

ABSTRACT

The thesis engages narratives that seek to explain why actors in the Somali insurgency have not explored the possibility of negotiations with the Al-Shabaab as a political solution to the insurgency despite the futility of the military efforts prioritized. Somalia has been mired in conflict for more than three decades with no clear end to the war in sight. Theoretically, the study is premised on the Isolation, engagement, ripeness and conflict readiness theories to explain why efforts to end the Al-Shabaab insurgency in Somalia have not progressed to formal negotiations.

The objectives of the study were to; analyse how Somalia's history has sustained the insurgency; historicize the major attempts by regional actors to end the insurgency; map out the major actors in the war ecology in Somalia and to analyse why the different attempts to end the insurgency have not progressed to formal negotiations. The study employed a historical research design and a qualitative approach. Data was collected through documentary reviews and qualitative interviews with qualitative descriptive methods of analysis.

The study established that the drivers of the insurgency are deeply rooted in Somalia's history and society formation with Islam and the clan system standing out prominently. The findings indicate that the war ecology in Somalia is intricate and rife with a myriad of state and non-state actors, convergences, divergences and interests involved in efforts to end the insurgency. The myriad of actors in the insurgency allow the Federal Government of Somalia some form of juridical sovereignty but no empirical sovereignty hence making it perpetually weak and dependant on foreign support. This further frustrates efforts to resolve the insurgency to progress to negotiations because parties in conflicts negotiate from a position of strength.

It is concluded that much as the insurgency is ripe, the actors are not ready for negotiations because the government remains weak on one hand and the actors are interested in pursuing their geopolitical interests. The study challenges the notion popularised by the Global War on Terror of 'never negotiating with terrorists' as this blurs the legitimate drivers of insurgencies such as the desire for self-governance. The study recommends that actors in the insurgency should explore peaceful means of ending the insurgency through negotiations otherwise Somalia will remain at an equilibrium of 'NO WAR, NO PEACE'.