Institut d'études politiques de Paris

ECOLE DOCTORALE DE SCIENCES PO

Programme doctoral de Science politique, mention Relations internationales

CERI

Doctorat en science politique, spécialité relations internationales

The State in Somalia

Between Self-Governance and International Order

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Defence on 26 January 2023

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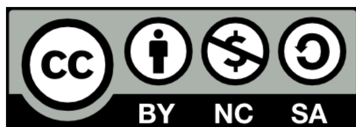
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Abbreviations used in the text

AFIS	Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana della Somalia (1950-1960)
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia (2007-2021)
ARS	Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (2007-2009)
ATMIS	African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (2021-present)
AU	African Union (2001-present)
BMA	British Military Administration (1942-1950)
CERI	Centre de Recherches Internationales, Paris (1952-present)
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (1961-present)
EU	European Union (1993-present)
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia (2012-present)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product (1937-present)
HDM(S)	Hizbia Digil Mirifle (Somalia) (1954-1966)
ICU	Islamic Courts Union (2004-2006)
IFI	International Financial Institutions: IMF, World Bank, regional banks (1944-present)
IMF	International Monetary Fund (1944-present)
IR	International Relations (1919–present)
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization (1970s–present)
NISA	National Intelligence and Security Agency (2013-present)
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (1961-present)
PMSC	Private Military and Security Contractor (1990s-present)
SDF	Somaliland Development Fund (2012-present)
SNM	Somali National Movement (1981-1993)
SPM	Somali Patriotic Movement (1989-1992, factions until 2003/2004)
SSDF	Somali Salvation Democratic Front (1978-2001)
SYC	Somali Youth Club (1943-1947)
SYL	Somali Youth League (1947-1969)
TFG	Transitional Federal Government (2004-2012)
TNC	Transitional National Constitution of Somaliland (1993-2001)
TNG	Transitional National Government (2000-2006)
UN	United Nations (1942-present)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme (1965-present)
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia (1992-1995)
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission to Somalia (2013-present)
USC	United Somali Congress (1987-2000)
USD	US Dollars (1792-present)
USSR	Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (1922-1991)

Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have been completed without the constant support of my wife, Mariko; she created enough space in our busy family and work life in Addis Ababa and Brussels for me to continue working for an unreasonably long time on this text. She is a great partner for critical intellectual exchange and has been following events in the Horn of Africa professionally herself, so our debates about the intricacies of Somali politics and international intervention could be pursued from the kitchen to the dinner table and beyond.

My luck is that my father, Marinus Kluijver, is a professional editor. Although he specializes in the earth sciences he has now also become an expert on the Somali state, by carefully editing all my chapters one by one and suggesting many improvements, especially to clarify the text and reduce my verbosity. Remaining mistakes are entirely my own responsibility, as I found it necessary to make many changes in the text *after* he had finished correcting it.

My gratitude also to my mother in law, Michiko Peters, who offered me refuge in her house in Utrecht several times when lack of concentration threatened to plunge me into despair. Her sober household and delicious Japanese cooking provided ideal working conditions. With her own academic background in the sociology of Law and as the widow of a Dutch professor who had many PhD students, she provided useful insights on my research process and argumentation.

Friends who also provided a writing refuge to me include Rodney Place, the South African artist who shared with me the isolated old hunting lodge in the forests of the Dordogne where the pandemic had washed him up, and Roel and Catherine, in whose Burgundy cottage I spent a very productive month. Thanks also to Anaïs Marin and Serge Dallas for editing my French.

In terms of intellectual stimulation, I will never forget my friend Holly Ritchie. One evening at a party in Nairobi, when I was nearly two years into my PhD but had hardly started working on it, she told me she had written her PhD dissertation (rewarded with a 'cum laude') in three months. Encouraged by her words, I started writing mine in April 2018, and finished only four and a half years later.

Markus Hoehne provided an essential boost to my PhD research in several ways. First, staying in the stylish old Jirdeh hotel in Hargeisa, taking me to Somali eateries where you would never find a foreigner and cracking jokes with everyone around in fluent Somali, he epitomizes the kind of researcher I have faith in; second, he copied onto a USB stick about 800 academic articles and books about Somalia which became the basis for my own research efforts; and third, he always responded to my queries helpfully and with German 'Gründlichkeit', providing great feedback on early drafts of chapters I sent him.

My gratitude goes also to Professor Baadiyow, who commented helpfully on an early draft of my dissertation, and to the Somali International University in Mogadishu for inviting me as a guest lecturer and taking care of my accommodation and transportation, thus facilitating my research.

Roland Marchal has been co-director of this dissertation since the day I came to his office in Paris with my PhD plan. His vast knowledge of Somalia and the Horn of Africa and his field research reports have helped me stay the course. I found out just before submitting this dissertation that his function as co-director could not be mentioned on the title page, but this has been his role throughout the process.

Luis Martinez, the main director of this thesis, deserves my gratitude for his patience and capacity to guide me through the process of writing a dissertation, even when I kept wandering off into unfamiliar academic terrain, or even entirely out of the field of political science.

Introduction

The international community intervenes in many developing countries to assist with state-building. Whether the intervention is primarily motivated by humanitarian and development concerns, conflict resolution or global security, in each case an effective state is considered the foundation for a sustainable, long-term solution for the country intervened in. There is also a global consensus that the liberal democratic state is the only acceptable form of political order. Since the end of the Cold War, state-building interventions have taken place in a wide range of cultural and political settings, such as Cambodia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Haiti, Afghanistan, Iraq, Sierra Leone, Liberia, East-Timor, Libya, South Sudan, the Solomon Islands… and Somalia. Most of these state-building interventions have ended in disappointment. The resulting states are weak, remain dependent on external support, and often seem to lack popular legitimacy.

The question that sparked this doctoral research is: Why does the international community pursue flawed state-building interventions in other countries? It arose out of many years of professional practice and the observation that, in the absence of an effective State, societies achieve a certain level of peace and social and economic development. In terms of political order, this can be termed self-governance, in contrast to state governance. But mechanisms of self-governance are rarely integrated into external state-building plans. My central hypothesis is that external state-building efforts serve to strengthen the international order and fail because they do not acknowledge self-governance.

The investigation of this hypothesis ran into a major problem: there is barely any political theory about self-governance. In fact, self-governance is almost completely ignored in the academic literature as well as in policy documents, and even in media reports. This observation pushed my research into the theoretical direction. An adequate theory for self-governance in the absence of an effective state had to be found, preferably one that could also explain the relation between self-governance and state governance. Ultimately, I constructed a theory from different sources, presented here as the Dual Power theory.

To provide a glimpse of it beforehand, this theory posits that there are two types of political power: social power and symbolic power. Social power is based on humankind's collective self-preservation drive and is exercised through self-governance. Symbolic power is based on laws that humans establish and has been increasingly exercised over the past two centuries by the modern State. Social power and state power together structure the political field. From this theory, an analytical framework is derived to examine the political field, characterized here as relations between state and society within their international context.

The geographical area chosen for this investigation is Somalia, because it is the ideal 'failed state' and it has witnessed all types of international intervention since the colonial period. The British tried to impose a political order in British Somaliland, the Italians pursued economic development in *La Somalia Italiana*, the independent Somali state was prepared under the trusteeship of the United Nations, both superpowers intervened during the Cold War, and in the 1980s international financial institutions oversaw structural adjustment programmes while the UN and international NGOs launched large-scale humanitarian and development programmes. Since the collapse of the Somali state in 1991, the country has witnessed intervention of many different sorts: humanitarian, development, military (as part of the War on Terror), conflict resolution/peacebuilding/stabilization, as well as a sustained international effort to rebuild a Somali state. Meanwhile, self-governance has assured some degree of political order in many areas of Somalia. Part of the country—Somaliland—seceded in 1991 to create its independent

state, while most areas of south and central Somalia are under the full or partial control of Al Shabaab, an insurgent Salafi movement. Somalia provides an ideal terrain for studying both intervention and self-governance. The country may be one of the most difficult fieldwork areas in terms of academic research, but I secured a job in Somalia during the first years of my dissertation work, allowing me to build a network of contacts and return to the field later.

The central subject of this dissertation is the State. Why does the international community insist on the formation of a liberal democratic state in Somalia? What is exactly meant by the term 'international community'? Do Somalis need and want a State? And, if so, how much latitude do they have to form their own State? Since the assumption that the State is the only valid form of political order and the only sovereign power lies at the basis of political science, and is at the root of both theory and practice of international relations, a critical analysis of these questions leads one beyond the framework of international relations theory. To conceive of political orders beyond the state, such as self-governance, other intellectual traditions and scientific domains (anthropology, archaeology, historiography, classical philosophy, even forestry studies) need to be marshalled.

Ideally, such a cross-disciplinary subject would be tackled by a team of academic researchers, each proficient in their own domain. But this is the work of one person, with its evident limitations. Some subjects are touched upon only lightly and would deserve a much deeper analysis. An eclectic approach is uncommon in a doctoral dissertation and perhaps disorienting for some readers. Formulating a novel theoretical framework instead of testing and improving others may also be unusual, but I consider that both the eclectic approach and the theoretical construction were required by the exigencies of my research subject.

Introduction to Somalia

Somalia is a country located on the eastern tip of the Horn of Africa. Population estimates range from 10 to 17 million inhabitants. It is a semi-arid and mostly flat land that supports nomadic pastoralism, agriculture along the two main rivers, and fishing along the coast. The Somali population is ethnically homogeneous and all practice Sunni Islam. They speak mutually intelligible dialects of Somali, a Cushitic language.

Somali populations are also present in Ethiopia (about 5 million), Kenya (about 3 million) and Djibouti (0.5 million). The global Somali diaspora is estimated at about 1.5 million, mostly migrant workers in the Gulf countries, business communities throughout East and Southern Africa and the Middle East, and refugees and their descendants in Western Europe and North America.

The current territory of Somalia was divided between an English protectorate (now Somaliland) and an Italian colony (the rest of the country). Both became independent in 1960 and joined to form the Somali Republic. In 1969 a military coup brought to power the dictator Siad Barre, who ruled the country until the collapse of the Somali state in January 1991. Since then, there has been no effective central state in the country. The current Federal Government of Somalia was formed in 2012 and receives crucial international support, but its effective control of the Somali territory is limited.

As the map below shows, the political situation of Somalia is complicated. Officially, according to the United Nations and the federal government, the entire territory falls under the Federal State of Somalia. However, the north-western part of the country (about a quarter of the territory) seceded in 1991, calling itself Somaliland. This area has the highest levels of peace and development, and a relatively well functioning state. I refer to it as a separate country, although it is not internationally recognized and is claimed by the federal government. Most of south and central Somalia is controlled by the insurgent movement Al Shabaab, whose reach also extends into the cities, including Mogadishu.

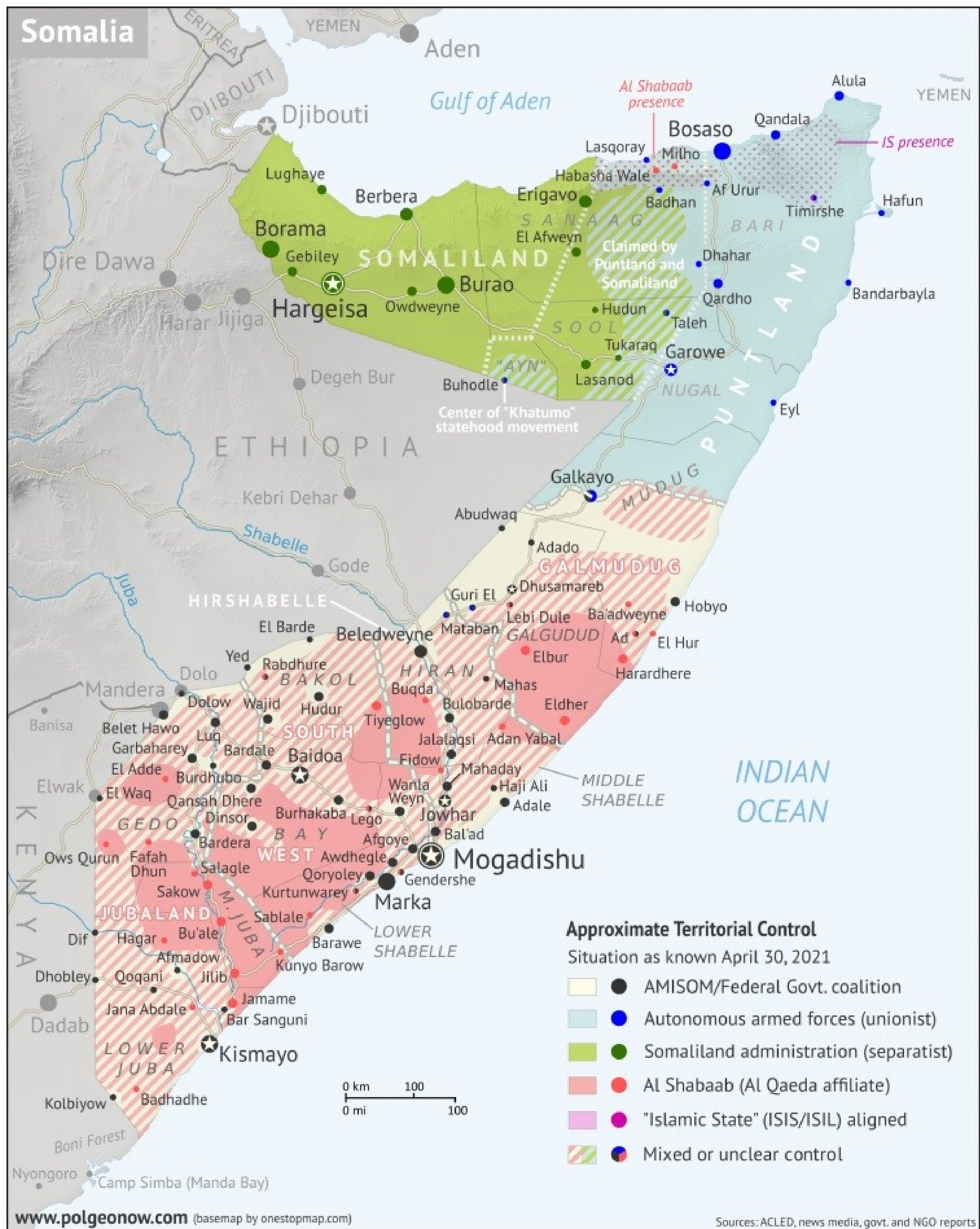

Figure 1. Political Geography Now, Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control as of 30 April 2021 (www.polgeonow.com)

As to the federal state, it is divided into five member states and a capital region called Benadir. Of these member states, Puntland has the highest degree of autonomy, including its own constitution, economic and monetary policy, foreign relations and armed forces. The other member states—Jubaland, South-West State, Galmudug and Hirshabelle—enjoy variable degrees of autonomy from Mogadishu, but, as Figure 1 illustrates, besides the towns and main roads protected by an African intervention force (AMISOM, now renamed ATMIS), most of their territory is in fact controlled or influenced by Al Shabaab. There is a small Islamic State presence in Puntland and Mogadishu, spreading to other areas.

Although many areas of Somalia are disputed between armed groups, conflict levels are relatively low. Even including terrorist attacks, the violent death rate in Somalia is lower than that of neighbouring Kenya and only slightly higher than that of the USA.[1] The Somali economy has been steadily growing over the past thirty years and levels of prosperity seem comparable to those of Kenya and higher than in Ethiopia, although there is no reliable economic data. This lack of data affects human development and humanitarian stress indicators too. Although Somalia scores very low/high on both counts, personal observation does not confirm such a dire situation for most of its residents. But the threat of famine looms, especially since the lowlands of the Horn of Africa are heavily affected by climate change (irregular and overall less rainfall punctuated by flashfloods). Conservative estimates consider that by 2080, most of the country's interior will be too hot to support human life. An estimated quarter million Somalis died in each of the 1991-92 and 2011-12 famines, and at the time of writing, another humanitarian disaster is in the looming.

Methodology

Somalia is a difficult country to perform field research in. I was fortunate enough to be employed as a full-time security analyst and deputy director of a research organization, based in Nairobi and then in Hargeisa, Somaliland, during the first two years of my PhD research. This helped my research in several ways. First, to provide useful and factual advice, I had to read extensively about the country, become intimately acquainted with its geography and society, and its politics at both the federal and the member-state level. I spent hours every week on Google Earth, and oversaw map-making by junior colleagues. I also launched a new product for the NGO community: Area Briefs, which zoomed in on a particular location, analysing it in terms of local socio-political dynamics and humanitarian presence. To make these I travelled extensively through Somaliland and a bit through the rest of Somalia. Second, I had access to a network of a dozen Somali researchers to follow up on stories carried by the media or reported by NGOs, that we shared in daily briefs. These researchers were veteran humanitarian reporters, some of whom became friends and helped me later by verifying details of local political and social developments, or by arranging introductions with people such as the Ugas (King) of the Hawadle clan. Third, by providing security trainings, twice-yearly workshops for Heads of Mission and country directors, and biweekly briefings to the NGO community in Nairobi, I met and befriended people in the NGO community.

I declared my research interests to my employer as soon as I was accepted in the PhD programme. He was pleased and saw the useful synergies that could emerge from a more academic research focus in my work; but unfortunately the general management of the NGO I was working for later expressly forbade me from using my position, access to information and work time for anything related to my academic research. I was not even allowed to use, for this thesis, one of the maps I had helped make. In the list of interviews provided in Appendix 1, only the first was made while I was employed. Consequently, none of the data or information used in this thesis comes from the organization I worked for. This is not really an issue, because humanitarian operations and security information are not central themes of this thesis. Moreover, NGO work is very intensive, and after two years of employment I had barely made any progress on my PhD research, so I did not prolong my contract that ended late March 2018.

Thanks to my wife's job, we stayed in the Horn of Africa (Addis Ababa) for another year. In this period I made two research trips to Somalia, using the contacts I had made previously. The most difficult was to do research in Mogadishu. In the time I worked for the NGO, I had made several trips there but I had to

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[1] Kenya: 7.07, Somalia 6.81, USA 6.00 violent deaths/100.000 population/year, on worldlifeexpectancy.com website (link). Although one may suspect underreporting from Somalia, the trustworthy dataset of ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project) gives a similar violent death rate.

abide by the NGO's security rules. Thus, I had only seen Halane (the 'Green Zone' around Mogadishu International Airport), the Peace Hotel that is situated opposite the main AMISOM gate of Halane, and I had once been sped around Mogadishu in an armoured car, which had cost my NGO an unforgivable 1200 USD. To speak freely to Somalis, I knew I had to be stationed outside Halane and the airport area—where many ordinary Somalis can not come freely—and enjoy some freedom of movement. I strongly desired to meet my interviewees in their own setting. With a Somali friend, the plan was hatched to have me invited as a guest lecturer at one of Mogadishu's universities.

In February-March 2019, I was invited to Mogadishu by the Somali International University. The deal was that I would give classes to their students for one week, and then have another week to accomplish my own research. Before deciding to go, I asked two people of whom I knew they had connections to Al Shabaab whether the group would object to my presence. Both reassured me that I had nothing to fear. The university issued an official invitation to obtain a visa, and provided free accommodation and transport. In return, I did not ask any fee for giving lectures and paid my own ticket. This money-less arrangement worked nicely, and we both kept our side of the deal. I was teamed up with a senior Somali who took care of my security and accompanied me everywhere; he rarely objected to my requests. I visited most of my interviewees in their own work settings or nearby cafés, and met others in the Jazira Hotel where I was staying. This hotel is one of the favourite spots for the Somali diaspora and for senior politicians, so I had many inspiring casual meetings by simply sitting in the lobby or patio. During my stay, Al Shabaab mounted a complex attack against another hotel used by politicians. This caused some consternation among my hosts, but finally we all knew (me because of my background in statistical analysis of security incidents) that this meant that I would probably be safe for the remainder of my trip.

I completed 23 formal interviews in these two weeks, again helped by the network of contacts I had made before. I also spent days with students, learning much from them. A junior professor offered to translate during interviews with non-English speakers. I desisted from trying to meet people affiliated to Al Shabaab, because I assumed I was being followed by NISA (Somali federal intelligence) and did not want to put anybody at risk. But I did speak to people who lived in areas governed by them, and others intimately acquainted with the movement.

A second research trip was made to Somaliland in April-May 2019, for which I could simply obtain a visa at their representation in Addis Ababa. As I had worked and moved freely in Hargeisa for a year and a half and made good Somalilander friends, it was not difficult to organize interviews there. However, I also wanted to meet one of the founders of Al Shabaab, who lived discretely in Bur'o. After checking on me with common acquaintances, he agreed to meet me. Since foreigners normally need to be accompanied by armed guards of the Ministry of Interior when leaving Hargeisa, I had to find a ruse for meeting him without government minders. A friend lent me his car and I drove myself to Bur'o. I talked my way (with difficulty, using my rudimentary Somali) through seven checkpoints on the way from Hargeisa to Berbera, and another three the following day between Berbera and Bur'o. I had consulted his Guantánamo Bay file on Wikileaks and was well-prepared, but he didn't want to speak about Al Shabaab. I had the uncomfortable impression that I may have been the first white person asking him questions about the movement since he had spent more than a year being interrogated at the prison camp. Finally he warmed up to me and took me around town to meet other people, including the previous mayor of the town. It was the evening before the beginning of Ramadan and we had a meal together. Later, as I was driving back to Berbera the following day, I realized I should have stayed for follow-up meetings with him. But it was too late, and one attempt to contact him through email did not elicit a reply. I completed 13 formal interviews during this trip.

In between these trips, I also organized interviews with (mostly) foreign specialists in Addis Ababa and Nairobi before moving from Ethiopia to Brussels in the summer of 2019. Luckily, I had the chance to return to the region twice afterwards, working on short term consultancies for other organizations. In

September and October 2020 I travelled to Nairobi, Mogadishu, Belet Weyne, Garowe, and from there overland, crossing the contested border between Puntland and Somaliland, through Las 'Anod, Bur'o and Berbera to Hargeisa. My job consisted in a mapping of contemporary Somali culture, and I conducted many interviews, together with a Somali assistant. After some of them, I would explain my PhD research, and ask additional questions related to it. If possible, interviewees were forewarned (such as the EU head of delegation, Berlanga) and occasionally more time was spent on my PhD research than on the cultural mapping. I also met several people exclusively for my PhD research during this trip. A follow-up trip in February-March 2021 brought me to the Ethiopian Somali region, but here only two interviews were of relevance for my PhD research. In total I conducted another 21 interviews for my thesis during these trips.

The opportunity to learn more about Al Shabaab was provided by research I did for the EU in May and June 2022 on options around 'talking to the terrorists'. I benefited from the excellent fieldwork by one of Somalia's leading specialists in the subject, and the chance to query him on important points for my research.

The method I used for interviews was semi-structured. The interview starts with questions prepared beforehand (often the same, to obtain comparable replies), but then may wander into the terrain of expertise and predilection of the interviewee. Notes were taken by hand and interviews were not recorded, as informants were generally not comfortable with it. When interviewees are disturbed by questions I ask, I do not press them for an answer but try to find out what disturbs them. I try to establish a friendly rapport, and if I can, I try to 'return the favour' by answering their questions or telling them things I think may interest them. This method results from many years of inquiry: the 'white man asking questions' and then taking the responses with him, never to be heard of again, is a role I wish to avoid. Often I note that, as the friendly rapport is being established, interviewees open up and give more interesting (less 'socially desirable') replies. This was especially useful for collecting impressions about Al Shabaab, which were often becoming less negative as interviews proceeded.

The primary source for my doctoral research consists of the 70 formal interviews I conducted between 2017 and 2022 (see Appendix 1) as well as what I would call, in an anthropological vein, 'participant observation'. To distinguish them, the list of interviews only includes cases where the interview setting was formal (I had prepared questions, took written notes and people had been forewarned). I used my notes, most of which were transcribed into digital files to make them searchable and allow copy-pasting, during the writing of my dissertation.

As to participant observation, in terms of Somali society, I would qualify as a 'moderate participant', defined as "*when the ethnographer is present at the scene of the action but does not actively participate or interact, or only occasionally interacts, with people in it*"[2]—I 'commuted' into and out of Somali settings and did not consider this as part of my *methodology*, but did it to satisfy my natural curiosity and socialize: spending leisure time with Somalis (including chewing qat), traveling with them and learning the Somali language (although my current level is still dismally low and insufficient for interviews without translation). In none of my travels in Somalia was I accompanied by foreigners, and overnight trips to places like Borama, Berbera, Bur'o, Buhodle, 'Aynabo, Las 'Anod, Taleeh, 'Erigabo, Badhan, Bosaso, Garowe, Belet Weyne, Mogadishu and Kismayo, always with many interesting encounters and sometimes adventures, taught me much about the country and its people since my first visit to Somalia in November 2015.

In terms of the international community, however, I would qualify as an active or complete participant, and my experience in this regard goes back to 1997, when I first worked in Tajikistan with MSF. Since

[2] Musante 2014: "Participant Observation"; p249

then I have worked in countries either still in conflict, or in 'post-conflict' settings,[3] for a wide variety of organizations; sometimes as an employee, but generally as an independent consultant.[4] Although I worked closely with colleagues and befriended some of them, and could often identify with the objectives of the organization or the mission, in general I preferred to socialize with people of the country I was working in. I became fluent in Russian and Persian as a result, as well as managing basic conversation in Arabic. That I am not completely integrated, in terms of socialization into the values of the international community, may be apparent in this dissertation.

The capacity of being able to socialize with both local people and intervening internationals has put me at the intersection between the discursive reality of international organizations and the social reality of local populations that I describe in 9.1, aware of the gap between both.

There is not much quantitative analysis in my dissertation. It is difficult to derive information from data, because the population of Somalia is not known, most of its economy is not recorded and generally there is a lack of data about the country. However, the existing imperfect data can be compared from year to year, providing information with relative validity. I made my own charts with the extensive online datasets of the World Bank and ACLED (the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data project). In Appendix 2 a reasoned attempt is made for recalculating the population of Somaliland, suggesting a much lower count than the United Nations and Somaliland's government give. But these data turned out to be irrelevant to the main argument, so they were moved to an appendix.

Having sometimes been in charge of collecting data and analysing it—this was notably a large part of my job in Somalia, 2016-2018—has made me, overall, more suspicious of quantitative analysis. The inflated population figures for Somalia matter because they justify higher levels of aid and financial support than what is probably needed. I realized that, from local populations, NGOs and local authorities to international NGOs, national authorities, and even foreign media, there is a collective interest in inflating numbers. In 2017, the UN spoke of 25% of Somaliland's population (that it estimates at 3.5 million) of being in urgent need of support.[5] But only a handful of Somalilanders died of famine that year (they got lost in the desert, so it was barely related to the drought). I visited several empty humanitarian camps and distribution centres that year. However, saying that the humanitarian response was exaggerated seems callous and is professionally risky. In chapter 9.1 I estimate that 90% of official development assistance is spent in Western countries. This percentage is based on my long experience, including in budgeting for donor organizations, but I found no source to corroborate this. Aid researchers are already scandalized when they calculate that 20% of donor money does not reach target countries. Despite the lack of data to support my 'informed opinion', I have ventured to include it here because it is important for my argument; but I realize how contentious this is. Quantitative analysis, apparently so 'objective', can become so politicized and subjective that I rather avoid it altogether.

My methodology is overall rhizomatic and intuitive rather than structured. This also applies to the use of secondary sources. When an interesting insight was encountered in secondary sources, it was followed up through references and internet searches; relevant articles were downloaded and read diagonally.

[3] In Tajikistan (1997-1999), Afghanistan (2000-2008), Iraq (2007-2010), Palestine (2008-2009), Yemen (2012-2013) and Somalia (2015 to now), with shorter experiences in Ukraine (1999), Egypt (2011), Syria (2015) and Sudan (2022).

[4] Organizations worked for include a humanitarian NGO, civil society and cultural organizations, donors, diplomats, the United Nations, the World Bank, the European Union and research organizations.

[5] Le Monde, 15 Dec 2017: "Au Somaliland, une sécheresse qui n'en finit pas" (link)

After useful ideas had been extracted, a second search served to see how these ideas and their authors were received in their disciplinary field. If contested in a dismissive manner by experts, such insights were dropped. If they led to discussions among academic peers or non-academic commentators, these discussions were parsed for novel insights and possible changes to my own point of view. This was my way of proceeding with a certain method through unfamiliar epistemic fields. Admittedly, it may not have been applied consistently and there may well be some 'loose ends'.

I do not presume any specialist knowledge of many of the fields touched in this thesis. These include: the international order, and the role within it of the United Nations; socialization and how it affects organizational structures; concepts of the State in Arabic philosophy, how they have developed through history, and what Salafi organizations think of them today; contemporary debates about natural law, and legal debates in general; or, more obviously, the debates in contemporary forest sciences about the role of the rhizome (usually called mycelium in this science). These are so many topics where I would be unable to defend my thesis if challenged by specialists on their terms. I can only explain why I think they relate to the topic where I can hold my ground, which is Somali society and its forms of political order, and its relations with the State through history.

In the general conclusions at the end of this thesis, I indicate some new research directions to free our political imagination from the State assumption. In this text, I explore some of them. This may not justify—but perhaps it explains—the liberty I take not to stick to a certain tried and tested methodology, but to roam around the edges of my topic and experiment with novel ideas and approaches.

Demonstration of the Central Hypothesis

The central hypothesis of this dissertation is that **state-building interventions in Somalia are undertaken to strengthen the international order and fail because they do not acknowledge self-governance**.

The central hypothesis is verified by breaking this statement down into its component parts, querying them and extracting the following questions and sub-hypotheses:

I. What is the origin of the State and of the international order? And what is self-governance? Can it form a rival political order to that of the State? The first sub-hypothesis is that the State is a transient form of political order that maintains the hegemony of ruling elites by denying alternative political orders based on self-governance.

II. When did state-building interventions in Somalia start? What is my rationale for starting in the colonial period? How does state formation by domestic forces in Somalia relate to external state-building efforts? Why did the Somali state collapse in 1991? Did Somali society attempt to build a new state, and if so how did these relate to external state-building efforts? The second sub-hypothesis is that efforts to build a modern state in Somalia throughout history have failed because they do not accept that Somali society is self-governed and seek to impose a foreign political order.

III. How does the current Federal State of Somalia reflect sociopolitical dynamics? What about the independent but non-recognized State of Somaliland? Can the areas in south and central Somalia that are controlled by Al Shabaab be seen as forming an alternative state? How do these three political orders relate to the international state order, and what do they teach us about that order? The third sub-hypothesis is that contemporary state-building interventions in Somalia seek to reorder domestic state-society relations in ways that facilitate global governance and maintain the hegemony of a transnational elite.

Each of these sub-hypotheses is examined and tested in a part of this thesis. Part I, dealing with sub-hypothesis I, is mostly theoretical, Part II historical and Part III consists of contemporary political analysis. At the end of most chapters, a summary of findings is provided, analysing how they contribute to demonstrating (or not!) the sub-hypothesis. Each part ends with a Conclusion where the sub-hypothesis is critically examined and submitted to validation. The General Conclusions summarize the argumentation used to examine the central hypothesis and recall other main findings of my thesis.

A Cross-Disciplinary Approach

The structure of the dissertation is not as neat as suggested above, not only to avoid repetitions and privilege the narrative flow, but also because of the presence of themes that run through the dissertation. One such theme is today's international order, referred to in chapters One (from its putative origins until the League of Nations), Four (the colonial order), Six (establishing the UN order and the neoliberal revolution), Seven (the post-Cold War 'New World Order') and Eleven (transnational governance today). Related to this is the State in Africa, touched upon in Chapter Three and examined in Chapter Six, and then briefly again in Chapter Eleven. Another theme present in the background of most of the text is Somali clan-based self-governance, introduced in Chapter Two, analysed anthropologically in Chapter Three, politically in Chapter Six, economically in Chapter Seven and in terms of political order in Chapter Eight, while being referred to repeatedly in other chapters too. A recurrent theme related to this is the 'states versus nomads' framework of analysis.

Questions such as the international order or the State in Africa, which have been analysed profoundly by some of the most famous political scientists of the past century and have given rise to great scholarly works and insightful academic debates, are not dealt with as such. Instead, a few points are gleaned from them that serve to advance the argument. The same is true of incursions into other academic disciplines, such as anthropology, archaeology, historiography, philosophy or forestry.[6] I resisted the temptation to follow tangents into these other interesting subjects and debates—which I am in any case not familiar with for a scholarly discussion—retaining the focus on the central question: Why the State?

The overarching theme in this dissertation is the dual nature of power. It parts from the observation that Somali society maintains peace and achieves a certain level of social and economic development through self-governance. Self-governance thus gives rise to a political order that performs some of the functions attributed to states. Political theory, however, provides barely any explanation for self-governance; it is either ignored or considered of limited application within small communities in well-functioning states (Ostrom 1990: "Governing the Commons"), a situation that does not apply to Somalia. The blindness to self-governance can be explained by the assumption within political science that political order can only be provided by the State, which is a counter-factual position with regard to the Somali situation. And while self-governance in Somalia is premised on the sovereignty of each adult male, within political science and the current world order only states can be sovereign. The Dual Power Theory provides a framework for understanding and using these apparent contradictions.

Structure of this Dissertation

In Chapter One the State is radically deconstructed, following a cue by Bourdieu. Its European genealogy is traced through the Catholic Church and the Enlightenment, demonstrating how it gradually displaced both humans and God as the repository of sovereignty. German idealism and later the discipline of

[6] Such incursions are rejected by some academics, who privilege boundaries between disciplines, reasoning that outsiders do not know enough about them to reach valid judgements. However, there are well-known arguments for not only allowing but encouraging cross-disciplinary approaches, and I do not seek to pass judgment on debates within other disciplines, but only to enrich my own arguments.

political science helped create the myth of the absolute modern State. A similar myth surrounds the creation of the international state order, both of them deriving their symbolic power from positive law. But an examination of its ontology indicates that the State is a social construct that serves as an instrument of domination by ruling elites. This provides the mental space for contemplating other forms of political order.

Chapter Two, on the pre-colonial political history of Somalia, confirms the historically transient nature of the State in Somalia. Since antiquity, Somalis have been exposed to hierarchical foreign political orders. They participated in the East African and Indian Ocean trade alongside the Arab and Persian rulers of local sultanates; but they always retained their structures of self-governance. Islam fostered different social relationships and reoriented the clan system. But after having experienced their own Islamic State (Ajuraan) for five centuries, and resisted Portuguese attempts to submit them, Somalis returned to a system of clan self-governance, showing that the premise of a linear progression from tribes-to-State (the myth of the State as harbinger of civilization) does not hold in Somalia.

The political order that arises out of clan self-governance is analysed in Chapter Three, and then interpreted through Bayart's notion of 'the rhizome state in Africa', referring to Deleuze & Guattari's conceptual opposition between the rhizome (nomads) and the tree (the State). The rhizome/tree model is enriched by insights from contemporary forestry, demonstrating that while these two archetypes of structure and growth are conceptually opposed, they interact continuously to produce life. The debates about the genealogy of the State in Chapter One revealed that the State constituted itself in opposition to a theoretical 'State of Nature' where humans retain their sovereignty. The parallels are too obvious to ignore: Somali clan self-governance is a political order derived from the State of Nature. I argue that the rhizome is the archetypal form of human society. Chapter Three thus ends with a definition of the Dual Power Theory, arranging the binary opposites discussed in this first theoretical part according to the two archetypes: the rhizome and the tree.

The advantage of establishing a theory of power in the first part of the dissertation is that it can be tested in the rest of the text. A good theory should provide conceptual clarity when applied to problems, and ideally it should also have predictive power. Testing it, moreover, allows refining the theory. The vegetal imagery is developed in subsequent chapters. What are the functions of roots, trunk and branches in the state-tree? How do roots connect to the rhizome and extract resources from it and from the ground to build the state-tree? Can the biological function of branches, which through the leaves extract resources from the air and use part of this for the growth of the tree while another part is fed back to the rhizome through the roots, help discern state-society relations? Can this imagery be related to the mechanisms of extroversion, foreign rents and patronage? If the modern state is an imported tree, how does it strike root and connect to the Somali rhizome? These questions come up in Part II, in a historical analysis of state-society relations in their international context.

Somalia has been continuously subjected to international intervention since its encounter with the modern state in the late 19th century, and efforts to establish a political order convenient for interveners through social transformation have always been a central element of such interventions. Chapter Four deals with the colonial period. For the first time in their history, Somalis were submitted to an external power and hierarchical rule. Although the practice of the colonial state was often quite weak, its image left an enduring impact on the Somali psyche. The nucleus of a modern state class emerged, and during the UN Trusteeship period (1950-1960) the keys of the future state were delivered to it. Resistance to the modern state-building project came not from clan society, but from religious quarters.

Chapter Five deals with the independent Somali state, 1960-1990. From the outset, Somali elites treated the State as a camel to be milked. Through clan politics, they would secure a position to access national or external rents, and then distribute these through patronage networks to remain in power. These politics were interrupted after the military coup by Siad Barre, and a genuine attempt supported by Communist countries was made to forge and develop a nation-state. This project failed during the

Ogaden War (1977-78), prompting a switch in Cold War alliances. Siad Barre's later state became expert at 'extroversion', using Western support to stay in power while his clan-base dwindled. He used his security forces to eliminate dissent.

The violence of the Barre regime sparked the Civil War, which began in earnest in 1988 when clan elders decided to support guerrilla groups that thus became armed clan factions. The country disintegrated in early 1991, and clan-cleansing occurred in Mogadishu, other cities and contested rural areas, while a massive famine developed. What was the role of clan in the disintegration of the Somali state? This has been the subject of virulent scholarly debates, and it is tackled here with the help of the Dual Power Theory. In the last section of Chapter Six, I place the evolution of the Somali state within the context of decolonization and subsequent Western intervention in Africa, to clarify that foreign policies towards Somalia were not specific to this country, but part of a wider rearrangement of the international order.

Chapter Seven starts in New York as the contours of the post-Cold War 'New World Order' are being designed. Somalia becomes its first test case, with a multilateral peacekeeping mission where most troops are provided by the USA under UN command. The failure of this intervention set back the UN's 'Agenda for Peace' and caused a withdrawal from Somalia. Left to itself, the country gradually pacified, but when the War on Terror started Somalia became one of the target countries. An internationally mediated political settlement led to the creation of an ineffective Transitional Federal Government, while an Islamic Courts movement emerged to re-establish order and rapidly swept through south and central Somalia. It was identified as a terrorist threat and destroyed by an Ethiopian invasion, sending Somalia into a new cycle of conflict marked by the rapid rise of Al Shabaab.

By the end of Part II, the Dual Power Theory has been refined into an analytical framework that can be applied to the analysis of contemporary state-building efforts in Somalia, the subject of Part III. Society-State relations in the three polities that exist in Somalia today, as well as the relations between the state and *international* society—the international community—are examined in both their structural and rhizomatic (agency-based) aspects.

This leads to several conceptual breakthroughs, such as the difference between a hybrid and a dual political order that is developed in Chapter Eight on Somaliland. Its state was formed—without international assistance—upon the initiative of clan elders, who maintain a vital role in keeping social peace, allowing a good view on how self-governance functions today. But the dual order gradually became a hybrid one, where clan permeates the structures of state and the economy. International support accentuates the imbalance and, although unrecognized, Somaliland is becoming dependent on it.

Chapter Nine starts by examining the Federal Government of Somalia as an international creation, including the impact of the aid economy and international security measures. The growing gap between international discourse about the Somali state and how this State actually functions, becomes obvious when examining the bargaining process between Somali elites for redistributing the power and rents associated with the State. Somali attitudes towards the State show, in their ambivalence, how the dual nature of power also permeates the individual, as citizen and as social person, at times leading to contradictory consciousness. As a citizen, the Somali seeks alignment not with the national state but with the international state order, while the social person remains ensconced in network loyalties, most often (but not only) to kin and clan, while diasporic and Islamist identities are on the rise, also among Somalia's ruling elites.

The next chapter studies Al Shabaab, not through the usual lens of terrorism, radicalization and violence, but as a successful political movement. Analysed dispassionately, Al Shabaab governance approaches in many ways the Weberian legal-rational state ideal. It manages to separate its practice of governance (the tree) from its Salafi-nationalist counterhegemonic identity (the movement as rhizome), thus instituting a dual instead of a hybrid political order. This provides Al Shabaab rule with legitimacy, even though the movement and its ideology is rejected by most Somalis, who prefer the prospect of

harmonious relations with the international community. The counter-hegemonic nature of Al Shabaab's politics may explain why it faces such determined and violent opposition by the international community.

Finally, in Chapter Eleven the Dual Power Theory is used to analyse the international order. The theory postulates that behind each structure there is agency, and that agency operates according to the rhizomatic rules of social power. A definition of intervention is coined first, because intervention has become the main mechanism to maintain or change the balance of power in the international order (like war in the past). Then the agent behind this order is defined as the transnational elite; it is seen how it functions like a rhizome, socializing and establishing consensus as the basis for its hegemony (leadership) and then spreading this consensus through the meta-governance of international and national institutions, which allow it to dominate world affairs. State-building is thus a tool of transnational governance, and its objective is primarily to strengthen the consensus about the State as the only source and expression of political order. This belief is key to the hegemony of the transnational elite, while the fortunes of a country like Somalia are of little concern to it.

The General Conclusions start with a review of the arguments developed in the dissertation to examine whether, indeed, the main objective of state-building in Somalia is to consolidated the international order. To verify the second part of the central hypothesis, that state-building fails because it ignores self-governance, the Dual Power Theory as refined during the research must first be restated. What is the relation between self-governance and the State as seen in Somalia? Finally, an appeal is made to free political imagination from the monopoly of the State, not only for a more sensible approach to political order in Somalia, but also as a possible way for dealing with global governance problems faced today. Tentatively, the Dual Power Theory is then used to describe how post-State political orders could emerge from the State of Nature.

Writing Conventions

This dissertation is written in British English, Oxford spelling.

For Somali words, I have kept the Somali spelling. To pronounce them correctly, 'c' stands for the Arabic ع 'ayn (glottal stop), and 'x' for the Arabic ح (fricative 'h'); the other letters are pronounced as in English. Doubled vowels are lengthened: they do not form diphthongs. Somali words are rendered in italics in the text with the translation between brackets. Thus *xeer* (agreement, custom or contract), *qaaraan* (material solidarity) and *mooryaan* (armed gangs/bandits in the civil war).

For Somali names (people, lineages and places), I have not followed Somali spelling, which in any case is not always consistent. The guiding principles were simplicity, ease of pronunciation and frequency of use. The Somali 'c' is transcribed using the ' apostrophe commonly used in Arabic transcriptions for the letter 'ayn; 'x' is usually transcribed using the 'h'. Double vowels are usually reduced to single vowels, unless the name is much more common with the double vowel or there really seems to be an official spelling, as with President Farmaajo, which on internet is just as often written 'Farmajo'. Burco becomes Bur'o, Ceerigaabo becomes 'Erigabo, Ciise Muuse becomes 'Ise Muse, Xaafuun becomes Hafuun, etc.

Occasionally I depart from this transcription to facilitate recognizability and pronunciation, or to follow commonly accepted western spelling of Somali names, as in the case of Prime Minister/President Egal (Cigaal in Somali, should be transcribed 'Igal) or Mohamed Farah Aidid (Maxamed Faarax Xasan Caydiid in Somali, should be transcribed 'Aydid). Siyaad Barre becomes Siad Barre.

Somalis typically name people with epithets like 'Farmaajo' (from the Italian 'formaggio') because given and last names are so widely shared that it is otherwise difficult to distinguish individuals (Farmaajo's real full name is Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, extremely common names). These epithets, though

often originating as taunts, are almost always assumed by the designated person (Farmaajo’s twitter handle is @M_Farmaajo). Following Somali usage, I use these epithets freely and without attempting to distinguish them from the official ‘real name’ by, for example, putting them between apostrophes.

When a concept that is used again afterwards is defined, it is rendered in **bold**. This allows the reader to flip back and find where the concept was first elaborated, and its precise meaning. Some concepts are put in bold twice: when first introduced and discussed, and then again when defined.

Each chapter is divided into several numbered sections; I use these numbers between brackets as cross-references in the text. When I need to refer to a sub-section, I use the section number and title of the sub-section, as in (7.3 The Development-Security Nexus).

PART I:

The Dual Nature of Power

"To have a chance to really think a state which still thinks itself through those who attempt to think it, then, it is imperative to submit to radical questioning all the presuppositions inscribed in the reality to be thought and in the very thought of the analyst".[1]

Pierre Bourdieu, 1994

A new model is needed to make sense of the difficulties of state-building in Somalia. Existing models fall short, both in conceiving of the state-society relations that should underpin state-building, and in explaining what drives other states to intervene in a country like Somalia to assist in state-building. This impels me to examine both the concept of 'State' in its sociological sense, and the international state order.

The liberal democratic State has acquired a universal status as the only valid political model: *'There is no alternative'*, as Margaret Thatcher famously stated, referring to market economy-based policies.[2] Even in political science, there seems to be little point in speculating about alternative models of state-society relations. But there is also a consensus that a State should be derived from social relations, at once reflecting and transforming local power arrangements. The tension between these two dynamics of state-building needs to be addressed.

The political order represented by the State comprises a set of institutions imported (or at least suggested) from abroad, while the political order inherent in state-society relations emerges from the history, geography and economy of a given society. Can these two be brought together in one common theoretical framework?

Confronted with the same problem while examining the State in Africa, Jean-François Bayart came up with the concept of *Rhizome State* in the 1990s, based on the opposition between rhizome and tree introduced by Deleuze & Guattari in 1976. Using this idea as a starting point, I develop an analytical framework that I call the Dual Power Theory, rooted simultaneously in society and in mental constructs like the State.

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[1] Bourdieu 1994: "Rethinking the State"; p2.

[2] In a speech to the Conservative Women's Conference on 21 May 1980

Chapter 1: The Myth of the State and the International State Order

In which the State is understood as a transient form of political order that nevertheless dominates the entire field of politics and international relations. How the State came to replace God as the sovereign power in society, demanding absolute submission to its Laws. How the Prussian state became the paragon of Western modernity, relegating liberal misgivings about the absolute power of states to history. Of the myth of Westphalia and how a state-system emerged only in the 20th Century. Where some political scientists establish the myth of the State while others agree that it is but a social construct. How that social construct is nested deep in collective psychosocial reality and benefits the hegemony of ruling elites. Why we must liberate our political imagination from the State.

