This stage also involved efforts towards justification and preservation of the ISIS territorial control and revolutionary vision of expansion into state territories and establishment of shadow governance in its provinces. The final decisive phase was the creation of the caliphate, effective governance of the people and the new territories, defend military gains, create a new society and influence across the globe through its media campaign (Whiteside, 2016).

ISIS strategically targeted the diversity of the populations in the occupied territories. The group attacked and destroyed unique cultural sites to erase from the territories the identity, life history and any knowledge of the unwanted populations in the controlled areas. UNESCO described the deliberate destruction of the ancient sites, museums and monuments as an act of ‘*cultural cleansing*’. The memories and learning of the targeted population were completely erased from the territories. Arabic language was also weaponized and used as a tool of indoctrination as the only language of the Islamic State (Ali, 2021).

ISIS use of children was different and strategic compared to other non-state armed groups such as warlords. The use of children by ISIS was aimed at nurturing the next citizenry of the Islamic State and the caliphate. ISIS members were encouraged to bring their children to be recruited as among the first ones to gain the citizenship of the caliphate. Children were taken through education indoctrination for brainwashing into caliphate children that are capable of keeping the infidels at out of the Islamic State. Education curriculum was tailored to focus on religious (sharia) course, mental and physical (jihad) training of the children. The brainwashing and broadcasting of hero like children in ISIS media helped in keeping the recruitment flow of children who were influenced psychologically and materially. Tactically, material inducements were for children within the controlled and nearby territories whereas psychological appeals were mainly targeted to children outside the ISIS territories especially those far away in Western territories. ISIS recruitment of children was an intentional long term strategy aimed at territorial preservation ‘*Cub of the Caliphate*’ (K. Anderson, 2016), (Ibrahim, 2020).

4.1.6 Understanding Islamic State’s Territorial Logic

The geo-political, bio-political and interestingly religio-political territorial logic of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria can be summed up by the words of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in July 2014. ISIS also condensed the group’s territorial logic in a propagandist’s slogan (*baqiya wa tatamaddad*) ‘enduring and expanding’ for media dissemination (Gartenstein-Ross et al., 2016). ISIS territorial logic manifested both conceptually and tactically rejects territorial and space demarcations that are based on nations or tribes in favor of *Ummah*. The colonial limits are considered as shameful, imaginary and a conspiracy that must be dismantled and re-territorialized

for the Islamic Caliphate and Ummah (Jabareen, 2015). Al-Baghdadi in his speech pointed to ISIS conceptualization of territory as quoted below;

“O Muslims in all places, rejoice, take heart, and hold your heads high! For today you have, by God’s bounty, a state and caliphate that will renew your dignity and strength, that will recover your rights and your sovereignty: a state joining in brotherhood non-Arab and Arab, white and black, easterner and westerner ... God has brought their hearts together, and they have become, by God’s grace, brothers loving together in God, standing in one trench, defending one another.... Their blood has mixed under one banner and for one purpose...O Muslims, come to your state. Yes, your state! Come! Syria is not for Syrians, and Iraq is not for Iraqis” (Rosiny, 2016, p. 10), (Bunzel, 2015).

Table 4.2: Showing the Territorial Interpretation of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

Main Components	Sub-Components	Territorial Interpretation
1. Governance	Functions (Ministries)	Ministries/Diwans established in all controlled territories
	Type/System (Exclusion/innovation)	- Innovative governance challenging Westphalia tenets. - Highly exclusive in early stages after which qualified civilian professionals (teachers, Doctors, engineers etc.) were allowed to work in occupied territories.
	Revenue (Taxation/Economic control)	- Diversified taxation reaching all the sectors and occupants of controlled territories. - Organized production industries (mining, fishing, agriculture etc.) to maximize revenue generation.

2. Relations with civilians	Violence (Indiscriminate/Selective)	• Violence in controlled territories was selectively administered to resisting civilian agencies. • Indiscriminate violence (Terror) was mostly targeted to territories controlled by other rival actors.
	Non-violence	• This was applied strategically to win the hearts and minds of civilians in the occupied territories. ISIS ensured public service provision and offered justice avenues for civilians including for atrocities involving their fighters.
	Integration/Homogenization	• The process of integrating civilians in the controlled territories was preceded by ideological indoctrination to achieve a near uniform civilian agency
3. Ideology, Operational Tactics and Strategies	Forced Recruitment	• Ideology was a main factor of recruitment through the ISIS ranks. All potentials were forced to subscribe to the strict sharia ideology.
	Strategic Displacement (Cleansing Depopulation Forced relocation)	• Displacement as a territorial strategy was used against minority groups such as Yazidis to force allegiance or migration from ISIS controlled territories.
	Strategic violence (limited/indiscriminate)	• Violence was a critical tactic and strategy of ISIS with increased deadly terror activities especially after the declaration of the ambition to establish a worldwide caliphate. Terror was

		executed within and beyond the controlled territories and perfectly branded by ISIS media for international audiences.
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Source: Author 2022

4.2 The Case Study of Al Shabaab in Somalia

4.2.1 Understanding Al Shabaab as a Non State Armed Actor

The ground for the formation of Al Shabaab was fertile after the collapse of the Siad Barre regime in Somalia. Al Shabaab terror group emerged campaigning against foreign intervention especially by the 2006 Ethiopian military. The group mainly supported by business people coalesced around the Islamic Courts Union emphasizing sharia as the path to prevent violence and not the clan laws. The struggle against Ethiopian military emboldened Al Shabaab because they took control of territories initially under Islamic Courts Union. They branded as the most determined and legitimate defender of Somalia. Like other non-state armed groups, its immediate enemy was the home state, the Transitional Federal Government in Mogadishu. The group has since underwent structural, strategic and ideological changes overtime amid acute leadership challenges necessitated by internal wrangles and decapitations. Al Shabaab increased its territorial hold and governance especially in the rural areas controlling strategic towns and ports such as the port of Kismayu before counterinsurgency operations. The group also pledged allegiance to both ISIS and Al Qaeda amid divisions within its ranks (Kfir, 2017).

