

## **Abstract**

This thesis examines Kenya's state-centric counter-terrorism approach in response to Al-Shabaab's terrorist threats in the country. It employs three security theories that attempt to decipher the best approach in countering terrorism- the traditionalist military view; human security paradigm and the critical terrorism school of thought. It demonstrates that Kenya is guided by the traditionalist view but then argues that this approach is likely to fail since it neglects fundamental drivers of terrorism that need to be addressed if at all a successful campaign against terrorism is to be realized. It suggests that Kenya's continued neglect of these underlying issues, which include increased marginalization of its Muslim communities, are likely to be exploited by Al-Shabaab to make easy recruitments. The thesis then analyzes Kenya's hardline policies and argues that contrary to winning the fight against terrorism; they are likely to be counter-productive, resulting in a domino effect of attacks and counter-attacks. It also argues that because of the discriminatory tendencies of the local level counter-terrorism operations, which are targeted at the Kenyan Muslim population (ethnic Somalis and Coastal communities), this approach risks increasing the impetus of the disenfranchised youth from within these communities to enlist into terrorist organizations.