The term 'state' has come, in common usage, to cover all forms of centralized and hierarchical political order, from the ancient states in Mesopotamia to the Islamic State today. In fact, a political order without the State is barely conceivable anymore. In history books, the State emerged together with civilization. Not only do all peoples today live in a state, but the world is organized in a state-system. Political science, and specifically International Relations, are premised on the existence of the State. How, then, can we understand the political order in a society living without a state, or with a very limited and dysfunctional one, like Somalia?

The first question that needs to be addressed is: *what* is the State really? It appears it should be easy to define what 'State' means, as it is such a central part of our reality. However, upon attempting a definition one feels like St Augustine talking about time: "*What then is time? If no one asks me, I know; if I want to explain it to a questioner, I do not know*".[1] Indeed, just like 'time', 'state' has rooted itself in our mental schemes of representation, at the foundation of our ways of thinking and speaking about this world. The quotation from Bourdieu under the heading of Part I suggests how difficult it is to think about the State and the presuppositions underpinning the concept of the State, as the State 'thinks itself through us'.

To start with, the State must be demystified. That's why this chapter starts with approaches to the State from different angles to establish some handles for grasping this numinous concept and bring it down to Earth. The State can, indeed *must,* be observed in its temporal, imperfect and transient character. Then the genealogy of the State in European history is investigated, until the rise of the modern (liberal democratic) state; how has it achieved such absolute power? This warrants a re-examination of the genesis of the state-system, as the modern state did not arise in isolation but in a dynamic process

[1] St Augustine, AD 400: "Confessions" Book XI; p397.

between societies and neighbouring powers. The State is then analysed afresh as a social construct: how does it structure our thinking about politics, both as ideal and as practice? Who benefits from this social construct? Can our minds be 'decolonized' from the State?

1.1 Approaching the State

"*States remain so dominant that anyone who dreams of a stateless world seems a heedless visionary"*.[2]
Charles Tilly, 1990

Is the State really such a difficult concept to grasp? At first sight, it doesn't seem so. A widely-shared definition of the State is given by Max Weber in Politics as a Vocation (1918): "*a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory*".[3] This is the base of the definition of state found in Wikipedia, quoted here as an indication of its universal acceptance: *"A state is a compulsory political organization with a centralized government that maintains a monopoly on the legitimate use of force within a certain geographical territory."*[4] In political theory one encounters many variations of Weber's definition, but almost all remain close to the original, indicating consensus.[5]

Some of the most recognizable characteristics of the state are: it has territorial borders, within which the state is sovereign; the people within the state must accept its jurisdiction, which it can enforce with its monopoly on the legitimate use of force; and it has a centralized government. Max Weber also repeatedly stressed that the State is based on, and maintains and develops, an administrative and legal order: its authority and legitimacy is based on the Law. To this we can add the contemporary consensus that a state's legitimacy rests on it being ultimately controlled by the population through democratic electoral processes. When there is no liberal democracy, the legitimacy of the ruling elite is considered inherently contestable.

Some questions emerge immediately: why the focus on 'a monopoly of violence?' This does not stroke with the common, more benevolent, perception of the State. Second, how can a definition of the State that is more than a century old still be considered valid today? Hasn't the State been through many changes since then, for example the rise of the liberal democratic state and the establishment of the United Nations global state order? How can we assume a definition based on the German state emerging from World War One is relevant for each state in the world today?

Indeed, here we hit upon one of the basic characteristics of the state: its universality. It is assumed that one model of state should be applicable to the entire world, both by the editors of Wikipedia and by people and organizations involved in international state-building interventions. But isn't it also assumed that the State reflects social relations in a country? Isn't the State supposed to result from a social contract between the population of a country and the sovereign power whose rule they have accepted for their own benefit? This must be rooted in particular social, political, economic and cultural contexts.

[2] Tilly 1990: "Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990-1990"; p4.

[3] Weber 1919: "Politics as a Vocation"; p4.

[4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_(polity) accessed on 9 October 2018.

[5] See for example this definition by Anthony Giddens: "*By definition, a 'state' presumes an administrative apparatus, a hierarchy of officials who specialize in administrative tasks (including the arts of war)*." Giddens, 1987: "The Nation-State and Violence"; p61.

If the State is the result of a social contract this would imply that societies all over the world are similar, if they are to result in the universal State-type. This leads us to the following contradiction: the State is presented as a universal phenomenon, but it is at once rooted in a specific culture, in the same way that, to Max Weber, capitalism is rooted in the Protestant culture of Northwest Europe, but is supposed to operate similarly throughout the world.[6]

It is of course possible that some features of human political life—like the State, capitalism and modern representative democracy—just happened to emerge in 19th century Western Europe, but that they are nevertheless universal. As the modern state spread from Europe over the rest of the globe it encountered other forms of political order. Apologists of the Western state suggest that its inherently superior features led it to replace pre-existing political orders, country by country. This supposes an evolutionary view of political order, as encapsulated in the expression: 'man's rise to civilization from the stage of hunter-gatherers to the modern state', prevalent in European social sciences since the mid-19th century. A famous exposition of this view can be found in Norbert Elias' 1982 "The Civilizing Process: State Formation and Civilization". Crucially, a stage beyond the modern state is never contemplated: the modern state is seen as the end-goal of human political evolution. Thus, the identification of state and civilization becomes total. When the Soviet Union—the last main challenger to the modern liberal democratic state—collapsed, mankind was said to have arrived in the final phase of history, Francis Fukuyama's 'End of History'.[7]

Despite this apparent victory of the Western state, a consensus emerged among political scientists and philosophers in the late 20th and early 21st century that the modern state was threatened by the combined assault of market forces, economic and cultural globalization, cross-border migration, the rise of transnational actors from multinational companies to NGOs and crime syndicates and the increasing clout of supranational organizations such as the UN and the EU. These developments all eroded the basis for state sovereignty, because even the strongest states seemed incapable of single-handedly addressing these questions.[8] Nonetheless, the graph below (Fig. 1) shows that between 1920 and 2020, average state spending increased from 11% of GDP to over 45%, and that over the past twenty years the growth of state spending has been particularly steep.[9]

[6] Weber 1905: "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism".

[7] Fukuyama 1992: "The Last Man and the End of History".

[8] See for example Evans 1997: "The Eclipse of the State? Reflections on Stateness in an Era of Globalization".

[9] Remarkably, the most liberal Western economies have higher rates of government spending (USA: 46%; UK: 50%, France: 62%) than communist China (37%) while some developing countries disparaged for having strong state-dominated economies such as Venezuela and Ethiopia are near the bottom of the international ranking, with 11 and 14% respectively. Data from 2020. Source: Wikipedia (link).

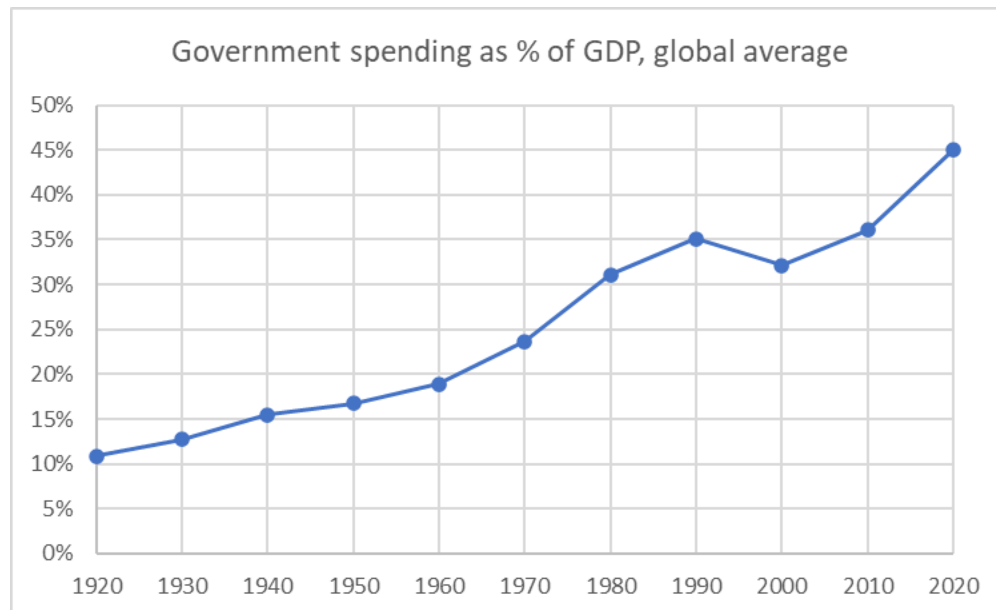

Figure 2: Government Spending as % of GDP, global average. Source: World Bank data[10]

Increases in spending are usually justified by the need to address crises, such as 9/11, the financial crisis of 2007-2012, and the Coronavirus crisis of 2020-2022, to name the most prominent: those are choices made by the government, and Figure 1 charts *government* spending. State and government must be clearly differentiated: the former is structure, the latter agency. More government spending does not *necessarily* mean a bigger state. Nevertheless, the government raising and spending of ever greater percentages of national wealth can only happen through the institutions of the state, backed by legal safeguards: government budgets are always approved through the legislative process. Moreover, when governments change, the percentage of GDP they spend does not vary much (for example from Presidents Obama to Trump to Biden): the main trend over the past century has been that every government spends more (as percentage of GDP) than its predecessor. Therefore, it is correct to infer that Figure 1 shows the increasing weight of the State in national economies. The modern state is stronger than ever and, given current spending trends, it is set to grow further.

What is the State?

State, government… Many terms in political science cover overlapping concepts, and authors seldom fully agree about these terms. There are noticeable cultural differences: French and Mediterranean authors have a much broader view of what the State is, seeing it as the expression of general social relations within a country; while American and English authors often focus on the State as the apparatus of rule by government (à la Weber). For example, in the French and Italian traditions, civil society is generally seen as part of the State, while for American and English writers civil society lies outside the State. Due to these differences, 'failed states' make as little sense to a French political scientist as the notion of 'sociology of the State' makes to Americans. German political philosophy about the State also seems to have been influenced by its history, culture and language, as described below. The terms for government and state in Arabic are again different (I will lightly touch upon them at the end of this section), and these have been extended to the whole Muslim world. This semantic confusion has led to

[10] There are many different datasets; none of them is perfect since they often ignore local government spending; in addition, countries use different bases for calculating their GDP and their budgets, and they switch their accounting base occasionally, making it difficult to study even the evolution of one country. Nonetheless, all different sources show a similar trend, even if the percentages are slightly different.

intense discussions about the state in political philosophy, especially over the past decades. Broadly viewing the debates about the nature of the State, the following observations can be made:

1) The term 'state' was not much used in political philosophy before the 19th century.[11] Most authors focused on the *agency* of rule: the government or the sovereign/king/prince/ruler, not on the *structure* of rule. When a term was used to denote the structural aspects of the political order, the focus was usually on the relationship between ruler and ruled: the republic, the commonwealth, often also the *body politic*.

The distinctions made by Jean-Jacques Rousseau between the people, the state and related concepts are still useful today: "*The public person . . . formed by the union of all other persons was once called the city, and is now known as the republic or the body politic. In its passive role it is called the state, when it plays an active role it is the sovereign; and when it is compared to others of its own kind, it is a power. Those who are associated in it take collectively the name of a people, and call themselves individually citizens, in so far as they share in sovereign power, and subjects, in so far as they put themselves under the laws of the state*".[12] The state is thus the passive aspect of the body politic and the source of laws.

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries the state was intensely debated among political thinkers, but after the Second World War these debates subsided until the 1980s.

2) Debates about the ontology of the state have become particularly intense since the 1980s. Abrams, Giddens, Bourdieu, Tilly, Pierson, Skinner, Migdal, Jessop, Hay and others have made the state a central focus of their research.[13] This interest was sparked when the state was 'brought back in' to political theory as a core agent of the political system.[14] This had been preceded by decades of relative disinterest in the state among political scientists, when it was seen as a site for political contest, or as an instrument of rule crafted by governments or ruling elites. The neo-Marxist scholar Nicos Poulantzas in 1978 declared *the state is a social relation*[15] and it made more sense to observers of politics to look at the actors in the arena/relation than the arena/relationship itself, a 'passive aspect of the body politic'.

Transforming the state from a structure, site or instrument to an *agent* contributed to the confusion surrounding the term. The logic was that the American state, for example, seemed to 'behave' in a similar way regardless of the government in power at that time. It was then that Max Weber's state, notably with its bureaucracy/civil service, was 'brought back in' to explain this phenomenon.

What further increased the confusion was extending the term 'state' to all kinds of hierarchical political orders throughout history, as in this example: "*States have been the world's largest and most powerful organizations for more than five thousand years. Let us define states as coercion-wielding organizations that are distinct from households and kinship groups and exercise clear priority in some respects over all*

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[11] Quentin Skinner argues that the term 'state', in the English language, was introduced in the 16th-17th centuries, quoting examples of the word being used in documents of that period. However, he admits that the words most commonly used were 'Commonwealth', 'body politic' or realm, and that 'state', also in several of the examples he gives, is meant as 'condition' or 'rank' as in one of the three estates of society. The 'slippage' he observes of the term State to mean 'the political order' did ocur, but—as shown by my own research into the same documents he used—it was much slower and took well until the middle of the 18th century for State to become more frequently used in its contemporary meaning. Skinner 2009. "A Genealogy of the Modern State"; p325–70.

[12] Rousseau 1762: "The Social Contract"; p61–62.

[13] An example of a high-level discussion can be found in Hay 2014: "Neither Real nor Fictitious but 'As If Real': A Political Ontology of the State" and the response to Hay's article by Jessop, Bob 2014: "Towards a Political Ontology of State Power".

[14] Evans, Rueschemeyer & Skocpol 1985: "Bringing the State Back In".

[15] Poulantzas 1978: "State, Power, Socialism".

other organizations within substantial territories".[16] Thus 'state' came to mean almost any centralized and hierarchical political order.

3) Although many authors are critical about the state as concept, almost none venture to explore political orders without or beyond the state. Even when discussing pre-modern States, the tendency is to describe what they lack in terms of a modern state, as in: "*The emperors, kings, princes, dukes, caliphs, sultans, and other potentates of AD 990 prevailed as conquerors, tribute-takers, and rentiers, not as heads of state that durably and densely regulated life within their realms (…) Nothing like a centralized national state existed anywhere in Europe.*"[17] This points to an epistemological fallacy: there's no point, once one has established that reptilians are the ancestors of birds, in calling reptilians 'birds' and wondering why they couldn't fly and lacked other characteristics of birds. The only result is that the real birds will seem more accomplished by contrast; so it is also with the modern state.

In this dissertation I argue that Somali self-governance constitutes a political order that is alternative to the State. Self-governing political orders have been observed by other authors in more countries. In political science, however, there are not many studies of self-governing political orders; and when they exist, such as Elinor Ostrom's 'Governing the Commons',[18] they often concern self-governance *within* a strong state structure, for example community collective action in the USA, or self-governing institutions in Europe.[19] In fact, one could say that, at the very least, mainstream political theory largely ignores self-governance and other stateless political orders.

Thankfully, political thinkers that are identified as critical theorists have done much to deconstruct the state, even if they propose no alternatives to its role in structuring political life; I will build on their work in the final section of this chapter. Among them, a consensus has emerged that the state is a convenient social construct, as its reality cannot be proven. Alexander Wendt suggested that the state is 'as if real' because so many people act as if the state is real, so the state has 'effects'—rather like Spinoza's evidence for the existence of God. Frustrated by the slippery ontology of the State, some political scientists have decided to focus on these effects: study *state power,* rather than the state as an abstract concept.[20]

Although there are doubtlessly many debates within political science that have escaped my attention—so I cannot speak for the entire discipline—my general impression is that contemporary political science is either unwilling or incapable of conceiving of stateless political orders. A political order without the state is most often characterized as *anarchy*. The presence of the state has become a (maybe *the*) basic assumption of political science, and definitely of its branch concerned with international relations; it is as if 'the State thinks itself through political scientists' to paraphrase Bourdieu. The rapid survey above suggests that political scientists have contributed to the myth of the universal state, an idea that will further be explored in the next sections. As Bourdieu noted: "*From its inception, social science itself has been part and parcel of this work of construction of the representation of the state which makes up part of the reality of the state itself*".[21]

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[16] Tilly 1990:1. Besides Tilly, Eisenstadt, Giddens, Pierson, Skinner have thus extended the State far back in time. This has entered common usage, as when one speaks of 'the Early States of Mesopotamia' or 'the Warring States of China'.

[17] Tilly 1990:39-40.

[18] Ostrom 1990: "Governing the Commons. The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action"

[19] Sørenson & Triantafillou 2009: "The Politics of Self-Governance".

[20] Jessop 2014:485-486.

[21] Bourdieu 1994:3.

One myth about the State that has particular relevance to Somalia is the evolutionary view of the modern state. This myth can be deconstructed with the support of critical scholars such as James C. Scott and David Graeber & David Wengrow.

Nomads, States and Civilization

The conventional narrative of the development of humankind is that the emergence of the state signalled the dawn of human civilization. According to this narrative, the discovery of agriculture, the mastery of irrigation and hard work by early agriculturalists created a surplus that was appropriated by political and religious elites, who proceeded to build the basic institutions of the state: an administration capable of improving and rationalizing production and collecting taxes, an army to defend the population or conquer new areas, a class of priests who developed the law as well as a narrative that justified power as emanating from the Gods, and a King with his court to embody the law and rulership. Different theories selectively emphasized population growth, warfare or religion.[22] Human evolution from primitive ('hunter-gatherer') societies to the modern (Western) state is considered predetermined, or teleological. Taking their cue from biological evolutionism, positivist philosophers such as Herbert Spencer even saw the rise of the Western state as the result of natural selection among peoples.[23]

This narrative makes the state and its components (ruler, law, administration, army and clergy) the main protagonist in a progressive evolutionary development of mankind[24] from caveman to 'space age'. There is an assumed continuity and linear progression from the past to the present and, putatively, the future. Outside the areas controlled by states lived nomadic and barbarian tribes, and history is the story of the gradual progression of state control over these "uncivilized" peoples. Civilization spread geographically from the fertile river valleys outward, and in this narrative sub-Saharan Africa, although recognized as the cradle of humankind, was the last continent to be transformed by civilization (through the colonial state and what Kipling called 'the White Man's Burden').

It is testimony to the power of narratives that they can subsist despite the mounting evidence against them. Recent discoveries have debunked the theory linking the state with the rise of agriculture and civilizational development. The ceremonial centre found at Göbekli Tepe in south-eastern Turkey (9500-8000 BCE) indicates humanity was capable of considerable complex cultural development before the 'discovery' of agriculture, and long before the first state emerged.[25] Anthropologists argue that the entire 'evolutionary view' whereby our ancestors were perforce cognitively less developed than modern humans may be invalidated by new archaeological discoveries going back 50,000 years.[26] Human beings, after the dawn of agriculture, only practised it intermittently for many thousands of years, seemingly preferring the nomadic lifestyle.[27] The analysis of human remains furthermore suggests that humans were healthier and lived longer as hunter-gatherers and had more free time. The practice of agriculture and animal husbandry signalled a regression in health for all humans involved.[28] There is also no indication that hunter-gatherers were more violent or less developed than contemporaneous sedentary populations. Their culture was not material (as they were not sedentary) so they left less remains. But

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[22] Flannery 1972: "The Cultural Evolution of Civilizations"; p400.

[23] The Social Darwinism developed by Herbert Spencer has been academically discredited, but in popular narrative the Western state is still held as the epitome of civilization.

[24] I use the gendered version of this concept on purpose.

[25] Schmidt 2000: "Göbekli Tepe, Southeastern Turkey".

[26] Graeber & Wengrow 2015: "Farewell to the 'Childhood of Man'. However, the theory of 'The Original Affluent Society' was put forward by Marshall Sahlins in the 1960s (see his work on 'Stone Age Economics').

[27] Scott 2017: "Against The Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States".

[28] Scott, in an argument made popular by Harari's bestseller 'Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind', argues that hunter-gatherers and nomads were in fact much better off than sedentary populations.

the artistry of little sculptures and jewelry from tens of thousands of years ago suggests a high cultural level.

States had a hard time imposing themselves on humankind; this process took many thousands of years.[29] The first states were usually short-lived affairs.[30] State collapse was recurrent and was often followed, in Mesopotamia at least, by extended periods of statelessness.[31] The notable exception of Egypt with its remarkable stable history may be explained by its unique geographic situation.[32] Elsewhere, populations both nomadic and sedentary transited in and out of the ambit of state control and were generally reticent to submit to its control.

Scott extends the conflict between sedentary and nomadic lifestyles into recorded history, pointing out that, beyond the antagonism, the sedentary and nomadic lifestyles were complementary.[33] He speaks of a 'Golden Age of the Barbarians' in Eurasia between roughly 500 and 1600 CE, when a balance seemed to exist between state- and non-state governed spaces. Nomads would benefit from settled communities through trade, raids and by means of a 'protection racket' through their superior military capabilities, and because—unlike states—they had little to lose.[34] States, in turn, benefited from the presence of nomads at their borders, who provided cheap meat, facilitated trade with far-off places and delivered mercenary forces when the state needed them, instead of having to pay for a standing army.

David Wengrow & David Graeber, in 'The Dawn of Everything', reflect on the assumption of linear evolution of humankind toward the modern State: "*Scholarship does not always advance. Sometimes it slips backwards. A hundred years ago, most social scientists understood that those who live mainly from wild resources were not normally restricted to tiny 'bands' (…) The assumption that they were only gained ground in the 1960s* [with the rise of positivism in the social sciences] *(…) Since in this new, evolutionist narrative 'states' were defined above all by their monopoly on the 'legitimate use of coercive force', the nineteenth-century Cheyenne or Lakota would have been seen as evolving from the 'band' level to the 'state' level roughly every November, and then devolving back again come spring. Obviously, this is silly. No one would seriously suggest such a thing. Still, it's worth pointing out because it exposes the much deeper silliness of the initial assumption: that societies must necessarily progress through a series of evolutionary stages to begin with. You can't speak of an evolution from band to tribe to chiefdom to state if your starting points are groups that move fluidly between them as a matter of habit*".[35] In their vast historical and anthropological account of human forms of political organization,

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[29] Scott 2009: "The Art of Not Being Governed".

[30] Scott 2017:183 ff.

[31] This is characteristic also of the history of Africa. Complex states capable of building great structures emerged, and then inexplicably disappeared again, as in Zimbabwe, along the Indian Ocean coast (Shungwaya, Gedi) and in Northern Somalia (Puntland & Somaliland).

[32] The fertile Nile valley that encouraged settled agriculture of a centrally organized, even 'scientific', kind with yearly flood management, could support a state. The population was shielded from neighbours by extensive deserts and seas on all sides, but these also made it difficult for them to escape (Scott 2017:208). One may add that one of the earliest, great tales of monotheistic religions is the escape from Pharaonic bondage by the Jewish people. The persecution by Pharaoh's troops, the miracle of the Red Sea opening and the 40 years of wandering through the desert all speak of the difficulty of escaping the tyranny of the Egyptian state.

[33] Scott 2017:219-256.

[34] This complements Charles Tilly's characterization of the state as imposing such a protection racket on its citizens (Tilly 1985: "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime"). The notion of the nomadic tribe as a 'machine de guerre', first introduced by Pierre Clastres in "La Société Contre l'État" (1975) and then further analysed by Deleuze & Guattari in Chapter Twelve of "Mille Plateaux" (1980), sheds a more philosophical light on relations between non-state actors and the state, but this discussion would bring us too far from our main argument.

[35] Graeber & Wengrow 2021: "The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity"; p110-111. An excellent example of the evolutionary view is Peter Farb's 1968 book: "Man's Rise to Civilization as Shown by the Indians of

the authors argue strongly that political imagination, so beholden to the State narrative, must be set free again. Altogether, less than 1 per cent of humanity's history has been lived out under even the most primitive of state forms[36], and there is no reason to believe that humanity is stuck with states until the end of times.

In this section the state has been approached from several angles to start demystifying the concept and establish its partial, transient character. To recap: the modern state is both bound in time (since the 19th century) and by culture (having emerged in Western Europe). The question now is: How can the state be universal if it supposedly is based on social relations, for these change from country to country and cannot be expected to have the same configuration, and thus equivalent results? It has also been noted that the meaning of 'state' varies quite strongly according to the cultural background of scholars. This confusion seems to have increased markedly since—starting in the 1980s—the state was brought back in as an autonomous actor, and the term came to be applied to any centralized and hierarchical order. Non-state political orders, such as that arising from self-governance, have been neglected by the discipline, indicating how deep the 'state assumption' is in this field. Scholars examining the ontology of the state conclude that there is no evidence that it really exists, but that its existence can be inferred from its effects, a reasoning bordering on tautology. Finally, recent efforts to debunk the evolutionary view in which the modern state is the pinnacle of civilization argue that the life of the nomad, or the hunter-gatherer, has often reflected a conscious choice for statelessness.

Before proceeding with the dissection of the concept of state, I would like to present some possible insights from etymology, comparing the Latin and Arabic terminology for 'state' and 'government'.

Etymologically, the word with its many variations in European languages derives from the Latin 'status' meaning position, rank or condition. It entered European political language in the High Middle Ages in the sense of 'estates' as in the three estates (ranks) of society: aristocracy, clergy and commoners.[37] Romans did not use the word to designate their political order, called *civitas* or *imperium* or *res publica*'. The next section explores how the term became common in Europe. The root of 'government' in English and Latin languages, a term that also emerged in the High Middle Ages, comes from the Latin *gubernare* and the Greek *κυβερνάω* (kubernau) which means to steer a ship, and thus to pilot and to rule.

The Somali term for 'state' *dawlad* is borrowed from the Arabic *dawlah* and based on the root د و ل that means 'to change periodically, to alternate, rotate'. That is quite the contrary of the etymology of the Latin root, as it implies a dynamic process, not a 'static' condition. Indeed, it is not a romantic notion but a historical reality that rule in tribal Arab societies was not fixed in institutions, and could often not even be inherited, but was exercised by those thought most capable of organizing or defending the community. The Arab and Somali words for government (حكومة and *xukuumad*) derive from the root 'to pass judgement, to decide', which also forms 'wisdom' (حكمة and *xigmad*).

'To govern a state' in Latin languages and English thus has the etymological meaning of 'to pilot a society divided in ranks and stable positions' while in Arabic and Somali it would mean 'to wisely judge a rotating social order'. It appears Somalis adapted to the form of the Arab *dawlah* much easier than to the European *status*. But, however insightful etymology can be when discussing the origin of concepts, the truth is that today Somalis (like most other people in the world) use the term state in the specific sense shaped by Western history and thought. Even Islamic State (Dawlat al Islamiyya fi'l Iraq wa'l Sham) uses 'state' to refer to a rule-of-law based political order with institutions and a centralized and hierarchical government.

North America from Primeval Times to the Coming of the Industrial State".

[36] Mann 1986: "The Sources of Social Power; Volume 1".

[37] Harding 1994: "The Origins of the Concept of the State".

1.2 Roots of the State

"The State is sometimes spoken of as though it were an actual entity, something remote and godlike, vastly superior to its citizens and deserving of a quasi adoration which none of them deserve. But this is, of course, a mere superstition. The orders given by the State are in fact given by actual men, the purposes of the State are the purposes of certain people in office. There is nothing superhuman about these people".[38]

Bertrand Russell, 1916

One of the essential characteristics that allows the modern state to aspire to a universal status is its non-religious, secular character. The separation between Church and State was suggested by Protestants in the 16th century and supposedly achieved in the 19th century, relegating religion to the private sphere, while allowing the State to rule the public domain. This would make the modern state a theoretically suitable model anywhere in the world, as long as a population can accept a secular public sphere. On closer examination, however, the Western state is heavily influenced by Christian religion in several ways.

Roots in the Church

In 'The Origins of Political Order', Francis Fukuyama argues that the roots of the modern state lie in the Roman Catholic church in two essential aspects: a law-based political order, and the establishment of a bureaucratic hierarchy based on the concept of the 'office'. By themselves, neither of these developments were new in the world, as an office-based bureaucratic hierarchy existed in China since the Qin dynasty (221-206 BCE) while the Rule of Law was much stronger in the Muslim world of the Middle Ages than in Europe. Taken together in the context of 11th-13th century Western Europe, however, these institutional changes heralded the advent of the modern Western State, as Fukuyama argues in a chapter called 'The Church Becomes a State'.[39]

In terms of Law, canonical (Church) law was not coherent but based on many different sources, from the Bible to church-council resolutions and religious edicts proclaimed by lay kings. Moreover, canonical law competed with natural, positive and customary law, the latter often based on Germanic or other tribal customs. **Positive law** consists of the rulings *posited* by human authorities, and **natural law** derives from the laws of nature as postulated or deducted by philosophers since ancient times. The Gregorian reforms of the late 11th century harmonized canonical law, notably the requirement of celibacy for every office in the Church and the principle that only Church authorities (the pope, council of cardinals etc.) could appoint ecclesiastics. The sale of religious functions (simonism) was prohibited while celibacy ensured that the ecclesiastic's loyalty was towards the Church, not their family.[40]

The rediscovery in Italy of the 6th century Justinian code, itself a compilation of Roman law harmonized and adapted to a Christian society, came at roughly the same time as the rediscovery of Aristotle and classical Greek philosophy, in the century after the Gregorian reforms. This prompted the emergence of

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[38] In “Symposium: The Nature of the State in View of Its External Relations” (1915–1916); p306.

[39] Fukuyama 2010: "The Origins of Political Order"; p262-275.

[40] Berman 1993: "Faith and Order: The Reconciliation of Law and Order". Fukuyama quotes extensively from this and other works by the legal scholar Berman.

a tradition of jurists[41] who developed their art in the new universities that were established throughout Europe. An effort was made to integrate the different sources of Law into a comprehensive legal system, for example by the 12th century monk Gratian in his 'Concordance of Discordant Canons', also called the *Decretum Gratiani*. The juridic tradition in Western Europe as applied first to the Roman Church and then to temporal regimes has continued uninterrupted from these premises, providing legitimacy for authority based on a rational investigation of legal sources. Soon, such jurists would become indispensable to provide legitimacy to the decisions of both spiritual and temporal rulers.

The second political feature inaugurated by the Roman Catholic Church is that of the 'office', and the law-based bureaucratic hierarchy.[42] The term comes from the Roman administration's *opus facere*, to perform a job/task.[43] The principle of the office is to unlink a position of power in a hierarchical structure from whoever happens to be the office-bearer. The power exerted by the office-bearer is thus not personal, but is vested in him/her by that position. It was often interpreted as a sacred power; in the Roman times scribes often performed their official work in temples, while for the Gregorian Church the authority vested in the office ultimately emanated from God. Giorgio Agamben establishes a similar link between priesthood, the concept of duty and modern political office.[44]

The 'invention' of the impersonal office, later idealized by Max Weber in 'Politics as a Vocation' with the figure of the selfless state servant who leaves his personal identity at the threshold of the office, today seems common-sense to many citizens. This notion is crucial to the concept of state hierarchy, where positions exist regardless of who fills them, and ideally should not be influenced by the personality of the position holders, but only by their capacity to fulfil this position. But this 'impersonality' is only maintained as a facade towards members of the public (among civil servants, personal connections, personality and moods do count) and it always stands at risk of being undermined by the human character. In fact, Fukuyama's grand narrative 'The Origins of Political Order' views historical development partially through the dialectic tension between a rules-based political order and patrimonial tendencies. In a patrimonial system, the public domain, also office, is regarded as private property of the rulers and their kin who use it to advance their interests; Fukuyama defines patrimonialism as 'the natural human propensity to favor family and friends'.[45] Typically expressed through the capture of institutions by political elites using their personal access to power to capture public rents, it is a major contributing factor to political decay in many of Fukuyama's examples.[46]

Based on the two institutional developments above, Fukuyama argues that the post-Gregorian Catholic Church came to form the first modern state-like structure, which would have a determinant influence on later political developments. The focus has here been on structural/institutional aspects, but now our attention must turn to issues of governance. These attracted more scholarly attention than questions of form.

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[41] Not only among Christians, but also among Muslims and Jews who worked together in Toledo's School of Translators in the 12th and 13th centuries to bring together the teachings of monotheistic religions with Greek, Roman, Arab, Persian and Indian philosophy and science.

[42] Fukuyama 2010:270, basing himself on Wolter 1997: "The *Officium* in Medieval Ecclesiastical Law as a Prototype of Modern Administration".

[43] The word, in Latin, means 'duty' or 'obligation' and implies that a position (office) is higher, more permanent, more Godlike, than the mortal occupying it at any given moment. The office-bearer literally bears a duty, to God and His Church or, later, the institutions of the State.

[44] Agamben 2013: "Opus Dei: An Archaeology of Duty"; p87-88. He explains that office implies 'having to be' instead of 'being', and the person who is ordained as priest loses his substantial personality; his acts—the liturgy—are the expression of another (God or the Christ), never of himself.

[45] Fukuyama 2010:17.

[46] One could think of the grip of American elite families on power, for example the Bushes *vs* the Clintons, as an example of re-patrimonialization of US politics and a sure sign of political decay.

Variety of Regimes

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) examined systems of government in order to provide the Church and temporal rulers with advice, basing himself on the Politics of Aristotle. The Hebrew kingdoms of the Bible were no longer a useful precedent for contemporary rulers, so Aquinas and his contemporaries examined Greek democracy and oligarchy, the Roman republic, and aristocratic forms of government. These were considered different *regimes*, or governance methods. In his Summa Theologica, Aquinas combines new insights on regimes with the law in a Christian framework. He thereby grants precedence to natural law, which he sees as an emanation of God, over positive law, the law made by humans, usually promulgated by the sovereign. Natural law provided a moral basis for positive law, and the sovereign, who could not be bound by his own law, had to comply to natural law.

The discussion of political regimes remained couched in legal terms, based on religious and moral values as well as secular investigation, until the end of the Middle Ages. Machiavelli broke a taboo by uncoupling the art of government from the legal-theological debate. The theological roots of the Western state go so deep that Machiavelli's a-moral discussion of government still appears transgressive today.

It was only with Jean Bodin that the Republic came to be separated conceptually from its regime and government. His 'Six Books on the Republic' were widely studied and translated in late 16th century Europe. Bodin used the term *state* as condition, to define the regime; for example, Bodin notes that the 'state of the Republic' can be monarchic, popular or aristocratic[47]. Moreover, government does not need to follow the nature of the regime. Thus, a regime could be monarchical, but the monarch could rule democratically, or tyrannically. Or, a regime could be democratic, as republican Rome, but entrust government to the nobility. Bodin describes the 'popular state' (Book 2) where *every citizen partakes in a manner in the sovereignty of the state*. Quentin Skinner shows how this brings Bodin to distinguish monarchies from (popular) states, the French philosopher expressing a clear preference for monarchy.[48]

It is currently argued that Jean Bodin 'invented' the sovereign state that stands above the ruler as well as above the ruled.[49] The state/republic thus came to encompass both the ruler and the people, and it was structured by Law: the people had to submit to the prince's law, and the prince to natural law or his interpretation of God's law. Although the sovereign ruler could make or break human laws, he/she remained subject to the laws of God and/or of nature;[50] in Bodin's thinking, sovereign power could not be arbitrary. The existence of a normative framework beyond the individual polity encouraged peaceful relations between sovereign states (in contrast to today's assumption of anarchy). He also suggested that polities should be of equivalent size to maintain a peaceful balance of power, but specified that even the monarch of the smallest polity is as sovereign as (and legally equal to) the mightiest King. He suggested stronger powers should show charity towards weaker ones.

It should be noted that in France the term 'state' was used politically as above, in the sense of 'condition' or 'mode', but more generally in the expression 'the Three Estates', a consultative but influential body that gathered upon royal request from 1306 till 1789 to represent the aristocratic, clerical and popular (later bourgeois) sectors of society. From the 16th century onwards, the term 'state' was increasingly used to refer to the 'popular' state (as Bodin did), where people rule themselves in opposition to monarchies.[51] The superiority of popular self-governing systems, Skinner argues, was based on historic precedent—the greatness of the Athenian polis and of Republican Rome were being

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[47] Bodin 1576 : "Les Six Livres de la Republique", Book 2, Ch 1; 1993 edition p110-111.

[48] Skinner 2009: "A Genealogy of the Modern State"; p333.

[49] Bodin as analysed by Harding 1994:p68-69.

[50] Bodin 1576 (Book 1, Ch. 8)/1993:79.

[51] Skinner 2009:332-336.

rediscovered as classical works were translated in Renaissance Europe and spread by the printing press—as well as the successful contemporary examples of Venice, the Hanseatic League, the Netherlands, Switzerland and many other self-governing towns and rural areas.[52] Well-managed, self-governing 'popular states' were more successful than those where the population surrendered its sovereignty, because human beings that work for themselves are more motivated than those that work for a lord.[53]

The State Rivals with God

The paragraphs above give a small indication of how vivid and subtle the philosophical debates about sovereignty in Europe were by the early 17th century. For most students of political science, however, one voice from that time stands out: that of Thomas Hobbes. His justification for the state—that life without it is marked by chaos and continuous warfare—has become one of the oldest and still most frequently used arguments for state acceptance. It is based on a negative view of mankind—*homo homini lupus est*. Hobbes considers that each human being is equal and has the same rights, including that to attack and defend itself. In the natural condition, he says, all people live in a state of mutual fear, and to escape this they must agree to what he calls the 'first law of nature': to renounce some of their rights and transfer them to a sovereign (which Hobbes named Leviathan) they establish to lead the Commonwealth. He presents his argument as a thought experiment, and barely bases himself on historical facts, departing from the fact-based, history-laced, inductive and argumentative approach that was common among Renaissance scholars.

There are several interesting aspects to Hobbes' take on politics, which is radical in comparison to the ideas of his contemporaries. He does not consider the 'State of Nature', which was the departing point for many other thinkers, from Aquinas to John Locke, who wrote his most important works thirty years after Hobbes.[54] (See 3.3 for a full discussion). He calls his laws, which enjoin people to renounce their liberties and seek peace in the protection by a sovereign, 'laws of nature'. This seems a purposeful travesty, because they are obviously man-made (and thus positive) and arrived at by speculative 'reason' rather than observation, the common way to extract the Laws of Nature. Related to this, it seems that the source of Hobbes' laws of nature is not 'reason' but his interpretation of the Scriptures.[55] Throughout the Leviathan, Hobbes shows a more powerful inclination towards an absolute form of monarchy than many of his contemporaries. A third and again related point is his disparagement of Aristotle, whom he ridicules at times, and whose influence on canonical law and theology he greatly regrets. Hobbes' reactionary mind is potently expressed in this passage of the Leviathan (p379 of the facsimile of the original 1651 edition):

"The enemy has been here in the night of our natural ignorance, and sown the tares of spiritual errors; and that, first, by abusing and putting out the light of the Scriptures: for we err, not knowing the Scriptures. Secondly, by introducing the demonology of the heathen poets, that is to say, their fabulous doctrine concerning demons, which are but idols, or phantasms of the brain, without any real nature of their own, distinct from human fancy; such as are dead men's ghosts, and fairies, and other matter of old wives' tales. Thirdly, by mixing with the Scripture diverse relics of the religion, and much of the vain and erroneous philosophy of the Greeks, especially of Aristotle. Fourthly, by mingling with both these, false or uncertain traditions, and feigned or uncertain history. And so we come to err, by giving heed to seducing

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[52] See also van Reybrouck 2016.

[53] Skinner 2009:336.

[54] Thomas Hobbes dicusses the State of Nature in "De Cive" (1642) and in "The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic" (1650), but the term is not to be found in the Leviathan.

[55] Hobbes was anti-clerical because he held a Protestant aversion for the Church, but he was more religious than most of his contemporaries.

spirits, and the demonology of such as speak lies in hypocrisy, or, as it is in the original, "of those that play the part of liars,"(I Timothy, 4. 1, 2)".[56]

Hobbes thus refuses many of the intellectual advances made in the Renaissance. He disagrees with Aristotle's characterization of the human being as a political animal (*zôon politikon*) and the *polis* as a manifestation of the State of Nature. For Hobbes, to be effective the 'Commonwealth' can only be a creation based on *fear,* otherwise human beings will seek to live their life freely instead of submitting to the sovereign. Hobbes specifically argues that religion should be under the authority of the Sovereign, and that when the Sovereign does *not* take control of religious affairs, he invites discord.[57] To keep order, Hobbes' sovereign is given absolute powers, also over the life, death and opinions of his subjects, who have no option to recall their sovereignty or legitimately disobey him.

In a recent study of Hobbes, the Italian philosopher Carlo Ginzburg convincingly argues that, far from establishing a strict separation between Church and State, Hobbes' Commonwealth not only submitted the Church to its rule, but usurped one of its essential characteristics: divine terror.[58] It was only when the Leviathan could project the supernatural awe previously associated with God that citizens would completely submit to its rule.[59] The rise of the state was thus a factor in the decline of the Church: since one cannot entirely submit to two different authorities at once, most European citizens transferred their blind obedience and unquestioning submission from God to the State over the coming centuries.

The in-between stage, as authors such as Pierson, Giddens and Anderson point out, was absolutist monarchy.[60] Absolutism was to a large extent the product of the Counter-Reformation. In France, at least, its establishment was aided by Bodin's writings. A stronger sovereign, necessary to defend society against protestant and other heretics, entailed a stronger state apparatus to focus power and increase its reach.

This may explain why Hobbes has such a strong influence on the domain of political theory today, even though his ideas were dissonant from those of Renaissance Europe in reaffirming the Medieval idea that anything departing from the Scriptures as only source was some form of 'demonology'. If one reads 'Leviathan' and compares it to Bodin's 'Six Livres de la République', Locke's 'Treatises on Government' and other texts of Renaissance Europe, Hobbes comes across as a less rational, less coherent and altogether more obscure thinker. But he clearly established the (precursor to the) state as an almost theological entity, whose justification is based on fear of mankind's evil penchants, and which is not itself submitted to any higher form of authority. The 'political theology', as it was called at the time, of Thomas Aquinas and Spinoza did not ignore mankind's social nature and the efficacy and prudence of self-governance. It could not condone the absolutist state based on nothing else than the will of the

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[56] Hobbes 1651:379 (facsimile of the original edition).

[57] Around 1650, when Leviathan was first published, Europe was just emerging from a century of near continuous warfare, and England was wracked by civil war between royalists and parliamentarians. Although most conflict was ostensibly due to religious differences, behind these a new model of social hierarchy was emerging, based on a rising capitalist class enriched by overseas ventures. This pitted the monarchy of old, with its control over resources, territory and privileges, against the emerging bourgeoisie buoyed by commercial and financial capital, a 'civil society' that preferably exercised power through Parliament. Hobbes tried to marry these two unwilling partners (it may have been his way of solving the English Civil War) in 'Leviathan': an absolutist state ruled by a monarch with a civil society determined to progress towards the 'common good'.

[58] Ginzburg 2009: "Peur, Révérence, Terreur : Relire Hobbes Aujourd'hui" .

[59] In Ginzburg's explanation: "*Pour Hobbes, le pouvoir politique présuppose la force, mais la force seule ne suffit pas. L'État, le « dieu mortel », engendré par la peur, fait naître la terreur : un sentiment dans lequel se mêlent de manière inextricable la peur et l'intimidation. Pour se présenter comme autorité légitime, l'État a besoin des instruments (des armes) de la religion. C'est pourquoi la réflexion moderne sur l'État s'articule sur la théologie politique : telle est la tradition inaugurée par Hobbes*."

[60] Pierson 2011:36, Giddens 1985:85, Anderson 1974:11.

Sovereign. Hobbes justified the absolutist state and was therefore more agreeable to rulers seeking to legitimize their power.

The modern state that emerged in the 19th century needed the absolutist justification of Hobbes. To free the path toward rapid progress, mankind had to be unshackled from the State of Nature. The political theorist and Nazi apologist Carl Schmitt leaned heavily on Hobbes[61] and in his own 'Political Theology' (1922) praises the 'decisionist' stance on authority taken by Hobbes: Authority is the source of Law, not the Truth.[62] Even today, Hobbes' negative view of mankind as a basis for providing absolute and unalienable sovereignty to the State is a perspective most first-year political science students are made familiar with, while they rarely hear of the State of Nature or learn about the popular systems of self-governance that brought such success, over centuries, to many European cities and republics (such as the sortition-based popular democracy of Venice).[63]

We can conclude that the essence of the Western state is at least partially theological. In its structural aspects, it has borrowed from the Law- and bureaucratic hierarchy-based Roman Catholic Church, and to provide legitimacy to its absolute sovereignty it has borrowed from (the idea of) God. The submission of the citizen to the State can be in conflict with submission to religion. Ruling elites have long avoided this conflict by appearing to be pious and motivated by religion, facilitating the transfer of submission from God to the State. Secularization does not imply the *loss of belief* in God's attributes (all-seeing omnipresence, awe & terror, ultimate capacity to judge, reward and punish, unquestioned existence), but in their transfer to the State.[64] The modern state thus became an article of belief. One manner to gauge this is by noting that the absence of the state, '*anarchy*', is a terrifying prospect in the minds of most Western citizens, similar to how religious people envisage a life on Earth without God. This may start explaining the conflict some Muslims have with the Western state.

The State Becomes a Subject

The discussion about the roots of the State is a recent one. John Locke, David Hume, Thomas Paine and Jeremy Bentham theorized abundantly about government, but rarely about the State. Although the State is not a focus of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, he does use the term frequently, to refer to the 'passive' aspect of a regime, a meaning close to 'state' as 'condition'. Following him, other philosophers such as Kant and Fichte took to observing the State in addition to 'government' and related concepts. But it was Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel who put the State central as a subject of political philosophy in the 1820s and 1830s.[65]

Hegel idealized the State, seeing it as the epitome of civilization and the result of the Spirit of History, which drove mankind relentlessly to its ultimate freedom through the self-realization of collective consciousness. The Spirit of History had originated in early states of the (Middle) East and—in a dynamic dialectic process where it confronted older political orders—had spread to the West, where it had resulted in what seemed to Hegel the most advanced form of collective self-realization: the German nation-state.[66] The reason Africa was not part of world history was precisely that it had no states,

[61] In 1938 Carl Schmitt published the monograph "The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes: Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol".

[62] Schmitt quotes the Leviathan, Chap 26: *Autoritas, non veritas facit legem*. Schmitt, Carl 1922: "Political Theology. Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty"; p33.