4.2.2 Al Shabaab Approaches to Territorial Governance

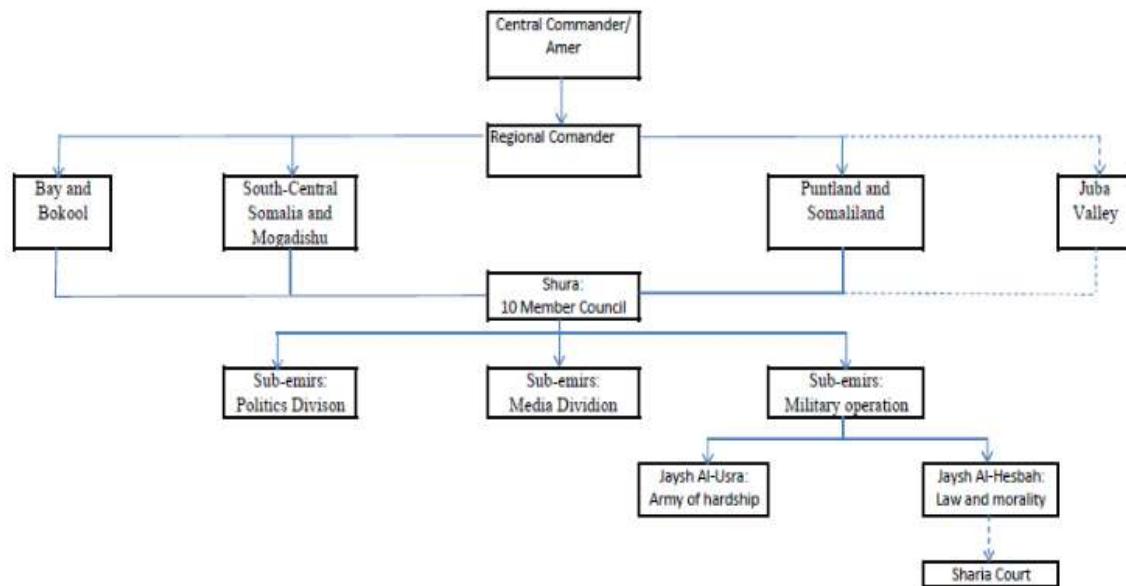
The governance by Al Shabaab in occupied territories in Somalia peaked in the period leading to the year 2010. The group had wielded significant power and authority and achieved sophistication in tactics and strategies. Al Shabaab also boasted significant financial muscle from taxation of the local population and businesses as well as engaging in the exploitation of productive economic

sectors. Al Shabaab sought collaborative governance, integration and merging when faced with rival groups inside Somalia. For instance, an emerging pragmatic rival group with relatively similar ideology to Al Shabaab emerged in 2010. The group *Hizbul Islam* was forced to merge with Al Shabaab with its leader enticed and members coerced. The absorption of rival groups gave Al Shabaab a near unrivalled control of South and Central Somali territories (Mueller, 2018). Al Shabaab also cooperated and build alliances with local sheikhs and militias especially in central Somalia where they faced stiff resistance from rival armed groups for territorial control.

Al Shabaab to captured and controlled Mogadishu the state capital of Somalia state before losing it to counterinsurgency forces. The capture and control of a state capital city was significant for the image of the group portraying their control as the legitimate government of Somalia. Mogadishu was also a strategic city for recruitment and resource mobilization especially in the largest Bakara Market. Another critical loss that hampered Al Shabaab governance was the loss of the port city of Kismayu which was very strategic for the group's operations and revenues. The revenues from export activities at the port of Kismayu were used to finance Al Shabaab governance structures such as secret service *Aminyat* responsible for intelligence, bombings and political assassinations.

Apart from security functions which are among the first to be established, Al Shabaab faced a huge shortage of professionals to operationalize other governance structures established throughout the territories. The established departments included those responsible for social affairs, adjudication, development, law and order. However, Al Shabaab's attempts to implement strict Sharia law faced stiff legitimacy challenges amongst the population in the controlled territories. The group's structure of governance consisted of a *Wali* responsible for various established offices and a *Shura Council* consisting of Al Shabaab clan representatives. There was also a religious office of *da'wa* and justice. The *emir* was the central authority controlling all offices as well as sub branches in other towns. The most influential emir of the group was Ahmed Abdi Godane. The *hisbah* police cooperated with the courts to punish behavioral offences such as dress code of the local civilians. Sometimes punishments were public events mobilized with loud speakers for everybody to attend (Skjelderup, 2020).

Figure 4.4: A Sketch of Al Shabaab Hierarchies of Territorial Governance



Source: (Shuriye, 2012)

Territorial control is a key requirement for any significant funding mobilization by NSAA. Territoriality interacts with other factors such as ideology and civilian support to provide opportunities for increased innovative funding sources. Al Shabaab during its peak enjoyed diversified revenue sources in addition to diaspora remittances and illegal activities such as the sale of charcoal, ivory, illicit sugar and mineral exploitation. The other sources of funding included an elaborate taxation within controlled territories, piracy, racketeering, levying fees on critical facilities, extortion of subjects outside controlled territories among other innovative means during increased counterinsurgency efforts. Al Shabaab governance structures included the finance office (*Maktabatu Maaliya*) responsible for collecting business and agricultural activity records in controlled territories. The finance office also coordinated and implemented the collection of tax (*zakah*) and special emergence military fund (*Infaaq*). Al Shabaab also established a dedicated finance office for non-monetary tax collection (*Zakawaat*) in an attempt to reach everyone within controlled territories (Levy & Yusuf, 2021).

Legitimizing territorial control is one of the priorities of NSAAAs intending to engage in governance. Apart from the provision of public goods and services, Al Shabaab employed different strategies to gain legitimacy. These strategies include the use of propaganda, calls for Somali nationalism and use of Islam to transform society from clannism. Al Shabaab provides mainly religious education in controlled areas lacking the prowess and capacity exhibited by ISIS like building and opening of new schools (Marchal, 2019). Religious education is especially given to children and women who are radicalized by Al Shabaab volunteer cleric teachers. The group appointed administrative executives responsible for education within its hierarchies.

Sharia training was also administered to judiciary executives designated to serve as judges (*qadis*) in *Sharia Courts* established in Al Shabaab territories. Al Shabaab justice is based on sharia with some interpretations vehemently opposed by the local population. However, the justice by the group wins it legitimacy as some locals opine it is better than nothing and it has resulted in solving some of the clan disputes. During emergencies such as drought and famine, Al Shabaab engaged in mitigating measures to win the hearts and minds of the local population. The group distributed food and sought to control the distribution of international aid in controlled territories in accordance to its goals. Al established the *Office for Supervising the Affairs of Foreign Agencies* to deal specifically in the control of the works of international humanitarian organizations. The aim of this regulation was to maintain its image as the protector of the people and prevent erosion of legitimacy (Mwangi, 2012).