[63] van Reybrouck, David 2016: "Against Elections: The Case for Democracy".

[64] A point also made by Ginzburg 2009, who notes: "*La sécularisation ne s'oppose pas à la religion ; elle en envahit le terrain*".

[65] Abrams 1977: "Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State".

[66] Hegel 1837: "Lectures on the Philosophy of History".

reasoned Hegel. Africa became the opposite pole of the State, the very example of statelessness. Hegel's vision of Africa as a 'dark' continent inhabited by people who had not yet been 'touched by the light of objective consciousness'[67] became the dominant image of Africa in late colonialism, until the end of World War II. One could even argue that the link Hegel established between the State and the notion of progress in Africa has dominated Western thinking until today.

Hegel also theorized the state *system*, which he conceived of as a *civil society* where each state is akin to a person,[68] pursuing his best interest while trying to keep cordial relations with the group. This has become an enduring image of international relations. Internally, each state was managed by a ruling class that consisted of the members of civil society who worked in or for the state, or who had an interest in its development. This enlightened group could expertly manage common affairs for the nation preserving the freedom of both state and individual, freedom being the absolute objective of Hegel's 'Spirit of History'.

In retrospect, it is surprising how many of Hegel's concepts became hegemonic in Western thinking: the State, the political class, civil society, the nation and the nation-state, the myth of ancient states, linear historic development (or *progress*), the goal of freedom, the notion of states as self-interested individuals who evolve in a context of natural anarchy and at best form a civilized state system, and the role of Black Africa as the polar opposite to all these positive notions. The State made its appearance in political science not as a single entity but as a cluster of concepts that have remained linked in discourse. For Hegel, the State also has God-like attributes, it is the emanation of the spirit of history and stands far above humankind as a concept; it is also the perfect embodiment of Reason ('objective consciousness').

In 'Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right' (1843), Karl Marx demonstrated how Hegel's 'doctrine' was based on his connivance with the temporary powers of his time. Marx equated the State with a tool used by bourgeois society for exploiting the workers, but that tool could also be used by the workers for their own ends; fundamentally, the state was the expression of class struggle in feudal and bourgeois societies. Unlike Hegel and many later thinkers, Marx and Engels were clear about the transient nature of the State. They believed that, at the dawn of history, humans lived in a form of primitive communism and that the rise of the State was accompanied by social injustice. In the future, the State was doomed to 'wither away' after a phase of dictatorship by the proletariat.[69] Political action could help speed up this natural historical evolution.

From Hegel to Marx, and later through all kinds of 'ism' ideological currents (nationalism, communism, anarchism, fascism, etc.), the State became the subject of political debate and competition. The focus of political groups shifted from becoming the government, or working on a social contract, to 'capturing the State'. The positivist belief in state power, a powerful new consensus between ruling elites and the ruled, led to totalitarian states in Europe's interbellum.[70]

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[67] Hegel deemed that Africans lacked a political constitution through which the individual as a rational entity can objectify his true self in the state. This lack of identification between self and state crippled the development of African politics.

[68] Here Hegel was taking position in a debate whether the state could be seen as a (fictitious) legal or moral person, where Rousseau took the position in favour of state personhood, and Bentham and others rejected it, on the grounds the State was a concept.

[69] Engels 1878: Anti-Dühring Part 3, Chapter 2.

[70] Hibou 2017: "The Political Anatomy of Domination". She points out (p155-157) that the modernization drives in the USSR, fascist Italy, and Nazi Germany responded to a real 'popular demand for state', as working classes believed they could finally be emancipated from their traditional social horizons.

The Nation-State

By the early 19th century, states had become "the sole constitutive elements of the international system at the exclusion of others", claims Hendrik Spruyt.[71] During the 19th century, almost all Europeans and many other peoples came to see themselves as members of a *nation* who, in case they did not yet have an independent state, deserved to have one. It seems the French revolution of 1789 and the Napoleonic reforms of the old political orders in all captured territories, sparked the European nation-state building process. But it was in German idealism (Herder, Fichte, Hegel, Goethe, etc.) that it found its highest expression, and became the foundational political philosophy of the modern period.

The rise of the nation-state was simultaneous with industrialization. Among the effects of industrialization, one was the integration of national territories through a transport and later a communications revolution, both managed by a centralized administration.[72] Administration was itself inspired by the rationalism of the European Enlightenment (17th – 18th C), meaning an orderly, routine approach and the search for efficiency in public affairs.[73] This implied standardization of coinage, weights, measures, documents, administrative procedures, etc., which contributed to making each state more of a closed circuit in economic, political, and social terms.[74] The State through its administration now effectively occupied the entire country, making borders more of a reality as they separated neighbouring states that were equally internally integrated and centralized. Sovereign, territorial nation-states thus became a reality in Europe (and Japan) in the second half of the 19th century, not before.

Industrialization also created a new bourgeoisie and the 'proletariat'. The demands of industry for labour and raw materials, coupled with a demographic explosion, created massive population shifts within countries towards mining and manufacturing areas, and urbanization. A series of revolts in industrialized countries erupted. The revolutions of 1848 brought to the fore the new industrial bourgeoisie, while the creation of the First International in 1864 signalled the beginning of a continent-wide struggle of the working class, which briefly seemed successful in the Commune de Paris (1870). These social changes required a political solution, which would be found in representative democracy.

The nation-state can be seen as a political invention destined to re-order society; led by a bourgeoisie whose power was based on a specific territory (with its overseas dependencies) that first displaced the previous pan-European aristocratic and religious ruling elites, and then faced a working class that was also incipiently pan-European. Nationalism required the pre-existence of states, as Gellner demonstrates, though he adds that the State alone is not sufficient: a common language and culture, and a central administration controlled by national elites who can wield a monopoly of violence through the state, are additional requirements. Gellner points out that nationalism is less of a political ideology than a *sentiment* that thrives on perceptions of injustice, provoking anger and seeking fulfilment.[75]

The identification between a formally defined state and the society living within its borders as a nation seems to have been a historical novelty. Although one can point out that homogeneous societies lived within clear borders (for example on an island) before the 19th century, there is little or no trace of such a self-identification in literature or chronicles. Regional self-pride may have been considered boorish, as evidence of a parochial mindset in pre-modern times. But the model of territorial nation-states spread rapidly[76] through Europe. In the process, it erased or absorbed both smaller group identities (regional,

[71] Spruyt 1994: "Institutional Selection in International Relations: State Anarchy as Order". Henceforth referred to as Spruyt 1994b.

[72] See Braudel and followers of his Annales school, such as Wallerstein.

[73] Gellner 1983: "Nations and Nationalism"; p20. He points out how Hume and Kant both idealized the application of rationality in human affairs.

[74] Osiander 2001: "Sovereignty, International Relations and the Westphalian Myth".

[75] Gellner 1983:1.

[76] Benedict Anderson identifies as main vector for its spread what he calls 'print capitalism'.

confessional, professional) and larger ones (religions, cross-border linkages, memories of empire). As it spread through the Balkans, in areas recently released from the Ottoman Empire with its complex patterns of ethnic and religious group identities (the *millets*), nationalism triggered the first World War.

Liberal Views on Sovereignty and Their Demise

The internal sovereignty of even the most powerful European states was still strongly contested a century ago. The Irish fought successfully for their independence from Great Britain (1919-1921) and Bretons, Corsicans, even Savoyards in France did not see why they should submit to the authority of the French state. In other European countries there were ethnic or regional minorities who similarly fought against the state to gain autonomy. Today, the Basques, Catalans, Sami and other European peoples still strive for self-determination, which they feel has been unjustly denied them. Besides this nationalist contestation, sovereignty has also been questioned from a class perspective, with periodic revolts by the industrial proletariat or the landless peasantry until the introduction of social democracy. In both cases, efforts were made to replace the State with institutions of self-rule. Some countries, notably Germany from 1918 to 1923, nearly disintegrated as they were riven apart by antagonistic groups seeking either power or autonomy. There was also a constant intellectual questioning of the state's absolute sovereignty, which was much less self-evident than it is now.

During World War I, leading British liberal intellectuals C. Delisle Burns, Bertrand Russell and G.B.H. Cole discussed the limits of state sovereignty—both towards its population and internationally—in the symposium "The Nature of the State in View of Its External Relations".[77] I will quote from this debate, which was 're-discovered' by International Relations scholar Jeanne Morefield in 2017,[78] as it delivers insights of an alternative take on the State and the state system to the one that later became hegemonic, suggesting there was a bifurcation in thinking about the State where the path not taken was nearly erased from collective memory.

Burns remarks about philosophical discussions of the State that "*The State is discussed (…) as though there were or could be only one specimen in existence, at least at one time. Hence comes the absurd identification of the State with the whole of civilized society: hence also the confusion of the two quite distinct problems – (1) the relation of a citizen to a State, and (2) the relation of the human being to society. It may not be the business of political philosophers to consider the relation of a Lutheran to the Lutheran Church, or of a professor to a University, but at least they should allow for the existence of social relations fundamentally different from the political, and possibly more important*".[79]

Bertrand Russell, pointing out the positive relation between state strength and external conflict, warned: "*In external affairs, every increase in the strength of the State has been a new disaster to mankind. For in external affairs the motive of dominion has triumphed over the motive of security by the wholly illusory argument that only the means of dominion would ensure security*.[80]

Cole remarks how states have been endowed with Kantian individual ethics, and been made moral actors who constitute an end in themselves, just like Kant's individual. Reflecting on the parallels, he concludes that "*the citizen is an individual in a far deeper sense than the State*" and "[The State's] *sovereignty is relative and not absolute; and this relativity exists for it both in its relations with its*

[77] Burns, Russell and Cole 1916: "The Nature of the State in View of Its External Relations" .

[78] Morefield 2017: " Urgent History: The Sovereignty Debates and Political Theory's Lost Voices".

[79] Burns 1916:294.

[80] Russell 1916:310. In fairness, it can be pointed out that Great Britain, through the Pax Britannica, exercised unparalled global hegemony and maintained its Empire by force *and* by conviction. Russell's point about the danger of state strength projecting itself through its security services was certainly borne out in the following decades by the totalitarian regimes of Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin, and despotic regimes in many smaller countries.

members and in its relations with other States".[81] This understanding "*sets men free to assign limits to the duties which they owe to their State, and to follow the path of those duties which they owe to other associations or to their own consciences.*"

Cole goes on to describe how political theorists discussing a 'world federation' or a 'world-state' have agreed to endow sovereignty only to the State—"*Sovereignty has remained the property of States, even if they have been conceived as delegating a part of it to a world authority*"— but that "*Abandonment of the idea of State absolutism involves also abandonment of the view that sovereignty is an absolute possession of States*" so that "*the location of sovereignty is a matter for choice*". For example, Cole suggests a 'World-State' if that form is seen as desirable. Following this line of reasoning, he suggests the individual citizen should weigh the different demands for loyalty to, for example, the British state and the international socialist movement, and be free to choose; thus, the individual reclaims its sovereignty.

Referring to the appeal states were making on their citizens during the war, Cole notes that "*The absoluteness of the obligation on the individual is defended by arguing that the State must at all costs be preserved. In urging that the State is not an end in itself, but only a more or less valuable means to the good life, I have sought to strike at the theoretical foundation of this view*".[82]

What strikes the reader is the liberty with which Russell and Cole discuss the option of withdrawing sovereignty from the State. They approach the matter contractually: if the English state no longer listens to its population (disregarding, for example, the popular rejection of war) and no longer is considered to represent the interests of the majority, then the population is no longer bound to listen to the state. And this not by majority decision, but each person individually.[83]

Morefield wonders why this discussion, and indeed the towering figures of Cole and Russell (another was Harold Laski), who for decades developed democratic pluralism and leftist liberal thought in Great Britain and beyond, have disappeared from mainstream International Relations theory. In her view, this is the legacy of Carl Schmitt. Cole, Laski and other English pluralists, Schmitt wrote, were advocating ungovernability by allowing all sorts of economic and social groups to place their demands on the state. Schmitt proposed a 'bounded notion of the political', isolating it from social and economic factors. A political or 'state' class could only lead the State through the dangerous and competitive waters of international relations if it enjoyed absolute sovereignty. This was encapsulated in his famous saying 'Sovereign is he who decides on the exception', the first phrase of "Political Theology" (1922). This means that the sovereign need not follow his own laws, as he can declare the State of Exception. This suspends the normal legal order and bureaucratic-parliamentary decision-making process; it is a function of dictatorship (which Schmitt defends) in which only the sovereign's will and word constitute the Law that all subjects of the State must comply with. Although later scholars did not agree with the idea of dictatorship, Schmitt created a realm of pure political science that appealed to them, by isolating 'the political' and associating it with the absolute, unalienable sovereignty of the state.[84]

It may be useful at this point to recall the similarities between how humans think about the State and how they think about God. Bertrand Russell's quote at the beginning of this section criticizes this view, but Schmitt turned it to the advantage of his bounded notion of the political. "*All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts*"[85] he noted, and all political theory

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[81] Russell 1916:315.

[82] Cole 1916:321.

[83] As Cole puts it in his paper, "*The citizens' obligation to serve the State is dependent upon the extent to which the State fulfils the will of the citizens. By this I mean their actual, conscious will, and not any "real" will with which philosophers may choose to endow them*" (1916:320). Cole believes the institution of democracy can partially ensure such a state.

[84] Schmitt developed this line of reasoning notably in 'The Concept of the Political', 1932.

[85] All quotes from Schmitt 1922: "Political Theology".

addresses the state in the same way as theology addresses God. He gave many examples of similarities between the practice of politics and the field of theology. "*The exception in jurisprudence is analogous to the miracle in theology. Only by being aware of this analogy can we appreciate the manner in which the philosophical ideas of the state developed in the last centuries*". And indeed, Schmitt's "*Sovereign is he who decides on the exception*" puts the State on par with God, the only entity who stands above its own Laws.

German scholars escaping Nazism brought Schmitt's realist, state-centred (and Weberian) perspective to the idealist American field of political science. Morgenthau took Schmitt's concepts of sovereignty and introduced them at the foundation of the school of post-war International Relations that has been called 'realism'.[86] Besides Morgenthau, Morefield mentions Leo Strauss, but also Hannah Arendt and even Chantal Mouffe as working from within the tradition of the 'bounded political' that Schmitt introduced, even though they may criticize it. Morefield muses: "*Schmitt's particular approach to sovereignty would go on to have much greater political and theoretical longevity outside of Germany than one might presume possible for a worldview produced by an unrepentant Nazi writing against liberal democracy on the eve of World War Two*".[87] Since Schmitt, it is clear that only states can be sovereign, and that their sovereignty may derive from a putative original social contract, but there is no mechanism for the population to recall that contract and 'de-recognize' the State, as Russell and Cole defended. The sovereignty supposedly conferred to the State by the domestic population it rules is, in practice, inalienable. The status of statehood is therefore extremely stable.

1.3 Origins of the State Order

"The greatest problem for the human race, to the solution of which Nature drives man, is the achievement of a universal civic society which administers law among men".[88]

Immanuel Kant, 1784

The Myth of Westphalia

The international state system is considered, in International Relations theory, to have originated in the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia. In particular, the principle of sovereignty—no state shall meddle in the affairs of another—and the inviolability of borders are held to have been first affirmed here, by a sufficient number of European states to make *territorial sovereignty* the nucleus of the current state system.[89] Hans Morgenthau provided a textbook definition in 1948: "*rules of international law were securely established in 1648 (…) the Treaty of Westphalia (…) made the territorial state the cornerstone of the modern state system*".[90] Another famous political scientist, among many, to validate this notion is Hendrik Spruyt: "*the Peace of Westphalia . . . formally acknowledged a system of sovereign states*".[91] The scholar of International Law Leo Gross, reflecting about the world order created through the United

[86] Morefield 2017:181.

[87] ibid.:181.

[88] Kant 1784: "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View".

[89] See for example this definition from Evans and Newnham's Dictionary of World Politics "*a number of important principles, which were subsequently to form the legal and political framework of modern interstate relations, were established at Westphalia. It explicitly recognized a society of states based on the principle of territorial sovereignty*." Evans and Newnham 1990:420.

[90] Morgenthau 1985: "Politics Among Nations" p294; quoted in Osiander 2001:261.

[91] Spruyt 1994: "The Sovereign State and Its Competitors"; p27.

Nations, called the Treaty of Westphalia "*the majestic portal which leads from the old into the new world*".[92] To this list we may add Anthony Giddens (1985)[93] and others.

As Andreas Osiander demonstrated,[94] this is a political myth.[95] It is a clear case of what Bourdieu would call 'institutional genesis amnesia', because it was only with the political-philosophical debates about the sovereignty of the state in 19th and 20th century Europe that this myth was produced. The treaty of Westphalia was not concerned with sovereignty in the first place; it was entirely focused on what would happen with the domains of the Habsburg Holy Roman Empire, not the other European states. It barely mentioned sovereignty or 'the state' and it did not seek to establish any principles of international law.[96]

Westphalia became fashionable among 19th century scholars imbued with the notion of the nation-state and seeking historical roots for it. These scholars clearly did not read the Treaty text itself, but readily accepted contemporary readings of the Thirty Years War, situating the origins of north-western European nation-states in that struggle against the Habsburg empire. The myth was construed that in Westphalia the nascent European nations had established a legal system to safeguard their rights and liberties on the basis of territorial sovereignty. This myth became the foundation of the Law-based 19th century emergent European state order and thus penetrated 20th century political science.

"*A typical founding myth, it [Westphalia] offers a neat account of how the "classical" European system, the prototype of the present international system, came about. Conveniently and comprehensively, it explains the origin of what are considered the main characteristics of that system, such as territoriality, sovereignty, equality, and non-intervention. It fits perfectly with the accepted view of what international relations is about, or at least has "traditionally" been about: relations of a specific kind (with the problem of war occupying a central position) among actors of a specific kind (territorial, sovereign, legally equal). While IR authors are divided on the applicability of this conventional model to current phenomena, very rarely do they question its applicability to the past*".[97]

'Realist' International Relations scholars argue that the international state order, and the survival therein of individual states, is premised on a 'balance of power' and thus on military might. This term, David Hume discussed in 1752, was newly coined in his time, but it referred to an ancient concept, also discussed by ancient Greek writers such as Xenophon and Thucydides.[98] The notion that states owe their survival and greatness to military might is, however, hard to sustain.

As Spruyt demonstrated, Tilly's 'state-making through war' and the 'survival of the fittest' ideas that state sovereignty could only be defended with sufficient military deterrence is a-historical. Powerful states disintegrated while their weak neighbours (e.g., German princely states) survived. Territorial states became strong not through warfare, primarily, but through internal organization and mutual

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[92] Gross 1948: "The Peace of Westphalia"; p28. On page 20: "*To it [the Peace of Westphalia] is traditionally attributed the importance and dignity of being the first of several attempts to establish something resembling world unity on the basis of states exercising untrammelled sovereignty over certain territories and subordinated to no earthly authority*" .

[93] Giddens 1985: "The Nation-State and Violence"; p86.

[94] Osiander 2001: "Sovereignty, International Relations and the Westphalian Myth" .

[95] This is now recognized by most scholars such as Jessop 2008:3/19, but the myth of Westphalia has not been replaced and is still being taught to students, as least at Sciences Po, in 2022.

[96] The French Cardinal Richelieu and the Swedish King Gustav Adolf, who brought the Habsburg empire to its knees, were interested in a settlement that reflected actual power rather than Catholic legitimacy. They extensively used propaganda to convince German Princes that Habsburg Emperor Frederik sought to expand his empire and that they would become his slaves if they didn't resist. But there is no historical reason to believe that the Habsburg Empire had such intentions, or indeed threatened the French and Swedes (and Dutch, Swiss and Danes, the other supposed beneficiaries of the new state system). Osiander 2001:260

[97] Osiander 2001:266.

[98] Hume 1752 "Essay on the Balance of Power", opening paragraphs.

recognition with neighbouring states, once borders had been agreed on. A process of "mutual empowerment" (through preferential recognition granted to each other by a certain dominant type of actors) led to "institutional mimicry",[99] notably the creation of 'nation states' in reaction to one another, as a basis of legitimation of state-sovereignty. This occurred in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Tilly's theory that 'states made war and war made states' is undermined by Spruyt's argument: legitimacy through marriage and inheritance was more important than military power when it came to surviving among neighbouring states. Military power only became a determinant factor for state survival in the second half of the 19th century, when industrialization gave armies the means to destroy the infrastructure and population of another country. This does not discredit the entire 'balance of power' hypothesis, but only the part concerning the *primacy* of military might. Balance of power is a secondary concern.

If Westphalia is a myth and the 'balance of military power between states' is not supported by historical evidence until the late 19th century, the question remains: how did pre- and early modern states function and survive in a competitive environment?

Socialization and Sovereignty

The current state-system has its roots in the restoration of aristocratic power after the Napoleonic wars and the transition to the nation-state. Society and state were not coterminous before the 19th century. The fact that European nobility, or bourgeoisie, or—for example—German-speaking or Catholic leaders, felt part of a same society (and socialized together) brought more stability to the European state-system than a supposed balance of military power or the affirmation of sovereign power.[100] It was this European order based on socialization and mutual recognition between Europe's royal dynasties that the 1814-15 Congress of Vienna re-established, against the current of national self-determination that had been unleashed by the French revolution. "*Consciousness of a common civilization balanced consciousness, within that civilization, of group separateness (ethnicity, for example), which on the whole was not exploited politically*" in pre-Revolution Europe.[101] Fichte, in what seems to be a fit of nostalgia for the Holy Roman Empire, wrote in 1800: "*The peoples of modern Christian Europe may be regarded as a single nation* (…) *modern states of Christian Europe are pieces torn from the former whole*". Thus, at the levels of both ruled and rulers, identities were structured not primarily by states and borders, or other formal considerations, but by socialization processes such as shared nobility and 'belonging to the Christian community', whether catholic, orthodox or protestant, or to professional guilds, commercial networks, scholarly circles etc.[102] The Congress of Vienna was not a 'congress' at all (there was no plenary meeting), but a series of informal meetings held between plenipotentiaries of the great powers. Like the Treaty of Westphalia, the Act of the Congress of Vienna was not concerned with legal notions of sovereignty; but focused on the distribution of territories between states as agreed by these plenipotentiaries.

The concept of sovereignty, although it had been 'invented' by Bodin in the 16th century (including the notion of formal equality between sovereigns, regardless of their actual power), only became the basis of relations between states in the 20th century. Bodin and the scholars after him concerned by the notion of sovereignty (including Hobbes), were focused on *domestic* relations, the legitimacy of a ruler vis-à-vis the population, which I call *vertical sovereignty* as opposed to the *horizontal sovereignty* that

[99] Spruyt 1994:175-176.

[100] Osiander 2001:279-280.

[101] ibid.:280.

[102] Socialization consists of two main aspects: the act of 'socializing' (making friends) and the process whereby the individual integrates the norms and values of the group he/she wishes to belong to.

deals with inter-state relations.[103] The rise of new power constellations within the population, for example land-owning peasantry or an urban commercial class, caused this discussion to be reinitiated time and again. Relations *between* states were not influenced by sovereignty, but by socialization or affect—positive or negative feelings. As Spruyt remarked: states prefer to deal with similarly constituted other states (instead of with other polities, such as city-states, empires or popular assemblies). This brings up the problematic notion of 'socialization between states'[104] as if these social constructs are capable of human feelings and behaviour, a notion also advanced by Hegel as we saw above. As I argued in the first section of this Chapter, I consider this personification erroneous; the state is a concept, it is not even a 'thing', let alone a 'person'.

Relations between European ruling elites, in summary, have always been based on socialization and mutual recognition; as Aquinas, Bodin and Locke surmised, they were governed by the 'Laws of Nature'. The code regulating relations between European nobility was based on shared values such as religious virtue, political wisdom, and a personal sense of honour and duty towards one's community. Formal and legal considerations did not play an important part in preserving the state system, with the important exception of genealogy (e.g. primogeniture), which is a social construct. Treaties did not need to be respected by stronger parties. Even in the 19th century, there was no stable state-*system* associated with the nation-state. As the post-Napoleonic restoration of the old aristocracy by the Congress of Vienna unravelled, European nations repeatedly went to war and the competition among them, also for overseas domains, was intense. As Marx and Engels theorized, the capitalist class was too focused on competition and maximizing profit to show any cross-border solidarity.

Nevertheless, at a cultural level the ruling elites did develop a new solidarity. As each nation was discovering itself, it also discovered other nations: their music, literature, poetry and other arts. Hegel's image of the community of nations as 'a civil society' evolving in a context of anarchy—where each nation benefits most from peaceful exchange with others—may have been idealistic, but it was a model that ruling elites could apply in their social relations. After all, the ruling elites in each European country shared many common traits, from their Christian background to enlightenment values such as scientific rationality, and the desire to replace the authoritarian '*ancien régime*' of aristocracy and clergy with a modern order based on progress.

Thus, mutual recognition as equal polities, which was already the norm between the Christian ruling houses of Europe, remained the basis of the state system, but now it was based on ruling-class identities embodied in the territorial nation-state. The old and new elites socialized together, allowing a smooth transition of power. This gave a separate identity to 'France', 'England', 'Switzerland' and later 'Italy' and 'Germany', but it also joined them in a (wholly informal) community of states. They shared an interest in suppressing a transnationally organized workers movement (the Communist International, or Comintern). But there was no structure to organize this new international community and define its laws. The first international organization (namely a body in which delegates of sovereign states take decisions in a routine, formalized manner) seems to have been the International Telegraph Union, established in 1865, followed by the Universal Postal Union in 1874. Unsurprisingly, this indicates how important communication was for the establishment of the international state system. But the world would have to wait until 1920, with the establishment of the League of Nations, for the first international political organization.

[103] This distinction is used by other scholars. See, for example, the discussions between legal scholars in Finkelstein, Claire and Michael Skerker (eds) 2018: "Sovereignty and the New Executive Authority".

[104] See Alderson 2001: "Making Sense of State Socialization" for a discussion of what state socialization means. Although he mentions that some critics dismiss the term as an example of anthropomorphism, his own treatment assumes states can be seen as subjects of socialization.

International Law Emerges as the Basis for International Relations

Interventions by strong states to punish a breach of treaties, cast in legal terms, have taken place since the dawn of history, and are not a European invention.[105] Legal systems governing relations between states had also existed before. But the legal foundations of the current international state system are typically thought to lie in the Law of the Seas, codified by Grotius in the 17th century.[106] The Dutch lawyer proposed that the sea should be free for all to use and put forth a set of legal principles based on the right of free passage and the freedom to trade all over the world. These remained speculative for centuries, as great maritime powers were free to act as they pleased at sea; but in the system of mutual recognition described above, that is between European monarchs and polities, they were used as a rule of thumb.

Domestic legal systems also grew towards each other. The introduction in states controlled by Napoleon's France of civil and criminal law codes replaced the customary law and fragmented legal systems that had prevailed until then. This made popular the positive approach to law, based on the belief that relations within a society could and should be ordered by Law. Positive law, unlike customary law, responded to the modern conditions and needs of citizens, and thus were similar everywhere. The civil and criminal codes that had come with Napoleon's administration were commonly adopted wholesale, and in many other places influenced local legal codification efforts.

In the same manner that law governed the relations between the citizens of a state, *international law* was to govern relations between states, considered as legal persons. The term was first introduced by Jeremy Bentham in 1789 in "Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation"[107] and gradually became influential throughout the 19th century. Besides the Law of the Seas, International Law focused on the laws of warfare, culminating in The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907. Efforts were made at both these conventions to create an international court that could take binding decisions, but some countries remained opposed to it, and only a voluntary court of arbitration was set up in The Hague in 1899.

The League of Nations, unlike the Congress of Vienna, was to usher in an international legal order, based on "*the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments*"[108]. It failed in the 1930s, but by 1945 this legal order imposed itself as the code for the international state system until today: the United Nations system.

Early jurists concerned with international law (Blackstone, Bentham, John Austin) pointed out the well-known problem that there is no authority above the state to exact submission to international law; it thus rather resembles a moral code, and sovereigns or nations only heed them to preserve their reputation. Bentham noted that most of the provisions of international law came from the Laws of Nature (supplemented by existing legal agreements, such as treaties). Indeed, referring to our discussion above, international law, like sovereignty, was long based on the principle of mutual recognition, not formal compliance.

An international Legal Order

President Woodrow Wilson, the chair of the Commission to establish the League of Nations, had famously drawn the contours of the post-World War I international order in his '14 points' declaration

[105] See Roy 2007: "Just and Unjust War in Hindu Philosophy"; Cox 2017: "Expanding the History of the Just War: The Ethics of War in Ancient Egypt"; and Ping-Cheung Lo 2012: "The Art of War Corpus and Chinese Just War Ethics Past and Present".

[106] Grotius 1609: "De Mare Liberum".

[107] Janis 1984: "Jeremy Bentham and the Fashioning of 'International Law'".

[108] Preamble of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

made to US Congress in January 1918. They included as first point the formalization of international relations through a move away from the private negotiations between plenipotentiaries that had characterized international relations until then: "*no international private understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view*". The last point specifies how formalization would be achieved: by the creation of what would become the League of Nations: "*A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike*". Most of the other articles suggest national self-determination of peoples in Europe and the Near East, but points two and three mention that free trade and the free circulation on the seas must be maintained.

The Covenant of the League of Nations was signed as part of the Versailles Peace Treaty that ended World War One in June 1919. The covenant was therefore drafted exclusively by the victorious powers in the War and imposed on its losers. The League of Nations came into being in January 1920, including most independent nations from Asia, Africa and Latin America besides 'Western' nations.

What was truly novel about the League of Nations, is that it extended the North Atlantic nation-state order to the rest of the world, treating non-Western countries as nearly equal to Western ones. Japan insisted that a clause of racial equality should be included in the Covenant, and the European powers agreed, but it was opposed—and finally removed—by the US[109]. However Wilson defended the principle of national self-determination, including for colonies of the defeated powers (in Africa: Tanganyika, Cameroon, Togo and Southwest Africa, later Namibia) although such territories were deemed to be "*inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world*" and so "*the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility*" as a "*a sacred trust of civilization*".[110] Somalia would later come under such a trusteeship (Chapter Four).

Although this paternalism may have seemed enlightened at the time, it was nevertheless in the same vein as what was then a standard policy of European racism. While racism has been present in all cultures and ages, its coupling with (pseudo-)scientific theories of race and Social Darwinism led to the exterminations of the 19th and 20th centuries. From Native Americans to Herero and Namaqua peoples in German South West Africa, the aboriginals of Tasmania, and the Jews in Nazi Europe: all were sacrificed on the altar of progress, aiming to improve race or economy. The League of Nations Covenant signalled a change in approach (more humane) rather than a different objective (govern over other people for their good).

Finally, Article X of the Covenant stipulated that members of the League of Nations had an obligation to protect each other from wars of aggression. Wars of self-defence by members, against external or internal (secessionist) threats were not outlawed, but wars of aggression were.

The Covenant of the League of Nations provided a foundation for the international state system in which we live today. The following principles of the current world order were established:

- Written as a treaty requiring ratification by each nation, it established law and public diplomacy instead of mutual recognition and private negotiations as the basis of international relations.
- It enshrined a balance of power in which the 'Great Powers' (then the USA, Great Britain, France and Italy) of the Western liberal bloc dominate, but which is open to membership by other countries, including non-European ones like Japan, China, Thailand, Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Latin American countries, and revolutionary ones like the USSR. Thus, although a

[109] Wilson knew US Congress would not accept this clause as it feared international condemnation of internal US race relations.

[110] Article XXII of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

distinction between core and periphery was solidified, formal equality between countries was also suggested.

- The Covenant reaffirmed the key importance of a global liberal free-trade regime that primarily benefited the great powers, but in which other rising powers could participate if they followed the given rules.
- The main purpose of the League of Nations was to achieve collective security by outlawing wars of aggression, supporting disarmament and prescribing active diplomacy to avoid conflict. But, lacking its own armed forces, it was dependent on the willingness of the Great Powers for coercion, which skewed collective security towards the national interests of these Great Powers.

The US Presidency led this international process, but the US Senate did not ratify the Covenant, fearing to be dragged along in European imperial conflicts and not desiring external meddling in US politics. This ambivalent attitude of US elites towards submitting to an international order, even when they dominate it and can force other countries to comply, remains characteristic of US foreign policy a century later.

An aspect of the League of Nations system that has dropped into the background is its basis, as its name indicates, in the concept of 'nation-state'. The principle of self-determination was included, but watered-down, by reaffirming colonial rule over '*peoples who are not ready for the modern world'*. By instituting the practice of entrusting mandates over ex-colonies to colonial powers, and by shifting the focus from 'nations' to 'peoples' living in the mandate areas, while affirming the primacy of territorial borders, the League of Nations anticipated later decolonization: not based on national self-determination, but on a shared political destiny within existing colonial borders.

Besides the League of Nations, another international organization was founded in the Versailles Treaty: the International Labour Office, to regulate the rights of workers. This included suggesting norms for working hours and conditions, strategies to prevent unemployment, legislation to guarantee the freedom of association, the protection of workers and their dependents against disease or incapacity, schooling opportunities, etc. Although it may have reflected genuine concerns about the well-being of workers on the part of some delegates, it was also a response by the liberal ruling elites to the growing unrest among European working classes, sparked by the successful Bolshevik revolution and difficult living conditions in post-War, ruined Europe. The League of Nations documents did *not* include any provisions about democracy or human rights, beyond the rights of the working classes. Although the ILO was markedly unsuccessful, the seed was planted for both social democracy and an international order in which states had to adjust to the interests of powerful states by making far-reaching internal reforms.

The Birth of International Relations as a Discipline

The formalization of relations between nations also heralded the beginning of a new academic discipline, that of international relations. Walter Lippmann, advisor to President Wilson, may be seen as its founding father. He was also one of the architects of what he himself had named the 'Atlantic Community', centred on the Anglo-American relation[111]. "*After having collected the materials on which Wilson's Fourteen Points were to be based (…), Lippmann was dispatched to explain them to the British government and the imperial ruling-class network, the Milner Group. In the spring of 1919, on the margins of the Versailles negotiations, Lippmann sat down with a group of bankers and class strategists from both sides of the Atlantic to expand the Inquiry into a joint Institute of International Affairs. The planned institute did not materialize and the US branch merged into the wartime Council on Foreign Relations, while the British settled for a Royal Institute for International Affairs* [better known today as Chatham House]."[112]

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[111] van der Pijl 1984: 'The Making of an Atlantic Ruling Class'; p53-54.

[112] van der Pijl 2017: "The World View of the Atlantic Ruling Class as Academic Discipline"; p297.

Lippmann saw the new field of International Relations as the integration of social sciences and foreign policy. International Relations scholars were meant to assist the political establishment with ideas and specialist knowledge. In his 1922 book 'Public Opinion', Lippmann argues that the governing class has insufficient time to examine each situation, and democratic pressures may lead politicians to pursue foolish policies; 'problem-solving' scholarly advice is thus extra important. The Dutch political scientist van der Pijl argues that this requirement triggered the creation of international relations chairs, and later departments, in universities on both sides of the Atlantic, which coordinated together to structure this new field of knowledge, subservient to the goal of serving the State (notably the Great Powers).

As seen at the beginning of this section, international relations scholars have contributed to a certain mystification of the origins of the state order, which, as argued here, only really took shape in the early 20th century, if we follow a 'genealogical' view of the state as argued in the previous section. Returning to Bourdieu and his concept of voluntary erasure by institutions of their origins, we should ask ourselves *what* is being hidden in this mystification of the beginnings of our current state-system. One hidden element is of course its novelty. The Westphalian myth, like the myth of the Mesopotamian *state*, provides a certain venerability to the international state system, and with that the suggestion of immutability: How could one reform such an old, stable system?[113]

But I find the emphasis on *order* most revealing. It is the formal nature of our current law-based state system that is extended backwards in time by political scientists and international relations scholars. This denied the centrality of informal relations that subsisted, we saw, well into the early 20th century among European ruling elites.[114] It may be understandable why current theorists, convinced that the lack of a rules-based order can only be detrimental, attempt to extend this order to the past; rendering the past more respectable. But it may be more interesting, intellectually, to understand why European rulers, civil society and population apparently functioned well in the absence of such an order.

1.4 Ontology of the State

"Without our intention and without our notice, the notion of 'The State' draws us imperceptibly into a consideration of the logical relationship of various ideas to one another, and away from facts of human activity".[115]
John Dewey, 1927

The first definition I gave of the State in this chapter was that of Max Weber, as it is universally accepted as the most common one, both in- and outside academia. I shall now use the German social philosopher's further elaborations of the State to initiate an investigation into the ontology of the State.

[113] The possibility of the emergence of a distinctively different post-Westphalian order was scheduled to be discussed at the International Conference to Celebrate the 350th Anniversary of the Peace of Westphalia 1648-1998: "From Pragmatic Solution to Global Structure," Munster, 16-19 July 1998. However, this part of the conference was cancelled (March & Olsen 1998: "The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders"; p945), probably because scholars would have had to destroy the Westphalian myth that was the reason for their invitation.

[114] Curzio Malaparte's "Kaputt" (1948), consisting of his experiences on the Eastern Front of World War Two, describes the last throes of this aristocracy-inspired natural order of socialization among European ruling elites. It is this European civilization that is definitely made "*kaputt*" (destroyed) by the mass bestiality of WW 2.

[115] Dewey 1927: "The Public and Its Problems" in Jo Ann Boydston (ed), '*John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925-1953, vol. 2*'; p241.

Together with the first approaches and the in-depth examination of the roots of the state and of the state system, this will allow me to arrive at a definition of the State that I will use throughout this dissertation.

Max Weber ′ s Theory of the State

Weber put centre-stage the following characteristics of the State: administration by a bureaucracy, compulsory jurisdiction, monopoly of legitimate violence and territoriality.[116] Until World War I, the 'ideal-type' of the modern state was Prussia, with its famously efficient bureaucracy, its scientific management of resources and its capacity to undertake liberal reforms while preserving the prerogatives of the crown, the nobility and military power. In the Philosophy of Right, Hegel idealized the administrative state. In the words of William Novak, "*Hegel's elevation and, frankly, celebration of the civil servant, executive administration, and bureaucracy in his conception of the state marked the beginning of a largely unbroken and nearly hegemonic tradition in history and theory of equating "the state" with "bureaucracy" and "central administration"*.[117] Indeed, it was this state that was also conceptualized by Max Weber. But neither Hegel nor Weber desired the State to take the lead in *developing* society: this was best left to civil society, which in Hegel's conception coincided with the *political* (ruling) class. This class preferably derived its income from its own, non-state activities.

It is baffling how the Prussian state, after being defeated in World War I, has become the paragon of state modernity in the 21st century. More than hundred years have passed since Weber conceptualized the State, which has gone through many transformations in the meanwhile, from the rise and normalization of electoral democracy to totalitarianism and its demise, and of course the socialist and social-democratic experiences. However, it is Weber's model of a liberal authoritarian state that holds sway in our world. Singapore conforms better to this ideal-type of the modern state, resembling late 19th century Prussia more than contemporary Germany does. We will see in Chapter Ten that even Al Shabaab has established Weberian structures of rule: a legal-bureaucratic system with impartial and non-corruptible civil servants. These two examples demonstrate that the ideal state of our days has little to do with our preferred form of government: a democratic government with far-going protection of individual rights

On the issue of democracy, Weber did not align himself with Hegel, who had seen it as a threat to political modernity. For Hegel, democracy and popular sovereignty could only limit and damage the perfect autonomy of the state, conceived as an instrument for the enlightened rule of the political class (an argument later also defended by Carl Schmitt). Weber preferred elections to choose leaders and he participated in the drafting of the Weimar constitution. But his emphasis on charisma as an essential quality in leadership and his technocratic focus on the exercise of state power led to enduring critique that his politics paved the way for the ascent to power of Hitler and the Nazi regime. Although this is not the place to enter this debate, it may be noted that Weber was not a 'champion of democracy', nor of the egalitarian values underpinning it, but he was definitely a champion of the state.

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[116] See for example Max Weber's longer definition of the functions of the state in 'Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft': "*It [the state] possesses an administrative and legal order subject to change by legislation, to which the organized activities of the administrative staff, which are also controlled by regulations, are oriented. This system of order claims binding authority, not only over the members of the state, the citizens, most of whom have obtained membership by birth, but also to a very large extent over all action taking place in the area of its jurisdiction. It is thus a compulsory organization with a territorial basis. Furthermore, the use of force is regarded as legitimate only so far as it is either permitted by the state or prescribed by it… The claim of the modern state to monopolize the use of force is as essential to it as its character of compulsory jurisdiction and of continuous operation*". In Roth & Wittich (eds.) 1968: "Max Weber, Economy and Society"; vol I:56.

[117] Novak 2015: "Beyond Max Weber"; p59.

To complicate matters, Max Weber did not claim that the state model he was conceptualizing was *ideal*. When he wrote his major political works, the Prussian State had been absorbed into a Germany that had emerged heavily battered from the war and was still politically unstable. Shaken by the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and the potential for it to spread to post-WW1 Germany, Weber was clearly trying to retrieve what was best from the state model that, by then, was already disappearing. Like most thinkers attentively examining the State, he ended up by demystifying it, characterizing it as a complex of *'Handlungen und Duldungen*'—active and passive human passions[118]—that was ruled by chance rather than predestination. This is where his concept of 'ideal state types' has led to misunderstanding. With this notion, Weber did not suggest that states actually should conform to the Prussian model, but he posited an abstract model, a heuristic tool, that exaggerates certain characteristics of the state (e.g. rational bureaucracy) to allow for comparisons[119].

Weber's ideal type for the State separated it from society, which was indeed very chaotic in Germany in the years he wrote.[120] "*Emphases on expertise, formal law, bureaucracy, organization, and administration as the "core" of any state distance the political from the social, the state from society, and the elites from the masses*."[121] Indeed, Weber's focus on the coercive and administrative tools with which a government can maintain law and order in a society depoliticizes the state and reinforces its unquestionable character.

Weber's definition of the State, with its emphasis on coercion (the 'legitimate use of force'), the rule of law and efficient bureaucratic administration, seems not to have been quoted much in the first fifty years after he formulated it.[122] With the Bolshevik Revolution, the modernist optimism that a powerful state in revolutionary hands could transform society—unlike Hegel and Weber's state that only administered collective affairs instead of attempting to shape them—gripped many European (and non-European) societies, most famously—but not only—fascist Italy, imperial Japan and national-socialist Germany.[123] Conversely, after the defeat of the Axis powers in World War II and with the experience of the totalitarian state in Stalin's USSR, the notion of a strong state was out of fashion for a while.

But, as seen above, Schmitt's 'bounded notion of the political' that preserves the State's sovereignty and autonomy in all conditions, as Weber also advocated, was integrated into the core of American post-WWII political science, and particularly into the realist school of International Relations. Whereas for neo-Marxists, the State was the expression of society, and the *site* where socio-political forces compete for influence, for US realist and liberal 'statists' the State came to be seen as an *actor* of the political field.[124] The behaviouralist (rational actor) school of American political science that rose to prominence in the 1960s studied how the state, as an actor, transformed society.[125] But the pre-eminence of

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[118] As quoted by Palonen 2011: "The State as a 'Chance' Concept"; p103: "*The scientific concept of the state, however formulated, is naturally only a synthesis that could be found in the heads of historical humans*" (Weber 'The "objectivity" of knowledge in social science and social policy', in S. Whimster (ed.), The Essential Weber, 2004 (trans. Keith Tribe; London: Routledge): 359-404, p394.

[119] Migdal & Schlichte 2005: "The Dynamics of States: The Formation and Crises of State Domination"; p3.

[120] An intricate description of the political chaos that reigned in Berlin in 1919-1920 is given by Curzio Malaparte in chapter 4 of "The Technique of Revolution".

[121] Novak 2015:81, my emphasis.

[122] Novak 2015:54.

[123] Griffin 2007: "Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler" argues that fascism was the natural outcome of the full embrace of modernist ideals.

[124] Jessop 2008:6-8/19.

[125] Geertz (ed.) 1963: "Old Societies and New States; the Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa"; Huntington 1968: "Political Order in Changing Societies"; and Evans, Skocpol, and Rueschemeyer (eds) 1985: "Bringing the State Back In". Together these American authors argued that the state had a role in shaping society and was mandated to not only give direction to social development but also exact obedience from the citizens in its transformative efforts

Weber's theory of state as a set of regulatory institutions ruling through coercion really coincided with the neoliberal turn in world politics (more on this in Chapters Six and Eleven), away from the state that modernizes and develops society to the State that—shielded to a certain degree from social pressure—simply rules for its own benefit; a State that has become an end in itself, like a Kantian individual. Weber’s strong and slightly authoritarian state-ideal could only be reintroduced in European thought when the decline of the Keynesian social welfare state and the ascendancy of the American liberal ‘free market’ state became evident: in the early 1990s.

Image and Practice of the State

Philip Abrams, in a lecture given in 1977, enunciated the difference between the image and the practice of the State—which he called the state-idea and the state-system.[126] He notes that the State, previously not a matter of prime importance in political philosophy, has become the central object of analysis in political science since the early 20th century (due to Hegel, Marx and Weber). But it has eluded definition and no satisfactory theory of the state has been proposed. Abrams underlines that “*an integral element of such power [of political institutions] is the quite straightforward ability to withhold information, deny observation and dictate the terms of knowledge*”,[127] rendering study of the state even more difficult. He suggests that political science should stop reifying the state, as it is illusory. Instead, there is a state-system (“*a palpable nexus of practice and institutional structure centred in government and more or less extensive, unified and dominant in any given society*”) and a state idea that gives an ‘illusory account of [state] practice’. Finally, “*the state is not the reality which stands behind the mask of political practice. It is itself the mask which prevents our seeing political practice as it is*”.[128]

Abrams’ intriguing and iconoclastic conception of the State as being two and none at once, a ‘mask’, was never really developed, but his distinction between image and practice of the state was replicated by Joel Migdal and Klaus Schlichte in 2005.[129] They explained the difference between 'seeing' and 'doing' the state, between its image (the law, regulations, declarations etc) and its practices. The state is never quite what it seems to be. Although the image of the state presumes it has absolute power, because it is the only source of power in a society, in fact it must coexist with many other rules that people live by. "*Indeed, a central part of state dynamics revolves around efforts by state actors to change the raw power of curbing people’s behaviour into a more stable, institutional form*".[130] But "*practices that are not in accordance with the standard image of the state are not simply deviations from normative—good—behaviour as set out in state codes. They are moral codes in their own right*".[131] The authors give as an example the smuggling of goods over borders not recognized by population groups. Such state-weakening practices are not undertaken with the objective to weaken the state, but as an affirmation of group solidarity and for the promotion of group interest; they obey a different moral code.