Al Shabaab has established alternative governance structures in areas where previous state structures have been completely destroyed and missing (Doboš, 2016), (Doboš et al., 2019). The alternative governance units '*Islamic Provinces*' are administered by Al Shabaab and sometimes subcontracted to local NSAAAs in the controlled territories. The Islamic Local Administrators of the subcontracted areas are responsible for public works infrastructure development as well as civilian and military employment. Civilians are involved and participate in Al Shabaab governance mainly for clerical duties. Legitimacy is also bolstered by the provision of medical services and organization of civilian buying and selling activities. The leadership of the group remains highly engaged with the local population organizing visits together with the soldiers to different towns in the controlled territories to speak and educate the people (*koormeer*). Unlike ISIS which largely

dismantled local authorities, Al Shabaab seeks to partner with local governance structures to reduce the cost of controlling the population and the territories in addition to sustaining the fight with state counter-insurgencies. Al Shabaab collaboration with clan elders for instance, enabled the group to establish social order and legitimacy even in remote areas with poor infrastructural development in the South and Central Somalia.

4.2.3 Al Shabaab Territorial Operational Tactics and Strategies

Al Shabaab territorial tactics and strategies are aimed at gaining the upper hand in the control and administration of an area. They achieve this through guerilla like tactics in near territories with strong state presence to weaken the state security agencies and prevent effective delivery of governance functions. In territories under control, Al Shabaab carries out full military like operations aimed at completely defeating efforts of the state. The main strategy used by Al Shabaab to gain territorial legitimacy, apart from deliberate governance functions, is through *social framing*. This strategy involves constructing and interpreting societal circumstances and linking them to a solution to gain support. Al Shabaab diagnosis of the problems facing Somali population has led to thoughts of a greater Somalia bringing together precolonial territories. Its diagnosis harnesses Somali grievances and channels them into a larger global religious agenda (Papale, 2021). Clerics associated to the group in the region such as Sheikh Aboud Rogo continued to sow seeds of discord amongst communities. Sheikh Aboud Rogo's radical preachings focused on delegitimizing state appropriation of allegedly Muslim territories to non-Muslims and called for Jihad as the only way to reclaim Muslim lands.

Unlike ISIS which was characterized by a large number of foreign recruited fighters, recruitment for Al Shabaab is mainly targeted to the population living in the controlled and nearby territories where Al Shabaab amplifies on local dissent among the population. Economic and religious grievances are major territorial mobilization issues for al shabaab. The group brews state discontent from the local population by penetrating marginalized and weak local social structures with the help of extremist religious figures. Al though, Al Shabaab boasts foreign fighters within its ranks many of its fighters are locals and those from nearby territories who are hoodwinked by

Al Shabaab hijra calls before crossing to controlled territories in Somalia for training and deployment for jihad in territories of origin to weaken kafri positions.

Al Shabaab used foreign fighters especially in the media propaganda to improve their global image. Foreign fighters also benefited the group in terms of strategy and training skills such as in bomb making. Inside Somalia, foreign fighters were used to appeal to the clan networks and gain legitimacy that Al Shabaab was beyond clan clashes and that it was pursuing a bigger global cause that involves everyone. In the contrary, foreign fighters faced resistance from within the ranks of Al Shabaab with some of their tactics considered too radical, anti-Islam or contrary to Somali culture. Leadership was also split between the radicals and the moderates hampering insurgency effectiveness of Al Shabaab. Foreign fighters also had more difficulties understanding and executing the unclear ideology of Al Shabaab. The foreign fighters were expected to fight foreigners out of Somali land, prioritize the quest for greater Somalia and importantly Islamic governance. The quest to wage war against foreigners saw Al Shabaab recruited foreign fighters targeted, purged and killed by Al Shabaab members themselves (Kruber & Carver, 2021). To solve the issue of integration of foreign fighters, Al Shabaab ranks engaged in attempts to naturalize foreign fighters by marrying them local women (Somalinize) to fit into the social networks that characterized the armed group and Somalia in general (Bacon & Muibu, 2019). The concept of being '*foreign*' is critical for the creation of a group identity, cohesion building and territorial mobilization strategy for Al Shabaab.

Propaganda is employed by the group's media (*Al-Kataib Media Foundation*) especially targeting local communities for brainwashing was a key territorial strategy. Al Shabaab press which is decentralized in the areas targeted for control is used to spread propaganda imagery and texts. Its magazine production *Gaidi Mtaani* is mainly used to distort and brainwash the local population to join jihad and eliminate the enemy (kafiri). The name of the magazine is derived from Swahili language which gives a glimpse of the target audiences of Al Shabaab territorial aims. Swahili is a dominant and main language in most of the countries in East Africa. There were also productions in English and Arabic. Propaganda is also used to give an impression of the group's power, strength and military prowess vis a vis the state. Al Shabaab fashioned itself as a territorial resistance to Ethiopian troops in Somalia. Thereafter, the group build its support base beyond Somali ethnicity

to Islamic identity with factions collaborating with other territorial groups with related ideology such as ISIS and Al Qaeda in the Middle East. The centrality of the media for Al Shabaab territorial insurgency in Somalia is captured below;

“The media battle being waged by the mujahideen is one of the most difficult and most important part of our war against the Zionist-Crusader disbelievers, and this has made us, as the caretakers of the media jihad (al-jihad al-I ‘lami) in the beloved battlefield of Somalia, strive hard to develop methods for media warfare and to advance the weapon of jihadi media to report the truth to the people from the battlefields as well as to broadcast the voice of (Al Shabaab’s) mujahideen to the entire world to defend the Muslims” (Anzalone, 2021, p. 351).

Al Shabaab employed a number military tactics to consolidate control of their territories and raise finances for the insurgency effort. Kidnappings and hostage takings were preferred when the group controlled significant territories especially in Southern parts of Somalia. Foreign operations such as humanitarian aid workers and journalists in the controlled territories were targeted initially before expansion of this tactics into nearby territories for ransom and show of might. Kidnapping and tactical high value target hostage taking significantly reduced when Al Shabaab lost its core territorial bases. It resorted to ambushes, hit and run tactics amid territorial losses and hot pursuit by counterinsurgency operations. This was captured in the group’s strategic communication as show in the excerpt below. The enemy can be interpreted to mean or refer to counter insurgency efforts by the state entities. Al Shabaab territorial defence strategy can be summarized in the excerpt below;

“The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; He retreats, we pursue” (Mueller, 2018, p. 120).

Al Shabaab is said to have adopted a long term view of the battle and strategically withdrew from the cities and towns when counter-insurgencies approached. The group preferred a strategic withdrawal and retreat to save the lives of the fighters and avoid mounting a fierce battle for the heart and soul of the city which most likely will lead the destruction of the city. Heavy soldier

losses ruined relations with the local population with the clans contributing soldiers unable to deal with large scale losses of young people. The retreat to the remote areas and change of military tactic though mostly interpreted as a defeat, it strategically leaves the city intact for Al Shabaab take over when counterinsurgencies are pulled back. Surrendering urban territory has also not immensely hindered Al Shabaab control of the local population through social networks (N. Anderson, 2016).

Al Shabaab's decade long existence in the Horn of Africa has enabled the group to adapt to the range and depth of counterinsurgency activities. The group does not interpret loss of territory as a defeat but rather a survival strategy that will allow the members to regroup when the counterinsurgencies withdraw. While gaining territories and establishing significant control, Al Shabaab focuses on establishing governance functions including taxation for revenues. However, governance is tactically abandoned during hot pursuits by counterinsurgencies and the group falls back to illegal, barbaric and illicit survival tactics and revenue generation escapades. The battle survival adaptation and resilience strategy is what has been referred to as '*long jihad*' characterized by booms and busts. The strategy involves Al Shabaab presenting themselves as authorities capable of governing when controlling territories and presenting themselves as aggrieved insurgencies when they lose the territories to counterinsurgencies (Ahmad, 2021).

4.2.4 Al Shabaab Relations with the Civilian Population

Al Shabaab civilian logic is not all clear. Al though the group tries to portray its insurgency as fighting for Muslims and gravitates towards implementation of religious (sharia) governance in its territories, Al Shabaab excludes Muslims who are considered not alienated, aggrieved and marginalized. It fashions itself as fighting for aggrieved, marginalized and Muslims with grievances as a priority.

Al Shabaab recognizes and relies on social identities and connections of the local population to achieve its territorial goals as NSAA. The group influences the ties and relations of the population in controlled territories to achieve a near natural homogenization of the population. This is mainly realized by encouraging the local population to live and work within the territories as well as

marrying and having children within the members to ensure future loyalty and adherence to its morals and values. The strategy guarantees unwavering commitment to the cause of the group by the future generations. Recruitment is tailored to members of the social network especially those in the diaspora allegedly oppressed by the West and allies. The social networks are also critical in financing the group's activities from diaspora remittances through financial platforms like al-Barakaat, hawala and dahabshiil among others. Although the remittances may not necessarily be sent directly to the members of the group, the local population living in the controlled territories who receive remittances from diaspora social networks are targeted for taxing by the agents of Al Shabaab.

The group's relations with civilians have been characterized by the strategic use of violence and threats to send messages and influence audiences to Al Shabaab's insurgency. Al Shabaab violence has also targeted behaviour in the controlled territories such as the unpopular banning of cinema and certain hair styles for men. Civilian violence also included blockading and starvation of villages for mistakes such as failure to pay taxes to the group. However, the victimization, violence and sometimes deliberate killing of innocent civilians including Muslims alienated the Al Shabaab from its core support base. Civilian population who fled Al Shabaab controlled territories for government territories for fear of violence are branded as cowards by Al Shabaab. The brand of a coward makes some populations to remain in Al Shabaab territories and be referred to as the defenders of Somalia and or Islam. Civilian response to Al Shabaab violence has been less significant with majority either passively resisting or collaborating and integrating with the group's ideas and logics (Mueller, 2018).

Al Shabaab tactfully traverses the governance competition in Somalia by laying out strategies that appeal to the local population compared for instance to Federal Government's bargain with the elite clan networks. Al Shabaab directly bargains with the people to expand its territorial power and governance legitimacy. Al Shabaab performance in the execution of governance functions to the local people has moved hearts in some instances with the local civilian population shifting taxes to the group. Al Shabaab civilian bargain has been a formidable strategy compared to deal making preferred by the Federal Government. However, even in the Al Shabaab bargain with the civilians which is mainly aimed at improving revenue and gaining legitimacy for group, violence

is part and parcel of the strategy with civilians who fail to meet ends of the bargain threatened with brutal violence. Al Shabaab uses the resources collected from the civilians in some parts to deliver critical legal and dispute resolution services as well as water and sanitation to the civilians (Ahmad et al., 2022). Drought committees, food distribution committees and lately corona virus prevention and treatment committee as well as centers were established to further collaborate with the civilians (Shigenoi & Maekawa, 2022).

4.2.5 Understanding Al Shabaab Territorial Logic

Table 4.3: Showing the Territorial Interpretation of Al Shabaab

Main Components	Sub-Components	Territorial Interpretation
1. Governance	Functions (departments)	Al Shabaab established public goods and services provision departments such as those responsible for education, health and public works.
	Type/System (Collaborative)	Al Shabaab sought collaboration with other local territorial groups and subcontracted governance to such groups. Cooperation and co-opting of clan elders enabled control of the territories and the people.
	Revenue (Taxation/Economic control)	It established a diversified tax collection and administration system targeting population and economic activities in controlled territories. Illegal sources were resorted to during territorial losses.

2. Relations with civilians	Violence (Selective)	Al Shabaab violence and unprecedented punishment was selective in the controlled territories targeting civilian behaviour change. Brutal violence was aimed at groups considered foreign to force them out.
	Involvement	There was little civilian involvement in Al Shabaab governance. Mainly limited to petty clerical works.
	Non-violence	Al Shabaab leaders and fighters constantly organized meetings with the local populations in different towns to interact and consolidate legitimacy for Al Shabaab governance
	Integration/Homogenization	Al Shabaab relies heavily on social networks mainly religion and clan connections in their quest for a uniform citizenry of their territories. However, amid wrangles the group has tried to transform the society from strong clan network to radical Islam.
3. Ideology, Operational Tactics and Strategies	Ideology	Al Shabaab ideology is twofold: religious and nationalistic/Clan. Both have different territorial implications. Religious ideology is similar to that of ISIS to establish an Islamic Ummah and governance (caliphate). Nationalistic ideology revolves around the idea of unifying Somali clans under one territory, a greater Somalia.

	Recruitment	Al Shabaab conducts strategic recruitment based on social connections to sustain cohesiveness and vision of the group. Recruits from much more diverse backgrounds (foreign fighters) are forced to <i>Somalinize</i> through arranged marriages to locals.
	Kidnapping for Ransom	High value strategic kidnapping was impressed by the group during the height of its territorial control especially targeting nearby territories.
	Strategic violence (Terrorism)	Terror campaigns against alleged occupiers of lands targeted by Al Shabaab for control are sustained to weaken and force withdrawal of occupiers (the state). This is a tactical and strategic transformation of the battle to a long-term war.