Frustrated by the incapacity of scholars to come to terms with State characteristics in developing societies, the authors suggest a post-Weberian state model, instead of always reverting to the yardstick of the ideal-type of the state, against which actual performance is measured, resulting in only negatives (informal, illegal, irrational, failed, weak, etc.). In this post-Weberian model, ‘the State’ is a dynamic

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(Migdal & Schllichte 2005:6-7).

[126] Abrams 1977: “Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State”; p82.

[127] Abrams 1977:62.

[128] Both quotes from Abrams 1977:82.

[129] Migdal & Schlichte 2005: “Rethinking the State”. Note that neither Migdal 2001 nor Migdal & Schlichte 2005 mention Abrams. They may have been unaware of his contribution to the debate that concerns them about image and practice of the state.

[130] Migdal & Schlichte 2005:15.

[131] Migdal & Schlichte 2005:25.

process where image and practices are continuously negotiated between agents of the state and other citizens. Migdal & Schlichte consider that these dynamics should be the focus of social scientists. I will follow their advice and the tension between image and practice of the state, and how it is dealt with by different actors, will return regularly.

Despite their vision of the State as a dynamic, negotiated process, they also accept the State has fixed characteristics from which it derives symbolic power. The peoples living within a state's borders constitute themselves as a society, or as a nation, by mirroring the unity of the state. The nation is no longer rooted in a mythological past (shared history, culture, religion, language…) that could provide it with some autonomy vis-à-vis the State, but is now the collection of citizens living within the boundaries of the state; by which it is thus defined. If they are successful in imposing this image, the state's leaders raise the state above all other collectives within those borders. And the image has been successful: "*The statization of minds has been so successful that no major political actor in the contemporary world has denied statehood as such*".[132] Migdal & Schlichte note the amazing resilience of the state image: even when predatory practices have caused a total collapse of the state, a positive image may endure, and a new state may rapidly rise (they mention Liberia) based on this image.[133]

Many practices serve to reinforce the state image; think of nationhood rituals, dress codes, national days, military parades, the flag and other symbols of the state that dominate public space. "*The forms of actual institutionalization—the way that power has been transformed into routinized patterns of domination—have derived from the interaction, and tension, between that image and everyday practices*".[134] The dynamic process means that the state keeps being reinvented, constructed and reconstructed, but the social groups are also transformed in the process. In "Banal Nationalism", Michael Billig points out that this daily reinvention of the state through its rituals also serves to obfuscate the past, making the state seem ahistorical and perennial.[135] Not to be blinded by this image of State perennity and universality, Migdal & Schlichte insist on integrating the historicity of each specific state-building process, what Bayart calls its trajectory.[136]

Migdal & Schlichte (2005) make many useful contributions to understanding the state, especially about the dynamic process between image and practice of the state. Continuing their line of argument, two points may be highlighted.

First of all, where does the image of the state come from and why is it so similar from one country to the other? This suggests a systemic international dynamic that the authors do not dwell on. Otherwise, the specific dynamics between society and state should generate in each country dissimilar images and practices of the state.

Indeed, a global template for the state also exists: the modern, constitutional, multi-party-electoral, capitalist, human-rights-protecting, social-safety-net-providing, and developmental state: in brief, the contemporary Western state. This template exists independently from state-society dynamics. Since the 1950s, the peoples of the world have been subjected to intense propaganda about the supposed superiority of this state, which has also become the UN model since the end of the Cold War; they can observe the success of countries based on this model, such as the 'Asian Tigers'. The *image of the state*, therefore, seems to be fixed at a central level and imported into different societies. The dynamics, then, between image and practice of the state in developing countries are also the dynamics between imported ideas and local practices.

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[132] Migdal & Schlichte 2005:17.

[133] Migdal & Schlichte 2005:26.

[134] Migdal & Schlichte 2005:19.

[135] Billig 1995: "Banal Nationalism"; esp. chapter 3, 37-59.

[136] Bayart 1996: "L'Historicité de l'État Importé".

Second, it is noticeable that the weaker the practice of a state (as in Somalia or Afghanistan), the stronger the image of the state (an ideal state haunts people's minds). Vice-versa, where state practice is relatively strong, as in Western Europe, citizens have a less exalted image of the state. I call this **the law of inverse proportionality between the image and the practice of the state**: the better it functions, the less it is desired, and vice-versa. It is a paradox and I will return to this further on.

Before proceeding, it is useful to elucidate what is meant by 'the State as a social construct', a formula used several times above. Constructivists posit that social reality, including the State, is only an inter-subjective construction. It is not a 'thing' in itself. A red traffic light only makes people stop because they have agreed it is a code, and a Presidential palace only exudes power because it has been so endowed by our imagination. Social reality can still be the object of study, but it cannot be taken for granted because, being based on mental constructs and beliefs, it is liable to change and to be interpreted differently by different people. Therefore, the object to be examined is not 'reality,' but the social construction of reality, whence the name 'constructivism'. This solves the ontological issue, but it does not encourage examination of the fundamental tenets of this construction of social reality: why people have agreed on a certain interpretation of signs, what the effects of this are, and how it can be changed. To take the state assumption, for constructivists it is sufficient to note that people believe in it, to further accept it as an ontological reality.

Most political scientists and philosophers that deal with the ontology of the State agree that it is a social construct, rather than a 'real thing', though they draw different implications from it. Alexander Wendt, the main theorist of constructivism in international relations, explicitly considers the state as the fundamental unit of international relations, noting that ultimately non-state actors must mediate through the state.[137] Oddly, it is hard to find a political scientist who infers from the socially constructed nature of the State that humans could just as well make up something else, replace the State with another social construct. This subject seems nearly taboo. That may be taken as evidence of the religious nature of our belief in the modern state. But to understand how the State idea is has ingrained itself so deeply in the human mind, we should now turn to Bourdieu.

Bourdieu: The State as Psycho-Social Reality

Bourdieu describes the State as a 'social fiction which is not fictional', as it shapes our reality so strongly. It produces evidence that reaffirms its reality. As any institution is wont to do, it produces its own legitimacy; it has erased its own origins and embedded itself in society (through *socialization*) to appear as a natural given. Bourdieu argues that any institution tries to occult its genesis. In general, an institution is created for a specific purpose, but it rapidly makes its own survival into its primary purpose, in the process erasing from collective memory why and for what it was created. This also applies to the state. This process, Bourdieu calls 'amnesia of genesis', the hallmark of institutional success; for, when the institution can make its genesis forgotten, only then will it fully impose itself objectively and subjectively. To counter this, the philosopher insists the institution must be deconstructed and studied in its *longue durée*, including its origins.[138]

The State may be one of the deepest institutions in this sense. Bourdieu sees it as the supreme expression of the Institution.[139] It presents itself as an unassailable common belief, for which Bourdieu

[137] Wendt 1999: "Social Theory of International Politics".

[138] Bourdieu 2014: "On The State"; p115.

[139] Bourdieu 2014:115.

uses the term ***doxa***. This means proto-belief*,* a belief that does not recognize itself as a belief.[140] It structures our very thought processes (through education) and compels us to adhere to its cultural and symbolic/legal norms. This is why thinking about the state, one of "*les présupposés impensés de la pensée pensante*"[141] is perforce an auto-analysis, as it requires questioning our very cognitive processes. This makes it extremely difficult to think about the state, as I have tried to convey in the preceding pages.

"*The further I advance in my own work on the state, the more convinced I am that, if we have a particular difficulty in conceiving this object, it is because it is … almost unthinkable … The state is a well-founded illusion; this place exists essentially because people believe that it exists (…) the state is a theological entity, that is, an entity that exists by way of belief*".[142] Note the use of the term 'theological'.

Bourdieu considers the state has accumulated several types of external power: coercive, financial and cultural, which it has used to generate its own—*symbolic*—power that is more than the sum of its parts. Symbolic power legitimizes the state's monopoly over all sources of power. According to Bourdieu, the State successfully exerts a monopoly of physical *and symbolic* violence over a given territory and the entirety of its population. The symbolic violence it exerts is both objective (the state apparatus, e.g. administration and the Law) and subjective (belief, infiltrating our mental structures). The latter ensures that we forget the state as institution and come to see it as natural.

Symbolic power is sustained mostly through education (forming the minds of all citizens) and the Law. The latter, like the State, leads an *a priori* existence in the minds of people. Both Law and State appear to exist innately, not as social constructs, but as givens independent of human existence. A religious mind might believe God created them. For Bourdieu, the successful push of jurists by the end of the 19th century to establish the law as having precedence over politics (thus leading to *constitutional* regimes) established the absolute hegemony of the state's symbolic power based in the Law.[143]

The modern bureaucratic state requires legal centralization. Reflecting on '*la force du droit*, Bourdieu follows the classic distinction between substantive law ('droit matériel') and formal law ('droit formel'). The former, closer to the notion of justice, incorporates non-juridical, case-specific elements aiming to strengthen social *peace*; the latter is a self-referencing mechanism that produces its own legitimacy, notably through the principles of jurisprudence and equivalence of cases, and seeks to reinforce social *order*. A purely formal legal system is the required basis of the Rule of Law, which structures the state administration, and notably the bureaucracy and coercive structures of the state. Through this formal grounding, these institutions lose the appearance of arbitrariness, though, as Bourdieu argues, the institutions of the State remain fundamentally arbitrary.

The state's symbolic power expresses itself through symbolic violence, of which the prime example is the forced socialization process that all children must undergo through compulsory national education. A state is considered 'legitimate' when it imposes itself through symbolic violence alone, when it has fully permeated conscious thought patterns as a *doxa*/proto-belief.[144] Bourdieu notes that the problem of legitimacy, posed as the fundamental problem of the state in political science, is a construed problem, as the legitimacy of the state is only doubted in extreme crisis situations. "*What is problematic*

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[140] The term doxa comes from the Greek δοκεῖν, *dokein*, 'to appear, to seem, to think, to accept' and used by ancient Greek philosophers in contrast with *episteme*, knowledge. Bourdieu developed this concept in his "Outline of a Theory of Practice" (1972) to denote society's unquestioned truths, produced by socialization.

[141] Bourdieu: "L'Objectivation Participante"; p51-52.

[142] Bourdieu 2014:11.

[143] Lenoir 2012: "L'État selon Pierre Bourdieu"; p150 remarks that "*la construction sociale de l'État moderne, résultant du travail des légistes aboutit à la fin du XIXe siècle à la notion d'État de droit par laquelle les juristes assurent leur supériorité sur les politiques (parlementaires) dont la fonction est pourtant d'élaborer et de voter les lois*."

[144] Lenoir 2012:134-135.

is the fact that the established order is not problematic"; that the daily 'common sense' world is taken for granted. "*The state is therefore the foundation of a "logical conformism" and of a "moral conformism", of a tacit, pre-reflexive agreement over the meaning of the world which itself lies at the basis of the experience [of] the world as "common sense world.*" Bourdieu goes on to say that "*The primary experience of the world of common sense is a politically produced relation*".[145]

The consent of the state's subjects comes quite naturally, as it derives from an agreement between the subjective and the objective manifestations of the state.[146] Through (subjective) education and the calls to social order around him, the individual is bound to heed limits enforced by the state apparatus (the objective manifestation of state). One of the instruments through which the state exerts symbolic power are paper documents defining status, such as title deeds, diplomas, certifications (Bourdieu doesn't mention it, but I think one should add to this list 'money'). The state enforces their acceptance, functioning like a central bank of symbolic capital.

Bourdieu outlined in his *Theory of Practice* that: "*Every established order tends to produce (to very different degrees and with very different means) the naturalization of its own arbitrariness… The instruments of knowledge of the social world are in this case (objectively) political instruments which contribute to the reproduction of the social world by producing immediate adherence to the world, seen as self-evident and undisputed, of which they are a product*".[147] Most of the writings about the state partake in its construction (as in 'social construction of reality'). This is "*particularly true of juridical writings"*. Bourdieu maintains that social sciences are fundamentally subservient to the goal of state construction.[148] For example, he claims that Hegel, Durkheim and other founders of the discipline of sociology caved in to State thinking by positing the bureaucracy as a rational entity capable of defending the universal interest.

I have extensively dwelt on Bourdieu's critique of the state, because it is the fullest and deepest analysis of how the state has colonized our minds and our thinking, despite being a social construct. Bourdieu also notes the similarities with religious belief. His concept of the symbolic power of the state, exercised through national education, law and paper documents such as certifications and deeds (including money) is a useful addition to the more classic focus on the State's coercive power, which would lack legitimacy without the acceptance of its symbolic power.

But Bourdieu's deconstruction of the State lacks political potential, because he did not follow his own injunction to do so—he shows the way but does not travel it himself[149]—and because his sociological theories about the state are insufficiently known in political science,[150] except perhaps in France. In the following, I will bring together Bourdieu and Gramsci, who submits the State to an actor analysis, wondering who profits from the mystification operated by the State through the human mind.

Gramsci: The State as instrument of hegemony

Antonio Gramsci would characterize Weber's theory of the state as a *hegemonic* concept, destined to perpetuate the rule of the current *political class*, and thus embraced by the *organic intellectuals* that populate the world's academic centres. This reasoning comes close to Bourdieu. There seem to have

[145] Bourdieu 1994: "Rethinking the State"; p15.

[146] Bourdieu 1994:14; what Migdal & Schlichte (2005) would call the image and the practice of the State.

[147] Bourdieu 1977: "Outline of a Theory of Practice"; p164.

[148] Bourdieu 1994:3.

[149] Despite his calls to 'deconstruct' the origins of the state and fight the amnesia surrounding its genesis, Bourdieu bemoaned the *'démission de l'Etat'*, and feared the state would withdraw from the public domain. He clearly admired the State's capacity to exercise absolute power, and also argued that by 'depatrimonialising' (i.e. nationalising) private wealth, the state serves the public cause.

[150] For an explanation see Bigo, Didier 2011: "Pierre Bourdieu and International Relations".

been no relations between the leader of the Italian Communist Party, who developed his theories in his prison notebooks in the 1920s and 1930s, and the French sociologist of the 1960s to early 1990s. Bourdieu doesn't seem to have read Gramsci, as he doesn't refer to him. This may have to do with the circumstances in which Gramsci's thought was introduced in France;[151] in any case, several analysts have been struck by the similarities between both thinkers' conceptions of the state, its relation to society, and how it exercizes and perpetuates its power.[152]

The central concept of Gramsci's political theory[153] is hegemony, which comes from the Greek *ἡγέομαι* (*hēgéomai*, "to lead"). This term is used in geopolitics as an expression of overwhelming power and ability by a specific nation (USA today, Great Britain yesterday) to shape the world order. Such power is military foremost, but also economic and cultural.[154] But Gramsci, following Machiavelli, distinguished hegemony from domination (*egemonia* and *dominio*) and would have referred to what is commonly called hegemony today as *dominio.* Gramsci defined hegemony as 'intellectual and moral leadership'; hegemony "*refers to an order in which a common social-moral language is spoken, in which one concept or reality is dominant, informing with its spirit all modes of thought and behaviour.*"[155] It is *pre*dominance obtained by consent, not force. It is linked to domination because it has economic roots and is manufactured by those that have decisive economic roles. "*The dominant class must establish its own moral, political and cultural values as conventional norms of practical behaviour. This is the essential idea embodied in 'hegemony'*".[156] Importantly, hegemony is agency and cannot be exercized by a state, which is structure. Robinson views "*hegemony as a form of social domination exercised not by states but by social groups and classes operating through states and other institutions*".[157]

The idea that effective rule can only be obtained by consent, not by force alone, is arguably as old as political power itself.[158] Domination is exercised by the political class directly through law and coercion, while hegemony, leadership, may be orchestrated by the political class, but is exercised through civil society (education, religion, associations, the press etc).[159]

Gramsci's notion of civil society was not that of Hegel and Marx, who emphasize its economic role, but lies closer to contemporary (US) definitions, in the sense that he believed in a certain degree of autonomy of civil society to the political class.[160] Both cooperate in the establishment of a symbolic framework for collective existence, including a historical and value-based narrative that sustains the power of the dominant class, legislation and its popular acceptance, defining the content of education and the funding of arts and culture, etc. The leaders of civil society can be absorbed into the political

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[151] Gramsci's political writings, long suppressed by the Italian communist party, were introduced in France in the late 1960s and early 1970s by Althusser and his followers, with which Bourdieu had strained relations. Note that Althusser's reading of Gramsci is partial and thus problematic. See Batou & Keucheyan 2014: "Pierre Bourdieu et le Marxisme de son Temps: Une Rencontre Manquée?" ; p21.

[152] See Batou & Keucheyan 2014; See also Burawoy, M. 2011: "Durable Domination: Marx Meets Bourdieu".

[153] In the following presentation of Gramsci, I will follow the analytical exegesis undertaken by Joseph Femia, as Gramsci's prison notebooks, due to the manner in which they were produced, are incomplete, at times redundant or contradictory and partially coded to avoid censorship—but without the key to the code ever having been given by the author, who died in prison. See Femia, Joseph 1981: "Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness, and the Revolutionary Process".

[154] American neo-realists such as Gilpin, Keohane, Nye and Krasner have argued that the concept of (US) hegemony is essential for a stable world order. For a recent reading of hegemony as domination, see Badie's 2019 'L'Hégémonie Contestée'.

[155] Femia 1981:24.

[156] Femia 1981:3.

[157] Robinson 2005: "Gramsci and Globalisation: From Nation-State to Transnational Hegemony"; p561

[158] As Joseph Femia argues on page 31.

[159] Femia 1981:24.

[160] Femia 1981:26.

class. But civil society fundamentally remains a sphere where autonomy of thought and action remains possible, also of a counter-hegemonic nature.

The other group that constitutes Gramsci's ruling elite is the political class: "*the apparatus of state coercion which legally assures the discipline of those groups that do not consent*'"—people who occupy positions of power. The borders between political and civil society are fluid, and institutions of civil society, such as the church or political parties, may become part of the state apparatus within a certain government constellation, and leave it when that government is replaced by another.

In Gramsci's definition, the state comprises "*all institutions which, whether formally public or private, enable the dominant social group to exercise power*". Gramsci condemned as 'statolatry' the views of ideologues who conceive of the state "as something in itself, as a rational absolute".[161] Instead, the state is '*the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules*'.[162]

The state thus encompasses the political class and those sectors of civil society aligned to it. The core of the political class is the bourgeoisie, and here Gramsci was a true Marxist, as his aim was to overthrow the bourgeois state in a proletarian revolution. Marx and Engels also conceded that bourgeois rule was bolstered by its monopoly on the means of intellectual production and symbolic power (the latter is implicitly recognized in the saying 'Religion is the opium of the people'). However, they believed that it was easy for the working class to see through this 'false consciousness', and neglected non-material mechanisms of domination. Gramsci, reflecting on why the workers' revolution did not spread from Bolshevik Russia to other countries with an oppressed proletariat, put forward the ideological dominance of the ruling class (in Italy, mainly through catholic and nationalist discourses) as the main factor disrupting working-class solidarity. Gramsci's concept of hegemony rests on the assumption that the 'objective' conditions for the formation of revolutionary class consciousness (exploitation of the masses by a capitalist political class) have, to varying degrees, been realized in contemporary capitalist society, and that what remains to be achieved is the creation of the appropriate 'subjective' conditions through a counter-hegemonic discourse that mobilizes the oppressed masses.[163]

Gramsci considered that hegemony can only work if the antagonistic social reality it constructs or perpetuates is hidden from view, i.e. consent is not voluntary. This brings us to the all-important question of consent. Consent refers to a psychological or mental state of acceptance, often implicit—Gramsci considered it was often of a religious nature. It can easily be consent with a totalitarian rather than a democratic regime; no mechanism needs to be followed (such as a social contract, or elections) to legitimize consent. Consent can be conscious and wholesale or reticent, partial and based on the fear of unknown alternatives, but it always indicates agreement with certain core concepts of society.

Gramsci differentiated consent from consensus, which has a much more voluntary character. He defined it as "*the belief that the demands for conformity are more or less justified and proper*".[164] "*Ideological consensus, especially when it is firmly rooted, is bound to assume the guise of a collective pursuit of rational interests. But we should not forget that the very definition of what is 'rational' or 'pragmatic' itself conceals evaluative propositions as well as a particular cognitive framework*".[165] For example, our pursuit of material growth is not a biological necessity, but it is a subject of consensus.

Finally, a key concept of Gramsci's thought is the organic intellectual. "*Organic intellectuals are not simply producers of ideology, they are also the 'organizers of hegemony', that is, they theorize the ways*

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[161] Gramsci, Antonio 1971: "Selections from the Prison Notebooks"; Q10II§61; 268-269, Q8§130.

[162] This conception of the state by Gramsci was assembled from his prison notebooks by Robinson 2005:562. See also Gramsci 1971: 244, Q15§10 .

[163] Femia 1981:230.

[164] Femia 1981:38.

[165] Femia 1981:41.

in which hegemony can be developed or maintained" noted Anne Showstack Sassoon in her analysis of Gramsci's politics.[166] They construct the narrative, or the counter-narrative if they are helping the formation of a new counter-hegemonic 'historic bloc'. Gramsci was concerned by the role of organic intellectuals in the Italian Communist Party.[167] He opposed the traditional idea of 'intellectuals' as erudite people engaged in academic or cultural production, and named intellectual every person that exercises an organizational function; everyone is or could be an intellectual in that sense, but it seems the crucial aspect for Gramsci was access to power. Organic intellectuals work on establishing, adapting or reformulating hegemony through 'ideological apparatuses', which he sees as institutions producing thought for the political elites—such as universities, policy institutes and major media.

Consensus can be seen as a dynamic process taking place within civil and political society; it is a field of agreement that is perpetually in motion (like a wave), anchored in several strong cores (fundamental values and beliefs of society), but with strong fluctuation at the edges. Public debate reflects this process. Organic intellectuals define and voice the consensus, which is then the basis for policies of the political class. Through the action of institutions (including laws and regulations) and of discourse (including mass media), the prevailing consensus is spread through society, which responds with consent or dissent. Within society, there can be several consensus fields, one for each group that has its own narrative, most of whom vie for power. The stronger state *hegemony*, the less space there is for alternative narratives and consensus fields. The stronger state *domination*, the less space there is for dissent, and the higher the price paid for it. This can be coercive (fines or imprisonment), or symbolic (expulsion from society). Stalin's Soviet Union was an example of a state where ruling classes wielded both strong hegemony and strong domination.

Given that the hegemonic consensus often disagrees with the actual interests of subjects—because it serves the interests of the ruling class that dominates the rest of society[168]—Gramsci noted that there is often a **contradictory consciousness** at work, where thought and action diverge. This is a type of cognitive dissonance. Thought processes are easily influenced by the hegemonic consensus and suggest consent with it, while actions indicate dissent. For example, a person may agree with the virtue of elections, but not be sufficiently motivated to vote; or agree with measures taken to curb the spread of a pandemic, but be disinclined to adopt protective measures. By observing contradictory consciousness, hegemonic thought and its fallacies become evident, but Gramsci did not suggest that this by itself threatens hegemony. He distinguished three levels of hegemony, depending on how consensual they are.:

1. The most powerful he terms *integral hegemony*, when citizens fully consent to the hegemony of the rulers: this is only possible when the rulers cause the whole society to move forward as an 'ideological bloc', in a manner that is beneficial to a clear majority. Gramsci named post-revolutionary France as an example, but one may also think of the USA from the New Deal from 1933 until the 1960s, the USSR from the 1920s to 1950s, or post-War social-democratic Western Europe.
2. But "*as soon as the dominant group has exhausted its function, the ideological bloc tends to decay*"[169] leading to *decadent hegemony*, where the masses are increasingly alienated from the ruling elites.
3. *Minimal hegemony* does not extend far beyond the ruling class, which wishes to maintain its separation from the masses, who feel frankly alienated by the regime. The leaders of civil

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[166] Showstack Sassoon 1980: "Gramsci's Politics"; p116.

[167] See the prison memoir by Athos Lisa, reproduced in Anderson 2017: "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci"; p186+.

[168] Femia 1981:45. A typical example is the legal sanctity of private property.

[169] Femia 1981:47.

> society are, however, co-opted, leading to the expansion of the ruling class and the decapitation of contestant groups (the working classes for Gramsci). Those left behind are negatively affected by this hegemony, insofar it stops them from developing their own frameworks; they do not get further than Hobsbawm's 'primitive rebellion'[170] unless a *counter-hegemonic project* is developed, typically by disaffected organic intellectuals.

Finally, Gramsci notes that hegemony is always threatened—especially in its weaker phases—by *counter-hegemonic currents*, which, in Gramsci's view, define historic blocs, such as the international workers' movement. A counter-hegemonic current can become hegemonic by assuming intellectual (or symbolic) leadership over a society, as happened in Russia with the Bolshevik revolution.

What Bourdieu adds to the legacy of Gramsci, especially when we consider that the state has constructed its hegemony by borrowing from theology (notably the principle of submission to a higher authority and the everlasting sovereignty of the state), is an understanding of why it is so difficult to break through the hegemony of the ruling class and formulate a counter-hegemonic project. Bourdieu also describes in more detail how consent is manufactured and how deeply rooted it is. Bourdieu's analysis of the different types of power wielded by the state, and how they interact and strengthen each other, further adds layers of understanding to Gramsci's analysis of hegemony. Gramsci, however, gave political force to Bourdieu's sociological musings, placing them in a dynamic context of power struggle. For Gramsci, hegemony was a dynamic process pitting historic forces (he called them historic blocs) against each other in a struggle for leadership. Instead of leadership arising out of the domination of material resources, it provides access to these resources; domination then becomes essential to sustain leadership.

1.5 The Hegemonic State

> *"Nothing is as astonishing for those who consider human affairs with a philosophic eye than to see the ease with which the many will be governed by the few and to observe the implicit submission with which men revoke their own sentiments and passions in favour of their leaders. When we inquire about the means through which such an astonishing thing is accomplished, we find that force being always on the side of the governed, only opinion can sustain the governors. It is thus solely on opinion that government is founded, and such maxim applies to the most despotic and military government as well as to the freest and most popular"*.[171]
>
> David Hume, 1758

Gramsci provides the explanation for why the State and state order have been cloaked in myth: it serves the hegemony of the ruling elites. The myth that links the State to civilization, progress and even freedom underpins the consensus that the liberal democratic state with its many attributes, including a capitalist free market economy, a rules-based international order and a liberal global human rights regime, is the most advanced and even *final* form of collective political organization.

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[170] Hobsbawn, Eric 1959: “Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries”.

[171] Hume 1758: "On the first Principles of Government".

Thinking about this dispassionately, the absurdity of this proposition quickly becomes apparent. Why would the political evolution of mankind suddenly come to an end? The modern state has only been around for two centuries, and the historic time-span of hierarchical authority represents less than 1% of humanity's life-time according to the authors examined above.

But the absence of voices calling for alternatives to the State and the state order—not for the return to a supposed golden past, but to a new, still to be imagined, future—demonstrates that the consensus is total. In terms of the liberal democratic state order, we are in a phase of what Gramsci would call integral hegemony. The precipitous growth of the state in terms of global spending over the past century certainly validates this. As Charles Tilly put it in the quote at the beginning of this chapter, "*anyone who dreams of a stateless world seems a heedless visionary".*

It appears we may have to make some space for 'heedless visionaries', at least to understand the nature of the State and of alternative political orders in Somalia. In the first section, Graeber and Wengrow's appeal to liberate political imagination from the grip of the state has been mentioned; I hope this dissertation will contribute to this goal. When speaking about 'the State' one should not gloss over the European origins and, especially, the religious roots of the modern state. The State not only borrowed from the Church, but it displaced God as a principle that exacts absolute submission of its subjects, and no longer requires any other legal source legitimating its absolute sovereignty, other than its own—positive—law. That such a State may not align with the expectations, beliefs and customs of, for example, Somali nomads used to self-governance and their own interpretation of sharia, already provides an inroad to understanding the difficulties of state-building in Somalia.

At the end of Part I, I will integrate the 'State' in a broader framework of political order that includes self-governance, which will help to further define the State. But I can attempt a provisional definition of the State on the basis of insights gained in this chapter.

The State is a social construct that is used by elites to rule over society. To obtain the consent of society and rule legitimately, this social construct is supported by a narrative elaborated with the help of 'organic intellectuals' that extend the roots of the modern state backward into time, equating the State with the rise of human civilization and the creation of a political order that delivers humankind from the perils of the State of Nature—notably, the rule by the strongest and the dangers this supposes to one's life. To assume absolute power over society, the State has displaced other sources of power, notably God, because humans can only submit entirely to one authority.

Through the State, ruling elites have acquired absolute sovereignty over society. The notion that 'States are sovereign' cannot be defended if the State is a social construct. In this chapter I have argued that the State and the state system should not be reified, much less personified. They are not actors, as States are often taken to be nowadays. If they are seen to be acting, someone else is acting through them. In the case of a national state, Gramsci's term of 'ruling class' seems more appropriate than 'government', to account for the continuities that can be observed from one government to the next.

The State as instrument of domination can enforce compliance with its laws through its monopoly over the legitimate use of violence, and produce and maintain social order through its administrative and juridical apparatus. But the hegemony of the ruling elites is based on the consent of the population. Without this consent, ruling elites' capacity to use the State to dominate society becomes questionable, as Hume's observation above underscores. Therefore the narrative upholding the State as the only possible source of authority is key. This consensus is continually reproduced, involving the leaders of civil society who can be admitted to the ruling elites, and spread through the organs of civil society to the rest of the population. Socialization is essential, in the sense of 'adopting the dominant norms and values of society', including submission to the Law of the State. This takes place through education, legislation, narratives about our world vehicled by the media, academia and the arts, and social pressure. At the individual level, consent is often subconscious, and can lead to contradictory

consciousness when the citizen perceives that the consensus is against its interests but consents to authority nonetheless.

Socialization has also been the key driver of relations between states. The rules-based order between states that emerged with the treaty of Westphalia in the 17th century is a myth; socialization between ruling elites on the basis of an evolving consensus, from the medieval Church through aristocracy to national bourgeoisies, provides a better explanation for both peaceful relations and wars than formal respect for sovereignty or military balance of power.

Although the State may only be 'the mask that hides political practice', it has been endowed with military, financial and cultural power, that together can be called **symbolic power**. The root of the State's symbolic power remains the Law, as developed in Western Europe and North America. The Law, posited through the use of reason and supposedly endorsed by the population in a social contract, in turn draws its authority from its supposedly universal nature. As all but a few countries in the world are increasingly structured by similar laws based on comparable constitutions, the universal character of the State's symbolic power appears to be confirmed in practice.

In Chapter Three I return to the discussion of the State of Nature and what Aristotle, Cicero, Aquinas, Locke and others called the Laws of Nature.[172] Some of the lines of enquiry opened above will be picked up there, and others again in the final parts of the dissertation, when I return to the notion of international order and address the question of what and who the 'international community' is, and why it is engaged in state-building efforts in Somalia.

A final note on my use of the term 'State': with capital 'S' it refers to the 'modern state' and the hegemonic concept described in the pages above. With a small 's', state either refers to its alternative meaning of 'condition', or it is preceded by a qualifying adjective (like 'modern' or 'Arab'); or I quote or paraphrase other authors who use the term state in a wider sense. When I refer to polities that are different to the State as defined above, I shall try to use their own designation (sultanate, kingdom, empire, city), or the generic term 'political order' and in some cases 'polity'.

[172] I distinguish the Laws of Nature from Natural Law. Given the deep and often theologically oriented debates that have taken place about natural law – contemporary 'new natural lawyers' work almost exclusively within the Thomist tradition – preference is given here to the more universal concept of the 'Laws of Nature', whose foundation is in the observation of social practices rather than in ethics and theology.

Chapter 2: A Political History of Pre-Colonial Somalia

In which the geography of the Horn of Africa generates different socio-political systems, with a preference for pastoralism. Why Somalis could lay claim to a glorious past—and why they don't. How Somali nomads accommodated Arab and Persian traders, integrated urban communities and benefited from the Indian Ocean and Red Sea trade. Where the little that is known about the 500-year Somali imamate of Ajuraan is explored. Why Somalis returned to clan-based self-governance after the Portuguese disrupted regional trade patterns, leading to long-lasting decline. In which Somalis preferred the autonomy of nomadism or religious community life to submission to the State.

Any understanding of political order in Somalia should take as its starting point pre-colonial Somalia. Since the encounter with the colonial state, Somali politics have perforce been heavily influenced by the foreign state. If there is an element of indigenous political order in Somalia today, that logically derives from the pre-colonial period.

It is often assumed that, before colonialism, Somalis simply lived in clans, and that they had no experience of any political order. A cursory look into Somali history shows that is incorrect. The Somalis experienced different forms of political order, external and internal, even if they mostly retained their nomadic pastoralist ways. Hereafter, I briefly discuss the political history of the Somalis since antiquity, to determine the main features of that history. There may be patterns and trends that are still noticeable in Somali politics today, providing a 'longue durée' perspective[1] on current developments.

The history of Somalia is sketchy. The Somalis didn't write about themselves until the 20th century. The following account is based on the following sources:

- History books by foreign scholars like Lee Cassanelli's "The Shaping of Somali Society. Reconstructing the History of a Pastoral People, 1600-1900" (1982), I.M. Lewis' "A Modern History of the Somali" (2002) and some fragments of Enrico Cerulli's "Somalia: Scritti vari editi e inediti" (1957-1964)
- Books by Somali scholars such as Mohamed Mukhtar ("Historical Dictionary of Somalia, 2003), Abdirahman Abdullahi Baadiyow ("Making Sense of Somali History" Volumes 1 & 2, 2017), Ali Abdirahman Hersi ("The Arab Factor in Somali History", PhD dissertation, 1977), and Hussein Bulhan ("In Between Three Civilizations Vol 1, Archaeology of Social Amnesia and Triple Heritage of Somalis") as well as academic articles by different writers.

[1] This term, meaning 'long term', comes from the French 'Annales' school of historiography; it implies we should look beyond the events of history that draw our attention to the long-term structural determinants that shape history: for example, how geographical constraints influence the relations between population groups.

- Books and articles covering regional history, for example that of Ethiopia or the East African Coast.
- Chronicles of travellers from pre-colonial and early colonial periods that can be found online.
- Evidence from archaeological studies, notably those by Sada Mire, and the results of genetic mapping exercises.

The primary sources for the literature mentioned above are accounts by travellers from other countries, oral traditions captured in stories and poetry, and the few published archaeological reports. Almost all chronicles that mention the Somali region (not yet called Somalia) until the 16th century were written by Arabs; and since then, by Europeans. This introduces an obvious bias against the pre-Islamic and later pre-colonial native cultures, as when places are graded according to how dark-skinned their inhabitants are.[2] Since Arab and European chroniclers rarely ventured beyond the coast, inland Somali cultures were only described by hearsay. Luckily, over the past decades many new insights have been gained about Somali history thanks to (mainly) Somali scholars who apply linguistics, genetics and other more modern historiographical methods to this topic. This justifies the present attempt to form a new narrative that focuses on the evolution of political order in Somalia.

I also test the hypotheses introduced in the beginning of Chapter One: Graeber & Wengrow's ideas about the plurality of forms of political order that defies the narrative of 'man's rise to civilization through the state'; and James C. Scott's ‘states versus nomads’ reading of history. Neither of these general theories was written with Somalia in mind; do they shed light on Somali political history?

A Harsh Environment

Somalis inhabit the lowlands of the Horn of Africa, which stretch between the sea and a line starting at the mouth of the Rift Valley in Djibouti, following the foothills of the Ethiopian highlands and then cutting across the plains of northeast Kenya until the Tana River, reaching the Indian Ocean at the Kenyan-Somali border. Currently, there are an estimated 24-25 million Somalis, living in Somalia (12.5m), Somaliland (3.5m), Djibouti (0.5m), Ethiopian Somali Region (5m) and Kenya (3m)[3]. In this dissertation, I focus only on Somalia and Somaliland.

The terrain Somalis inhabit is exceptionally dry. It mostly receives insufficient rainfall for growing crops, but there is enough to allow rangeland pastoralism throughout the region. In addition, two rivers in central and south Somalia, the Shabelle and the Juba rivers, bring water from the Ethiopian highlands most of the year, allowing sedentary agriculture along the riverbanks. The area comprised between these rivers is called the intra-riverine area, and mostly supports semi-sedentary lifestyles. There is enough rainfall in parts of this intra-riverine area and in a small area west of Hargeisa, Somaliland, to allow for crop production. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (2013), only 1,6% of Somalia's land area is cultivated (sorghum, black-eyed peas, maize and a variety of other crops), providing about 50% of Somali cereal consumption; the rest is imported. About 69% of the land surface is permanent pasture. The seasonal rivers in northern Somalia only flow immediately after heavy rains (causing flash floods), and their waters are not managed through irrigation projects or dams.

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[2] Al-Hamawi (d. 1228), a Muslim traveller who compiled Al Mu'jam al-Buldan (The Dictionary of ities), includes entries for Zeyla’, Berbera, Mogadishu, and Merka. He notes that *the inhabitants of Berbera are very dark and speak an unwritten language, but that the inhabitants of Mogadishu are not black.* Mukhtar, Mohamed Haji 2003: “Historical Dictionary of Somalia. New Edition”, The Scarecrow Press. p.xxvi

[3] Based on a variety of data: Ethiopian and Kenyan national census figures (Ethiopian updated since 2007), UNFPA data for Somalia and Somaliland, local sources for Djibouti. Only estimates can be given in the absence of reliable population counts in Somalia, Somaliland and Djibouti.

Figure 3: Geography, clans and historic places in the Somali Horn of Africa (made by author)

The land is generally flat except for a mountain spur (the Golis Mountains) that extends from eastern Ethiopia, along the north coast, all the way to the tip of Puntland, Cape Guardafui. The coastal strip from Somaliland through Puntland and south to near Mogadishu is even drier and hotter than the interior, and for lack of fresh water and heat is mostly unpopulated, save for some port towns and fishing villages. From north of Mogadishu to Kismayo, the proximity of rivers makes the coast more inhabitable; this stretch is called the Benadir Coast.

The Somali territory can be roughly separated into three ecosystems: about 85% consists of semi-arid pastureland that extend west into Ethiopia and southwest into Kenya. Sparse and irregular rainfall means that pastoralists often have to travel long distances to find grazing grounds for their herds. The second ecosystem (roughly 10%) is provided by the Juba and Shabelle river valleys, which vary between floods and low levels, but have sufficient flow to allow for riverine agriculture except in drought periods through low rainfall in eastern Ethiopia's Bale Mountains. The third ecosystem (about 5%) is provided by the coasts. Despite the harsh environmental conditions, fish is plenty and trade with other areas surrounding the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea offers livelihoods to its inhabitants.

Over the past millennia, Somalia, which used to host more game, rivers and forests, has become increasingly dry. Climate change is accelerating this trend, threatening to turn the entire Horn of Africa into a desert[4].

As a result of this geography, most Somalis are pastoralists. Besides raising livestock, they used to make a living from the caravan trade between coastal towns on the Sea of Berbera and the Ethiopian highlands, and between the Benadir Coast, Kenya's Rift Valley and the Great Lakes region. However, both neighbouring countries developed new transport corridors in the early 20th century (from Djibouti and Mombasa) that bypass Somalia, killing the trade between the Somali coast and the African hinterland. The agricultural communities along the rivers and the coastal populations have historically been integrated into the pastoralist and trading economy. In periods of drought, the mobility of nomadic pastoralists gives them an advantage over sedentary agricultural populations that are comparatively harder hit (this pattern was repeated in the mass starvations of 1991-92 and 2011-2012).

Since the semi-arid pastures of the Horn of Africa cannot support large herds, Somali pastoralism is traditionally conducted by small communities with a few hundred animals at most: sheep, goats and camels. Cattle cannot easily travel great distances through dry lands and is less drought-resistant, but it is found in large numbers among the riverine semi-sedentary communities. Given the irregular distribution of rain, Somali pastoralist communities have a loose relationship with the land, and often converge on the same pastures, and to the same watering holes. More permanent population movements from one area to the next and the recomposition of community ties occur sporadically, especially in times of prolonged drought or due to migrations of other peoples into or out of Somali territories. Although the competition for scarce resources drives conflict, the harsh environment also fosters mutual reliance, rewarding cooperation. This applies not only to relations between pastoral communities, but also to those between them and sedentary populations. Many of the people living in

[4] UN predictions are that by 2080, in a conservative estimate, most of Somalia's interior will be uninhabitable, and Somalis will mostly live on the coast to survive. Climate projections show that climate related disasters and displacement will increase over the coming years in Somalia, coupled with the projected 3-4 degree rise in temperatures by 2080". Christophe Hoddard, United Nations Climate Security and Environmental Advisor to Somalia, July 2021:4. Also, UN OCHA 2021: "Humanitarian Response Plan Somalia 2021" p11: "*Climate-related disasters in Somalia have increased dramatically in recent years, both in number and impact. Somalia faces severe environmental challenges related to deforestation, land degradation, increasing aridity and overgrazing, water scarcity, climate change as well as limited governance that has persisted for decades. Somalia has seen an increase in the frequency and intensity of floods and droughts*".

towns and along the rivers belong to communities that have switched from nomadism to semi-sedentary or fully sedentary lifestyles, and they retain kinship ties with their nomadic cousins.

Thus, the geography of the Somali-inhabited lowlands of the Horn of Africa has conditioned social relations between Somalis, favouring small pastoral communities that either compete or collaborate to confront the harsh environment, and who live in close contact with (semi-)sedentary agriculturalists and townspeople, who are often kin-related to the pastoral communities. The exception to this is formed by Bantu communities settled along the rivers (the rest of the Somalis belong to the Cushitic group). These are a mix of old Bantu populations that moved into East Africa about 1,000 years ago, and descendants of 19th century slaves, bought for agricultural or household labour from East Africa and manumitted during the colonial period. Although they have adapted to Somali culture (language, religion, habits, etc.), they are still treated with scorn by Cushitic Somalis because of their different looks. The small and ancient immigrant communities in the coastal towns (descending from Arabs, Persians, Indians and East Africans) have been more easily integrated because of their strong economic position as traders.

In the following sections of this chapter, I will sketch the historic development of Somali political culture, which is—of course—not static. Today, many Somalis have changed—partially or wholly—to an urban lifestyle. Somali political culture, however, is still strongly conditioned by the environmental factors shaping social relations as sketched above, which have resulted in complex, but strong, clan identities. Culture does not evolve as fast as economic conditions, and the hardship to which Somalis have been subjected over the past decades has reaffirmed the social safety-net function provided by the clan system.

2.1 Evidence of Pre-Islamic Political Orders in the Horn of Africa

The common narrative about Somali origins, still widely accepted in Somalia, claims that the lowlands of the Horn of Africa currently inhabited by Somalis were almost empty and devoid of history until the dawn of Islam. Somali history thus starts when Muslim Arabs landed on the Northern coasts of Somalia, during the 10th and 11th centuries, and intermarried with local girls, spawning the Somali clans. Each of the main clan families (Dir, Isaaq, Darood, Hawiye, Rahanweyn) supposedly has an ancestor of the Quraysh tribe, to which Prophet Muhammad also belonged. The fact that most Somalis can recite all their ancestors leading up to this one—a practice called *abtirso*, and which most young people growing up in Somalia learn by heart—makes this narrative seem very real.

The narrative may be historically inaccurate, but revealing. I will discuss this in detail in the next Chapter. Here it can just be pointed out that a*btirso* may be a practice of ancestor worship,[5] redirected toward the new religion by postulating as ancestor Prophet Mohammed. At the same time, in this patriarchal social model, the 'heathen' African heritage, while avowedly still 50%, is assigned to the mother and disregarded.

Colonial history took this narrative as a starting point and colonial ethnographers described how the Somali people slowly spread southward.[6] They trusted the Arab historian and geographer Mas'udi who in the early 10th century described the coastal settlements of East Africa, all the way down to the

[5] Christopher Ehret points out that *abtirso* is rooted in pre-Islamic Cushitic traditions of ancestor worship. See Ehret 1995: "The Eastern Horn of Africa, 1000 BC to 1400 AD: The Historical Roots".

[6] E.g. the classic historiography written by 'the dean of Somali Studies' I.M. Lewis, "A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa", 2002, and the works of the Italian scholar of Somalia Enrico Cerulli: "*Somalia. Scritti vari editi e inediti*", 3 volumes, 1957-1964, follow this version of Somali history. Even though many Somali people still follow this narrative, Somali scholars reject it on the base of evidence. See also Eno, Mohamed A, 2005: "The Homogeneity of the Somali People. A Study of the Somali Bantu Ethnic Community".

Tanzanian coast, focusing on their Arab inhabitants as if this region had no pre-Arab history.[7] According to this 'blank slate' version of Somali history, the entire Somali culture, from livestock rearing to trade, agriculture, craftsmanship and popular culture, derives from the Arabian Peninsula.[8]

This history is contradicted by fact. Linguistic, genetic, and archaeological research, among others, demonstrate that this Arabian genealogy cannot be correct. There is also no evidence for mass migration from the Arabian Peninsula to Somalia, while there is ample evidence of human habitation of a relatively high cultural level in pre-Islamic Somalia.

Proto-History of the Somali people

Hereafter, I summarize some of the salient points of the ancient history of the Somali people, taking into account recent or previously unassimilated discoveries in genetics, linguistics, archaeology and historiography:[9]

About 26,000 years ago, a proto-Somali Cushitic population was living along the northern coast of Somalia and eastern Ethiopia. They spread from there—along the Nile—into Chad, along the North African coast; and into the Arabian Peninsula, and from there into Southern Europe. Evidence is provided by the distribution of a genetic subgroup with the highest concentration in eastern Ethiopia and Somalia.[10] Furthermore, a linguistic study by ‘Umar ‘Abdallah Mansuur[11] provides evidence of the close connections between modern Somali—which, with Oromo, Afar, Borana and languages spoken by smaller groups in Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia, forms the Cushitic language group—and some of the languages spoken in the above-mentioned areas, including Amazigh and ancient Chadic and Nilotic languages. Contemporary Somali scholars have also investigated linkages between ancient Egyptian and Somali languages[12], suggesting a common ancestry between the two.

The rock paintings found at Laas Geel and Dhambilin in Somaliland, considered by experts to be 4000 to 5000 years old, are evidence of a high cultural level.[13] The paintings represent cows, men, dogs, camels, elephants, antelopes, baboons, giraffes and horses. Their highly stylized form, regular composition and the lasting quality of the pigments suggest that those that made them had high and stable levels of technical and artistic skills.

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[7] Al-Mas’udi’s book *Muruj al-Dhahab wa Ma’adin al-Jawhar* (The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems), published in 947 CE, contains descriptions of towns and their socioeconomic life along the coasts of the Sea of Berbera and the Indian Ocean. Unfortunately the English translation I could find (Mas’udi: “The Meadows of Gold. The Abbasids” edited by Paul Lunde and Caroline Stone, 2010) is abridged and seems not to contain the chapters on the Horn of Africa.

[8] Interestingly, an early English ethnographer relates that the Isaaq and Dir considered themselves of Arabian origin, but his own conclusion was that "the Somali are an original unmixed African race", on the basis of language, type and customs. Rigby 1867: "On the Origin of the Somali Race, which Inhabits the North-Eastern Portion of Africa". Given this insight, it may appear that the English colonial administrators were inclined to humouring their Somali subjects rather than follow scientific opinion when studying Somali genealogy.

[9] This section draws heavily on Bulhan, Hussein 2013: "In Between Three Civilizations Vol 1, Archaeology of Social Amnesia and Triple Heritage of Somalis". Other sources as given.

[10] Cruciani et al 2004: “Phylogeographic analysis of haplogroup E3b (E-M215) Y chromosomes reveals multiple migratory events within and out of Africa”, published online in March 2004.

[11] Mansuur 2008: “Taariikhda iyo Luqadda Bulshada Soomaaliyeed” (The History and Language of Somali Society).

[12] Notably, Bulhan quotes the research of Mohamed Saeed Mohamed Gees (“The Historical Relationship Between the Ancient Egyptians and Somalis”; unpublished) and Mohamed Hussein Abby (personal communication with Bulhan, 2010). Mansuur (see note above) also explores such etymological similarities.

[13] Laas Geel was 'discovered' by French archaeologists in 2002. The site of Dhambalin was brought to world attention by the Somali archaeologist Sada Mire in 2008. These are the major sites; there are also other rock paintings from the same period across northern Somaliland, Puntland, and in the region of Dire Dawa, Ethiopia.

Pastoralism seems to have been present in the Horn of Africa at least since 2500 BCE. The paintings at Laas Geel provide unmistakable evidence of pastoralist activity, and skeletal remains confirm this. According to current knowledge, there are no traces of early agricultural activity in the lowlands of the Horn of Africa; people lived either as fishers and hunter/gatherers, or as pastoralists.

Figure 4: Photo of Laas Geel rock art taken by the author in 2017

Before Islam, Cushitic peoples believed in a supreme sky God, 'Waaq'[14]. Between the mortals and Waaq was the world of spirits. Prof. Bulhan investigated the ancient Somali belief system in detail. Ancestors were worshipped, and the dead and unborn were thought to reside in the spirit world. Many of the ancient beliefs are reflected in contemporary Somali language, toponyms and mythology[15], and some pre-Islamic practices persist, notably in the field of medicine/spirit exorcism and astrology/divination, albeit in a very clandestine manner[16] as they are suppressed by both Islam and modern science. The beliefs of the Oromo people, some of whom are still animist and worship Waaq, allow scholars to make some inferences about the beliefs of the ancient Somalis.

Integration in the Ancient World

The Egyptians not only mention 'Pwenet', the Land of Punt, but also refer to this territory as 'Ta Netjet' or 'Ta Nteru', which translates as 'land of the Gods' or 'land of our ancestral origin'.[17] The northern

[14] Sada Mire: "Divine Fertility" 2020.

[15] See for example this Wikipedia page: Somali Mythology (accessed 27 November 2020).

[16] For example, in the Saar healing ceremony, ancient words are used that are unintelligible to modern Somalis, accompanied by unfamiliar drumbeats (personal communication of an educated Somali who witnessed such a healing ceremony in Hargeysa, 2019).

[17] Not all Egyptologists agree that this refers to Puntland. Some scholars place the land of Punt in Southern Sudan, Ethiopia or Eritrea; however, most agree that it does correspond to the southern shore of the Sea of Berbera, given that the Egyptian sources refer to lengthy sea travels. It has been pointed out that Egyptology suffers a birth defect of racism, as the early Egyptologists and their successors, today, tried to isolate ancient Egypt from black

Somali coast traded with Ancient Egypt: records from 2250 BC show that large quantities of incense and electrum had been imported from 'the land of Punt', while a series of hieroglyphs from 1490 BC mention an expedition of eight ships to the land of Punt ordered by Queen Hatshepsut, which returned with myrrh, frankincense, ebony, ivory, kohl, spices, baboons, dogs and leopard skins. Trade between both countries was recorded until Ramses III (12th C BC). The mentioned merchandise suggests that the land of Punt traded with other countries in Africa.

Queen Hatshepsut's expedition record mentions Queen Ati of Punt. She is even depicted on the walls of Queen Hatshepsut's funerary temple in the Valley of the Kings accompanied by her retinue. This suggests that there was a Somali kingdom on the north coast in 1490 BC, governed by a woman.

In 603 BC, according to Herodotus, the Egyptian sovereign Necho II[18] sent an expedition to circumnavigate Africa, which took three years. The land of Punt is mentioned as part of the 'known world' before the ships venture into the unknown.[19] Later, the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (thought to date from the mid-first century AD[20]) describes in detail several ports and their trade along the coast of Punt, some of which were identified by scholars as Berbera (named Malao), Hiis (Mundu) and Bosaso (Mosyllon). Cosmas Indicopleustes, who travelled from the Somali north coast to Sri Lanka in the early sixth century CE, depicted Somalia as 'a hub of international trade where the inhabitants actively provide products of their country brought from the interior'[21].

Prof. Sada Mire has uncovered archaeological evidence of Christian and Jewish populations in Aw Barkhadle, Somaliland[22], while a Spanish archaeological team has discovered tombstones at Hiis/Mundu in a South Arabian script current in Yemen in the first millennium BC[23]. I have purchased and donated to the Berbera municipality, limestone and sandstone statues reportedly excavated in the mountains near Berbera[24] that, if authentic would point to a higher degree of culture in the pre-Islamic period than assumed.

State formation seems to have started early in the Ethiopian highlands, where agriculture seems to have emerged around 5000 BCE, if not earlier[25]. Ethiopian tradition speaks of a state since at least Makeda, the Queen of Sheba,[26] who reputedly had a child by King Solomon: Menelik, the legendary founder of

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Africa; they considered ancient cultural links between Egypt and black Africa highly unlikely despite the evidence. See Ashton 2017: "Race Theory, Racism and Egyptology".

[18] Necho II is also known as Wehimbre Nekao, the ruler of the Egyptian kingdom from 610 to 595 BCE. In his efforts to defend his kingdom against the Babylonians who defeated his Assyrian allies, he sent a crew to sail from the Red Sea southwards, circumnavigate Africa and reach the Mediterranean. Herodotus recorded this trip a century and a half later.

[19] Herodotus, Histories 4.42; the story is recounted and analysed on www.livius.org

[20] See Anonymous: “The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea”, translated by Wilfred Schoff in 1912.

[21] S.M-Shidad Hussein (2021): "Ruined towns in Nugaal: A Forgotten Medieval Civilisation in Interior Somalia"; p251. Shidad Hussein, researcher at the Puntland Development Research Centre in Garowe, quotes McCrindle 2010: “The Christian Topography of Cosmas, an Egyptian Monk”; p51–52.

[22] Mire 2015: "Mapping the Archaeology of Somaliland: Religion, Art, Script, Time, Urbanism, Trade and Empire". Strangely, the Somali authorities, probably worried about the reaction of the religious establishment, are very sensitive about any mention of Christian and Jewish heritage; the latter are referred to as 'Himyarites' to avoid easy recognition, even by Sada Mire. The Himyarites, who ruled from 110 BCE to 525 CE over both coasts of the Bab el Mandab separating East Africa from Yemen, converted to Judaism after 390 CE.

[23] Personal communication by the lead archaeologist Jorge de Torres in 2019.

[24] See Robert Kluijver, 2018: Mysterious Sculptures from Somaliland on robertk.space.

[25] Ehret 1979: "On the Antiquity of Agriculture in Ethiopia".

[26] According to Near-Eastern sources the Queen of Sheba was called Bilqis and came from Yemen, but the Ethiopians claim that she came from Ethiopia and have many stories about her trip to King Solomon, the trip back, and Menelik’s later voyage to see his father, whence he returned with the Ark of the Covenant which now is supposedly hidden in a church in Axum. See Hancock 1992: “The Sign and the Seal”.

the Jewish Solomonic Ethiopian dynasty around 1000 BCE. This dynasty was revived in the 13th century, ruling Ethiopia (with hiatuses) until 1974. Archaeological discoveries do not confirm the story of the Ethiopian queen of Sheba, but provide evidence of a kingdom tentatively named D'mt in the period 1000-500 BCE. This period also sees the flourishing of the Sabaean and other cultures in South Arabia, just across the Bab-el Mandab straits. These South Arabian kingdoms had advanced state forms for their age, capable of great public works and accomplished art forms, including written language. They were also seafaring.

Figure 5. Statue of a Somali youth reportedly excavated near Berbera, thought to date to the first centuries CE[27]. Face about 30 cm long. Photo by author.

Little is known about D'mt; but the Aksumite kingdom that emerged in the same area (today's Tigray and Eritrea) during the first century BCE, and lasted until the 10th century CE, is much better documented. Without going into detail, for our purposes it is sufficient to know that it was a powerful and relatively stable state, which projected its influence throughout the Horn of Africa. We may surmise that Somali pastoralists, already used to trading with ancient Egypt, also traded with the Aksumite Kingdom, ancient Saba and the Himyarites (in today's Yemen). These were all areas with sedentary agriculture and urban cultures. There is thus ample reason to believe that the states vs nomads dialectics mentioned in Chapter One were played out between the sedentary Ethiopian and Yemeni highlands and the pastoral Somali lowlands, facilitated by sea-faring peoples. The connection of the island of Socotra—at the entrance to the Sea of Berbera—to ancient trade routes from the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea to the Indus Valley has been attested by the discovery of objects and written traces in Indian, Central Asian and proto-Arabian scripts from the early centuries of the Common Era.[28] Socotra lies a short distance away from the Somali coast.

This brief overview of Somali history before the arrival of Islam suggests that northern Somalia (contemporary Somaliland and Puntland) has a long history of contact with civilization; it was integrated through commerce and belief systems into the ancient world with its empires and states. Cultural levels in Northern Somalia may have mirrored those on the other side of the Gulf of Aden. Archaeology in the

[27] If it is a fake, as some specialists assume, it has been made by a skilled forger. I examined it carefully and believe it is authentic, although it may have been 'touched up' to make it more attractive to buyers

[28] Vigano: "Sea Routes and Medieval Wealth. Recent discoveries in Socotra, Hararge and Addis Ababa". The proto-Arabian script find includes the longest extant fragment in Palmyrene.

region is still in its infancy, but is very promising. The area of early civilization seems to have covered most of contemporary Somaliland and Puntland, but as yet no evidence of early cultures in Central or South Somalia has been found, to my knowledge.[29]

It is striking what a rich cultural historiography Somalia could elaborate for itself, posing as one of the most ancient cultures near what is still considered the origin of the human race, the Rift Valley. Despite research by highly regarded Somali academics, such as those quoted above, this knowledge has not yet changed the narrative of Somali Arab genealogy with its direct connection to the Prophet. One may wonder why Somalis do not seize this opportunity of profiling themselves as part of an ancient civilization, which could give them more 'respectability' among the peoples of this world. However, it should be remembered that the Europeans had no interest in their connection to the classical Mediterranean world until the Renaissance; and even then, the interest in the material remains of that glorious past only was sparked in the 19th century. The Egyptians were not interested in their pyramids and ancient temples until the 20th century, while Chinese authorities and revolutionary vanguards tried to erase their own past in the Cultural Revolution (1966-1973). This reminds us of how "constructed" the history of peoples is, and how the narrative keeps changing. The narrative of Somali origins is likely to change over the coming century.

2.2 Somalia under Arab and Islamic Influence (7th to 16th Century)

Somalis were already monotheistic, which helped their conversion to Islam. They simply replaced their God *Waaq* with Allah, and equated djinn and angels with the spirit world they believed in.[30] It also appears that they only gradually converted to Islam. A dynamic map would see Islam present along the Benadir coast from the 7th century onward; next its gradual progression inland along the Shabelle and Juba rivers before spreading to other areas of south and central Somalia from the 13th century onward. Thereafter, it was widely adopted among pastoralist clans of northern and central Somalia from the 14th to the 16th century, and until the 19th century by remaining pockets of Somali population.[31]

Towns of the Benadir

As we saw above, port towns along the Sea of Berbera and around Cape Guardafui, the eastern-most point of Africa, were integrated into the ancient world's trade between the Far East and the Mediterranean through the Red Sea. Arab geographers called the Somalis of the north coast *Berbers*, and the region they inhabited The Coast of Berbera. The Gulf of Aden was called the Sea of Berbera until the English renamed it, but Somalis still call it so, as I will do in this dissertation.

However, the region south of Puntland was described as terra incognita by early seafarers. When the first Arab geographers travelled down the coast, there were no coastal settlements worth mentioning between Berbera and Mareeg (north of Mogadishu, beginning of the Benadir coast). But southward

[29] Abdi Kusow presents a compelling narrative based on linguistic, genetic and oral history research suggesting that the Cushitic peoples, including the Somalis and the Afar, descend from a proto-Somali population living in the area now shared between Southern Ethiopia and Northern Kenya, and that they migrated eastward and northward into the Horn of Africa. See Kusow 1995: "The Somali Origin: Myth or Reality?"; p81-106.

[30] Bulhan, H. 2013:174-178. Interestingly, the word Waaq (وَاقٍ) appears twice in the Quran (in verses 34 and 37 of Sura Al Ra'd); although it was translated as 'defender', this term is unknown in Arabic, and the manner it is used ('they/you will have no Waaq against Allah') suggests it may refer to the Cushitic divinity, as was noted by several Somali scholars (e.g. Said Samatar, 2002, Hussein Bulhan, 2013). But this is not accepted by most scholars of Islam.

[31] This is my own interpretation of the sources I read; I have no scholarly confirmation of this approximate timeline.

from there, they found coastal settlements actively trading with each other and their hinterland; they were ruled by kings and nobles,[32] but little is known about them.[33] Mogadishu, Merka and Baraawe were part of this network. The settlements south and west of the Juba River may have been Bantu, with belief systems that were probably similar to those of today's Mijikenda people along the Kenyan coast.[34] North and east of the Juba River were Cushitic peoples with their own belief system, centred on the God Waaq and ancestor worship, but they were joined from the 7th century onward by communities of Muslims. Swahili culture emerged out of the encounter between Bantu inhabitants and Arab and Persian settlers.[35] It is not known what drove a relatively large number of Persians (usually called 'Shirazis') to settle along the East African coast, but by the 10th century they formed important communities in several coastal towns.

The Arabs called this stretch of coast, from the Benadir region to northern Mozambique, the land of Zanj (meaning 'black'). Omanis established trading communities in the Benadir in the 7th century[36] and, as early as 700, the Umayyad Caliph sent an expeditionary force to the land of Zanj for collecting taxes; taxation by Muslim caliphs continued at least until the 13th century, as the history of tax revolts illustrates.[37] Thus, the southern Somali coast was integrated into the Arab-dominated Indian Ocean trade network. Situated along the routes of East Africa toward the Red Sea/Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf and India, it prospered. Travellers marvelled at the stone towns with apparently good government of Mogadishu, Merka and Baraawe. Descriptions of available merchandises include many products from the Somali hinterland.

In the early 14th century, Imam Said al Muqdishawi—who, as his name indicates, hailed from 'Muqdisho', the Somali and Arabic pronunciation of Mogadishu—travelled to Yuan China. At that time giraffes, zebras, other exotic animals, horses and ivory from Somalia were traded against ceramics, spices and muskets from China. The Imam from Mogadishu was most likely an informant of Ibn Battuta, whom he met in India.[38] The latter in 1331 described Mogadishu as an 'exceedingly large city' and very prosperous too, famous for high-quality textile that it exported to Egypt. Mogadishu, according to Ibn Battuta, had a university and several splendid mosques, which had earned it the appellation of 'Madinat al Islam'—an Islamic centre—by the geographer Ibn Sa'id al-Maghribi in 1286.

Trade was mostly in the hands of Arab merchants. Immigrant communities, nourished by successive waves of migrants from Arabia and Persia, apparently mixed well with the Cushitic (Somali) people living in those areas. There are no records of violent conflicts between local and immigrant communities, and coastal communities were early converts to Islam.[39] For a long time, Somali scholars assumed the coastal towns of southern Somalia were established and inhabited mainly by Arabs and Persians until they were overrun by inland pastoralist clans in the 16th century, leading to their brutal decline. But a careful reading of Arab sources, such as that by Abdirahman Hersi,[40] provides ample evidence of Somali co-habitation in these towns, and suggests that immigrant communities were a minority. However, little (almost nothing) is known about the Cushitic populations who lived along the coast before the arrival of Muslims. Archaeological and other research into Somali history may yet deliver surprises.

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[32] This period of proto-Swahili history is tentatively termed 'Shungwaya' by Chittick and De Vere Allen.

[33] For a fascinating historical investigation of the Swahili coast see De Vere Allen 1993: "Swahili Origins".

[34] De Vere Allen 1993.

[35] Kassim, Mohamed M. 1995: "Aspects of the Benadir Cultural History: The Case of the Bravan Ulama".

[36] Mukhtar 2003: "Historical Dictionary of Somalia", xxv-xxvi.

[37] Mogadishu and the other coastal cities initiated a tax revolt against Caliph Harun al Rashid around 800 CE; it lasted until Caliph Al Mamun sent a large expeditionary force in 829; see Baadiyow, Abdirahman Abdullahi 2017 "Making Sense of Somali History" Vol 1; p52.

[38] Baadiyow, A.A. 2017/1:52-53.

[39] A tombstone in Mogadishu dates the death of a Muslim to 101 AH (722 AD).

[40] Hersi 1977: "The Arab Factor in Somali History"; p107.

In terms of political order, travellers—from the first descriptions (Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, first century CE) to the 19th century—record that each of Somalia's coastal towns (including those of the North) was ruled by its own elders or chiefs. None of the coastal towns seems to have ever submitted another, although at times they came under the common rule of an external power such as the Sultan of Zanzibar. Moreover, travellers describe a very informal type of rule, sometimes with admiration, but usually with disappointment. Only the Sultanate of Mogadishu had more elaborate forms of governance during certain epochs.

In Mogadishu and Baraawe, the Arab and Persian presence seems to have led to higher levels of administrative development between the 13th and 16th centuries. This is revealed by historical records, and the names of Mogadishu's ruling families are Arab (Qahtani 1300-1330, Fakhruddin 1330-1450) or Persian (Zuzni 1450-1500). The type of government established by these rulers of Arab and Persian descent was usually a sultanate of a city-state type, integrating local self-governance.

The first hereditary government in Mogadishu, according to local sources, was established in 1330, with the nomination of Fakhruddin by the city's four-man ruling council (arba'a rukn).[41] The powerful Qahtani family, which had governed the city before, retained its position as the provider of judges and prayer leaders until the 19th century.[42] Why the governing council of Mogadishu decided to establish a hereditary sultanate is not clear.

In Ibn Battuta's description of Mogadishu, which is supposed to be around 1331 and clashes with the local accounts reproduced above,[43] the ruler is said to be a Somali ('Barbar') sheikh (religious leader, not secular sultan). He describes the court as highly sophisticated, "more like a Persian court than an Arab chieftaincy".[44] The ruler tightly controls trade revenue, and this is presumably his only source of income. In Ibn Battuta's glowingly positive account of Mogadishu, he specifies that people own many camels and sheep/goats, so undeniably the city had a pastoral (Somali) character, and was not only an implant by Arab and Persian traders and urbanites.

In the early 16th century, the Portuguese traveller Duarte Barbosa was amazed by Mogadishu's wealth and good government; besides the Sultanate of Mogadishu, he also visited the town of Baraawe, which he says was also impressively built and well-governed by a council of twelve elders, who represented the constituent clans of the city's population.[45] But with the Portuguese came the decline of Arab Indian Ocean trade, while long spells of drought in those same years undermined agricultural production.[46] Nevertheless, the towns of the Benadir retained some of their status and prosperity. Mogadishu went through another spell of increased prosperity when the Muzaffar dynasty came to power at the close of the 16th century. This Arab dynasty was said to have closer links with Somalis in the hinterland than its predecessors[47] and drew its wealth from peaceful trade with the inland Ajuraan polity.

Little is known about the other coastal towns,[48] but from what is known it seems that they were generally ruled by clan coalitions (elders) and that the rise of a more developed state form—the

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[41] Interestingly, extant sources not only specify that, by then, Mogadishu had spent three centuries without hereditary rule, but also that a stranger was nominated (Fakhruddin having recently arrived in Mogadishu) to avoid one of the local clans assuming too much power (Cerruli "Somalia, I" p14-15 quoted by Hersi, A.A. 1977:182).

[42] Pouwels, 1978: "The Medieval Foundations of East African Islam"; p209.

[43] It is widely suspected that Ibn Battuta compiled many of his 'travel reports' from hearsay and other accounts (cf Elger 2010: "The Wonders of the Orient") and as seen above he supposedly met an Imam from Mogadishu in West India, so his description of Mogadishu may actually be a description of the city he heard from this visitor, of a period before the Fakhruddin dynasty.

[44] Hersi 1977:188.

[45] ibid.:197.

[46] Ibid.:188-193.

[47] Ibid.: 1977:194.

[48] Between Zeyla' and Mogadishu there were almost no settlements along the coast according to Hersi 1977:210-

sultanate—in Zeyla' and Mogadishu had at least two prerequisites: a strong position on trade routes stretching from the hinterland to foreign markets; and the presence of an Arab or Persian population capable of building the institutions of government the Sultanate needed to function as a political entity.[49]

Somalis exchanged their livestock, agricultural produce and natural resources against other foodstuffs and consumer items with Arab (and later 'Banyan' Indian) merchants in coastal towns. They were not themselves engaged in trade activities, but did sail and crew on Arab dhows (sailing ships). This may explain why the immigrant Muslim communities could integrate so easily along the Somali coast; they did not represent competition, but only new opportunities for development and enrichment. They brought with them their trade networks that spanned from the Mediterranean to China. The Arabs also developed the trade with the hinterland by connecting it to Asian markets.

Somalis were eager sailors and engaged in exploration and conquest themselves, too. In the 10th century, travellers from the Sultanate of Mogadishu established a trading post in Sofala, Mozambique, which traded with Greater Zimbabwe and the gold fields of the interior.[50] Somali sailors conquered the Maldives in the late 13th century, converting the population to Islam and establishing the Hilaalee dynasty. When Ibn Battuta reportedly visited the islands in 1346, he was greeted by a ruler named 'Sultan Abd al-Aziz of Mogadishu'. This all suggests that Somalis could have become prominent traders, but that they *chose* not to. One can only surmise a cultural reason, which is not difficult to imagine as, until recently, many human communities looked down on traders and those who seek to enrich themselves.[51]

Ajuraan

When one asks a Somali today whether there was a state in Somalia before colonization, most will name Ajuraan, not the Sultanate of Adal (see below), or even that of Mogadishu. This is the state that has most firmly marked itself in the Somali national imagination. This may be mainly so as it lasted so long, from the 13th to the 17th century, and because it was the most expansive, spreading out from the area along and between the Shabelle and Juba rivers to the coast. They left forts and stone towns, and hydraulic works (irrigation channels, cisterns, wells, dams, embankments), whose remains still dot the landscape of south and central Somalia today.

Little is known about Ajuraan, as it did not write its own history and no travel accounts remain. It survives mostly in the form of oral history, some hearsay evidence collected by travellers to the Benadir coast, and in the guise of—almost entirely unexplored—archaeological remains. The following section is thus largely based on oral traditions, many of them collected in the colonial period. We will start with the question why Ajuraan emerged there, in which conditions, and why at that time?

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212. In the early 16th century, a state seems to have covered the current region of Bari, formally vassal of Adal. But travellers from the 9th to the 13th century are very dismissive about the whole area, describing it as hosting a primitive and war-prone society.

[49] Hersi 1977:197-198 suggests that the Persians were present in greater numbers along the Benadir coast than the Arab travellers mentioned, drawing on local sources as well as on external accounts, and that this presence may have supported the Ajuraan state, as the Persians were notable for their administrative skills, also in the Arab world. See also Cassanelli 1982:100.

[50] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sofala: Portuguese chronicler João de Barros (Dec. I, Lib. 10, Cap. 2 (p. 388 ff.) relates that Mogadishu merchants had long kept Sofala a secret from their Kilwan rivals, who rarely sailed beyond Cape Delgado [Kilwa is a trading town of the Swahili coast in Kenya]. However, when Kilwan traders found out about the riches of Sofala in the 1180s, they nudged out the Mogadishans.

[51] Today, many small shops from Cape Town to Minneapolis are run by Somalis, but this seems to be a fairly recent development, probably linked to the remittance economy that emerged since the 1970s.

The Juba and Shabelle river valleys were—most probably—populated by agricultural Bantu populations in the first millennium of the Common Era. It appears that the Cushitic population groups were culturally rather predisposed to pastoralism, for reasons that may be related to the better lifestyle of nomads compared to settled peoples, as seen above. It is quite likely that they coexisted with the Bantu settled communities and engaged in barter trade.

There is a tradition (quoted as a fact by Mohamed Mukhtar in his Historical Dictionary of Somalia) that during the Riddah Wars, which broke out in the Arabian Peninsula after the death of Prophet Muhammad (632 CE), a group of Arabian exiles left Oman, settled in the Benadir, and later moved up the waterways into the hinterland. They might have been Kharijites, or one of the other groups who did not agree with a dynastic succession to the Prophet Muhammad, the issue that triggered the Riddah wars. This may be legend, but it is a common feature throughout history that groups of 'heretics' flee areas that are controlled by central religious powers to establish themselves in a place where they can freely practice their own belief. Such areas would have included the Benadir coast that, as we saw, was already being taxed by the Caliph in 700. The lush hinterland of the Benadir coast would have provided such a setting for retreat. Somalis speak of a Tunni Sultanate centred on Baraawe and Qoryoleey along the Lower Shabelle, that existed between the 9th and the 13th centuries, but very little is known of it.

Until the end of the 19th century, the inter-riverine area remained a place where many Islamic brotherhoods ('tariqas',[52] or loosely named 'Sufis') established themselves. The arrival of successive waves of Muslim groups would have been accompanied by a gradual conversion to Islam of the local population and the partial sedentarization of Somali pastoralists. Islamic doctrine supposes that, to be a good Muslim, one must live a sedentary lifestyle; nomads lack regular access to mosques, Islamic schools and religious scholars, and are more likely to cling to their own pre-Islamic beliefs, engage in warfare and not submit to religious law (Islam means both ‘peace’ and ‘submission’). In the better documented Somali 19th century, several religious centres were established in the inter-riverine area, usually centred on a shrine, a school and a religious endowment, such as the Uwaysiyya brotherhood (Chapter Four).

I would advance that, from the 7th to the 13th century CE, the penetration of such religious brotherhoods in the inter-riverine area transformed local communities.[53] It rendered the pastoralists semi-sedentary,[54] as many of them would identify with one such religious centre, hoping to benefit from the superior skills and knowledge of the immigrants, or intrigued by the religious life. Arab immigrants transformed local farming practices through their agricultural know-how and water management, creating an economy around the religious endowments (*awqaf*) that accompany Islamic centres. By the 13th century, the Indian Ocean trade had developed to such an extent that the hinterland of the Benadir coast could be profitably integrated. This surge in wealth, alongside the downfall of the Abbasid caliphate in 1258 (which allowed for the expression of more Islamic heterogeneity) created favourable conditions for establishing the Ajuraan state. Ajuraan was, by all accounts, a Somali state; there are no reports of it being led by Arabs or Persians. In the interior, Arabs did not come to rule or make money, but to escape religious persecution.

Although it is sometimes called a kingdom and sometimes an empire, it seems Ajuraan referred to themselves as an imamate, which probably resembled the sultanates of Ifat and Adal (see next) as there is little trace of formal institutionalization.[55] For example, there was no fixed capital; the Ajuraan ruler would spend several months in each part of his realm and had wives and households in different places.

[52] This Arabic word means ‘path’ or ‘way’ and is used throughout the Muslim world to denote a Sufi community. See below for more explanation.

[53] This is an extrapolation as yet unsupported by evidence, but not contradicted by any known fact.

[54] Baadiyow 2017:187 Recovering the Somali State, quoting Laitin & Samatar "Nation in Search of a State", 1987.

[55] In the following, I base myself on Cassanelli 1982:87ff, Hersi 1977 and Baadiyow 2017.

Famously, the ruler had the right to sleep with every newly married woman (*ius primae noctis*).[56] Sometimes Merka is named as the Ajuraan capital; being a port town close to Mogadishu, it probably had the best facilities for the administration. Other towns where the Ajuraan had a permanent presence were Qelafo (now Kelafo in the Ethiopian Ogaden) and Mareeg (a coastal town in Galgaduud).

The administration busied itself with the taxation of agriculture and trade; the minting of money; the upkeep of an army; the administration of justice; and the organization of forced labour. Territorial rule was indirect through local chieftains, so presumably administrative tasks were mostly outsourced. The obligatory community labour mentioned in oral accounts mostly concerned waterworks, fortifications and agriculture.[57] The administration would force populations under its control to work for them and generally maintained a very fierce reputation, which may be one reason why no travellers' accounts exist of their state. They were backed up by an efficient communication system; what happened in Baraawe in the morning, was known in the Middle Shabelle at noon.[58]

Besides providing some governance and development, their legitimacy was based on their spiritual pedigree; the ruling Gareen dynasty, originally from the Ogaden, claimed to be descended from an Arab sheikh and a Hawiye woman. They were known to strictly apply sharia. To bring the nomadic Somali and Oromo populations under their control, they built stone wells, some of which are still in use today, regulated access to these water points, and established temporary courts at wells and in markets to settle conflicts between clans. The *qadis* (Islamic judges) seem to have mostly been drawn from 'holy' Arab families, as along the Benadir coast, instead of being political appointees.[59]

The Gareen were allied to the Muzaffar dynasty that ruled Mogadishu in the 16th and early 17th centuries, an alliance that was profitable to both parties. They also had good relations with the inhabitants of Baraawe who, while formally incorporated into the Ajuraan state, enjoyed considerable autonomy according to travellers. Ajuraan provided the cotton that Mogadishu weavers processed; cloth from Mogadishu seems to have been highly appreciated from Malacca and China to Syria.

The rulers of Ajuraan were also involved directly in the Indian Ocean, albeit as Islamic warriors and conquerors, not as traders. It were sailors from Ajuraan who conquered the Maldives and established the Hilalee dynasty there at the end of the 13th Century. They successfully warded off the Oromo invasions that started in the 16th century, and resisted Portugal's efforts to conquer the Benadir coast between 1500 and 1670. Both victories, framed as Islamic wars (jihad) against unbelievers (the Oromo were called Gaal Madow, the black unbelievers), alongside Ahmed Gran's conquest of the Abyssinian empire (see next), imprinted themselves deeply in the Somali national conscious, as stories, poems and sayings.

Ajuraan went into decline at the same time as the rest of the Horn of Africa, but the internal factors of decline seem to have weighed more than in the case of the coastal settlements or Adal. Indeed, local lore recounts how cruel the Gareen rulers and their lieutenants became, and deviated from Islam: their sexual predation and taxation became unbearable.[60] Finally, they were overthrown by the Hawiye Abgal clan in the mid-17th century, other clans joining the rebellion. From the ruins of Ajuraan the Geledi Sultanate emerged, but it never rivalled Ajuraan in strength.

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[56] Lee Cassanelli notes (1982:102) that clan marriages used to be endogamous and that the 'invention' of exogamy allowed the Ajuraan rulers to consolidate their rule; possibly, exogamy only became widely practised after the Ajuraan.

[57] Cassanelli 1982:103.

[58] Hersi 1977:195. He bases himself on oral history sources.

[59] Today this phenomenon still exists: lineages of 'spiritual men' that stand outside the clan system and are welcome everywhere; they claim to be of Arab descent. Their reputation is based on their education and capacity to provide spiritual services.

[60] Cassanelli 1982:94.

When defining Ajuraan, the following characteristics emerge:

- Strict autocratic but indirect rule, leaving intact local governance structures (including deliberative ones such as in Baraawe), but obliging populations to provide forced labour and warriors.
- Use of force rather than diplomacy to submit dissent and enemies. Military success, especially Islamic, contributed to early legitimacy; later they became despotic and brutal.
- Legitimacy mainly derived through sharia and piety, and effective application of sharia-based justice to settle conflicts among the population.
- Itinerant centre of government, avoiding centralization in one spot and limiting court size. Effective communication systems to complement the lack of a political centre.
- Economy based on pastoral and agricultural production and trade, and pragmatic relations with neighbouring sultanates and their trade communities, rather than trying to take them over.
- Elevated levels of imposition (rules and taxation), occasionally so high they lead to revolt.

Although present-day knowledge may be insufficient to extract such clearly defined characteristics of Ajuraan, this is the perception today of Somalis , and thus it is at least valid in terms of the *image of the state.* This image today is that of an initially successful and glorious kingdom that, over time, degenerated into a brutal, unjust regime.

Curiously, this is strikingly similar to the basic characteristics of Al Shabaab rule, as we shall see in Chapter Ten. In addition, the boundaries of Al Shabaab's current area of control and influence quite closely follow those of Ajuraan.

Northern Sultanates

In the fourth century, the Aksumite Kingdom in what is now Eritrea and northern Ethiopia, as well as western Yemen, adopted Christianity, but, from the 7th century onward, Somalis progressively converted to Islam. Religious conflict, however, only began after many centuries of coexistence. Arab traders, starting their expansion from the port of Zeyla' inland in the eighth century, established sultanates in the eastern foothills of the Ethiopian highlands.[61] These were inhabited by the—now extinct—Harla people, probably of Cushitic origin and the ancestors of the Harari people who today inhabit the same area. The Arabs seem not to have been concerned with religious proselytism, but sought to profit from the caravan trade that extended from Zeyla' to the Ethiopian highlands, and through the Ogaden to Central Africa, thus connecting a vast portion of Africa to the Red Sea/Indian Ocean region. These traders were welcomed by the Ethiopians, who needed this connection to the rest of the world. Religious conflict began only in the 13th century, when the newly established Solomonic Christian dynasties in the southeastern Ethiopian highlands decided to tax the Sultanates.

Large stone towns were built in this period throughout the northern and western parts of the Horn of Africa. According to Sada Mire, stone towns were already a feature of pre-Islamic Northern Somalia,[62] but there may have been a hiatus in urban settlement between, roughly, the sixth and the thirteenth centuries. This corresponds to the decline of the South Arabian and Aksumite empires in the sixth century, and the rise of the Ethiopian Kingdom in the 13th century. A British expedition in the 1930s uncovered the ruins of ten known and eleven new stone towns in the area between Zeyla' and Harar, which the lead explorer dated to the 12th-16th centuries.[63] Recently published research indicates there were towns of importance also in the Nugaal plain of inland northeast Somalia (currently Puntland).

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[61] Hersi 1977:199 names the Mudzhumi dynasty as the rulers of that time.

[62] Mire 2015: "Mapping the Archaeology of Somaliland"; p128.

[63] Curle 1937: "The Ruined Towns of Somaliland".

Three urban centres have been partially explored by Puntland archaeologists east of Garowe, who tentatively date them to the 13th to 16th centuries.[64]

Zeyla' was the main emporium for the Ethiopian highlands in this period. The town became so important that its name was used for referring to north-western Somalia and eastern Ethiopia, and occasionally even for the entire Horn of Africa.[65] Zeyla' was probably the capital of the Sultanate of Ifat (late 13th – early 15th centuries) and then the capital of the Sultanate of Adal (1415-1577).[66] As to Harar, it had become an Islamic town either in the late 10th century (according to local lore) or at the latest in the 13th century (according to available evidence). Its status as one of the holy cities of Islam—as a place of learning and propagation—dates at least to the time of the Ifat and Adal sultanates. Although situated in territories used as pasture by Somalis, sources agree that the towns of these sultanates were governed by Arabs and other Muslims, and inhabited by local settled populations such as the Harlas, and later the Hararis. The role of the Somalis was to deliver meat and dairy products, protection for caravans and troops when war erupted; unlike the Somalis in the Benadir, they rarely seem to have been part of urban life.[67]

The Arab sultanates were politically and economically dominated by Ethiopia in the 13th-15th centuries. They rivalled with each other to gain the favour of Ethiopian commerce, and the Ethiopian king reportedly intervened in succession struggles to appoint the ruler most amenable to his interests.[68] Extended periods of profitable cooperation would sometimes be interrupted by rebellions against Ethiopian taxation.[69] The Sultan of Ifat proclaimed the first jihad in 1376, but the decisive one was proclaimed by Ahmed Gurey from the Adal Sultanate in 1529. Ahmed Gurey (or Gragn as he is called by the Ethiopians, or Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al Ghazi as the Arabs called him) was probably the son of a local Harari chieftain who rose in the local military. He ransacked the Ethiopian highlands, including the capital Barara and the holy town of Axum, and nearly destroyed the Solomonic dynasty in a long campaign from 1531 until his death in 1543. Ethiopia was saved *in extremis* by Portuguese musketeers. Ahmed Gurey was assisted by Ottoman musketeers and Arabian soldiers after 1540,[70] turning the Muslim invasion of Christian Ethiopia into an extension of Mediterranean rivalries. After the death in battle of Ahmed Gurey, his widow attempted to rekindle a jihad, but it ended in the capture of the Adal Sultanate by the Ethiopian king in 1557.

Somali pastoralists, in contrast to local settled populations, may have long remained relatively heathen and untouched by Arab culture, as they interacted only marginally with urban Arab communities. This changed during Ahmed Gurey's jihad; most of his troops seem to have been Somali, drawn from all areas of Northern Somalia and the Ogaden. Their participation in this effort, under a non-Somali leader, supported by the Ottomans, and alongside other Arab and non-Arab Muslim troops, certainly strengthened the Muslim identity among Somali pastoralists.[71]

[64] S.M-Shidad Hussein 2021: "Ruined towns in Nugaal: A Forgotten Medieval Civilisation in Interior Somalia"; p257-58. He believes these towns may be linked to inland Somali towns mentioned by Al Idrisi in the 12th and Ibn Said in the 13th centuries.

[65] The Egyptian Mamluk historian Al Maqrizi wrote in the early 1400s that "*the length of the land of Zaila' is by land as well as by sea about two months journey, and its width is more than two months (…) It is divided into seven kingdoms, viz Awfat [Ifat], Dawaro, Arabini, Hadya, Sharkha, Bali and Dara*".

[66] Other historians consider that the Sultanates of Ifat and Adal may have had other capitals, such as Dakkar (close to Harar) or Aussa (in the Afar country) or even in eastern Shewa.

[67] Hersi 1977.

[68] ibid.:201 quoting Al 'Umari.

[69] Curle 1937:325 quoting Marius Saineano.

[70] Cassanelli 1982.

[71] Hersi 1977:213.

In terms of the states *vs* nomads framework, the participation of Somalis in the destruction of the historic Ethiopian state seems to be explained by Clastres' 'Machine de Guerre' theory rather than by Scott's 'Golden Age' of mutual profit between states and nomads. The Arab intermediaries plucked the fruit of the caravan trade, while Somalis mostly provided ancillary services.

The Arab sultanates were less institutionalized than the Ethiopian state. The latter resembled Medieval European states with a rules-based order, in that the Orthodox church sanctioned the King's rule and his laws. The Muslim sultanates did not enjoy a similar sanction, as both qadi (religious judge) and sultan (ruler) kept their sphere of autonomy. There is no mention of institutions in Muslim sultanates such as Adal; however, chroniclers recount chaotic succession struggles.[72] In terms of Max Weber's ideal-types of political legitimation, the Ethiopian state's authority was based on tradition, providing stability, while the Arab sultanates were led charismatically, allowing them to accomplish feats like Ahmed Gurey's conquest of Ethiopia, but providing little stability.

As to the Somali pastoralists, they seem to have retained their structures of clan self-governance. Chroniclers of that period describe how each clan was ruled by an advisory council consisting of all adult males.[73] There were no terms denoting hierarchy. There seems to have been no social differentiation based on status among Somali pastoralists until at least the mid-16th century (when chronicles ceased to be written). The first record of such hierarchy dates from the 19th century. Somali clans applied *xeer*, their social contract (see next Chapter), but to deal with the Arab towns and sultanates, and as part of their Muslim identity, they also accepted sharia. This double legal basis continues to exist among Somali pastoralists today. While Somalis adapted to Arab and Islamic culture, the Ethiopian state and church remained the hostile 'Other' for them.

When the Arab sultanates disappeared, the towns were abandoned (except those along the coast).[74] There are no reports of Ethiopian highlanders establishing trade activities anywhere in Somalia, or indeed elsewhere in the region. Although they met and traded in places like Harar, Somalis and Ethiopians interfered little in each other's polities after the Ethiopian-Muslim wars. Somali nomads did not raid the Ethiopian highlands, while Ethiopians only started exerting control over Somali-inhabited lands at the end of the 19th century, when King Menelik II conquered Harar. Neither Somalis nor Ethiopian highlanders sought to perpetuate the mutually beneficent economic relations after the departure of the Arabs, who in retrospect seem to have been necessary intermediaries.[75]

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[72] This is mentioned by several chroniclers of that age as a weakness that undercut the strength of the Muslim sultanates. See Hersi 1977 and Cassanelli 1982.

[73] Hersi 1977 quoting Al 'Umari and other sources, p193ff.

[74] Curle 1937.

[75] In Richard Burton's 1856 account of his travels between the Somali coast and Harar, he described how far apart the pastoral Somali and the urban Harari culture were. Harar was then not yet part of Ethiopia and had been an independent town for at least 600 years. Trade may have been discouraged by this cultural chasm. Burton 1856: "First Footsteps in East Africa or An Exploration of Harar".

2.3 Somalia Marginalized (16th to 19th Century)

Decline and Reversal to Clan Self-Governance

The arrival of the Portuguese in the 16th century was a catastrophe for Somalia. The Portuguese wilfully disrupted the Arab Indian Ocean trade. Their expansion into the Indian Ocean was a continuation of the *Reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula, which was completed in 1492 with the fall of *Al Andalus.*[76] Conversion to Christianity was a tool to submit and ally populations, and a way to justify imperial actions at home, but establishing a monopoly over the lucrative Indian Ocean spice trade was the main Portuguese objective.

The Portuguese established a system of passes: Muslim ships that sailed without them were looted and the sailors often killed.[77] The Portuguese also imposed taxes on all produce entering or leaving African and Arab ports.[78] Hindu (Gujarati) merchants, who allied with the Portuguese against the Arabs, soon became dominant all over East Africa, establishing trading posts along the coast. They built and owned most of the dhows. In East Africa the Gujaratis and other South Asians were known as 'Banyan'.

Upon his return from India in 1499, Vasco Da Gama bombarded Mogadishu, apparently without provocation.[79] The Portuguese destroyed Baraawe, renowned for centuries as a place of Islamic scholarship and regional trade, in 1506,[80] Zeyla' in 1517 and Berbera in 1518, because they would not submit to Portuguese rule. Portugal attempted to submit the Benadir coastal towns a few more times, before it was replaced in the region by Oman. In 1671, Mogadishu supported Oman against the Portuguese, leading to their definitive departure from Somali waters.

However, the major long-term effect for Somalia was its marginalization on global trade routes. The Portuguese crossed the ocean directly and Somalia became part of only a regional trade network, extending from Mozambique to the Persian Gulf. Omanis controlled this network, first from Muscat and later from Zanzibar. Somalia remained a backwater on global trade routes until 1869, when the Suez Canal opened.

While this catastrophe unfolded on the seas, mass migrations affected Somalis inland. The Oromo people, who lived to the west and southwest of the Somalis, started an east- and northward migration. They were stopped by the Ajuraan, but their migrations provoked large-scale movements of Somali clans to new areas. Darood moved into Hawiye areas, Hawiye clans moved into the Ajuraan state and later took over Mogadishu, while some Dir populations from north-western Somalia sought refuge along the Banadir coast and its hinterland. Somali oral history recounts how many clans were split and displaced by these migrations.

The Oromo also invaded the southern Ethiopian highlands and occupied the Bale mountains and the areas surrounding Harar. Ethiopia and the Muslim sultanates had exhausted each other in warfare, and they both fell easily. Ethiopia became isolated and, like Somalia, went into a long recession. The little remaining Ethiopian trade with the rest of the world now went through Red Sea ports controlled by the Ottomans. Zeyla' and Berbera didn't recover; in 1670 they were incorporated as outposts into the

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[76] King Manuel of Portugal told Dom Francisco de Almeida, his first viceroy in India (1505-1509), "to seize and enslave all Muslim merchants at Sofala, but not to do any harm to the local negroes" (Hersi 1977:217, quoting C.R. Boxer 1963 "Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire" p41). Dom Francisco had participated in the expulsion of the last Moors from Granada in 1492.

[77] Hersi describes a reign of terror in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean.

[78] ibid.:218 quoting Boxer.

[79] ibid.:217.

[80] "*Great cruelty was reported*" Hersi 1977:222.

Ottoman empire, from where they continued to benefit marginally from the caravan trade through Harar, but practically nothing was heard from Northern Somalia until the 19th century.

The Benadir coast resisted a little longer, in part because of internal trade between its towns and the hinterland. By the late 17th century, however, the curtain of history fell on this part of Somalia too. It is remarkable how little mention Somalia receives in any of the available sources from the mid-16th century until the late colonial 'scramble for Africa'.[81] The areas that today are Somaliland, Puntland, Mudug and the Ogaden reverted entirely to clan self-governance, into the atemporal state that European explorers discovered when they arrived on the Somali coasts in the second half of the 19th century.