Source: Author 2022

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has brought sharp focus in understanding the territorial logic of Al Shabaab and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Applying the components and sub-components of the framework of analysis has proved useful in making some sense on how the two NSAAs interpret territory and territoriality.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This is the final chapter that provides a balanced analysis of the findings of the research and provides concluding arguments. In addition to suggesting recommendations for stakeholders and policymakers, this chapter also identifies gaps for future research for concerned academicians to improve the arguments and potentially theorize the field.

5.1 Findings of the Study

The results of the study are three fold, first shining a spotlight on the conceptualization of territoriality in the literature specifically for non-state armed groups, second providing an assessment of the topology of understanding NSAA territorial logic and lastly, understanding territorial conceptualization of the two case studies of Al Shabaab and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

Territory and territoriality is a critical topic in the field of international relations. Territory is considered one of the most important tenets of the Westphalia state that must be protected and secured against existential threats. However, there has been limited focus on the concepts of territory and territoriality in the field of international relations. Mancur Olsun provides some of the accurate and most convincing explanations of territorial actors when he writes about roving bandits and stationery bandits (this research uses roving actors and stationery actors respectively). From his analogy a roving actor can be regarded as the earliest state formation stage characterized by looting, theft and squandering of resources amid stiff competition from other territorial actors. The stationery actor can be equated to a newly formed state with a functioning government in a given territory. The state is achieved when the roving actor, smarts out of a looting competition, establishes a monopoly over theft of resources and develops the capability to protect the resources from competing external threats from other actors. The rise of territorial NSAAs has brought new

attention and focus on the conceptualizations of territory and territoriality. This is partly because of the existential threats the NSAAs bring to the Westphalia territorial integrity of states.

One of the key objectives of this research work was to develop a useful framework of understanding the NSAA territorial logic. The topology brought together the three main interrelated and interconnected components of NSAAs as well as the relevant subcomponents. The main components include NSAA governance, NSAA relations with the civilian population in the areas under control and NSAA ideology, tactics and strategies. Governance component helps us understand whether NSAA are interested in the holding and demarcation of space. There is a strong agreement among scholars that the establishment of governance hierarchies and functions requires significant control of territory. Therefore, NSAAs involved in the establishment of administrative orders and delivery of public goods and services such as health, education, finance (tax), security, public works, law and order among others are highly territorial. Territorial NSAAs also seek to collaborate with other local territorial actors in local governance to minimize costs and expand the size of their territorial reach and control.

The component of NSAA relations with the local civilian population is useful in shining a spotlight on whether the group is interested in controlling the population. Territory is not an empty slate, it is ideally occupied by many subjects among them the civilians. Non-state armed groups interested in consolidating and solidifying their hold on the territory engage in deliberate efforts to win the hearts and minds of the subjects which are the local civilian populations in the controlled territories. Territorial NSAAs therefore encourage civilian participation by creating structures of civilian involvement in their governance. They attempt to modify civilian behaviour in accordance to the goals of the insurgency (homogenize) to achieve legitimacy of their governance and territorial control. Having the local population on your side also reduces the costs of the insurgency and territorial control. Highly oppressive NSAAs with increased brutal violence on civilians are less likely territorial because they run the risk of alienating the civilian agency. Territorial NSAA interactions with the civilian agency are very critical. The civilian agency can actively or passively engage in resistance which may delay, influence, modify and shape the goals of the NSAA.

Focusing on the ideology, tactics and strategies of the NSAA can also give critical insights into its territorial logic. Some NSAAs have a clearly defined ideology that points to their

conceptualization of space. Other war tactics and strategies like strategic violence towards minorities who pose little threat to the goals of the NSAA may be attempts of the group to forcefully homogenize the minority groups into their established civilian agencies. Media has also proved to be a critical strategy in territorial control. Media messages are profiled and primed to influence the populace. The propaganda helps to expand the psychological space, glorify the NSAA military prowess and provision of governance functions in the controlled territories. Media is weaponized to delegitimize the home state territorial justifications. Cleansing, strategic displacement of the population and female sexual violence may also give a glimpse of the NSAA attempts to influence and determine the future citizenry of the controlled territories.

The case studies provided a good start for the testing of the topology. Both Islamic State of Iraq and Syria are considered territorial NSAAs albeit with very different territorial conceptualizations and interpretations. The territorial logic of ISIS is guided by its religious ideology and main goal of establishing a caliphate. The group established elaborate governance hierarchies and structures in the controlled territories in Iraq and Syria as well as in its provinces across the world. ISIS established ministries such as those responsible for agriculture, mining, finance, law and order, justice, education, religion, media as well as military and defence functioning with some sought of similarity to the state. An elaborate tax regime was also established, diversified enough to cover almost all aspects of the life in the territories. ISIS allowed civilians such as teachers and doctors to continue working in institutions established by the group in controlled territories thus allowing civilian participation in its governance to a small extend and at lower levels. This was strategic to ensure continuity of critical public goods and services to the local population to win their loyalty. ISIS was guided by its motto endure and expand to reterritorialize and de-territorialize. The group engaged in open attempts to homogenize the population in the controlled areas notably implementing radical sharia governance. This was characterized by enormous attempts to regulate civilian behaviour and morals. A sophisticated media campaign was also launched to help in brainwashing and indoctrinating the population as well as announcing territorial gains and narrative transformation. Strategically, brutal violence was used as a territorial expansion strategy. It was employed to spread the logic of fear to other rival territorial actors who ended up surrendering and withdrawing to allow ISIS easy territorial expansion and control. The indoctrinating school syllabus, strategic use of children and the targeting of minority groups such

as the tribal cleansing, displacement and sexual enslavement of Yazidi women are attempts to create a future citizenry of the caliphate that will remain loyal the caliphate goals.

Al Shabaab on the other hand, though not achieving the level of territorial sophistication such as that of ISIS also established governance hierarchies and functions in the controlled territories. The group provides public goods and services such as health, education and training (mainly religious/Sharia), law and order, tax collection, public works as well as office of Foreign Services. Al Shabaab also established elaborate structures for kidnapping for ransom targeting high value and visible profiles. Unlike ISIS, Al Shabaab ideology is not clearly defined. However, it takes the form of both a religious ideology and a nationalist/clan ideology. Territorial interpretations based on the religious ideology point to the group's goal of establishing sharia governance in Eastern Africa similar to the caliphate of ISIS. Territorial interpretations based on Somali nationalism/clan ideology are aimed at bringing under the same territory and governance all the Somali clans scattered in different countries in the region to establish a greater Somalia. Both ideologies strongly advocate for the elimination of non-believers and foreigners from the territories that belong to Muslims and Somalis respectively.

Al Shabaab heavily invests in building relations with the local civilian population with the group's leaders and fighters organizing visits to different towns in the controlled territories to interact with the local people. Locals also participate in Al Shabaab governance especially providing clerical support. The group also builds legitimacy and expand territorial hold by cooperating with clan elders and subcontracting governance to other territorial local non-state actors. Terrorism for the group is a strategic transformation of the goals of the group to long term aims of slowly weakening the state capacity for Al Shabaab to govern the targeted territories when the state forces collapse or withdraw. Recruitment to the group is mainly based on social networks and connections to avoid delusion of the group's identity. Foreign fighters are mainly relied upon for rare skills and media branding to give an impression of a movement that is above Somali clannism. However, there are strong attempts to Somalinize the foreign fighters, kill and expunge them from the group when the identity of the group is threatened.

The case studies also provided useful tips on understanding the territorial logic of the NSAAs. The location of the NSAA influenced its territorial logic. Non-state armed actors located in highly competitive environments in terms of resources and territorial struggles are more likely to have a much more pronounced territorial logic. This is because territorial control is one of the guarantees of accessing the available scarce resources as well as establishing a control of the people. ISIS was located in a highly competitive Middle East region surrounded by several challenging and rival actors whereas Al Shabaab was located in a region which can be considered least competitive in terms rival groupings. The territorial logic of ISIS was much more deliberate and entrenched compared to Al Shabaab which had the leeway to juggle between religious or clan demarcation of the physical and the imaginary space. The main challenge for Al Shabaab was the state counter-insurgencies whereas ISIS faced other territorial NSAAs with competitive ideas in how to demarcate the same space in the Middle East. The case studies have also produced some confidence in the developed framework of analysis when used in combination with the relevant sub components, it is possible to get critical insights into the territorial logic of any NSAA. The topology does not place any restrictions on the selection of case studies and it can be easily be applied to understand interpretations of space of either religious groups, terror groups, warlords or indeed many other groupings of non-state armed actors in almost any region of the world.

5.2 Understanding the Contemporary State – Non State Armed Actor Relations

Understanding the territorial logic of the NSAAs is very critical in modeling new insights into the understanding of the relationship between the state and the non-state armed groups. The relationship has been characterized by some observers as mutually constitutive state – NSAA relation where the Weberian state utilizes the NSAAs as one of the tools to achieve tactical and strategic goals. The non-state armed groups are believed to be pawns of the state in the international chess board. In order to gain new insights into the complex state – NSAA relations I strongly agree with Staniland for a shift in the lens of analysis from for instance civil war or any other to ‘armed politics’.

The dynamism of State - NSAA relation ranges from supportive and collaboration with the state (collusion), violent relation (suppression), absorption into the state (incorporation) and

containment by the state. However, the most critical observation is that despite of the kind of relationship, the state is always guided by the preservation of sovereignty and maintaining the Weberian monopoly over violence. The strength of the state – NSAA relations is mainly determined by the objectives of the state actor which makes some armed groups lose relevance when the objectives of the state change (Staniland, 2015).

5.3 Understanding of the State Behaviour Based on the Findings

This is an area of research with significant grey areas. The state action and reaction to the emergence of NSAAs is yet to be fully explored and understood in the literature. Most of the studies point to counterinsurgency in civil wars and counterterrorism in terrorism skirmishes. A comprehensive and holistic study to understand state reaction to the emergence of the NSAAs will be beneficial to the state policy framework, delivery of the mandate of international organizations and to the academic scientific world. The emergence of NSAAs is believed to influence both the behaviour and the actions of the state either positively or negatively. It is evident that it is not just the NSAAs that are influenced and conditioned by the presence, actions and responses of the state, but the state also undergoes some conditioning in terms of its actions, responses as well as general behavior and modifications as a result of the emergence of the armed non-state actors in the system.

5.4 Conclusion and Recommendations

The use of two case studies by this research provides an opportunity to further interrogate and compare the territorial logic of Al Shabaab and ISIS. It is possible to find out the extent to which their conceptualization of space is similar or different in a more clear way using the framework as shown in the table below;

Table 5.1: A Comparison of the Territorial Logic of Al Shabaab and ISIS

Main Components	Sub-Components	Islamic States	Al Shabaab
1. Governance	Functions (departments)	Strong established horizontal and vertical hierarchies for service delivery and civilian control	Relatively weak organization of departments that provide services and control the population and territory
	Type/System (Collaborative)	Highly restrictive allowing only ISIS members who have pledged allegiance. Very limited cooperation with other actors.	Collaborates with clan elders and other groupings to extend and limits costs of territorial hold
	Revenue (Taxation/Economic control)	Very elaborate and diversified means of revenue generation, collection and control of economic activities	Established revenue collection mechanism but resorts to extortion during territorial pressures

2. Relations with civilians	Violence (Selective)	• Selective violence to punish rebellion and enforce caliphate laws	• Indiscriminate violence in the territories controlled by other rival actors
	Involvement	• Civilians highly excluded in ISIS governance save for critical skills. However, pledging allegiance was the determinant of employment benefits	• Civilian involvement structures for feedback developed though very weak. Clerical jobs easily left for civilians in controlled territories
	Non-violence	• Religious intoxication of the populations. Education reforms for caliphate children and general provision of governance functions to the population	• Organization of meetings between Al Shabaab leadership and fighters with local people as well as distribution of aid, relief food amongst governance initiatives
	Integration/Homogenization	• Strongly pursued homogenization of the caliphate population. They	• Somalinization of foreign fighters by marrying them Somalis by keep

		zeal for a uniform population is to ease territorial governance	strong the social networks
3. Ideology, Operational Tactics and Strategies	Ideology	Main ideology is the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate	Two fold ideology, religious oriented (caliphate) and nationalism/clan leaning (greater Somalia).
	Recruitment	Forced recruitment in controlled territories and ideological appeals in other areas especially the West	Mainly strategic recruitment based on social or religious networks to fill its fighter ranks
	Kidnapping for Ransom	Established more elaborate and diverse revenue sources in the controlled territories	Kidnaped during periods of relatively strong territorial holds.
	Strategic violence (Terrorism)	Brutal deadly violence to scare away potential rivals. Adopts	Selective violence due to the impacts of brutal violence to

		long jihad to weaken state hold to territory	the group's cohesion and relations with clan factions. Adopts long jihad to weaken state hold to territory
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Source: Author (2022)

However, inclusion, a lot remains to be done in the study of NSAAs in international politics. Recent research has acknowledged how the study of NSAAs is different from the more common traditional study of civil war. We lose analytical lens when we study NSAAs in the civil war perspective. The situation is no different when researchers look at NSAAs' insurgency as small wars, warlords, criminal enterprise, gang networks or terrorism. I strongly support the revamping and transformation of the study of NSAAs to an independent area of study, otherwise referred to as the study of 'Armed Politics'. This will help in focusing research attention, synthesize and synchronize knowledge for effective decisions. The contemporary conflict environment has been transformed with NSAAs strategically engaging in competitive statehood. The perceived ungoverned areas in the conflict environment are innovatively governed by the armed groups to the dilemma of the state. The strategies and tactics employed, the relations build with civilians and the strive to establish a bureaucracy all point to a deliberate effort to new territorial logics. Non-state armed actors enjoy the flexibility of innovating with every foundational aspect of Westphalia statehood. This has contributed to limiting the chances of NSAAs achieving international legitimacy in the state centric international system.