While north and west Somalia disappeared from the historical record and the coastal cities were in continuous decline, the intra-riverine area became politically fragmented after the fall of Ajuraan. The Geledi sultanate that emerged out of the ruins of Ajuraan in 1750 was much less powerful than its predecessor, and its power did not extend much beyond the Lower Shabelle region around its capital Afgooye. Several theocratic city-states[82] emerged in Luuq (on the Upper Juba), Sarmaan (south of Hudur), Mareerey (Lower Shabelle) and Baardheere (upper to middle Juba) and retained their spiritual importance until the late 19th or early 20th centuries. The spiritual leaders usually combined religious scholarship and lineage prestige. They fulfilled an important function for the Rahanweyn people, but not—it seems—for other Somali clan families. Thus, the Somalia that was encountered by European colonizers in the 19th century was but a shadow of its former self. During the two- to three-century interval even the memory of its own past had largely faded from Somali national consciousness; moreover, it was politically split along clan lines.

The Emergence of Clan-States

The first mention of a Somali clan name that survives today comes from Al-Idrisi, a Muslim geographer, who in 1154 reported that there were Hawiye settlements on the Benadir coast;[83] he differentiates them from the Benadir towns that he visited, where Arabs (and Persians) played a dominant political role, but does not describe any Hawiye settlement. Darood and Isaaq clans are also mentioned in Arab chronicles of the jihad against the Ethiopian state.[84]

It may be wondered whether the first purely Somali polity, Ajuraan, was based on clan. Cassanelli argues that the core of Ajuraan consisted of Hawiye clans, and that they formed a 'pastoral aristocracy' over the semi-settled Rahanweyn people of the intra-riverine area. This was based on four sources of power: the control of wells (broadly speaking: resources), the 'baraka' (divine favour) bestowed upon the Gareen dynasty, the fighting strength of the Hawiye pastoral clans, and the establishment of ties with other clans through the practice of exogamy.[85] Cassanelli surmises that only the Hawiye tribes were fully integrated into Ajuraan, and that there was no territorial continuity, as other clans living in the area they controlled would have felt less included. However, Cassanelli's characterization of Ajuraan as a clan-based polity is doubtful. Today there is a clan called the Ajuraan, but it is a minor member of the Hawiye

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[81] In the chronology established by Mohamed Mukhtar in "Historical Dictionary of Somalia" (2003) there are only three entries for the 17th century, and only one for the 18th century, compared to five entries for the 13th century, seven for the 14th century, five for the 15th century and fourteen for the 16th century.

[82] Mukhtar 2003 mentions Luug Aw Madow, Sarmaan Aw Umur, Mereerey Aw Hassan and Baardheere.

[83] ibid.:xxvi.

[84] Ahmad ibn Abd-el Kadir, in "Histoire de la Conquête de I'Abyssinie (Publications de l'École Superieure des Lettres d'Algers, n.d.), drawing upon ancient Ethiopian sources, mentions 'the people of Mait' (the Isaaq, whose ancestor's tomb is in Maydh) alongside several Darood clans, including the Marehan, Herti, Bartiire and Giri) and the Yibir, now a 'professional minority'.

[85] Cassanelli 1982:101-105.

clan family that lives mostly between Kenya and Ethiopia, and nothing explains why this once so powerful Ajuraan would have descended to such insignificance. Moreover, I have rarely heard Somalis refer to Ajuraan as a *Hawiye* polity. In the eyes of most Somalis today it transcended clan.

What is certain, however, is that the states that emerged out of the ruin of Ajuraan were clan-based. The Geledi sultanate was mentioned already. The Hiraab imamate replaced Ajuraan in central Somalia from the 17th to the 19th centuries.[86] Very little is known about this imamate, and it seems likely it was very loosely organized, like other clan states that emerged in the 19th century, such as the Majerteen, Warsangeli and Isaaq sultanates and the Bimal confederacy centred on Merka.

From the early 19th century onward, Somali encounters with European powers increased; this seems to have fostered the emergence of clan states with a ruler. Besides the British and the French, the Sublime Porte also presented a potential friend, or foe, who could most easily be engaged by establishing a state-like structure. Elsewhere, I have examined how the British presence in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea stabilized previously volatile tribal politics.[87] The British need for stability led them to freeze the political situation at the time they encountered these societies, and British imperial policies were often directed at maintaining in power dynasties that they could control.[88] When required, the British would intervene in succession struggles. They used the carrot (yearly stipends paid to rulers) and stick (gunboat diplomacy) to maintain the status quo. Before the arrival of the British, however, these societies had seen leadership constantly shifting from one group to the other, true to the etymological meaning of '*dawlah*' (see Chapter One).

There is evidence of links between Somalia and the Arab princes of the Persian Gulf. The Al Qasimi pirates from Ras al Khaimah, whose attacks on British ships increased at the end of the 18th century, reportedly had a base in Socotra, and the old name of Bosaso, Bandar Qasim (‘Port Qasim’),[89] suggests that they may have had a presence there too. It is possible that the Somalis learnt plundering shipwrecked British ships—their first acts of 'piracy'—from Al Qasimi pirates.[90] To the west, the ‘Idagalle Sultan Farah wrote to the Al Qasimi sultan of Ras al Khaimah—who was then (in the 1810s and 20s) spearheading resistance against British domination in the Persian Gulf—to request his support against the British. Evidently, such a request would be harder to make if it were issued by 'a group of adult males representing the ‘Idagalle clan'; coming from a 'Sultan' the request carried more weight.[91] But nothing indicates the ‘Idagalle sultan effectively presided over any institutions or structures of rule.

Richard Burton made accurate descriptions of local social, political and cultural life during his 1854-55 visit to Zeyla’, Harar and Berbera. He makes no mention of any ‘sultan’ or other hereditary leader among the Isaaq clans (but does describe at length the Sultan of Harar and the Warsangeli Sultan in Laasqoray). This visit took place in the context of mounting clashes between the British and Somalis over the looting of shipwrecks. The British protectorate established in Somaliland in 1884 was preceded by about six decades of occasionally violent encounters; it seems the emergence of what was in the 19th century the strongest polity in Somalia, the Majerteen sultanate, was shaped by this conflict. Both Majerteen sultans, the rivals Usman Mohamud Yusuf (1866-1927) and Yusuf Ali Kenadid (1884-1911), used piracy

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[86] The Hiraab branch of the Hawiye clan family includes the Habar Gedir, the Abgal, the Duduble and the Sheekhal, that is: most of the Hawiye.

[87] Kluijver 2013: "Introduction to the Gulf Art World".

[88] The Al Sabah family (Kuwait), the Al Saud (Saudi Arabia), the Al Khalifa (Bahrain), the Al Qasimi (Sharjah and Ras al Khaimah), the Al Maktoum (Dubai), the Al Nahyan (Abu Dhabi), the Al Said (Muscat) and the Al Thani (Qatar) were kept in power by Great Britain through 'protectorate agreements' drawn up between 1747 and 1868. As a testimony to the success of this policy, these families still rule the region today and the British remain present in mentoring positions, such as advisors to the rulers on matters of national security and fiscal management.

[89] Described by Charles Guillain in 1854 as the 'most important village' of Northeast Somalia.

[90] Ingiriis 2013: "The History of Somali Piracy: From Classical Piracy to Contemporary Piracy, c. 1801-2011"; p251.

[91] Sultan Farah's letter was, however, not answered. The Arabic original was published here.

to gain recognition from the imperial powers and extract advantages with which they could consolidate their rule over the interior.[92] "*Majerteen rulers attracted the imperial spotlight by inciting unrest at sea, pinning the blame on their clan rivals and styling themselves as the real guardians of British imperial interests. They thus sought to interpose themselves [...] as 'gatekeepers' between the international community and local networks and resources"*.[93] The parallels with how Majerteen rulers handled the wave of piracy in the early 21st century are stunning: allowing piracy to develop, profiting from it, and then attracting foreign patronage to reduce it.[94]

This brings us to an essential aspect of state-building: it can be undertaken for purely external reasons, to provide access to a foreign state.

Of the clan-'states' mentioned above, it is hard to find either a built structure (a fort, a palace, a court, a mosque…), a contribution to local society, or any other form of domestic legacy. The Geledi, Hiraab, Majerteen and Isaaq sultanates did not leave behind any institutions of rule. But through what is sometimes called 'isomorphic' or 'mimetic' state-building,[95] some of the early Somali sultanates did succeed in attracting yearly stipends and occasional arms shipments, in exchange for their protection of British interests. The colonial period of Somalia is further dealt with in Chapter Four.

Reflections on the Role of Islam

Until recently, the consensus about Islam was that it had been imported by Persian and Arab immigrants to the East African coast, and that the 'passive' Africans—whose religions were considered 'inferior' to monotheistic Islam—were brought into the course of history, or ‘civilized’, or 'enlightened', through contact with the superior, virile Islam. This frankly racist view[96] has been modified by a closer examination of the belief structures and political economy of Medieval East Africa.[97] It is clear that local cultural practices, social structures and trade networks had a dominant influence on East African Islam.

Somali Islam was similarly syncretic, and has long integrated pagan, pre-Islamic beliefs. See Hersi, where he speaks about ascribing special powers to clan heads in Southern Somalia,[98] or Cerulli: "*Ancient heathen magicians have been replaced by Muslim scholars, although they have kept their name wadaad and may be also applied to magical practices*".[99]

With the falling apart of the theocratic and despotic Ajuraan state and the reduced role of Arabs (and Persians) in the Indian Ocean trade, the Arab and Islamic factors in Somalia declined. The clan confederacies that arose in several places (Bimal, Rahanweyn, Majerteen/Harti, Isaaq) adopted ancient Somali titles for their leaders (*ugas, boqor, islao, garaad, waber*) instead of Arabic ones—such as *amir* or *wazir*; only *sultan* was used—and returned to their own social contract, *xeer*, instead of sharia (see next chapter). Clan elders took on religious duties such as being a judge, a position long reserved for Islamic scholars from prominent urban families.[100] Sufi saints were seen as *wadaado*, spiritual men who could marshal supernatural forces *and* interpret religious texts. There was thus a fusion of pre-Islamic pastoral

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[92] Smith 2015: "The machinations of the Majerteen Sultans: Somali pirates of the late nineteenth century?"

[93] Cooper 2002: "Africa since 1940"; p21.

[94] De Waal 2015: The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa; p126-128.

[95] Pritchett, Woolcock & Andrews 2012: “Looking Like a State: Techniques of Persistent Failure in State Capability for Implementation”.

[96] Pouwels 1978: "The Medieval Foundations of East African Islam".

[97] see for example the works by Neville Chittick and James De Vere Allen on Swahili culture.

[98] Hersi 1977:265.

[99] Cerruli 1957: “Somalia. Scritti vari editi e inediti”; p149.

[100] Cassanelli 1982:129-130.

culture with Islamic religion, or a de-Arabization of Somali Islam.[101] The *asraar*, the mystical secrets, as they were taught in Baraawe and other places of learning, became an important tool for religious and political ascendancy in Somali society. "*By the 19th century, if not earlier, the power of the saints and the power of the clan heads had joined in the person of the Geledi Sultan*".[102]

This Somalization of Islam in turn prompted adherents of purer forms of Islam to rebel against the corrupt intertwining of temporal and spiritual power. For example, during the Baardheere jihad, (1838-1843),[103] tobacco and dancing were prohibited, the veil imposed, social intercourse between men and women restrained; and the jihadis spread their message with force, sacking Baraawe in 1840. While Sufi sainthood was generally hereditary, Baardheere leadership was merit-based, so charismatic.

The *tariqas* represented a form of communal solidarity over and above clan and territorial ties. Their sheikhs provided some leadership when necessary, but they were not interested in politics and rarely participated directly in the anti-colonial resistance.[104]

Somalia was only marginally concerned by political developments in the Muslim world. It hardly seems to have been impacted by these developments until the late 19th century, when there were two main currents of Islamic reform: Al Nahda (rise), which sought to reconciliate the Europe of reason and scientific progress with Islam, and Salafism (predecessors) that affirmed that a Muslim community could be refashioned on the roots of the original Islam, uncorrupted by subsequent political developments.[105]

These early reformist ideas prompted Somalis to see themselves as part of a wider religious community and helped them forge a common identity in the modern world. The age-old sense of being a frontline Muslim population against Christian Ethiopia and animist 'Black Africa' acquired new political overtones. The urge to modernize Islam was, to an extent, a reaction to colonialism,[106] though colonial authorities in Somalia condoned the spread of these reformist ideas, which they saw as positive for the general development of their colonial subjects.[107] This tolerance of Muslim reformist thought did not lead to mutual understanding, however, and political Islam evolved separately from the colonial state-formation process, only triggered occasionally by a public issue.

"*If we think of Islamic intellectual and associational life solely as forms of resistance to European colonial rule, we deprive them of a creative and autonomous history of their own. We fail to appreciate Islamic knowledge as an independent stream of creative ideas and engaged commentary on the state of affairs--that is, as a distinct source of knowledge production whose antecedents date back well before the European era*."[108]

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[101] ibid.:130.

[102] ibid.:134. The Geledi were described above as quite inefficient and powerless. Cassanelli refers to Yusuf Mahamud (1820-1848), who is often seen as the greatest of Geledi sultans, along with his father Mohamud Ibrahim Adeer (late 18th century - 1820).

[103] ibid.:135-146.

[104] Cassanelli 1982:196 & 237

[105] It must be noted that the original Salafism that inspired the Dervish leader (see 4.2) and many of his contemporaries was somewhat different from what is called Salafism today. It was a modernizing force, seeking a positive response to the challenge of Western progress and material superiority. The difference between the two streams of reform mentioned here were not always clear-cut. See for example Glassé 1989: "*The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam*", entry under Salafiyyah. Or, for a succinct overview: Filiu 2015: « *Les Arabes, leur destin et le nôtre – Histoire d'une libération* », chapter 1.

[106] An argument made by Kassab 2009: "*Contemporary Arab Thought*". See her discussion of the Nahda p17-47.

[107] Cassanelli 2009:9-10. Following quotation from page 10

[108] Ibid.:10

2.4 Political Order in Pre-Colonial Somalia

The evolution of political order in Somali-inhabited areas proves that one cannot speak of a clear evolution from small self-governed units to the modern State. Graeber and Wengrow's point about humans moving back and forth between different political orders (1.1) is confirmed by the Somali experience. This seems to have been a matter of choice, not necessity, although the choice was conditioned at least partially by environmental factors, which in Somalia encourage pastoralism. This choice is seen in the preference of contemporary Somalis for their demonstrably fictional Arab Islamic clan genealogy. The north coast of Somalia was integrated into the classical world, but Somalis are not interested in deriving any civilizational 'grandeur' from it, maybe because it does not stroke with their self-governing clan culture and Muslim identity.

Environmental factors in the Horn of Africa gave rise to three Somali socio-economic systems: pastoralism, settled agriculture and coastal trading and fishing. Each had its associated form of polity in history. Coastal communities have generally lived in self-ruled city-states together with foreigners, and these foreigners or their descendants either ruled these territories with simple institutions, or staffed their administrations. Inland agricultural communities seem to have formed through the implantation of Islamic settlements, which allowed Somali clans to integrate sedentary populations. And pastoralists have generally been stateless and organized in self-governed clans. Pastoralism has also been the main socio-economic system throughout Somali history, and had a strong political influence on both (semi-)sedentary agricultural and coastal settlements.

James C. Scott's analysis of a double—antagonistic and cooperative—relation between states and nomads, seems to apply quite well to Somalia. As in ancient Mesopotamia, centrally organized polities were short-lived affairs with long blanks between them. The nomads profited from it, but in only one instance—Ajuraan—were they motivated to establish their own hierarchical political order. Otherwise, structures of rule were created within their territories by others (Arabs and Persians), mostly for commercial purposes. Somalis participated in the trade and the institutions that supported it, such as the observance of sharia and the submission to the authority of a *qadi*, but rarely in leading roles. They provided fighters, sailors, caravans, and meat, dairy and other products, but let others rule those polities, in both temporal and spiritual dimensions. When the Arab sultanates went into decline, Somalis did not attempt to revive them, but returned to the pastoralist lifestyle, while a reduced urban Somali population remained in the declining towns. Somalis thus stuck to the 'nomad' side of the 'states vs nomads' interpretation framework of history that James C. Scott suggested. They were familiar with centralized hierarchical rule, not least because of their long exposure to neighbouring Ethiopian kingdoms, but would not adopt it for themselves. For centuries, the Somali nomads thus moved in and out of the 'state' ambit, seemingly at their discretion.

The view that Somalis were 'civilized' by Arab and Persian Muslims, which was common during the 20th century and aligns with the evolutionary view of human history, is undermined by findings of the past decades. East Africans, including Somalis, were already trading before the arrival of Islam, and they influenced East African Islam in ways that medieval Arab chroniclers may have wanted to ignore, but that are increasingly well documented. Somalis may have integrated many of their pre-Islamic beliefs in their practice of Islam *after* the Arab factor in Somalia declined in the 16th century.

Islam at once made Somalis feel part of a larger community—the *umma*—especially during the jihad against the Ethiopians, and it gave them a group identity as *Somali Muslims*. Somalis assimilated Arab statehood (the *dawlat*) easier, because of its closeness to pastoral culture and because they had adopted Islam. In their dealings with foreigners and non-related Somalis in Arab market towns, they adapted to the imported rules, embraced sharia and accepted the authority of the *qadi* (judge). But the centralized Ethiopian kingdom (the *status*), of which the Somalis have had a long experience, did not attract them and they never tried to emulate it. They had no need for a state to govern them and this

did not cause a 'war of all against all'. It seems that, generally, *xeer* and sharia combined to keep social peace and order among Somali clans.

Most historical sources make little mention of conflict; neither between Somalis and the Arabs who established the Sultanates; nor between Somali polities. Despite the simultaneous existence of independent cities and sultanates that presumably were neighbouring commercial rivals—Mogadishu, Baraawe and Merka—the extant literature provides almost no accounts of battles between them, or attempts to take one another over. Ajuraan surprisingly seems to have lived in harmony next to the prosperous, but independent, Mogadishu for many centuries: why wouldn't the Kings of Ajuraan try to capture it? Even relations with the Ethiopians seem to have been generally peaceful until the 16th century. Travellers of all times speak of the fearsome Somali warriors, but Somali polities seem not to have engaged in the type of warfare that characterized, for example, Europe during those centuries.

Of the Somali polities, only Ajuraan clearly established a strong rule, with public works, an effective defence against enemies, taxation and a central administration. But Somalis today mostly remember Ajuraan for its despotic inclinations, high taxation and immoral behaviour, not for its civilizational achievements. This memory may explain why Somalis later did not allow the appearance of another such strong state, but reverted to clan self-governance instead.

The notion of institution seems alien to Somali forms of governance; even in the few accepted institutional positions such as qadi (judge) or sultan, personality seems to prime over status and foreigners are accepted. Moreover, accounts of the towns of the Benadir and inland sedentary communities repeatedly mention that Somalis self-governed through councils of elders representing the different clans present, often parallel to a foreign 'Sultan'. According to extant sources, self-governance seems to have been a constant feature throughout Somali history.

The clan-states that emerged after the 17th century were really not 'states' at all, as they lacked even the most elementary forms of centralized administration, but they apparently always included councils of elders of all sub-clans in their territory. Early European travellers rarely mention these clan-states, as if they were unaware of their existence. Only the two rival Majerteen sultanates, discussed in Chapter Four, were recognized by the colonial powers of the late 19th century.

It is remarkable how the three different Islamic polities I have discussed in some length here—the towns of the Benadir, Ajuraan, and the Sultanates of the Northwest—not only correspond to the coastal, agricultural and pastoral socio-economic systems discussed above, but how they find parallels in the three forms of rule that I will discuss in Part III of this dissertation: 1) the Federal Government of Somalia, centred on Mogadishu and a few other towns with heavy foreign involvement; 2) Al Shabaab rule in south and central Somalia, in an area corresponding roughly to Ajuraan; and 3) Somaliland in the northwest. At the very least these parallels suggest that a long-term perspective can help understand today’s different political orders in Somalia.

Another lesson offered by this brief political history of pre-colonial Somalia is the disruptive effect of the interventions by Europeans in the 16th century, which signalled the end of a relatively prosperous and culturally and politically dynamic period for Somalia that lasted several centuries. The Portuguese repeatedly bombarded Somali port cities to force them into submission, but, rather than submit to foreign rule, Somalia went into a long decline, the Somali people reverting to self-governance.

Chapter 3: Self-Governance as a Political Order

Where Somali self-governance, the clan system and xeer, the 'Somali social contract', are studied as a form of political order. Why the rhizome provides a better model to understand the Somali clan system than the more usual tree. About these two models of organic growth, and what we can learn from contemporary forestry science. Where the State of Nature is brought back in to explain clan self-governance, and turns out to be the long forgotten ancestor of our civil state. Why we need a new theory – the Dual Power Theory – to make sense of the dynamic relation between social and symbolic power.

In Chapter One the State was presented as the only source of political power, at least in the contemporary vision, while in Chapter Two Somali clan-based self-governance was presented as a lasting form of political order that interacted flexibly with hierarchical forms of power but that did not adopt them. Before embarking on a study of society-state relations in Somalia since the encounter with the modern state in the colonial period, this contradiction needs to be resolved. How can self-governance in a stateless environment be conceptualized as political order?

This chapter starts with an examination of how the Somali clan system generates its own political order. Then the intuition of Jean-François Bayart about the 'rhizome-state' in Africa is applied to understand it. Given its promising initial results, the rhizome is investigated as an alternative model to the tree. Since few people are familiar with the rhizome, this term requires clarification, from Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual opposition between the rhizome and the tree to modern forestry science. The model of the rhizome is then applied to a contentious area of the Somali clan system: its arborescent structure. The argument leads us to a dual conception of political power, opposing the social power for which the rhizome seems to provide a powerful model to state power characterized by the tree.

In the description of the genealogy of the Western state we saw that it emerged, for many ancient and enlightenment thinkers, from a dualistic opposition to what they called 'the State of Nature'. Can self-governance be understood as emanating from the putative natural social order of humanity? If so, can the rhizome-tree opposition shed light on how it interacts with State power? Pursuing this reasoning to its conclusion, I suggest an analytical framework based on the dual nature of power.

3.1 The Somali Clan System

"Few societies can so conspicuously lack those judicial, administrative, and political procedures which lie at the heart of the western conception of government (...) Yet, although they [the Somalis] thus lack to a remarkable degree all the machinery of centralized government, they are not without government or political institutions." [1]

Ioan Myrdal Lewis, 1961

The most common complaint about the political system one hears in Somalia today is that it is hostage to clannism (*qabiilyaada*)[2]. Election campaigns and voting patterns provide evidence for this. Other forms of network identity—such as those based on higher education[3], religious orientation[4] or professional interests—exist in Somali society, and there may be nothing unavoidable about clans dominating the socio-political domain. Such networks can also have political expressions. Nevertheless, clan identity constantly dominates Somali politics, and usually ends up by subsuming other political identities. Although no Somali political group will ever admit to representing a certain clan or lineage, almost all political groups are obviously based on lineage.

Researching the role of clan in Somali politics is tricky and politically unwelcome. Somalis are sensitive about foreigners poking their noses into Somali clan affairs and trying to make sense of it, or to make it work for external interests. The quite virulent debate about the role of clan identities in the civil war that took place in the late 1990s, and that has been reiterated a few times since, is described in some detail in Chapter Six. As a result scholarship about Somali clans has decreased over the past decades: Somali scholars rather avoid the subject, and foreign scholars have become wary. But given that Somalis themselves identify clannism as the major political problem the country faces today, the topic cannot be avoided.

The most comprehensive study of Somali self-governance practices is that of I.M. Lewis: "A Pastoral Democracy", which appeared in 1961, the year after the independence of Somalia.[5] It is based on extensive field work in the late 1950s. This is the main source for the following study of Somali self-governance, complemented with insights by Somali authors and a few more recent ethnographic studies focusing on the intra-riverine sedentary communities and minorities living along the Juba and Shabelle rivers. Unfortunately, there has been little research into urban self-governance.[6] Lewis' research, which was declined in many other academic publications, may be a bit dated but I use the present tense in the analysis below, because most characteristics of the Somali clan system survive today, albeit usually in a modified form.

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[1] Lewis 1961: "A Pastoral Democracy"; p1.

[2] Almost every Somali analyst and political commentator agrees on this point, from liberal democrats to Salafis.

[3] Sarah Phillips highlights the importance of Somaliland's Sheekh and Amoud secondary school networks in the SNM, civil society, and the upper echelons of politics and the administration. Lafoole secondary school near Mogadishu played a similar role. Phillips 2020: "When there was no Aid. War and Peace in Somaliland"; p77-82.

[4] See works by Baadiyow, e.g., "Recovering the Somali State", 2017, on the role of Islamic networks in recent Somali history and its potential for the future. Al I'tisam is a modern Islamic network with a strong implantation in Somaliland and Puntland, but another example is the Dandarawiiya Sufi community in Sheekh, see note 36.

[5] Lewis 1961: "A Pastoral Democracy".

[6] This topic is explored in section 7.2 through Marchal's field study of the economy of Mogadishu in 2002

The Somali Clan Structure

There are two ways to approach the Somali clan structure: from the individual to the Somali ethnic group; or top-down, from the clan-families down to individual lineages. For the reader not familiar with Somalia, it is easier to start with the more familiar and easier to oversee top-down structure. As these groups are referred to throughout the text, this also serves as an introduction to the Somali clan system. The individual and community-centred approach is dealt with in the following section.

The three largest clan families are mostly pastoral. They are

- the **Hawiye**, who dominate the federal states of Galmudug and Hirshabelle and the city of Mogadishu. The largest Hawiye clans are the Habar Gidir (Galmudug) and the Abgal (Middle Shabelle and Mogadishu). Other large clans of this family referred to in this text are the Hawadle, Murosade, Sheekhal, Ajuraan and Duduble
- the **Darood**, who dominate the federal states of Puntland and Jubaland. The biggest clans are the Majerteen (Puntland), the Ogadeni (in the Ethiopian Somali region and southern Jubaland) and the Marehan (in northern Jubaland and along the Galmudug/Ethiopian border). Other large Darood clans are the Dhulbahante and Warsangeli in the area claimed by both Somaliland and Puntland.
- the **Dir/Isaaq**, who rule Somaliland; they are often brought together as they share common ancestors, but they consider themselves as two different clan families. The Isaaq dominate Somaliland, and their biggest clans are the Habar Younes, Habar Awal and Habar Je'lo. More about them in the section on Somaliland. The Dir are spread between western Somaliland (Gadabursi), Djibouti & Ethiopia (Issa) and the lower Shabelle (semi-sedentary Bimal).

The other large clan family is called Rahanweyn, which calls itself Reewin. It comprises both sedentary and nomadic people in the intra-riverine area of south Somalia. They dominate the South-West State. Their two main components are the Digil (mostly farmers along the Shabelle river) and the Mirifle (mostly semi-sedentary pastoralists in the intra-riverine area), and they have many clans of equivalent size.[7] The Rahanweyn speak their own May dialect of Somali and their herds rarely venture beyond the rivers, making them more localized. They are looked down upon by the first three clan families, who consider themselves more noble (*bilis*).

The numbers of the four groups mentioned above are roughly equivalent. The Darood, Hawiye and Isaaq also are present in the Ethiopian Somali region and in northeast Kenya, and small communities of these clan families are found in the federal member states ascribed above to other clan families. No clan territory is homogeneous. The federal states they rule today are only mentioned above to allow the reader to situate the clan families and main clans on Figure 3; how the federal states were formed between 2012 and 2016 will be explained in Chapter Nine.

[7] This group is also often called *Sab*, especially in southern Somalia. An overview can be found in Gundel 2006: "The Predicament of the 'Oday'"; p51.

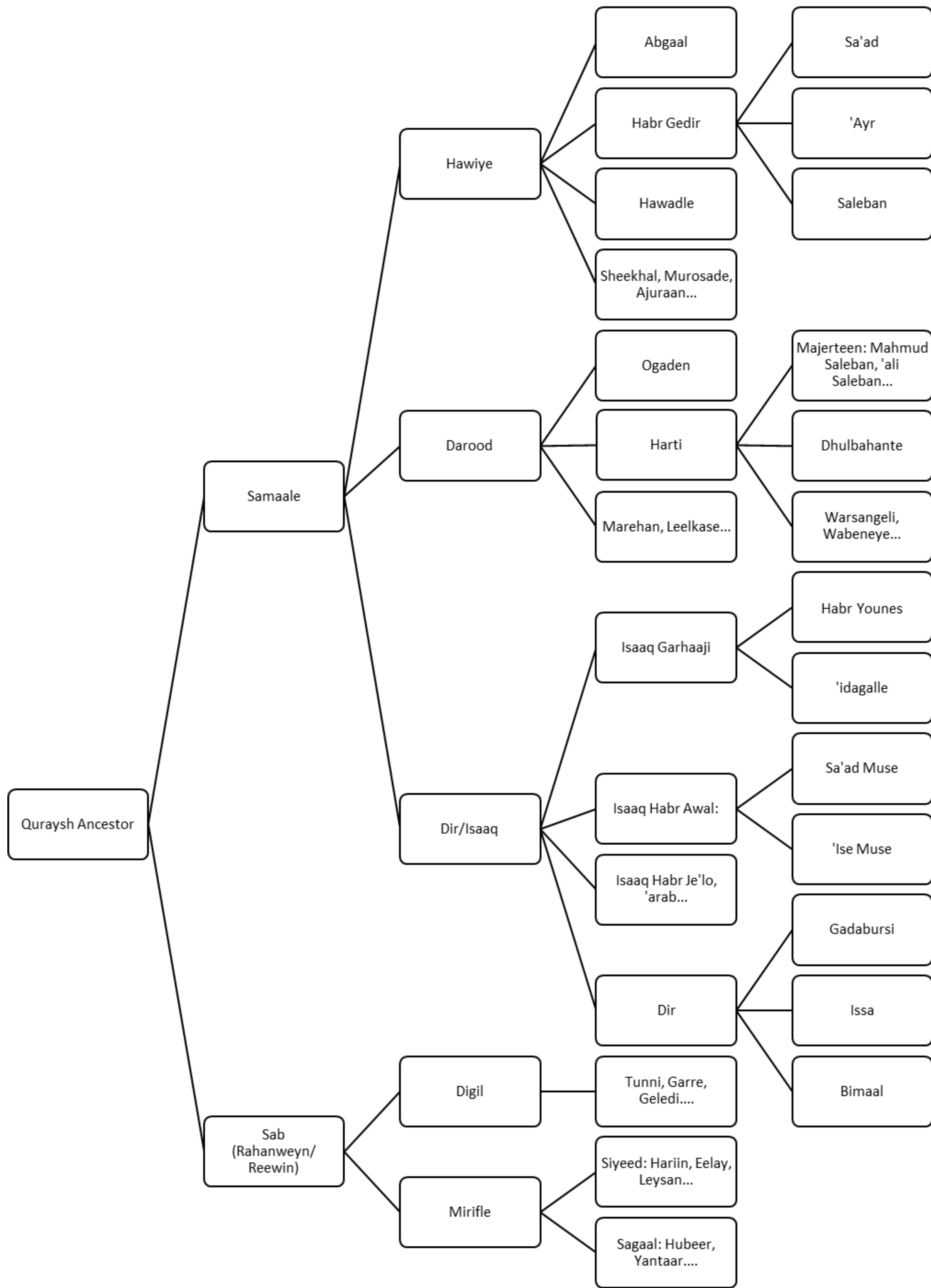

Figure 6: Diagram of the Somali clan families (made by the author)

The rest of the Somali population is lumped together in a category called 'minorities'. They are composed of three main groups: Bantu, Gabooye and Benadiris. This is admittedly a contestable simplification, but one that lies at the basis of the current Somali political system.

The Bantu live in farming communities of Bantu origin, for example the Gosha along the Juba River and the Shiidle and Jareerweyne along the Shabelle River. Roughly half of them seem to have arrived with the Bantu migrations to East Africa about 1,000 years ago, and the other half are descendants from slaves brought to Somalia in the 19th Century (see 4.1). Until recently they were not part of the clan system.

'Gabooye' refers to 'professional' minorities, akin to outcasts, who live everywhere throughout Somalia, mostly in towns. They do handwork, such as leatherwork (the Midgaan), smithing (the Tumaal), or barbering, as well as traditional medicine and magic (the Yibir). Handwork, especially in service of another, is seen as degrading by the rest of the Somalis. Both Bantu and Gabooye are considered unmarriable by other Somali clans, and thus they are mostly endogamic. Moreover, the Gabooye until recently were barred from owning land or livestock, and from participating in local markets or politics.

The third, Benadir, minority is composed of small urban clans, which arose out of intermarriage or 'Somalification' of Arab, Persian, East African and other foreign settlers, mostly trading families. Though they wielded economic power, their small size and the absence of militias meant they were decimated during the civil war and are scattered in the diaspora.

Other minorities are small groups, such as the Bajuni (Swahili-speaking, but Somali seafaring people living on islands near the Kenyan border) and the Ashraf, supposedly descendants of the Prophet's daughter Fatima, who enjoy religious and scholarly prestige, and live integrated with other clans throughout the country, generally in towns. The Benadiri and Ashraf can intermarry with other Somali clans, and are not looked down upon, besides for being 'weak' in martial terms.

Following the arborescent approach from the trunk outwards, as compiled by colonial ethnographers, the clan families branch out into clan, sub-clans and further sub-units all the way down to the family (Fig. 6). This neat approach invariably gets murkier and more contested the further one departs from the trunk. Closely related people may give different replies about genealogical ties. Moreover, lineages split as they grow, producing new lineages—not always recognized by others—while weak lineages, such as those that lost their flocks through drought, may be absorbed by wholly unrelated stronger ones. Sometimes, lineages strike alliances with each other that become lasting; this can result in the creation of a new sub-clan, variably appended to its mother clans.

Characteristics of Somali Self-Governance

The most essential aspect of the internal political organization of a pastoral Somali community is egalitarianism between adult males. Each man is considered a potential elder (*oday*) and has equal rights to decision making. Distinctions between men are based on their capacity (piety, knowledge, wisdom, martial, oratory and poetry skills) and resources (wealth/livestock, amount of progeny)[8], but these are never structural. A young man is generally considered to be 'adult' not upon reaching a specific age, but when he is married, has children and some property/livestock.

Decisions are made in councils (*shir*) where all adult men convene. Decisions are based on consensus, not voting. This can entail lengthy discussions, but the outcome is accepted, in principle, by all community members (the agreement of women and children is presumed). As Lewis notes: "*where every man has a direct say in traditional government all are politicians, and as such, the pastoralists excel in guile and strategy*."[9] As civic republicans have noted, through regular participation in collective

[8] Lewis 1961:196.

[9] ibid.:30.

deliberation about community affairs, individuals become more attuned to the necessity to strive for the common good and become more expert (and efficient) at collective decision-making.[10]

In political terms, one could say that each adult male is fully sovereign. There is no human authority above him. This is evident in the lack of political institutions in Somali society.[11] A clan assembly (*shir*) occasionally elected an elder to represent them to an outside power, but this elder had no autonomous power and had to report back to the *shir* to take a decision with their approval.[12] The position was occasionally passed down within a particular lineage, such as the *boqor* (king) of the Osman Mohamud, especially from the 18th century onward,[13] but this did not mean that the descendant automatically had authority: he had to earn it by demonstrating leadership.[14]

Although the characteristics of Somali political organization mentioned here were identified mostly for pastoralists, historians, other ethnographers and Somali writers confirm that sedentary communities are self-governed in a largely similar manner.[15] As to urban communities, they commonly are divided into lineage areas, and neighbourhoods are thus ruled through clan self-governance, with local adaptations as needed. The egalitarian principle that each adult male has an equal say and is fundamentally 'self-sovereign', as we shall see subsequently, still applies to Somali politics today.

Xeer, the Somali Social Contract

A crucial point is that Somali lineages are traditionally not linked to territory. At clan level there is some sense of territory (*'deegaan'*), but this disappears at higher and lower segmentations. For example, the Darood clan family is spread out over the entire Horn of Africa. Until a century ago, nothing stopped a certain lineage of travelling through areas controlled by other clans (as long as they can negotiate, or fight, their way through) and settling in an entirely different area where they find good pasture, maybe semi-permanently. As there is no legitimating principle of attachment to land, relations between lineages are defined mainly by force,[16] supplemented by *xeer,* which Lewis translates by contract, compact, agreement, treaty.[17] Other translations are 'social contract', 'tribal custom' or 'customary law'.

Xeer regulates relations between lineages on the basis of unwritten, but well understood, agreements. These are negotiated between elders (potentially any adult man) of these lineages and primarily aim to settle conflicts, share resources and for collective defence and security. *Xeer* proceeds by what is akin to a system of oral jurisprudence. Agreements made in the past that have worked can be re-applied, thus forming a body of practice that elders can refer to when solving conflicts, even if there has not been a specific agreement between two lineages in conflict.

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[10] Hannah Arendt (1963) notably was a proponent of the republican value of participation

[11] ibid.:241: "*what is generally characteristic of the northern Somali political system is its striking lack of formal political offices*."

[12] Cassanelli 1982: "The Shaping of Somali Society. Reconstructing the History of a Pastoral People, 1600-1900"; p86.

[13] Hersi 1977 points out that the current Somali dynastic titles such as *garaad, boqor, ugas, suldan,* etc., only appeared in reaction to Ottoman rule (indeed, such titles seem more prevalent in Northern Somalia, where Ottoman power reached). All previous Arab chroniclers describe how public affairs were led collectively by all adult males, and hereditary rule goes against the principle of self-governance.

[14] Jama 2007: "Kinship and Contract in Somali Politics"; p228.

[15] See for example Gundel 2006; Luling 2006; and others.

[16] Lewis 1961:3: "*In Somali lineage politics the assumption that might is right has overwhelming authority*".

[17] ibid.:162.

Customary law is directed toward the maintenance of social *peace*, not to the imposition of a system of rules that guarantees social *order*. For example, when a weak lineage incurs injury by a stronger one, *xeer* is commonly not applied as the weak lineage cannot take revenge and disrupt social peace[18].

A fundamental principle of social relations between Somali clans is that of collective responsibility. This is coherent with the principle of egalitarianism and decision by consensus (if all adult males have agreed, they are all equally responsible). It extends to the actions of any member of the group. It is most clearly expressed in the concept of ***mag* or blood money** (*diya* in Arabic). If a member of your lineage has killed another Somali outside your lineage, you share the responsibility for the murder. This means that you could be killed in return by any member of the victim's group or must contribute to raising blood money for the victim's family. This generally also applies to theft, rape, and defamation.[19]

A *mag*- or *diya*-paying group is a basic community unit, usually comprising between a few hundred and a few thousand people[20], sufficient to pay the price for the murder of an adult male, which is 100 camels according to sharia (50 camels for an adult woman). Mag-paying groups usually comprise several lineages. They split when they grow sufficiently large, and when one half of the group no longer wishes to bear the responsibility for the actions of the other half. Although *mag*-paying groups tend to be patrilineal, they can also form between neighbouring non-related lineages[21], and kin through matrilateral connections may also be expected to contribute to raising blood money.

Each *mag*-paying group is bound by *xeer* to honour the obligation to pay compensation for spilt blood or other grave injuries, but the *xeer* also extends to neighbouring mag-paying groups[22], and in fact all Somali society is bound in this manner by a collective *xeer* agreement, although, as mentioned, stronger clans may disregard paying *mag* if they think they can get away with it. Weaker clans, such as sedentary populations, may form alliances with a stronger group, in which they become a subordinate partner (*sheegad*). This allows them to profit from the protection of the stronger (*bilis*) group, including being part of their *mag* group. In return they offer food, access to water and manpower when necessary, thus strengthening the *bilis* clan without formally joining it. The Bantu and Gabooye minorities are usually spurned by the *bilis* clans and have no access to such arrangements[23].

The collective responsibility for blood money can have far-reaching consequences. Private property (primordially, one's livestock, but also one's money) thus is also communal property. It dilutes individual responsibility (as your mag-paying group, not you, carry responsibility for a murder), but it reinforces group cohesion, as each member of the group is responsible for the actions of all others. For example, if a person is dangerously deranged, the group collectively attempts to ensure he doesn't go out and kill someone else. This principle may explain relatively low homicide rates in Somalia.

Besides the paying of 'blood' compensation (collective responsibility for spilt blood, theft, rape and defamation), André Le Sage (2005) points out the following fundamental principles of *xeer*[24]:

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[18] Charlotte Besteman describes how pastoral Darood clans (Awlihan) would routinely raid food and people from Gosha (Bantu minority) communities along the Jubba River. To her surprise, the Gosha mostly pretended this did not happen and that they had good relations with the Awlihan (who *did* admit to committing these crimes). She concluded that, to admit to being raided would confirm the Gosha's inferior status to a foreigner. Besteman 1993: "Public History and Private Knowledge: On Disputed History in Southern Somalia".

[19] Le Sage 2005: "Stateless Justice in Somalia. Formal and Informal Rule of Law Initiatives"; p32.

[20] Gundel 2006:6.

[21] Lewis 1961: "Force and Fission in Northern Somali Lineage Structure"; p106-107.

[22] Le Sage 2005.

[23] Besteman 1993:583-584 explains that within each lineage one can find 'nobles' and commoners, the former being able to trace a direct line of patrilineal descent to the ancestor, the latter (adopted, or descendants of adopted) not. Nobles outnumber commoners in most Northern and Central pastoralist clans but it is the other way round in the inter-riverine areas of the South.

[24] Le Sage 2005:32-33.

- *ius in bello*: treatment of wounded or captured opponents, and honouring the untouchability of *biri-mageydo* (women, children, guests, spiritual leaders, doctors, mediating elders);
- family obligations, such as paying a dowry, marrying the wife of a deceased brother, the right to the sister of a deceased wife;
- sharing of pasture and water, and supporting newly-weds and the poor with donations.

Xeer is subdivided into *xeer guud* (common law, including family/social and penal law) and *xeer gaar* (dealing with resource management). Sharia is to a large extent integrated in a subordinate role by *xeer*; and religious authorities generally need the protection of the traditional clan authorities where they reside; in return they give their blessings and guidance when the traditional authorities cannot deal with a case. While clan elders at times appear as corruptible to those seeking justice, religious authorities usually have a higher standing, but less practical power.

The principles of *xeer* as explained above are generally agreed upon by all Somalis; but elders can also decide to make specific agreements, either internal or with other lineages outside their group, as long as they fall under the general principles of *xeer* and no-one argues they are contrary to sharia. For example, to allow each other's caravans or trucks to pass without taxation, or how to share access to a specific watering point. Such agreements are routinely renewed when the elders involved in monitoring their application meet in a *shir.*

Xeer is not sufficient to deal with mass killings, modern crimes and major political crises. In that case, communities agree on representatives who come together to solve the problem at hand. They are then called *nabadoon* (peace-seekers). They are not vested with decision-making powers, and they must return to their communities to sell the agreement they have reached; if they fail to convince their own constituencies, they must return to the negotiation table. During the formation of Somaliland, negotiations to agree on the contours of the future state took many months. The hosting community usually provides for the expenses of the meeting—mostly food and a safe place to sleep.

When a conflict between two communities negatively impacts other communities, such as the fight over the control of port facilities,) the elders of the other communities may intervene to force a solution to the conflict. This is a legitimate intercession by *nabadoon* that the leaders of the community in conflict have to accept, although they may of course not agree with the solutions proposed. Thus, in an extension of *xeer*, elders may engage in mediation and arbitration among communities they do not belong to.

Xeer has been challenged by the emergence of formal law systems and by events such as mass killings during the civil war, the emancipation of women, or the introduction of private property rights to land: issues it is incapable of dealing with. Nevertheless, *xeer* remains integrated into the core of Somali social relations. I have experienced Somali office workers in Nairobi depressed because they had to contribute to blood money for a deadly traffic accident caused by far-off kin, and others afraid of being killed by a stranger in the streets of an unfamiliar town, because their kin may not have settled their blood money debts. It seems *xeer* is a declining but still vital element of Somali political culture, but, as we shall see, it has changed.

Xeer falls under the general heading 'self-governance' because there is no central authority imposing it, and all adult males have an equal say in it. Efforts to codify it over the past century have failed (as discussed in Part II). It extends self-governance within the community to relations between communities. In 1961, I.M. Lewis wrote, in a slightly romantic vein, that *xeer* as a political principle has "*closest affinities with those political theories which saw the origins of political union in an egalitarian social contract*."

The Abbaan

The *abbaan*, or protector, is a figure that early travellers to Somalia were well acquainted with, for no foreigner could set foot on Somali land without having an *abbaan*. In the words of Lee Cassanelli, the *abbaan* "*offered temporary shelter and security for traders or travellers whose business required them to spend time in another clan's territory. The* abbaan *and his kinsmen served as guarantors of the guests' safety for the duration of their stay; in turn, the patronage of the* abbaan *ensured that guests would conduct their business in the interests of their hosts.*"[25] Guests could be foreigners or Somalis of other clans.

The *abbaan*, or protector, plays an important role in inter-clan relations. He is usually member of one of the locally dominant clans, and has agreed to provide protection to members of other, distantly- or not-related, clan members. This protection includes hospitality, protecting the visiting clan members from other local groups, covering visiting clan members when they misbehave or commit a crime, and settling business disputes. In exchange, he can ask for payments or a commission on the trade conducted.

Each clan had an *abbaan*, a protector, in one of the port towns, which were sometimes divided—as Mogadishu was in the 19th century—between clan-dominated areas.[26] Charles Guillain noted in 1842-1843 that there were two markets in Mogadishu, each dominated exclusively by one clan with its own *abbaan*, *qadi* and protection forces.[27] The figure of the *abbaan* was vital for the professional minorities (Gabooye), as it was the only way they could participate in community politics and markets, before the emergence of formal modern political institutions in which they have equal rights.

The role of *abbaan* is quite stable and the relationship can pass on to future generations. These non-kin based relations can solidify over time, for example when a lineage from a rural clan settles in an urban area where they are protected by an abbaan; as time goes by, the rural lineage may even integrate the urban lineage of the abbaan.[28] The *abbaan* system seems to have influenced population patterns within towns, and thus urban social life.

The term *abbaan* is rarely used today, but the concept still exists, as in 'gatekeeper'—the person with essential connections to foreign funds—and the connection that allows you to solve problems with the authorities or obtain a government job (*wasita* in the Arab world). The *abbaan* indicates the fundamental flexibility of the Somali clan system, showing how kinship relations can be 'invented' when that is useful.