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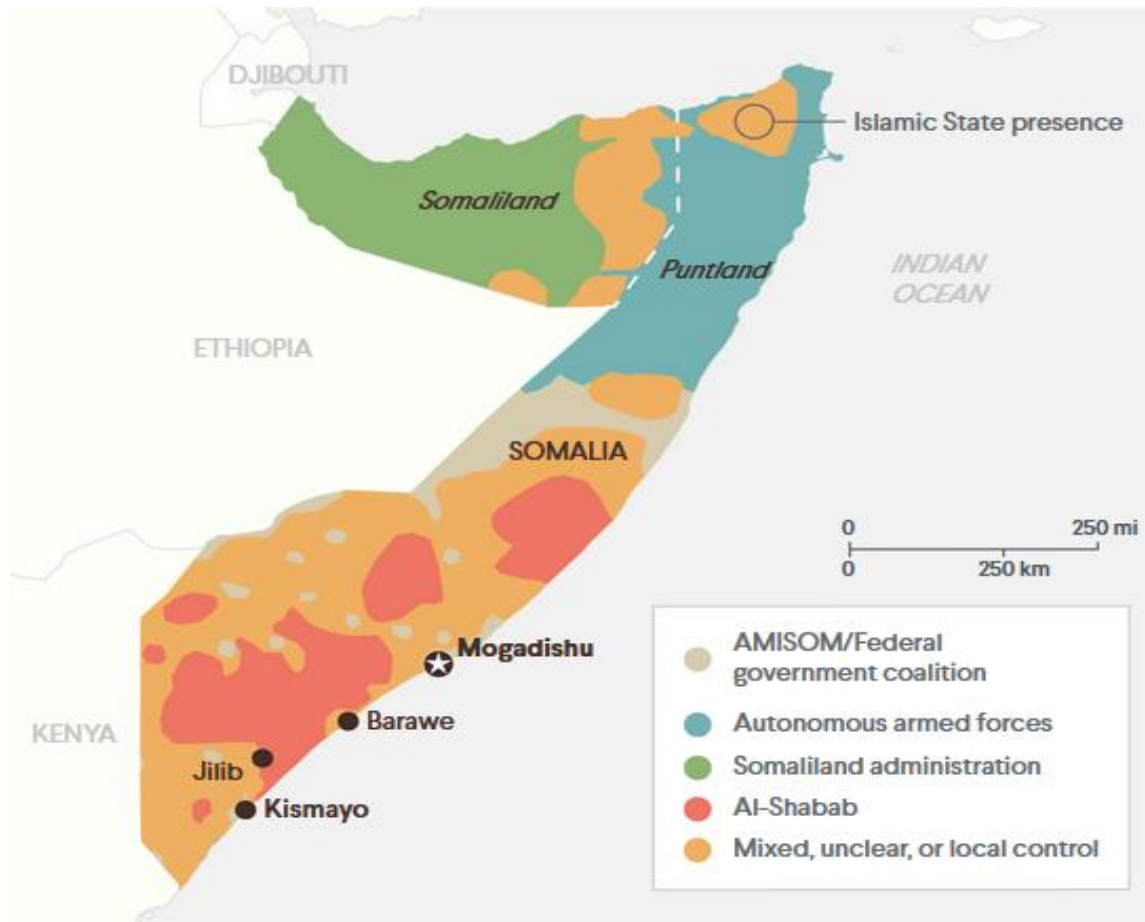
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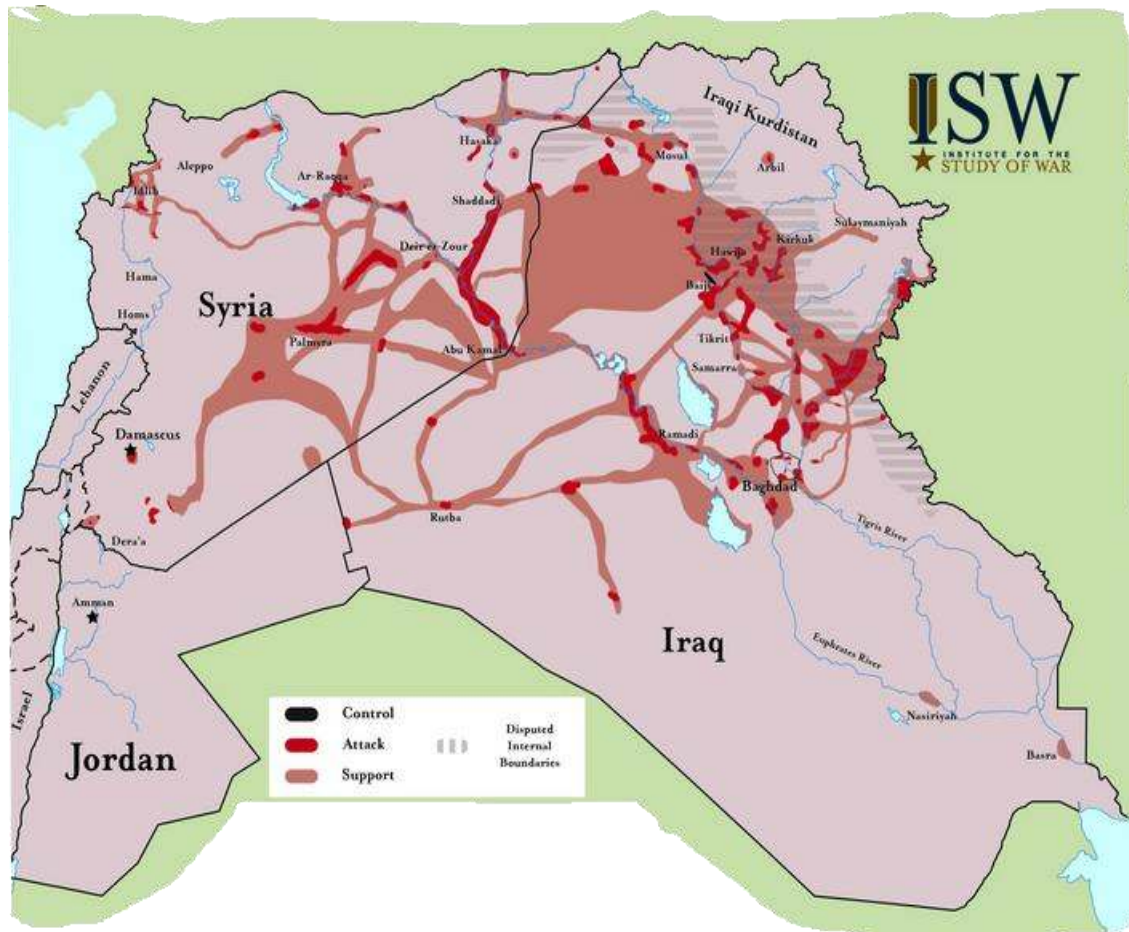
APPENDICES