Self-Governance in Settled and Religious Communities

Observing the differences between settled (agricultural) and pastoral communities in Somaliland, Lewis noted that "*settlement seems to create conditions conducive to a more formal structure of authority; and at least one in which local elders wield greater power than they do in the pastoral situation. Certainly, local cultivating communities maintain law and order without recourse to violence even between members of different mag-paying groups where among the pastoralists self-help or administrative intervention would be required*.[29]". It was common understanding when I.M. Lewis wrote this that agriculture leads to forms of hierarchical society, compared to nomad/pastoralist communities. Even today, sedentary communities on farmlands around Gabileh in Somaliland are organized more hierarchically than pastoralists, as I observed between 2016 and 2018. The same lineages also engage in

[25] Cassanelli 2015: "Hosts and Guests: A Historical Interpretation of Land Conflicts in Southern and Central Somalia"; p16.

[26] Cassanelli 1982:27ff.

[27] Alpers 1983: "Muqdisho in the Nineteenth Century: A Regional Perspective"; p446.

[28] This insight is gleaned from Cassanelli 1982:156-159, who takes his example from the caravan trade.

[29] Lewis 1961:125-126.

pastoralism; when they do, they switch to a more egalitarian way of self-governance, and the clan elders, who are used to allocating tasks during sedentary phases, become equal to other pastoralists while on the move.

Lewis also surveyed settled religious (*tariqa*) communities in Somaliland, which members of any lineage could join. While living together in a non-kinship community, individual members would still have *mag*-paying obligations toward their clans. I visited one such community in Sheekh, Somaliland, that had a more radical stance, because its members needed to renounce their clan affiliation, and submit to the spiritual and political life of the community as led by the sheikh[30]. It struck me and my Somali companions as being very unusual that Somalis would accept such authority, without having any say in community affairs.

In south Somalia, among the semi-sedentary Rahanweyn, there is a higher degree of centralization among traditional authorities. There are institutions such as the head of the clan (*malaakh* = king), who has executive power, and a permanent council of elders (*akhyaar*) from all Rahanweyn clans. Community elders elect their own *malaakhs* (as a lifetime position) and suggest elders for membership of the *akhyaar*, but the latter must be invited by the other elders on the *akhyaar* council. Council members have executive authority to take decisions on behalf of their community. The *malaakh* is the head of the *mag*-paying group. Interestingly, the Rahanweyn explain the strength of their traditional authorities as being the result of their attachment to the land as well as their religious scholarship, in contrast to the pastoral clansmen with their insistence on lineage[31]. According to Rahanweyn leaders, these political institutions are inherited from the Geledi Sultanate, and seem to have been revitalized by the collapse of the Somali state and the subsequent civil war, which hit the Rahanweyn disproportionately hard. They also demonstrate an attachment to history.

The Rahanweyn are known to accept non-clan-members much easier than other Somalis; they integrate them into their communities by providing a place on their land (if there is space). They extend kinship to new arrivals, thus showing an openness in terms of community identity, which is rare among Somalis[32]. This confuses the clan identity system: as the Rahanweyn are seen as less *bilis* ('noble') than other pastoral Somalis—among others because they take lineage less seriously—the latter may seek to retain their own clan identity while accepting the offered one for pragmatical reasons. This can lead to parallel genealogies: one for government surveyors, the other for their personal contacts. This is usually explained by the fact that the community derives its identity from the territory it inhabits, in addition to lineage identity.

In south Somalia, among the Rahanweyn but also among other people, many more *tariqa* communities are found than in the north. The same can be said about them as in the north: they tend to adopt structures of formal authority that are already inherent in Sufi orders: the hierarchical relation between *murshid* (teacher/guide) and *murid* (student/seeker). This facilitates the organization of agricultural labour. However, it also adds to and usually does not negate clan identities of the followers. At times both overlap, and some religious communities are clan-exclusive and do not accept followers from other lineages, or only in subordinate positions. An example is the Jama'a Mubarak Belet Karim of Barsane lineage of the Hawiye/Galje'el, a group that opposed the Italian presence from the late 19th century to

[30] This is the Dandarawiiya community, described in Lewis 1961:96-100, and visited by me in June 2019. In Lewis' time, members still had responsibilities towards their kin, but when I visited, they were no longer allowed to have these ties. I could not get access to the community itself, but spoke with the sheikh and with inhabitants from the town that were not member of the community, but knew it well.

[31] Gundel 2006:29-30. His text is based on recent research including many interviews, reflecting the situation in the early 2000s.

[32] Helander 1996: "Rahanweyn Sociability: A Model for Other Somalis?".

1928.[33] But these are the exception; in principle, *tariqas* are open to members from other lineages, and they provide an additional layer of identity instead of erasing the old one.

Islam inherently encourages the settlement of Muslims. In the Quran the nomadic lifestyle is seen as detrimental to the practice of religion, and the Prophet Muhammad admonished his tribal followers to abandon nomadism and settle in agricultural communities. In the state-*vs*-nomads framework, Islam as an organized religion clearly situates itself on the state side, though political practice in Islam is commonly quite tribal. This gives pastoral nomadism an a-religious aspect. Religious groups have long used this to attack the clan system and replace it with social relations based on the community of believers (the *umma*), sharia and individual responsibility, instead of clans and *xeer*.

The experience of settled compared to pastoral communities in Somalia validates the perception that agricultural labour requires forms of hierarchical, centralized organization, put forward by proponents of *'agriculture as the engine of early state-building and civilization'*. Settled religious communities have an additional reason to prefer a hierarchical political order to one based on equality and self-governance: it seems to fit the purposes of God, whose assumed existence at the head of the religious establishment already suggests a natural hierarchy in human affairs. Nevertheless, in all descriptions above, there is little institutionalization and codification for bolstering the exercise of centralized authority, which remains dependent on the personal charisma of the leader. Elements of self-rule persist in most cases, such as the *akhyaar* council and leadership councils of *tariqas*. As mentioned, in many cases members of settled, non-clan communities retain their clan identities in addition to their locality-bound identity.

A Flexible Lineage System

A close observation of the 'segmentary lineage system', as Lewis called it, and my experience of it through my Somali contacts, demonstrates that, what at first appears as a rigid, tree-like structure that branches out into many separate branches and twigs (as in Figure 6**?**), is in fact quite flexible, allowing the establishment of different kinds of links between its parts. Charisma, social skills, worldly influence and personal motivation all play a role in bridging gaps between individuals or communities. Matrilateral connections also play an important part. Thanks to the practice of exogamy (marrying outside your lineage) women offer access to other lineages. Social relations are not only determined by this system of identity formation but also shape it, whether through established social institutions like the *abbaan*, or improvised ones, such as lineages joining to form new communities for religious or practical reasons.

Xeer provides stability and longevity to Somali society as an agreed set of social practices, but—like clan identities—it is flexible. This inherent flexibility allows Somali political culture to adapt to new givens, such as the emancipation of women (with difficulty) and minorities, the exile of entire communities, and the establishment of new centres of formal power. Observers may be surprised that the 'clan system' has survived and is still so strong in Somalia today, despite seeming so obviously antiquated and unsuited for the contemporary period of liberal democratic politics.

Somali political culture in its 'pure' pastoralist form is based on self-governance; but land ownership, organized agricultural labour, and Islam tend to establish systems of formal authority. These are not processes induced by colonialism or the encounter with the Western State, but are older. Somali political culture has formed itself around this opposition. Despite the impressive array of forces that seem to be on the side of the State (including both Islam and the international community, with their legal, political and financial systems), until today nomadic political culture, despite its recognized negative features such as unpredictability, unequal rights for women and minorities, disregard for the Rule of Law and refusal to submit to 'the greater good' of nationhood, still dominates Somali politics.

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[33] Mukhtar 2003:209-210

Somali self-governance is thus a form of political order that has apparently managed to maintain the stability of the clan system for a millennium at least. As contemporary Somalis often note, it has brought neither development nor prosperity, but it has maintained the self-sovereignty of Somali men. It is rigorously non-formal, has no institutions; each adult male is sovereign, decisions are made by consensus and there is collective responsibility for outcomes. Self-governance is opposed in every way to what the modern state stands for. Can a model be found for it in political theory?

3.2 The Rhizome as a Model for Clan Self-Governance

We are also 'tired of the tree', of this arboreal metaphor of the State which, in truth, has exhausted the theoreticians. Our time would be better spent trying to understand the mysteries of the rhizome. [34]
Jean-François Bayart, 1993

In 'L'État en Afrique' (1989), J.F. Bayart suggested reading African state-society relations through the lens of the rhizome. He qualifies the African state as a Rhizome State: "*An infinitely variable multiplicity of networks whose underground branches connect the scattered points of society. In order to understand it, we must do more than examine the institutional buds above ground and look instead at its adventitious roots in order to analyse the bulbs and tubers from which it secretly extracts its nourishment and its vivacity*".[35]

Furthermore, Bayart added that "*the postcolonial State is not dissimilar from its colonial and precolonial predecessors. It obeys a law of incompletion. It functions as a rhizome of personal networks and assures the centralization of power through the agencies of family, alliance and friendship, in the manner of ancient kingdoms that possessed the principal attributes of a State within a lineage matrix, thereby reconciling two types of political organization wrongly thought to be incompatible*".[36] But he did not further develop the idea in subsequent books and papers. Other Africanists noted Bayart's interesting perspective,[37] but a detailed rhizomatic analysis of African politics cannot be found. Bayart's take on the African state will be explored in more detail in following chapters; here the focus is on exploring and developing his concept of the rhizome.

In fact, the concept of the rhizome has barely entered the vocabulary of political science.[38] It was developed by Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze in the late 1970s and formed the structure for their book 'Mille Plateaux' (1980).[39] It comes from the world of vegetation, where it is conceptually opposed to the tree. The tree has a hierarchical structure, with roots and branches growing from the trunk; the tree's structure is prefigured in the seed, and it grows according to an inherent, pre-planned logic. The rhizome, by contrast, grows underground in a seemingly chaotic manner, creating nodes from where it branches out in an endless process. Fungi and plants such as ginger, bamboo and strawberries grow this way. The principles of the rhizome, as noted by Deleuze & Guattari (1980), are *heterogeneity*, *connections between all parts*, *multiplicity*, an *open cartography*, *reproduction without copying itself*, and *insignificant rupture*.[40]

To illustrate these principles: rhizomes are continuously growing, but there seems to be no logic or structure to their growth. There is no beginning or end, each node is in the middle of a structure and connected to all other nodes in multiple ways, which makes the rupture of one of the connections

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[34] Bayart 1993: "The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly"; p221.

[35] ibid.: 220-221.

[36] ibid.:261-262.

[37] Such as Jourde 2009: "Les Grilles d'Analyse de la Politique Africaine : la Problématique de l'Etat"; and Schlichte 2018 : «Politics in African States ».

[38] See Lenco 2014: "(Re-)Introducing Deleuze: New Readings of Deleuze in International Studies" on the reception of Deleuze's work in IR.

[39] Deleuze & Guattari 1980 : "Capitalisme et Schizophrénie Vol 2 : Mille Plateaux"; p11-32. This was preceded by "Rhizome: Introduction" published in 1976, but I use the updated text of 1980.

[40] Insignificant rupture is a function of 'connections between all parts'; in an arborescent structure, all parts after a rupture will be affected by it.

insignificant. At each point, it adapts to its environment by the principle of 'reproduction without copying itself', fostering heterogeneity; it continuously evolves into something else than it originally seemed to be, and multiplicity at each of its nodes is the centre of its own constellation of connections. The World Wide Web is an example of a rhizome,[41] but the human mind also seems to function in this manner[42].

Recent insights from forestry science show that tree roots communicate with other trees through the mycelium.[43] Through this rhizomatic connection, each individual tree is also part of a superorganism: the forest. This understanding of plant life, also jocularly dubbed 'The Wood Wide Web' for obvious reasons, has only recently been pioneered scientifically.[44] For example, a poplar forest is a single organism that can last many thousands of years. Each poplar is a separate tree growing from a seed, but their separate roots all connect underground in a rhizomatic structure that survives even when all trees are destroyed, for example in a forest fire. Through the rhizome, the trees connect and provide each other with essential nutrients; they warn each other of disease or predators, so that trees can start building their defence system before the attack, etc. Rhizomes can extend over many square kilometres and move up a mountain slope should the climate become too hot, carrying the forest to better climates.

Moreover, the rhizome does not only connect trees from the same species, but all plant life. For example, Suzanne Simard found that certain trees have more connections; she calls these Mother Trees because they stock nutrients for weaker trees and saplings. They provide these preferably to their own species, but also to other plants and organisms. Rhizomatic fungal networks transform organic to inorganic matter and vice-versa.[45] The rhizome, in fact, connects forest life as a whole, sometimes over great distances. In that sense, it is an essential communications tool that differentiates between its offspring and other species, but connects all parts of plant life, creating the basis for an ecosystem. Areas where fungal rhizomes have become upset by land movement, herbicides or large-scale intervention have demonstrably less productive and varied ecosystems.[46]

This brings the notion of the rhizome close to that of life itself. The first one to make this connection may have been Carl Jung: "*Life has always seemed to me like a plant that lives on its rhizome. Its true life is invisible, hidden in the rhizome. The part that appears above ground lasts only a single summer. Then it withers away-an ephemeral apparition. When we think of the unending growth and decay of life and civilizations, we cannot escape the impression of absolute nullity. Yet I have never lost the sense of something that lives and endures beneath the eternal flux. What we see is blossom, which passes. The rhizome remains.*"[47] Combining Jung's quote with those of Bayart at the beginning of this section, three more characteristics of the rhizome can be identified: it transmits life-force or *bios—'from which it secretly extracts its nourishment*'—it is durable beyond the manifestation of its life-forms or

[41] For a structural explanation, see Vieira & Ferasso, 2010: "The Rhizomatic Structure of Cyberspace: Virtuality and its Possibilities". For an example of its political instrumentalization, see Beck 2016: "Web of Resistance: Deleuzian Digital Space and Hacktivism".

[42] Schuh & Cunningham 2004: "Rhizome and the Mind: Describing the Metaphor".

[43] This is a network of fungal threads through the soil transmitting organic nutrients like water, minerals, carbon, gases and energy signals. Besides trees, other plants are also connected to this mycelium, which can be seen as an archetypal image of the rhizome.

[44] As I am not a forestry expert, I relied on the bestselling books about this subject by Canadian expert Suzanne Simard 2021: "Finding the Mother Tree", and German forestry expert Peter Wohlleben 2015: "The Hidden Life of Trees", as well as on online articles

[45] One cubic centimetre of soil can contain 750 metres of mycelium, the threads that extend between nodes. "*I contend*," says Paul Stamets in "Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World", "*that the planet's health actually depends on our respect for fungi.*" They are "the *grand recyclers of our planet, the interface organism between life and death. Without fungi, all ecosystems would fail*."

[46] Simard 2021

[47] Jung 1965: "Memoirs, Dreams, Reflections"; p4.

institutions—'*obeying a law of incompletion*'—and it is invisible—its '*underground branches connect the scattered points of society*'.

Intuitively, it appears that social relations between people are driven by a rhizomatic logic, not only among Somali nomads or in African politics, but generally. The rhizome offers a model for how humans establish friendships or acquire knowledge, and of how intuitive thought processes and casual exchanges are structured.[48] Friendships and group identities generally do not follow any kind of formal logic, but emerge spontaneously. Thinking about the characteristics of the rhizome given above, they seem to fit our manner of operating socially quite well. Each person is the centre of her/his own network of social relations, within which there appears to be no pre-set hierarchy. Relations can rupture and recompose in many ways, but there is no pre-set boundary to socialization, and these relations keep adapting to the environment. This is very unlike our insertion into the formal world, for example through educational institutions or the workplace. These obey to a structural logic and are not supposed to function like a rhizome.[49] The two extremities of political life are the wholly informal and rhizomatic as opposed to the entirely formal and hierarchical. In terms of power, one should distinguish **social power** (exercised rhizomatically) from **state power** (based on one's position in formal power hierarchies).

The closest social form to the rhizome, Deleuze and Guattari maintain, is nomadic society. However, their chapter 'Nomadology' is subtitled 'War Machine' and they focus, after the anarchist sociologist Pierre Clastres[50], on the war of the nomad against the state, pitting the rhizome against the tree, whereas what would concern an Africanist is the co-penetration between rhizomatic networks and the state. Under 'nomads' Deleuze and Guattari understand all kinds of gangs and uncontrolled crowds.[51] From their perspective, the state-'tree' stands in conceptual opposition to the nomadic-'rhizome', making the 'rhizome-state' appear as a contradiction in terms. But the two do not only clash: they also coexist and intertwine in many ways, which is what Bayart focuses on.

Indeed, hierarchical and rhizomatic identities may be *conceptually* opposed to each other, but they coexist, like the blood system and the skeleton, the formal and the informal, the agent within the structure, the state in society. In the forest rhizome and tree interconnect, as seen above.

The fluid motion of rhizomatic energy is captured and constrained by the static logic of an institution; but the rhizome also bends, undermines and surreptitiously connects the formal structures of the state. These two dynamics inevitably clash and pollute each other, as Fukuyama noted when he lamented that every political order is threatened by patrimonialism, the private appropriation of public wealth. Here, the rhizome is overtaking the structure of state, like a building invaded by plants. The obverse is the alienation expressed by Franz Kafka in The Trial, when humanity has been superseded by bureaucracy, and the cold logic of the corridors of power extinguishes the last glimmer of hope in the individual. But both aspects need each other like the structure and the agent. What is a state without a government? And can humans structure their collective existence without positing any kind of law to govern their interactions? Every political manifestation is a mix of both principles.

We may thus postulate that politics are situated at the intersection between rhizome—the underground driving force of social relations—and the structures of formal power. The state elites sprout from the nodes that form at these intersections, as Bayart suggests in the excerpt above. For example, where the

[48] This is what Deleuze & Guattari attempted to portray in "Mille Plateaux", by structuring their book as a rhizome; but they may have been defeated by the book's format, which is linear and was established thousands of years ago. A webpage cloud linked in multiple ways would have been a more logical format for their argument.

[49] The term 'socialization' also covers this formal induction into collective values, as noted above in 1.3; the word, in its two meanings, covers both rhizome and tree.

[50] Clastres 1975: « La Société contre l'État ».

[51] Deleuze & Guattari 1980:443 "*Les meutes, les bandes sont des groupes du type rhizome, par opposition au type arborescent qui se concentre sur des organes de pouvoir*."

institution of multiparty democracy intersects with a clan rhizome, nodes form from which emerge 'clan politicians'. Because they occupy officially recognized positions, we all agree that they wield the symbolic power allocated to that office. This is a social construct, even a question of belief, as seen by Bourdieu. However, as human beings these clan politicians remain connected to the human rhizome, which explains how they came to that position and how they maintain themselves there. In this realm they need social power.

This leaves us with an interpretation problem. What explains political practice—which concerns us here—better? State power or social power? We may receive some assistance from the world of physical science by examining the duality paradox. Light is both particle and wave; both concepts are irreconcilable, but true. As Albert Einstein noted: "*It seems as though we must use sometimes the one theory and sometimes the other, while at times we may use either. We are faced with a new kind of difficulty. We have two contradictory pictures of reality; separately neither of them fully explains the phenomena of light, but together they do*".[52]

Studying the rhizomatic field is extremely difficult for three reasons. 1) It is underground and invisible, and we can only catch a glimpse of one section at a time, forfeiting an overall view. 2) It is continuously in flux, permanently recomposing itself, bringing to mind Heraclitus' *panta rhei.*[53] This makes it impossible to compose a general image of the rhizome based on snapshots of its fragments. 3) More speculatively, the question is whether academic language, which seeks to define reality in precise, formal terms, can capture the fluid, undefined form of the rhizome. A more rhizomatic use of language may be poetry, where associations between words form fluid connections. These three difficulties may explain why social power is difficult to integrate into studies of politics.

Therefore, rhizomatic explanations seem to have limited scientific use, because rhizomatic development, as stipulated by Deleuze & Guattari (1980), is intrinsically unpredictable, responding continuously to a changing environment, 'reproducing itself without copying itself'. This problem has dogged even the most well-intentioned ethnographers, whose description of a dynamic society unnaturally fixes it, as the pin fastening the butterfly in a box for proper examination. In truth, the rhizomatic cannot be adequately *represented*. It can only be lived, experienced. In contrast, the purely formal world of State and Law can be represented very well, but it can rarely be experienced. This recalls the distinction between image and practice of the state, by Migdal & Schlichte (2005). This can cause cognitive dissonance, where the experience of life and its mental representation are in conflict.

One way to approach the representation problem of the rhizome is by comparing it with its opposite, the tree. The *tree as image*, not the real tree that is already fully integrated into the rhizome. In Table 1, I first indicate the five characteristics of the rhizome as opposed to the tree given by Deleuze & Guattari (1980). To this, I add the insights on the rhizome as discussed in the paragraphs above, under the headings informal *vs* formal. Table 1 forms the base for others I will develop hereafter.

[52] Taken from Wikipedia: "Wave-particle duality" accessed on 8 December 2020; quote from Albert Einstein in Infeld 1938: "The Evolution of Physics: The Growth of Ideas from Early Concepts to Relativity and Quanta".

[53] 'Everything flows'. You never step into the same river twice. Heraclitus was a pre-Socratic Greek philosopher from the 6th -5th centuries BCE.

Table 1: Conceptual oppositions between rhizome and tree

Rhizome	Tree-as-image
Non-hierarchical network (connections between all parts/insignificant rupture)	Hierarchical internal structure, arborescence
Heterogeneity	Homogeneity
Multiplicity / No centre	Unicity / Centralized
Open-ended	Finite
Reproduction without copying itself - adaptation	Cloning/branching – identical reproduction
Informal	**Formal**
Agent	Structure
Fluid (blood)	Crystallized (skeleton)
Invisible, underground	Visible, above ground
Bios (life–force)	*Logos* (reason)
Permanence beyond manifestation of life	Manifestation of mortal life
Affect / Experience	Mental Ideal / Representation

On the right, we find insights gained on the State in Chapter One, and on the left, understandings of the rhizome as developed above. This table, arranging political concepts into a dual system consisting of two sets of opposites—both of which are contradictory, but true, representations of reality, and both of which coexist—can help us understand the contradictions of the Somali clan structure.

Somali Clans as Rhizome

Somali clan structures are usually shown as a tree, but any person who has studied these diagrams closely realizes that this representation is insufficient, even misleading. Why have so many lineages disappeared, and are there only a few that, after many branches, seem to occupy a large space of the field, spawning sub-clans and sub-sub-clans? Mass deaths or infertility are not the answer; in fact, as we saw above, the clan field keeps recomposing itself; cross-clan marriages and the 'adoption' of a small or weak clan by a stronger one are mechanisms that come to mind. Clan identity, as argued in the previous section, is a fluid concept. Its representation in the form of a tree (or an organizational chart) is attractive, but misleading.

Efforts to make definitive or authoritative genealogical maps of kinship structures in developing countries are invariably undertaken by foreign scholars, and it seems to have been a favourite pastime of colonial ethnographers. However, they rarely resonate with the described populations. Several times I drew blank looks from Somali interlocutors when discussing clan identity through such diagrams. Most of the lineage names were unknown and may have disappeared a long time ago. Others were placed in the wrong segmentation, according to my informants. I came to realize that each individual has his/her own lineage structure in mind, and there is no right one.[54] Probably, ethnographers interviewed mostly elders, and then tried to reconcile differing answers to arrive at the most likely genealogical tree, with the conviction that there must be *one* correct one if all Somalis descend from a common ancestor.

[54] See Mansur 1995: "The Nature of the Somali Clan System"; p127ff. He shows how several genealogies can coexist without apparent contradiction, at least in the minds of the Somalis engaged in *abtirso.*

As Virginia Luling says after many years of field experience in Somalia, Somali genealogy "*is actually something of a mirage; if you look closer you find that there is no agreement as to where many clan groups fit in, and even at clan-family level there is no consensus as to the relationships*".[55] Genealogies not only provide group identities, but also narratives explaining the relations between groups and how they have evolved. Furthermore, genealogies change over time and space, and can be strongly influenced by the current interests of the person reciting a narrative. In the civil war, Hiraab, a common ancestor to the Habar Gidir and the Abgal, was resurrected to bring these warring clans together. Likewise, when fighting for control of Kismayo, the Majerteen 'remembered' that they shared the Harti ancestor with the Warsangeli and Dhulbahante, so that the latter would fight on their side, and now *Hartinimo* is useful to claim eastern Somaliland as part of Majerteen/Harti Puntland.[56]

Foreign influence can also play a role. The inhabitants of Baraawe resurrected a half-forgotten myth that they have Portuguese ancestors to strengthen their case for asylum in Europe. Foreign interveners seeking to solve Somali politics decided that the Bantu, who before the war had never been part of the Somali clan system, should also be seen as 'clans'. This allowed them to have parliamentary representation.[57]

To illustrate the problems of the tree-like representation of Somali society, we can examine this page of 'The Total Somali Clan Genealogy' compiled by Jon Abbink:[58]

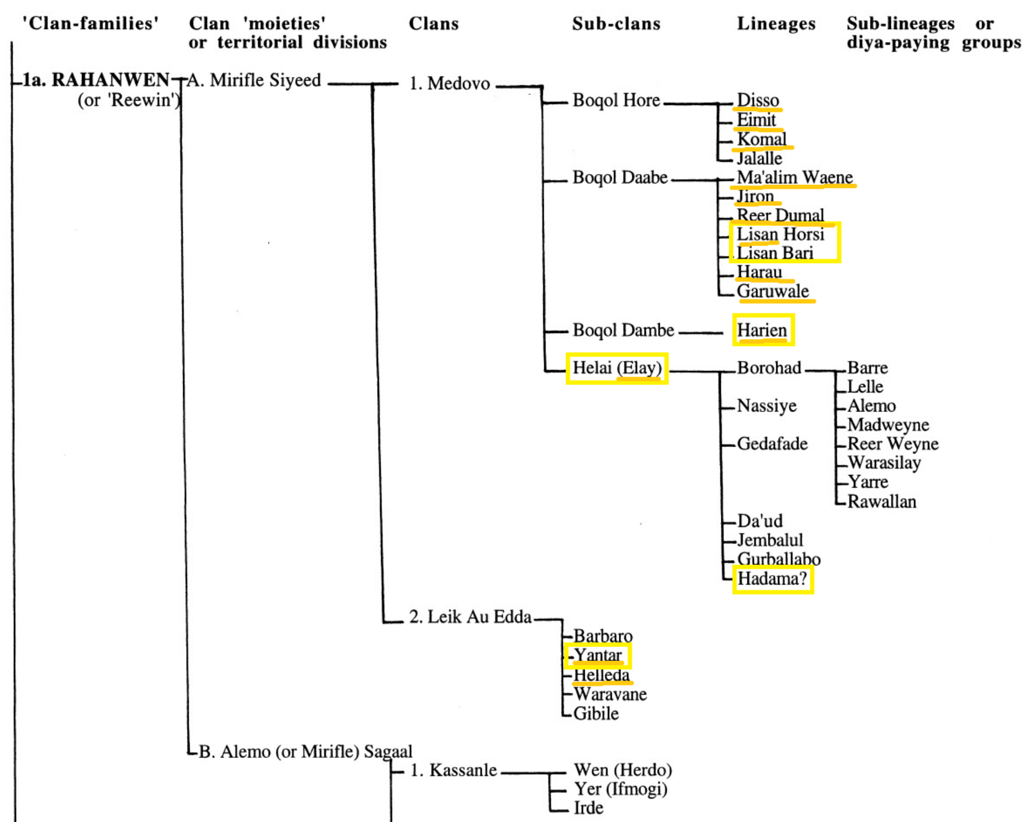

Figure 7: Fragment of the Somali genealogy. This diagram only shows part of the Rahanweyn/Mirifle clan family. Boxed in yellow are the Rahanweyn clans mentioned in the text; underlined in orange are those that were allotted an elder among the 135 who picked the MPs for the 2016-17 elections.

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[55] Luling 2006 "Genealogy as Theory, Genealogy as Tool: Aspects of Somali 'Clanship'"; p474.

[56] Hoehne 2015: "Between Somaliland and Puntland"; p56.

[57] Luling 2006:478-479.

[58] Abbink 1999: "The Total Somali Clan Genealogy: A Preliminary Sketch"; p7.

On Figure 7, the lineages of the Lisan Bari and Lisan Horsi are given as lineages of the Boqol Daabe sub-clan of the Medovo clan of the Rahanweyn Mirifle Siyeed. Today, however, all Somalis consider the Leysan one clan, as well as the Eelay (here noted as sub-clan) and the Harin (here a lineage); in fact, they are three of the best-known Rahanweyn clans. They each have their own malaakh ('king') and consider there is no clan authority above them.[59] The Hadama, again one of the bigger Mirifle clans, are here put with a question mark under the Elay, but they also appear on the following page of Abbink's total Genealogy as a sub-clan of the Aysha Omardin clan of the Mirifle Sagaal. The names of clans that provided one of the 30 Rahanweyn clan elders that helped select the MPs in the 2016-2017 elections—a sure sign of contemporary relevance—are underlined in orange. Of these 30 clans, 6 do not figure in Abbink's genealogy at all, and two are not considered Rahanweyn by him (the Ashraf and the Garre).

On Figure 8 (fragment of a rare and probably old clan map) one finds other clans, but some of those that provided elders for the 2017 elections are missing, etc. Such inconsistencies are common. As mentioned in section 2.1, above, the assumption of *abtirso*, that all major Somali lineages converge in one or a few ancestors of the Arabian Quraysh tribe—to which the Prophet Muhammad also belonged—is very unlikely. Western scholars should take a cue from their Somali colleagues and stop taking lineage ancestries literally. Somalis seem to see lineage ancestries as social conventions, not historic truths. This, however, does not mean that they are to be taken less seriously.

Figure 8: Fragment of an unattributed Somali clan map reproduced by Wikimedia showing, in yellow, the Rahanweyn clans; in green are Hawiye, orange Darood, pink Dir, while minorities are purple.[60]

[59] Gundel 2006:30.

[60] It is probably German and it may represent a historic distribution of Rahanweyn clans, since it includes the mid-

A Somali who recites his lineage (*abtirso*) sees it as a line connecting him to something ever greater as he goes back in time. He only considers the branches when opportune, for example when trying to find a common ancestor and thus a link of kinship with another Somali. Two strangers who set out to find a common ancestor are most likely to find one, if they want to. To an observer it appears more like a game requiring social skill than genealogical science.

Missing from arboreal representations of Somali clans are matrilateral relations. For an individual, the lineage their mother, wife, or daughter-in-law belongs to does count, as matrilateral connections can be called upon when necessary. But including them would make the arborescent representation impossible.

From an individual perspective, a rhizomatic map (Figure 9) would make more sense, with the individual as the node in the middle, related individuals as other nodes, and the lines between them indicating relationships.[61] The Djiboutian scholar Ali Moussa Iye, for example, suggests drawing the personal clan relations of an individual on a graduated circle, indicating the distance of clan relatives.[62] This allows integrating matrilateral affiliations and non-blood-based affiliations that are nonetheless expressed in lineage terms (such as the friend that one calls 'brother' and whose family is also dear to the individual). Such a representation of kinship would come close to the rhizomatic one. Below are two schematic representations of rhizomatic networks; one the left a simple one centred on a few individuals; on the right a more complex one showing how the image on the left could be embedded in a rhizome. In both diagrams each dot/node represents an individual human being.

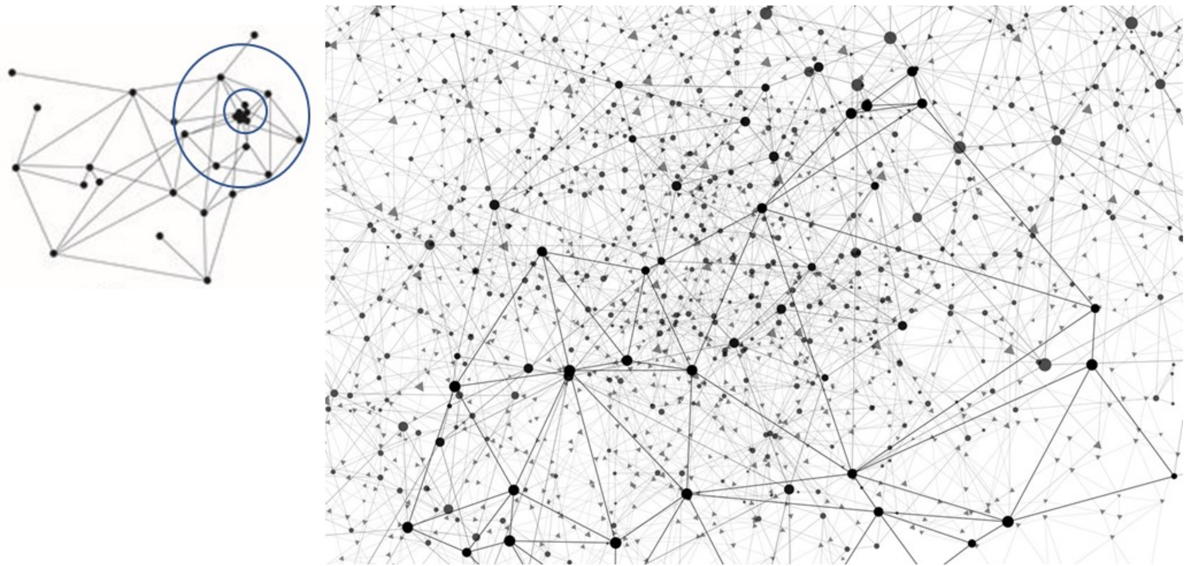

Figure 9: A different representation of clan, through social power

I have drawn circles on the left graph to represent Iye's concept. In the middle would be the individual surrounded by its direct family, and the second circle covers matrilateral and patrilateral relatives, half-siblings, close friends, etc., while the *mag*-paying group would fall within a third circle.

19th century "Jamaa of Bardera' (see Chapter Two).

[61] «Le rhizome est une antigénéalogie»; Deleuze & Guattari 1980:18

[62] Ali Moussa Iye, «Le verdicte de l'arbre; le Xeer Issa: Étude d'une 'démocratie pastorale'». Quoted in Luling, 2006:475. She mentions that most Somalis use the words *laan* (branch) or *jilib* (knee) to describe the articulations of the segmentary system.

The practice of 'counting ancestors' (*abtirso*) as articulations in a line extending into the past demonstrates, however, that a rhizomatic representation of clan identity does not replace the genealogical one, but coexists with it. Indeed, clan identity should not be seen as only rhizomatic. The driving force of social relations that forms Somali communities as clans is rhizomatic, but 'clan' is also a political construct that belongs to the world of forms. Clan identity is flexible in practice, as argued above; but in its arboreal representation the clan tree is a rigid concept, not unlike an organogram of state institutions. Unlike the state, however, clan is *based* on the rhizomatic nature of society, drawing its vitality from it. I found that many Somalis are not even familiar with the arborescent representation of their clan structure, although they can navigate it through *abtirso*.

Above, social power was opposed to state power. Both are at work within the Somali clan system. In a rhizome, one node (individual) can be more powerful than others (e.g., a leader, famous poet or intellectual or spiritual person), but this is temporary and has to do with that person, the context, and the connections with other nodes. This reminds one of the distinction made by Ibn Khaldun between leadership (*riyasa*) and regal authority (*mulk*).[63] The first is social power, the second state power. In the first case, noted the Arab philosopher, the leader has no coercive power (*qahr*), he/she can only convince others and lead by example. The leader may employ violence, but it is his own violence, not state power. This charismatic power may radiate on others (including progeny), but it is evanescent as it disappears with its holder. The playing field stays level.

When that power is bound into a structure—such as inherited leadership, or permanent grazing rights on conquered lands, or a text with the status of law that establishes privileges for some—then the playing field is not level anymore, and we are no longer purely in the domain of the rhizome, but in that of the tree and *mulk*. Mulk means kingship, dominion, but from the same root (m-l-k) the word *milk* (property, estate) is derived. It is from this view that the kingdom is his private estate and the people living there his *subjects*, that the ruler derives the legitimacy to impose his will, even with force. The distinction between 'noble' lineages and others, and the discrimination against minority clans (and women!) give Somali clan identities a structured nature, even though compared to any other political order, clan society remains very egalitarian. As stressed above, the pure forms of rhizome and state-tree do not exist in political practice, which is always a mix—in variable proportions—of both elementary forms of power. The Somali clan is thus one of the social identities that is closest to the ideal-type of the rhizome.

Social power and state power are both regulated by an internal code. *Xeer* is the Somali version of the social code. As noted, it is premised on power as a personal capacity: force, rhetorical skills, wisdom or wealth (the right of the strongest applies), not on power as structure. Law, on the other hand, is the source of state power, and does not require personal capacity. The judge and the police officer may be personally feeble, inarticulate, indecisive and penniless, but this does not influence how their exercise of state power is received. One could simplify by positing that *xeer* is code for the Somali rhizome, while Law is code for the State.

Let us now see whether the characteristics of Somali clan governance as seen intrinsically and through history, and the genealogical insights gained above, fit the rhizome/tree duality:

[63] Ibn Khaldun, 1379: "Al Muqaddimah".

Table 2 - Forms of political and social order in Somali history

Somali Clan Political Order	**External Authority / Sultan**
Leadership (*riyasa*)	Dominion/Control (*mulk*)
Social power	State/symbolic power
Nomad, non-territorial	Sedentary, territorial
Customary law (*xeer*)	External Law (religious/regal)
Fluid social connections	Abtirso (tree-genealogy)
Rhizome	**Tree-as-image**

Commentary

It appears that here, too, the rhizome/tree duality can illuminate the differences between the political order derived from clan self-governance, and the 'sultanist' political order introduced by Arab and Persian rulers (as seen above, Somalis were probably well acquainted with hierarchical forms of political authority before Islam, but we know too little about it).

One key aspect is the non-territorial nature of the rhizome, compared to the tree. The Somali pastoralist traversing the vast expanses of the Horn of Africa lowlands, looking for pasture, has a relation with the land, but not one of possession. The land belongs to God, or to nature or its spirits, or to the entire human community that uses it. The relation with the land is cultural rather than purely economic. It is not difficult to compare the above-ground wanderings of pastoralists with the underground rhizomatic networks that connect and provide vitality to the shrubs and grasses their livestock eats.

The term 'state power' has been used to clarify the opposition with self-governance, nomadism and social power. But, in keeping with the definition of the state given at the end of Chapter One, it is more appropriate to speak of *symbolic power*, which is derived from the tree-as-image. In the case of pre-colonial Somalia, this was not based on positive law, but on sharia or princely (sultanist) law. Both were largely customary, like *xeer*, but they derived their legitimacy from the ruler, not from self-rule by the elders of a community.

Although *xeer* allows for the right of the strongest, we have seen that it contributes to diffusing conflict (more examples will be given of this in Chapter Eight). How these two can happen at once can be explained by putting *xeer* within the tradition of the State of Nature. Law, as discussed in Chapter 1, did not emerge in a vacuum. The Law of the modern state, or positive law (posited by humans) was long considered one half of a dual conceptual structure, whereby the other half are 'The Laws of Nature', that emanated from the 'State of Nature'. To lift the discussion out of the purely Somali context, and develop a model that can explain how self-governance relates to the State, I suggest returning to the discussion of the State of Nature, and to some of the thinkers seen in Chapter One.

3.3 Bringing the State of Nature Back In

The discussion of the roots of the modern state in Chapter One mentions how the idea of the State represented an emancipation from the State of Nature, and how the tradition of positive Law it is based on distinguished itself from 'natural law'. The State of Nature and 'the Laws of Nature' are no longer familiar concepts in political science; bachelor students may not, or hardly, come across them as they seem antiquated, fuzzy notions. Nevertheless, natural law is still being debated, for example by 'new natural lawyers', mostly in the field of international law.[64] These discussions fall outside the scope of this dissertation and I will leave aside natural law and focus rather on the State of Nature and the idea of *ius gentium* or a customary law common to all peoples. Do these concepts provide a theoretical grounding for self-governance in a setting beyond that of Somalia? Is *xeer* a manifestation of *ius gentium*?

As a way of entering this discussion, I suggest starting by analysing the Somali clan system described above through the eyes of John Locke (1632-1704).[65]

The Somali Clan seen through the Perspective of John Locke's State of Nature

The precolonial Somali clan-based political order corresponded closely to Locke's definition of the state of nature, which precedes and is the basis for political or civil society. Locke sees the human being as inherently sociable, like Aristoteles' Zoon Politikon, and the social contract and political society it gives rise to derive their legitimacy from this state of nature. He describes the state of nature as a state of perfect freedom and equality (§4): a state of liberty yet not of license to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions. As men all share *one community of nature*, no man can subordinate another; each person should attempt to preserve oneself—as each person has his *station*, i.e. his/her own role in the community—and the rest of mankind next (§6). The *law of nature*—he asserts that "it is certain there is such a law"—wills the peace and preservation of all mankind and therefore a person transgressing against this law transgresses against all mankind, and punishing this person to restrain him or force him to pay reparations, and to deter others of committing such crimes, is the only legitimate form of violence. Moreover, every person has a right to thus be the *executioner of the law of nature*. Locke concedes the superiority of the law of nature as it is "easier to be understood than the fancies and intricate contrivances of men, following contrary and hidden interests put into words", which he calls *the positive law of Commonwealths* (§12).

Locke discusses monarchy, where all men are submitted to one authority, but where that authority itself has no authority above it, and thus exists in 'the state of nature' together with other sovereign authorities. But unlike later international relations theorists, who describe this 'state of nature' among sovereign states as an anarchic system, where the strongest rules and which thus must be overcome by a rules-based order, Locke writes "much better it is [than monarchy] in the state of nature, wherein men are not bound to submit to the unjust will of another" reasoning that the one who "judges amiss in his own or any other case is answerable for it to the rest of mankind." (§ 13). From the above, it is clear that for Locke the law of nature presupposes a strong responsibility of humans towards their community, and that this community encompasses all of mankind.

[64] A plea for the return of a theological interpretation of natural law in the field of International Relations, which provides a good overview of contemporary debates, can be found in Amanda Russell Beattie, 2013: "Only in the Leap from the Lion's Head Will He Prove His Worth: Natural Law and International Relations". It must be noted that 'new natural lawyers' focus exclusively on Thomist (catholic) theories of natural law, while I believe a return to ancient philosophers is more enriching.

[65] Locke 1690: "The Second Treatise of Government".

When Locke speaks about the political order that results among polities, he speaks of princes or 'governors of independent communities', or of Commonwealths, never of institutional systems of rule. He focuses on the active, not the passive (institutional), aspect of government.

So far, Locke could be considered an apologist of the Somali clan system as a nearly pure example of the State of Nature. But Locke does not conceive of the state of nature as a political order, and he believes that 'where every man is King' there can be no social contract. He recognizes that in the state of nature a balance tends to arise (because of man's sociability) between the freedom of each individual, and that communities can and have thrived with this inherent balance. He admits that in the state of nature two or any other number of people can make contractual agreements, for they are bound to it 'as men, not as members of society'. But this falls short of a social contract and a voluntary political order.

This is necessary, because Locke sees the individual human being as a permanent potential threat to the community. If an individual decides to trespass the liberty of other people, he can only be kept in check by a government that arises from the people and is based on a social contract. Locke does not argue this, but simply asserts it, even though it contradicts his earlier assertions about the responsibility of each human being to enforce the law of nature against its transgressors. Locke does not contemplate how social pressure and unwritten rules of society keep individuals from misbehaving against the community, or how self-governing people appoint their judges among the wiser community members (a feature which in his time was known to exist among native North American societies, and to which he refers) for establishing social order and the rule of justice.

The contradiction in Locke's philosophical musings about the State of Nature and his political views on the establishment of government may be read in several ways. The least charitable explanation would be that Locke, as the owner of large estates, was concerned how a manifestly unjust distribution of wealth in society could survive if the laws of nature were applied to all men; this concerned him and his peers. Locke's main reason for establishing a government with coercive powers is to protect private property. But, in apparent contradiction, he exposes in detail that, in the State of Nature, property belongs to the community, and only "*as much land as a man tills, plants, improves, cultivates, and can use the product of, so much is his property. He by his labour does, as it were, enclose it from the common.*" (§32) This is also true if a man picks up a nut that fell from a tree. By this act of labour, it has become his nut; but he has no right to claim that tree and all its nuts as his own; that would be theft from the community and, by extension, a crime against humanity (§35). Similarly, if a man stops putting the land he owns to good use—to feed the community—he loses his right to it. But this is in the State of Nature. In Locke's time, "*the invention of money and the tacit agreement of men to put a value on it introduced—by consent—larger possessions and a right to them*" (§36).

This brings us to the second, more charitable, explanation why, if the State of Nature allows the social instinct of human beings to lead to such a balanced society, a 'political society' is nonetheless required. This is because the State of Nature was irremediably lost a long time ago. The State of Nature is an ideal type, in the same manner as Utopia (or 'the Virtuous City' of the Arabic tradition) provides an ideal type for the other end of the political spectrum. All political practice takes place on a scale that ranges between these two ideal types, between the ideal community and the perfect state.

Some characteristics of the State of Nature

The political philosophers that were examined in Chapter One as the foundational thinkers of the modern state and state order (Aquinas, Bodin, Rousseau, Locke, and others) mostly counterpoised the man-made (positive) political order and its laws to a natural order and its laws. This debate was a central one of European philosophy since Thomas Aquinas, who made popular the expression 'positive law' in contrast to 'natural law'. Aquinas himself leaned heavily on Aristotle.

For all these thinkers, the natural order was endowed with many positive qualities; like Locke, they indeed made it appear as ideal. One fundamental tenet of the natural order was that humans are political animals, in Aristotle's words, who tend to live together in peace, seek common prosperity (commonwealth) and are capable of quite advanced collective self-regulation. Another was an inherent morality, not only governing human conduct, but as an aspiration. The individual human being, as well as the human community, seeks happiness and finds this in a moral and just social order. This teleological aspect of the State of Nature—the assumption that there is a goal to human community, that it is moral and inspired by external factors—would provide a major stumbling block for later positivists. The teleology of the State of Nature, it must be noted, often expressed itself in theological terms (not to confuse the reader with this terminology!), for most natural law philosophers suggested that, ultimately, the morality inherent in the social order could only emanate from God.