Appendix I: A Map Showing Al Shabaab Territorial Control as of February, 2021



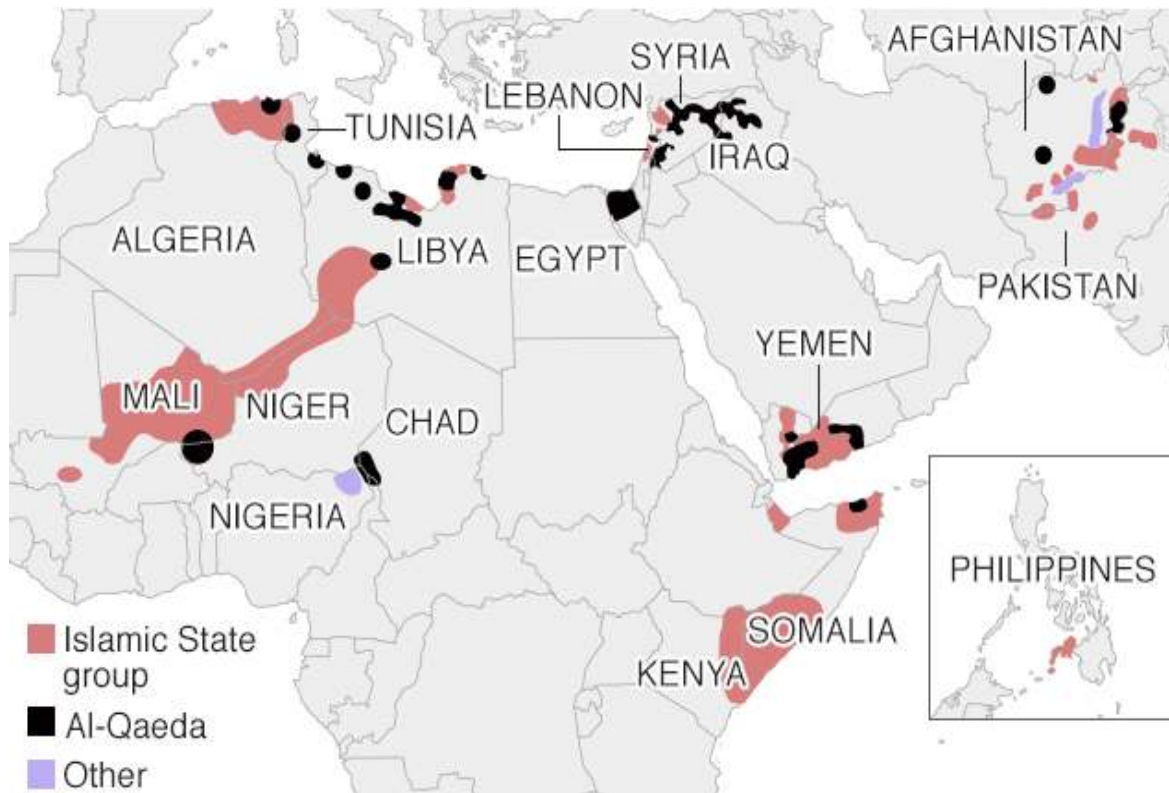
Source: (Felter et al., 2021)

Appendix II: A Map Showing ISIS Operating Areas as of August 2019



Source: Institute for the Study of War (ISW)

Appendix III: A Map Showing ISIS Provinces in 2017



Source: (BBC News, 2018)

Appendix IV: Author Profile

Education	
2020 – 2022	Master of Arts International Relations Social Sciences University of Ankara - Turkey
2013 – 2017	Bachelor of Arts Political Science, Conflict and Peace Studies University of Nairobi – Kenya
Publications	
1. Shihundu, F. (2021). Review of the book by Sara Bazoobandi (2020), <i>The New Regional Order in the Middle East: Changes and Challenges</i>. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 141, ISBN 978-3-030-27885-4. Security and Defence Quarterly. https://doi.org/10.35467/sdq/141520. 2. ----- (2022). Libya: Arms Proliferation and Armed Groups. <i>The Libyan Conflict Revisited</i>. Conflict Studies Quarterly, 38, 60–72. https://doi.org/10.24193/csqr.38.4. 3. ----- (2021). The Experience of Terrorism in Kenya: What Are the Vulnerabilities and Strengths ? <i>African Journal on Terrorism</i>, 11(1), 127–144. 4. ----- (2022). The Geopolitics of Renewable Energy Transition in Eastern Africa. <i>Journal of Global South Studies</i> Vol. 39, No. 1, pp. 134-159. ISSN 2476-1397. 5. ----- (2022) “Examining the Prospects of Consociational Power Sharing as a Conflict Resolution Strategy in South Sudan” <i>The African Review</i>. pp. 1-18. https://doi.10.1163/1821889X-BJA10019 6. ----- (2022) A Book Review of Bruce D. Jones and David Steven, (2014). <i>The Risk Pivot: Great Powers, International Security and the Energy Revolution</i>. <i>African Journal on Conflict Resolution</i>. 7. ----- (2022). Examining the Prospects of Consociational Power Sharing as a Conflict Resolution Strategy in South Sudan. <i>The African Review</i>, 1(aop), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1163/1821889x-bja10019	
Conference Presentation	
1. Shihundu, F. (2022, February 11). <i>The Challenges of Climate Diplomacy in Developing Countries</i> [Second International Conference on Environmental Peacebuilding]. Environmental Peacebuilding Association. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAUv_8ft0vg	