A distinctive feature of the State of Nature is that it is an ideal type. For Rousseau, it is society which corrupts man; in the state of nature, man is perfect. But Rousseau also argued that the State of Nature had maybe never existed, nor would it ever exist, but like Weber's ideal types it served to structure thought and examine possibilities. Because human beings had left the State of Nature long ago, driven by their will to develop, which sets them apart from apes. Rousseau sketched the fertile tension between the state of nature and the political state in the first paragraph of his Discourse on Inequality: *"how could I reflect on the equality which nature has ordained between men, and the inequality which they have introduced, without reflecting on the profound wisdom by which both are in this State happily combined and made to coincide, in the manner that is most in conformity with natural law, and most favourable to society, to the maintenance of public order and to the happiness of individuals?"*[66] Here, he sees a balance between the state of nature and its innate equality, and the political state with its inequalities.

What is important to understand about the State of Nature is that it must be conceptually distinguished from the political state, but early thinkers never opposed them—this is where later understandings of Rousseau's 'innocence of man in the state of nature' and the 'noble savage' are erroneous (Rousseau only introduced them as thought experiments, as ideal types, not as an expression of nostalgia or an aspiration).[67] Locke, Bodin, Aquinas, Cicero and Aristotle did not oppose the political state to the State of Nature, but considered that the former (and positive law) can only derive its legitimacy from the latter (the Laws of Nature). For Bodin, as seen above, the sovereignty of the ruler could only draw its legitimacy from the State of Nature in which the rulers themselves lived, because that State of Nature pushed the ruler towards virtue (do good and avoid evil: the fundamental natural law as posited by Thomas Aquinas).

Aristotle, in his Politics, debates whether political authority is better exercised through a rule of law, or the rule of men—be it a monarch, a chosen leader, a democratic assembly, or a court of wise judges. He argues that the rule of law is preferable in almost all cases, because it is based on reason, not passion (which can always overtake humans); it prevents tyranny (also of the majority, of a democratic assembly) and, since all human beings are equally entitled to rule, the law can provide a mechanism of rotation (the *kleroterion* in the Athenian polis: selection by sortition)[68] while men will always cling on to power. The Rule of Law is thus preferable to the Rule of Men, but only because it is solidly based on the laws of nature. This reasoning was taken up by Aquinas, providing an answer to the first issue he took up about human law in his *Summa Theologiae:* is human law [positive law] beneficial—might we not do

[66] Rousseau 1755: « Discourse on Inequality/*Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* »

[67] Graeber & Wengrow, 2015: "The Dawn of Everything" provide an expanded analysis of Rousseau's original thinking about the 'noble savage' and later misconceptions of it.

[68] Aristotle: "Politics" III.15.1286a – IV 4 1292a.

better with exhortations and warnings, or with judges appointed simply to "do justice", or with wise leaders ruling as they see fit? Following Aristotle, Aquinas also decided the rule of law is preferable.[69]

For all these thinkers, the State of Nature remained an ideal-type, irretrievable in practice. It needed to be complemented by human laws, to rule virtuously (Aquinas), for legitimate and thus accepted rule (Bodin), to guarantee property (Locke) or equality (Rousseau). The manner in which human laws can be deducted from the Laws of Nature, and here again all thinkers from Aristotle to Rousseau concurred, is through the exercise of reason. Hasn't the State of Nature (or God) endowed human beings with reason, which sets them apart from animals? *Logos* is what defines human beings from all other forms of life (*bios*). But *how* reason must be exercised—through observation of the manifest laws of nature, through metaphysical extrapolation from the Scriptures, or any other mode of reasoning between these—was a subject of dissension and led to some of the most famous debates of the European enlightenment (Erasmus, Spinoza, Descartes, Hume…). A consensus was never reached.

An interesting distinction between the laws of nature and positive law is the lack of coercion in the former. As Aquinas argues, only human beings can exert force to obtain compliance;[70] this does not occur in nature. These considerations led philosophers to speculate about how much coercion a sovereign could apply to enforce compliance. Locke defined political power as "*a right of making laws with penalties of death and, consequently, all less penalties, for the regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of the community in the execution of such laws*". (Locke's surprising obsession with property as the main, almost sole object of positive law-making is revealed once again in this quote). And it is precisely this capacity to use violence to enforce compliance, against people whose natural instinct is to be free and (self-)sovereign in the State of Nature, that was the most worrying aspect of human political order and positive law for natural philosophers.

Finally, a bridge between the State of Nature and positive law was identified early on: ***ius gentium***. Minted by Cicero and developed by classical Roman jurists such as Gaius (c. 165 AD), 'the law of peoples' alludes to the principles and values found in similar if not identical forms in virtually all human societies. *Ius gentium* is not a body of statute law or a legal code, but rather customary law thought to be held in common by all *gentes* ("peoples)". Gaius distinguished ius gentium from ius civile: "*That law which a people established for itself is peculiar to it and is called ius civile [civil law] as being the special law of that civitas [polity], while the law that natural reason establishes among all mankind is followed by all peoples alike, and is called ius gentium as being the law observed by all mankind.*" In his treatise *De officiis*, Cicero regards the *ius gentium* as a higher law of moral obligation binding human beings beyond the requirements of civil law. Somali *xeer* can be seen as an incipient form of *ius civile* still closely related to *ius gentium*.

Aquinas integrated *ius gentium* as a higher standard for canonical law, which set it above the civil laws of individual states. But the notion of a law of peoples was undermined by the development in Europe of different legal systems that claimed absolute jurisdiction. Positive law, as opposed to natural law, can only apply to a distinct society. One of the central characteristics of positive law, according to early philosophers, is that it is *not* universal. "Each civil legal system is of and for a particular political community". The notion of a universal, practice-based human law (like *ius gentium*) still exists today as a moral backstop to the principles of international law in the writings of legal philosophers such as Dworkin and Rawls.[71] The laws of nature survive, albeit barely visible, as norms shared by all human

[69] Aquinas: "Summa Theologica", First Part of the Second Part, Question 95 (Of Human Law), Article 1 (Whether it was useful for laws to be framed by men).

[70] *ex sola lege humana vigorem habent*. Aquinas: Summa Theologica, Part I-II, question 95 article 2.

[71] Rawls in "The Law of Peoples" advocates such a Law as the ideal base for a 'Society of Peoples'; but he mentions ius gentium only once (1999:3), specifying that his thinking has nothing to do with that ancient tradition. Ronald Dworkin argues that judges, even in their day-to-day adjudication of cases, base themselves on morality, that is on natural law or *ius gentium*, and he advises they should do so even when this goes against the letter of positive law.

communities, necessary for individuals, families and human communities, that underlie the distinct legal systems they live in.[72]

In summary, the **State of Nature** in early political philosophy is seen as the natural state of human beings in society, in which they are free and equal, and in which they tend to cooperate for both individual and collective self-preservation, these two being linked. In the state of nature there is no hierarchy and humankind self-governs. The state of nature endows human society with a finality: happiness, prosperity, peace and development, but to realize this, humans must create their own legal order, or political/civil society, on the basis of the laws of nature. A formulation of these laws can be found in the Law of Peoples, an unwritten cross-cultural customary law shared by peoples all over the world. Such a basis provides legitimacy to human-made, positive law. The human faculty of reason serves both to apprehend the Laws of Nature, and to deduce from it desirable positive laws. Creating a legal order becomes essential in an urban context, when community rules and principles no longer suffice to regulate relations between strangers.

Inherently, natural law and positive law form a dual order, in which positive law only refers to intra-human relations, and is therefore different in each society. Positive law requires a sovereign who can enforce compliance, a condition that does not exist in the State of Nature. But this does not necessarily mean the sovereign rules. Philosophers agreed the rule of law is preferable to the rule of men, as the latter are governed by passions and cling on to power. The rule of law is more stable and can provide all humans an equal chance at governing, as humans are fundamentally equal. Law-based sovereignty is expressed in different regimes, like monarchy or democracy. Positive law requires humans to surrender part of their sovereignty to the Law or sovereign. This entails the risk of violent domination and tyranny, and that is why the political state must remain embedded in the Laws of Nature, subject to the consent/sovereignty of the citizens, and remain of limited scope.

The State of Nature becomes 'Anarchy'

In the fundamentalist Christian perspective that emerged with Protestantism in the 16th century, there could be no State of Nature, even before the deluge, as men lived only by the will of God. Since Aquinas, the canonical law of the Catholic Church claimed a base in natural law. Protestants opposed this as a deviation of pure faith. From a religious point of view then, the State of Nature came to be something made up by men, close to heresy.

This was also the viewpoint of Thomas Hobbes, as seen in Chapter One. Speculations about the State of Nature could only weaken the power of the Sovereign, resulting in chaos and ungovernability, he argued, advocating for a complete and unconditional submission to the power of the sovereign. As mentioned, his views were radical for his time, and many contemporary and later thinkers, such as Rousseau, specifically disagreed with his negative view of mankind. But his vision of the sovereign state that need not obey any other law than its own and that can demand the complete submission of its subjects appealed to the supporters of absolute monarchy.[73] As argued, Hobbes' sovereign thus usurped the place of God as the ultimate source of legitimacy, in a process that took two centuries. In the 18th century, theories of natural law were still being developed and discussed by the continent's main enlightenment thinkers (such as Rousseau and Hume), as the basis for both positive law and legitimate rule.

Dworkin 1977, *Taking Rights Seriously*; p326–7 and p340.

[72] Finnis 2020: "Natural Law Theories" in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.) Link https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/natural-law-theories/accessed 30 June 2022.

[73] Pierson 2011: “The Modern State”; p40: "*In some ways, what was most important about absolutism was the extent to which the capacities for the exercise of sovereign will were increased.*"

But around the cusp of the 19th century, the tone of debates about natural law changed in Europe. The experience of the modern state that Napoleon imposed, replacing old aristocratic political orders in each country occupied by France, inspired confidence in the capacity of a modern state with unrestrained sovereignty to transform society. Kant echoed this belief when, in his commentary on Rousseau's state of nature, he mentioned that the state of nature as such may be intrinsically good, but that man in the state of nature is evil by disposition, and can only become virtuous through society.[74] The chaos and bloodshed of the French revolution, followed by the glorious achievements of empire under Napoleon, seemed to prove that a strong state was beneficial to social progress.

The intellectual climate of positivism disproved of the vagueness of the discussion of the State of Nature and the a-priori moral finality of human community that was suggested in natural law theories. For example, Jeremy Bentham, when discussing the sources of 'the law of nations', said "*The one is the rules of our old friend the Natural Law. The other is mutual compacts, treaties, leagues, and agreements*".[75] 'Our old friend the Natural Law' could no longer suffice for legal theorists, intent on creating a rational, autonomous legal system. Sovereign power was enough justification unto itself, it no longer needed to be embedded in a wider natural or divine order to be legitimate. In the same manner, the Law—in fact, *positive law*—should be able to legitimize itself intrinsically, not by referring to another source of law. The Constitution would come to play this role, first during the 18th century.

Over the 19th and 20th centuries, the State of Nature was increasingly cast as something negative (*anarchy*) that did not support, but undermined, human law,[76] as if the term 'positive' (from posited by man) had been reduced to its more common contemporary meaning, making the Laws of Nature seem 'negative' in contrast. Thus, the law of man, of the state, became absolute *and* opposed to the law of nature.[77]

This development was most pronounced in post-World War II 'realist' theories about international relations. The argument is that while each state is governed by its specific Law, relations between states take place in a state of anarchy. There is no natural order: the State of Nature is anarchy. In mainstream (realist) international relations theory, the state is the only institution capable of delivering mankind from the condition of total chaos. This view was most coherently expressed by Hedley Bull in "The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics", 1977.[78]

From a State of Nature perspective, this did not make sense. The earliest texts dealing with the laws of nature (besides Aristotle's 'Politics', also Plato's 'Gorgias', 'Republic' and 'Laws') all reminded their readers of the evident evils of anarchy, and saw the laws of nature as an antidote to this. But international-relations 'realists' invariably harked back to Hobbes to justify that the state of nature had long been seen as one of anarchy and chaos, and barely examined the rest of the debate about the State of Nature.

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[74] Gueroult 1941: "Nature humaine et état de nature chez Rousseau, Kant et Fichte".

[75] Burns & Hart 1977: "Introduction to J. Bentham, a Comment on the Commentaries and a Fragment on Government,"; xix-xx .

[76] See Hans Kelsen for legal philosophical arguments for positive law and against natural law. His argument is that the Law is an entirely human, thus positive creation, and that the duality brought by the (equally human-made) concept of natural law is confusing and makes impossible a methodologically coherent legal theory. Langford, P. & I. Bryan: "Introduction: the Kelsenian Critique of Natural Law".

[77] One could argue that current problems in human governance of nature stem from this imbalance. For example, Locke's law of Nature that natural resources belonged to the human community and could only be privately owned in a limited measure and for mutually beneficent purposes, was swept aside: as long as an individual has acquired property legally, there's no limit to how much they can own.

[78] Bull, H. 2002: "The Anarchical Society". An interesting exchange between Hedley Bull and E.B.F. Midgley, author of 'Natural Law and International Relations' (1975), about Bull's dismissal of natural law theories, is reproduced by Beattie 2013:26-27.

In the light of the ancient philosophical discussion about natural law, the equation of the State of Nature in which states evolve with anarchy was unjustified, but it was remarkably successful in achieving three related purposes. First, it nearly ended the whole discussion of the State of Nature as a natural condition for human community life (this discussion continues today, but inaudibly in the distant margins of political theory). Second, it reaffirmed the State as the natural sovereign of human society, as the guardian of civilized people against the threat of war and mayhem. Third, by positing anarchy as an absolute state of evil and chaos, it killed the political debate about anarchy that had been initiated by the likes of Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin. Clearly, the concept of anarchy used in International Relations theory has little relation to anarchy as a philosophical and political current, with its emphasis on self-governance.[79] But it seems to have displaced it, and it would be hard for any political scientist to claim the term and develop this school of thought in a serious academic way today.[80] Anarchy, the *bête noire* of the state, seems to have been totally vanquished as a serious alternative to state power.

There is a parallel here with Islamic thought, where the principal bulwark of order against chaos is not the State, but religion. Islam is the light that has saved mankind from the disgraceful condition of *jahiliyya:* chaos, darkness and ignorance—a situation one could call moral anarchy.[81] The modern state protects people from political anarchy. In this sense, there is at once competition and a commonality of purpose between the propagation of the Western state and that of Islam. Both seek to order social reality with formal structures derived from Law. This point reminds us that, despite its secular appearances, the modern State is really a theological concept and an article of belief. Western attitudes towards anarchy are not so distant from Islamic perspectives on *jahiliyya:* anarchy is seen as utter blackness, the negation of all that is good and civilized, the contrary of the ‘common good’ embodied by the State. It is not only a political, but also a moral negative condition.

To conclude, we may note that, if the state is a theological concept, then it is a monotheistic one, not allowing the practice (or even recognition) of any other form of governance. It has the vocation to occupy the entire domain of human political imagination, past, present and future, in each country, in each community and globally.

As the 'new natural lawyer' Finnis notes, "*Legal theorists who present or understand their theories as “positivist”, or as instances of “legal positivism”, take their theories to be opposed to, or at least clearly distinct from, natural law theory. Natural law theorists, on the other hand, did not conceive their theories in opposition to, or even as distinct from, legal positivism*". Natural-law theorists have always accepted the duality, the two-in-oneness of positive and natural law. Positive law theorists, however, to 'decontaminate' their laws, have rejected natural law, even seeing it as 'anarchy' today; but they can no longer address the fundamental issue of what makes their laws just. That justification has become self-referential. Similarly, the legitimacy of the state has become unquestionable because it is based on its own law, and on the rule that *only* states can be sovereign. Its legitimacy only becomes questionable if one compares it to another source of law: that could be *ius gentium*, for example, or sharia. Or by bringing back in the State of Nature. Clearly, the debate is not over yet.

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[79] Anarchy as a philosophical current and praxis may have been a continuation of the state of nature tradition, but it faced a much stronger and hostile state, and thus became antagonistic.

[80] With a few exceptions, such as James C. Scott, who wrote a pamphlet "Two Cheers for Anarchism" (2014) as a kind of political coming out. However, this American professor does not further develop anarchy as a political philosophy, and his books only treat the subject askance. Another exception is the liberal anarchy of the economist Peter Leeson (Anarchy Unbound). These are exceptions confirming the general rule.

[81] Islam is however not antithetical to political anarchy. A believer not abiding by the laws of the state is viewed negatively from a Western perspective, but is acceptable in Islam if he/she lives a pious life.

3.4 Towards a Theory of the Dual Nature of Power

"a theory which would make world-relations purely relations between States, in which the individual citizen or the functional association as such would have no part, is intolerable, a preposterous doctrine, and one that theory can sustain only by flying full in the face of facts".[82]

G.B.H. Cole, 1916

Why a Dualistic Power Theory is Needed

We have just seen that, from a natural-law perspective, a dual system with positive law is taken for granted, because the dual nature of humans—moved by *bios* and aspiring to *logos*—is accepted as a fundamental truth. But, from the positive-law side, the existence of another legal source such as the Laws of Nature faces nearly complete denial. For whatever reason this may be, the resulting imbalance is worrying. Maybe the State of Nature needs to be brought back in to complete political theory and practice.

The State of Nature has been knocking on the door. One reason is that the interpretations of our political reality, when negating rhizomatic/social power, are generally insufficient. It appears the wheel must be reinvented again and again. Take this excerpt: "*Late in the nineteenth century, Walter Bagehot in Great Britain, followed by Woodrow Wilson in the United States (when he was a student and later a professor), made a major discovery. To everyone's surprise, they found that around the formal structure of political offices and institutions there were all kinds of informal behavior and organizations in which power over decision making might lie.*"[83] Now, who would really be surprised about that? Our daily life is so full of rhizomatic behaviour and situations—the clerk who won't help you because he dislikes you, or has a bad day, or a bad character—that we don't think about it twice. When explaining my Dual Power Theory to non-experts, they have looked at me incredulously: that's banal, everybody knows that formal power and structure are only half of the story, the other is personal, affect-based. Who doesn't understand that it helps to be charming to a police officer when caught doing something wrong? Do we need a political theory for that?

It appears we do. If we agree that there is a duality of power, political science almost only examines one side of it: that of the State (the tree-image). The difficulties in apprehending the rhizomatic aspect of reality through reason, science and language are well understood, but this should not lead to denial. The result of this denial is that the State and its formal representations of reality have become omnipresent and omnipotent, while the 'State of Nature' has been downgraded to 'anarchy', something antithetical to the common good and to civilization.

Politically, one can see how this serves the ruling classes, and how academics, as organic intellectuals, also profit from this. From Aquinas through Spinoza to Schmitt, Russell and Bourdieu parallels have been drawn between political theory and theology. Some political scientists may be seen to function as a priestly class (hierophants) who uphold the belief in the State and spread the narratives that sustain the myth of its universality, including that of the liberal democratic state regime as an eschatological 'End of History'. Where are the political scientists who (dare to) think aloud about a global human society beyond this regime? Why are there so few? Are democracy, capitalism and (human, civil, political, economic, social) rights regimes truly producing such great effects in this world that there is no reason to engage in thinking about a different political order?

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[82] Cole 1916: "Symposium: The Nature of the State in View of Its External Relations"; p303.

[83] Easton 1985: "Political Science in the United States: Past and Present"; p135.

At least as importantly, political science seems incapable of explaining the failure of state-building efforts in Somalia (and in other scenes of intervention). Perhaps that by 'bringing the State of Nature back in',[84] and providing it with a new and dynamic model—that of the rhizome—this dissertation will contribute to a discussion about the necessary re-balancing of political science. For these reasons, in this final section of Part I (Theoretical Premises) I will attempt to construct a Dual Power Theory, based on the conceptual opposition between rhizome and tree.

It helps to first recall the main characteristics of the rhizome. The **rhizome** is an open-ended network that reproduces itself while adapting to circumstances—making it heterogeneous—and that can have connections between any of its nodes. This means it is non-hierarchical and multiple, because every node is the centre of its own constellation of connections. This also means that it always survives rupture of a connection, because there are manifold connections to other nodes. These are the characteristics listed by Deleuze & Guattari (1980). To this can be added that the rhizome manifests the vitality of life, that it is durable because it survives the mortality of what sprouts from its nodes, and that it is underground and thus invisible. Recent insights from forestry studies add that the connections within the rhizome allow communication and exchange of nutrients between the nodes, that it consists of differentiated networks favouring their own progeny and species but connecting all forms of plant life, and is essential for the maintenance of the ecosystem as a whole.

The main topics explored in the preceding pages will now be interpreted—in reverse order— in the rhizome/tree dual power model. To start with natural and positive law, then State and self-governance, after that Gramsci's and Bourdieu's insights on the workings of political power in society, and finally the premises of international order itself.

Although the opposites mentioned in each row appear exclusive, the following tables do not sketch two different political orders. From a dualist perspective, each political order in 'real life' consists in varying proportions of both sides of the duality.[85] One cannot negate one in favour of the other. They seem contradictory and do not allow for a smooth blending like two colours; instead, both opposites stand at straight angles and disrupt each other, like the concept of light as wave stands at a right angle to that of light as a bundle of particles. As Einstein noted, sometimes we can interpret political reality with one perspective, sometimes with the other, and sometimes with both. The observer chooses what delivers the best results.

The Laws of Nature and Positive Law

Table 3 – Customary and Positive Law in the dual power model

Archetype	**Rhizome**	**Tree**
Legal source	Customary Law / *ius gentium*	Positive Law / *ius civile*
Associated condition	State of Nature	Civil Society
Jurisdiction	Human community (open)	Limited (territorial)
Manifestation	Universal constants	Historical developments
Negative political expression	Anarchy	Tyranny

[84] This is a reference to the seminal 1985 book by Evans e.a. 'Bringing the State Back In'.

[85] In Western countries our daily experience of political order seems closer to the tree, and in Somalia to the rhizome; all human communities are located somewhere between the two extremes, or ideal-types.

Commentary to Table 3

There is no need to repeat what has just been stated in the previous pages. To summarize: positive law was derived from the State of Nature, in recognition of the fact that human communities benefit from rules, and from having to abide by them. A human community structured by positive law forms a civil society. What is important is that positive law is embedded in the Laws of Nature, and only applies to a given political community that lives under its chosen regime, such as a republic or a monarchy. Moreover, positive law changes as civil society develops;[86] it allows for progress and development, though this restricts its jurisdiction in space and time, unlike the Laws of Nature.

In the rhizome/tree representation, positive law sprouts from the rhizome of the Laws of Nature, forming a tree that can grow big and become old, but that is inherently mortal. Its legal order—*ius civile*—develops with it, but is also perishable. The State of Nature, like the rhizome, survives the death of the trees, and it applies everywhere and always.

I have noted the 'negative expression' of each form. This refers to how the other pole of the duality negatively characterizes this pole. Self-governance can be characterized as anarchy from a state perspective, but equally the state is often seen as tyranny from a self-governance perspective. If one accepts that each political order must have elements of both natural and positive law, it results that pure anarchy or tyranny cannot occur; they are negative ideal-types, useful concepts for orienting thought.

The State and Self-Governance

Table 4 - The State and Self-governance in the dual power model

Archetype	**Rhizome**	**Tree**
Political order	Self-Governance	State
Social virtue	Freedom/Equality	Safety/Predictability/Progress
Power expression	Social	Symbolic
Location of power	Multiple / Diffuse	Unique / Centralized
Structure	Network	Hierarchy
Role of humans	Citizen, participant	Subject
Authority source	Internal (self-sovereign)	External (sovereign state)

Commentary on Table 4

Political order can be generated in several ways; the state is but one of them, although currently it is the main expression of political order. Self-governance, I demonstrated above, also forms a political order, but one based on the rhizome/the Laws of Nature.

In Chapter One I examined the state at length. I could have marvelled at the unique capacity of human beings to imagine structures and endowing them with symbolic power. The state, as well as arguably religion, the value of money and the financial system, the Law, language, science: these are all social constructs that through our collective effort, our shared belief, have come alive, become 'as if real', shaping not only our daily behaviour, but even our thought patterns. I mentioned the mortality of the

[86] Thomas Jefferson, reflecting about the US constitution in a letter to James Madison, noted that "*Every constitution then, and every law, naturally expires at the end of 19 years*" because "*the earth belongs to the living, and not to the dead*"; from "The Founders' Constitution", Volume 1, Chapter 2, Document 23 (link).

tree compared to the durability of the rhizome, the tree-*as-image* being more perennial than the rhizome. Unlike the rhizome, its image can stay stable over thousands of years, while the rhizome is in permanent flux, heterogeneous and inherently unpredictable. The durability of concepts and ideal images gives them a peculiar strength and attractiveness, as Plato underlined. Undeniably, our capacity to make up stories around images and then behave as if they are real, has made us into humans who we are. I also get carried away by them. This characteristic, the apparent universality of the state-as-image, is what makes the state so appealing. I am now using the term 'state' in its usual, extended sense like *civitas*, not in the restricted definition I gave of it.

Early authors, from Ancient Greeks to Enlightenment thinkers, argued that the state of nature is not sufficient for human beings. Note that this is a European intellectual tradition. Freedom and equality are precious concepts, but people also want safety, predictability and, above all, progress. In the State of Nature, time is circular, unending, there is no progress. But the State of Nature has also endowed humans with reason and a longing for meaning, a sense of purpose that translates into a desire for progress: a dynamic that pushes people to leave the State of Nature and establish 'civil society'. Almost all philosophers dealing with the State of Nature agree on that.

As Table 4 does not allow for an ‘either/or’ interpretation, the suggestion is not that humans must choose between freedom and equality, or safety, predictability and progress. The question has usually been: how much freedom and equality are humans ready to give up for the virtues of living in civil society? And how to make that transition? On this point, most philosophers agreed that the least detrimental of solutions (as they all involve a loss of freedom) is that of transferring some human sovereignty to an external authority, establishing a centralized hierarchy, and providing it with the means to exact compliance.

A point must be made here: almost all the philosophers who argued thus were themselves men closely connected to the power structures that would benefit from this transfer of sovereignty. They had a personal, rhizomatic interest in arguing for centralization and increased sovereign power, and this likely determined their choice of regime. The sovereign, we must remember, can be an assembly of citizens elected through democratic means; but most philosophers argued against this form, and for monarchy or a form of oligarchy. Their argumentation is not always clear, from Plato to Locke. It could be argued—from a rhizomatic point of view—that their choice for centralized and personal rule instead of more participative forms betrayed a personal interest. The same is true for the Founding Fathers of the USA and their equivalents in European countries: their choice for a bi-cameral representative electoral democracy reflects the effort of maintaining the privileges of the ruling elites they belonged to.[87]

In this case, it may be argued that the discussion about what forms the best type of political order for 'civil society' has not been conducted in an appropriate manner—with the participation of all adult citizens—and therefore remains open.

In any case, the current common-sense assumption that the *natural* state of civil society is submission to authority has been proven wrong, both by the far-ranging investigations into political order throughout the world by Graeber and Wengrow,[88] and in the case that concerns us by a reading of pre-colonial Somali political history. It is also contrary to what most philosophers have said about the State of Nature. It seems more likely, given the evidence, that the default political order of human beings is egalitarian and participative. But, maybe there is no default political order, only a multitude of them,

[87] On the Founding Fathers see Chomsky & Waterstone 2021: “Consequences of Capitalism: Manufacturing Discontent and Resistance”; p81-85. On how European democracy was hijacked from the outset by oligarchic interests see van Reybrouck 2016: "Against Elections: The Case for Democracy"; 89-100.

[88] They point out that when an archaeologist claims that a society was organized through democratic participation, proof is demanded, but the assumption that a centralized authority submitted the population to its sovereignty requires no evidence.

each one incorporating elements of both self-governance and hierarchical authority in varying proportions.

In self-governing communities authority is diffuse; it is not 'decentralized' because it never was centralized to begin with. In the network structure of the rhizome, due to its multiplicity, there can be no organized distribution of power as there must be in the tree-image. Each node is the centre of its own constellation of connections. Nor is power equally distributed among all nodes. The ability to distribute power would imply that somebody has control over it, which cannot occur in a self-governing rhizome. As forest studies have pointed out, differentiation exists within the rhizome. There is the phenomenon of the mother trees—nodes that are more central, that have more connections and that transmit more to other nodes—and that of preferential sharing between plants of the same species. A forest is not a democracy; in the oak forest, oaks rule, in the beech forest it is the beeches. Power is spread differentially, not following ideal notions or structural rules, but according to individual capacity, connections and accident (environmental factors). In this way 'social power' is also distributed in human society. The forest and rhizome parallels help visualizing self-governing society.

Bourdieu gave a comprehensive definition of state power: it is more than the sum of its parts (material, coercive and cultural power) and he calls it *symbolic power*. Symbolic power is exercised through a position in a hierarchy, but ultimately derives from the sovereign and the law that sustains its authority. The law, in turn, is a social convention. Its written words—whether on paper or a clay tablet—can only operate their magic if we agree that they have symbolic power over us. Symbolic power is always external from the individual viewpoint, cascading downward from the crown of civil society through a hierarchy.

In a self-governing system, ultimate authority remains with each individual. *Sovereignty* really means that 'no other person can tell you what to do'. As seen, this is distinct from 'anarchy', because self-governance can include complex mutually agreed-on arrangements. In a self-governing society such as Somalia, 'every man is King'; self-governance implies, in its fullest sense, self-sovereignty. This applies in Somalia to each grown-up male with his own resources. This makes the individual humans citizens: equal participants in their community life. Each individual is a stakeholder in the State of Nature. In a hierarchical system, the role of individuals is to be a subject of the sovereign; even if they occupy a position of power, they can only transmit power that comes to them from above, so they remain subject to the sovereign. Again, each political order consists of elements of both, and each human adult is therefore both participant in society and subject of the sovereign.

In developed Western states, too, a family, a group of friends, and almost any social gathering is a largely self-governing unit. Rarely do social units spontaneously establish rules; and when they do, individuals are often free to ignore them, as there is no coercive power to force them to comply. True, non-compliance of socially established rules, whether written or not, generally meets with social disapproval. But such disapproval is not coercion, though it can be experienced as a type of violence: it is an affect, and it belongs to the realm of social power, to the rhizome, not to that of authority.

To end this section, a word about visual representations of the state-tree and the rhizome.

Below are two fairly standard arborescent representations of state power; Figure 10 sketches the hierarchical relations within the League of Nations in 1930 and seems to represent three trees from above. Figure 11 shows the internal structure of the US Federal government, as an upside-down tree. Real trees grow from the bottom upwards, and the trunk is generally lower than the branches. But in representations, the highest authority is always at the top of the page, as if to indicate that symbolic power comes from above, the idea/the sky, not from reality/the ground below. When citizens are shown as the ultimate sovereign of a democratic system, they are usually placed at the bottom of a diagram.

Figure 10 - representations of the state-tree – League of Nations

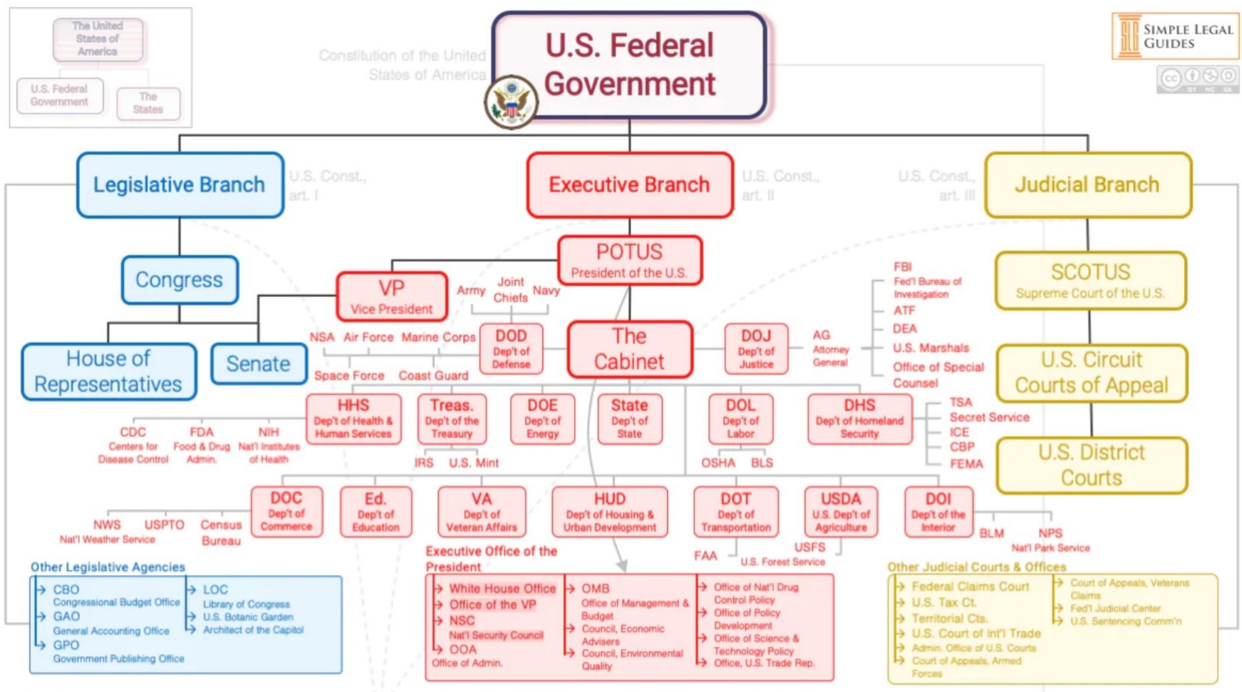

Figure 11 - Representation of the state-tree – US government

In contrast, below is a 2D representation of a 3D rhizome, which is but a snapshot of a rhizome evolving over time. A moving 4D model would be even more accurate, to account for the time factor.[89] Each node represents one human being. If one considers that each human being is connected not to a few others, as below, but in reality to at least a hundred, and that these people can be spatially very distant, the difficulty of representing the rhizome becomes clear, at least in the habitual 2D format.

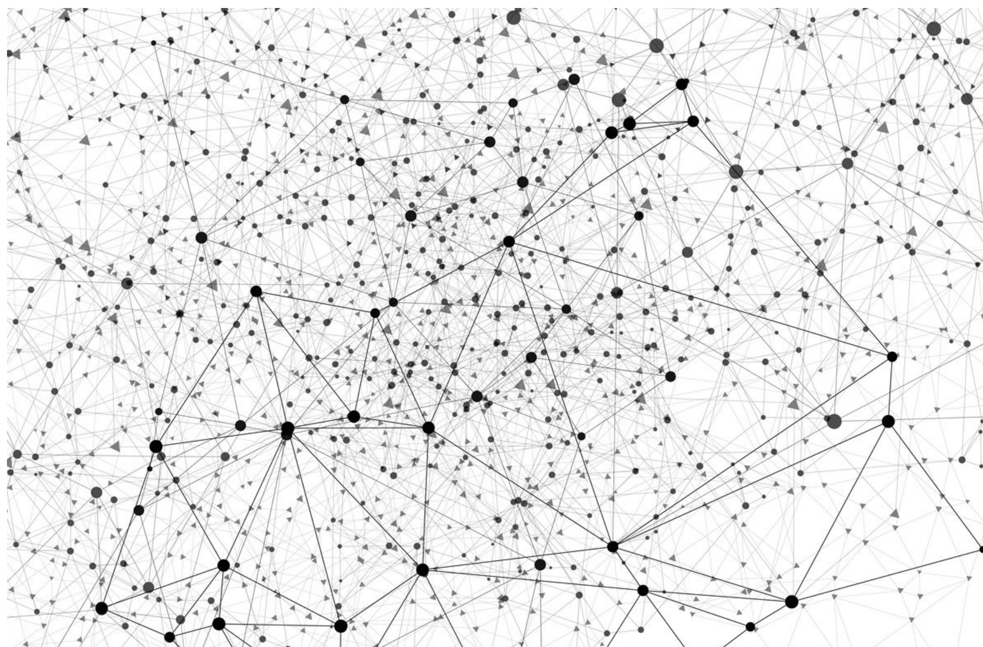

Figure 12: Representation of the Rhizome

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[89] A superficial resemblance with the starry night sky and the constellations is not a coincidence, for 'as above, so below'. There seem to be structural similarities between the macrocosm and the microcosm, in the same manner that an atom with its electrons resembles a sun with its planets. In this set of correspondences, each human is equivalent to a star and constellations are akin to rhizomatic connections.

Unlike the world of constructs, the rhizome seems to exist outside space-time. One can have an intense connection with a person on the other side of the globe, and some people experience those that passed away many generations ago as living presences, and act accordingly, creating a social effect.[90] Perhaps another dimension must be evoked to make sense of the non-space and -time based relations that can exist between people, knowing that human relations are multiple, highly mobile and influence each other.

In reality, the rhizome cannot be *represented* with any accuracy. But as an image, think of how computers are connected through the World Wide Web.

Hegemony vs Domination

Table 5 reflects the dualities observed in Gramsci, and to a degree also in Bourdieu, aligned with the rhizome/tree dual nature model.

Table 5 - Gramsci's concepts of hegemony and domination in the dual power model

Archetype	**Rhizome**	**Tree**
Power expression	Hegemony	Domination
Power through	Leadership (*riyasa*)	Control (*mulk*)
Source of power	Personal capacity	Position
Foundation	Narrative	Matter
Preferred domain	Thought / Ideas	Practice / Action
Incarnation	Ruling elite	Institutions of State
Main channel of power	Intellectual, moral, spiritual = cultural	Armed forces, Bureaucracy = disciplinary
Validation mode	Consent, Consensuc	Compliance, Coercion
Authority legitimation	Charismatic	Legal-rational

Commentary of Table 5

While studying Gramsci, I noticed that hegemony must be differentiated from domination. Much of the confusion surrounding hegemony seems to stem from this lack of differentiation. The two terms are closely linked, in theory and in practice, but they describe two different aspects of power that should be distinguished. Hegemony is *pre*dominance, because for capturing power a social group needs to lead; even when it has established its material domination, it must continue also to lead lest leadership be taken from it.

As Gramsci put it: "*the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as 'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership'* [hegemony]. *A social group* dominates *antagonistic groups (…); it* leads *kindred or allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise 'leadership' before winning governmental power (this indeed is one of the principal conditions for winning such power); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to 'lead' as well"*.[91]. While hegemony is essential for domination, domination allows power to

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[90] For those who believe in the spirit world, the model of the rhizome allows for the presence of ancestors and descendants as nodes that no-longer/do-not-yet sprout above ground, but that one is connected to nonetheless.

[91] Gramsci 1971:57-58.

be unlinked from a leader's personality. By vesting it in structure (office), power acquires a lasting influence and can be transmitted between individuals.

Placing hegemony and domination under the rhizome/tree duality gives the following:

- **Hegemony** is informal, agency-based, fluid, multiple and multi-centred, open-ended, non-hierarchical and invisible;
- **Domination** is formal, structural, crystallized, unique, centred, finite, hierarchical and visible.

Hegemony/leadership is a personal quality with the prerequisite of charisma. Domination, in turn, is a question of position and is exercised through control, by the exercise of legal-rational authority. Referring to Weber's three modes of legitimation, in terms of legal source, the rational-legal modern state is based on positive law, charisma on the laws of nature, and tradition on customary law which, being partly codified, is an intermediary form between the laws of nature and positive law.[92]

The incarnation of hegemony is, I suggest, the **ruling elite**. I prefer this over the term used by Gramsci, 'ruling class', which supposes structure. Class is a word belonging to the state-tree. It presupposes a group of people defined by their economic position in society, as if that by itself could predetermine their collective interest. The word 'elite' comes from the Latin *eligere* (French *élire*): to choose. Although it has often been rendered as 'the chosen', the verb is in an active form and it rather means 'chooser'.[93] I think that the agency-based notion of 'chooser' fits the rhizomatic character of the ruling elite much better than the passive notion of 'chosen' (eliciting the question: *who* chose them?) or the structural idea of 'class'.

Conceiving of the ruling elite and civil society as essentially rhizomatic (fluid, informal, affect- or socialization-based, multi-centred, networked, capable of reproducing without copying themselves, open-ended), provides an analytical advantage over formal, class- or structure-based visions when examining the workings of power. It explains how networks of people strengthen each other through sustained socialization and mutual recognition, and manoeuvre to capture power or retain it.

According to the above, a group needs social power for capturing power and it needs control over the institutions of state for exercising it durably. This, we will see, is key to understanding clan and other network politics in Somalia today.

Hegemony and leadership imply control over the **narrative**. This is why the notion of organic intellectual is so important to Gramsci. Organic intellectuals craft the hegemonic narrative (for example the heroic origins of the nation and the legitimacy of the current sovereign) and systematize it (for instance by presenting their narrative as science), which in extreme cases allows the narrative to become a tool for domination (when public dissent towards the official narrative becomes punishable). Bourdieu's symbolic power is supported by the hegemonic narrative, which is ingrained in citizens' thought processes through national education, the daily rituals of 'banal nationalism' and public exhortations from positions of power carried through the national media. Bourdieu considers the power of the State as essentially 'arbitrary'—which could refer to the rhizomatic social aspect of hegemony—but it is 'naturalized' by the forced socialization of individuals through institutions.

The institutions of state exercise power through control over matter, ranging from natural resources to the human body (e.g. public health standards). Their preferred domain is action. Like the tree, institutions are stable; unlike the rhizome, there is no intrinsic dynamic of transformation—they remain homogeneous and may even resist transformation. They evolve only as a result to external conditions.

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[92] A more complete treatment of customary law would certainly be welcome in this dissertation, but it is beyond my capacity. For an interesting analysis, see Zenker & Hoehne 2018: "Processing the Paradox**.** When the State Has to Deal with Customary Law".

[93] "*Le terme a un sens actif. Il s'agit de faire un choix comme l'indique la première occurrence du mot sous la plume de Chrétien de Troyes au XIIe siècle « a vostre eslite », c'est-à-dire « à votre choix* »." Wikipedia 12 Nov 2021.

Their mode of reproduction is copying themselves (through the seed or grafting/branching). Institutional power, being crafted by logos and positive reason, is easy to understand—think of the organigrams above. However, in the dual power model the thought processes that derive from hegemonic narratives are as important as the tools of domination. Like the Laws of Nature for positive law, they are even an enabling factor. The state's domination is only consented to because its symbolic power has been accepted.

Gramsci's notions of consensus, consent, compliance and coercion can also be brought under the denominator of the dual power scheme. Consensus is a function of leadership by the ruling elite and, as noted in 1.4 above, there are usually several fields of consensus operating at once.. It can be imagined as a magnetic field polarizing the rhizome. Through this polarization, the individual nodes (human beings) feel the dual tug of consent and dissent. Consent, as noted, is a more subconscious process than consensus; it is fundamentally produced through the socialization processes of the state. Both consensus and consent/dissent are rhizomatic. For example, it is difficult to bring them under words, because they fluctuate incessantly. Compliance, however, is what the state through its disciplinary institutions demands (filling in tax forms, observing traffic rules, going to school). It hardly involves thought processes—these would express themselves through consent/dissent—and only requires action in a binary manner: comply or not. Coercion is the power the state wields to enforce compliance. Coercion and compliance belong to the domain of the tree.

Representing the Dual Nature of Power

Applied to the study of power, the rhizome/tree duality can be pictured as follows. Above us is the ideational world of concepts, forms and structures, and of light and reason in which we create the mental structures that guide our perception. Below us lies the invisible realm of the rhizome, containing the primary life force that connects human beings in one vast dynamic and ever-fluctuating network. Both extremes lead to immortality of a different kind: that of the rhizome lies in its permanent mutation and adaptation to circumstances, and the fact that it seems to contain the life force. The immortality of the tree-image lies in its permanence as a mental image that can remain stable over thousands or millions of years, structuring human thought processes. In their effort to perpetuate themselves, human communities tend towards both poles, which express themselves as social and symbolic power, respectively.

The socio-political reality we live in emerges at the intersection between the underground rhizome—that creates us physically—and the above-ground mental structures that provide meaning to our existence. Although the world of form and representation and that of the rhizome are conceptually opposed, they coexist and interact continuously through us. But we cannot turn our gaze upward and downward at the same time. This is the problem of the observer that, once directly addressed, led to the quantum revolution in physics.

Ideal Type	**Political Practice**		***Ideal Type***
Rhizome	⟸	⟹	*Tree*
State of Nature	Community (lineage)	State	*Virtuous City*
Bios/Life Force	Social Power	Symbolic Power	*Logos/Reason*
Unconscious/Id	Underground	Ideal in the Sky	*Superego*
Dionysos	Instinctive/Emotional	Rational/Spiritual	*Apollo*

Figure 13: Political Practice between two ideal types

Philosophers and politicians concerned with morals and ethics have long added to the list above the value judgements of 'good' (positive, male) to the right and 'bad' (negative, female) to the left columns, thus tending to overcome, repress, channel or ignore the rhizomatic. A scientific, non-judgemental approach requires the observer to recognize the existence of both poles, understanding that political practice is situated between both extremes and always a mix of both principles.

Figure 13 helps to situate the 'image of the state' versus 'state practice' dialectic observed by Philip Abrams and Migdal & Schlichte (1.4): between the middle and the right of the diagram above. Social power and the rhizome is ignored in this dialectic, which explains why it cannot account for self-governance (I tried during my research to fit clan self-governance under 'state practice' and see state governance as 'image of the state' but these attempts failed, leading me to the rhizome-tree distinction developed in this chapter). The reason that state practice does not conform to the image of the state is because political practice is also influenced by social power; but this dialectic remains a helpful distinction to study experiences of state power and will be referred to frequently in the text below.

We cannot *see* the rhizome nor can we even represent it; we can only really *experience* it. Nevertheless, I have tried here to understand it—*over*stand might be a better, though as yet non-existing, term—by pointing out its conceptual contrasts with the tree. This has led to the Dual Power Theory, in which many of the dualities encountered in the political philosophy studied in these pages are arranged in a bipolar fashion. Such a conceptual model, however, where everything seems to fit nicely in a 2D diagram or table, clearly belongs to the realm of social constructs and ideal images, and it may do violence to the intrinsic nature of the rhizome. I note this problem, but do not know how to address it.

Conclusions of Part I

The sub-hypothesis I set out to investigate in this part of my dissertation is that **the State is a transient form of political order that maintains the hegemony of ruling elites by denying alternative political orders based on self-governance**. It required an answer, first, to the questions: What is the origin of the State and of the international order? On the other hand, what is self-governance, and can it form a rival political order to that of the State?

I thus first addressed the point that the modern state has become a hegemonic concept that has come to define political order, so that a political order without the State has become inconceivable, or at the very least undesirable. The modern state is generally taken to be the end point of a long socio-political evolution that started at the 'Dawn of History'. Accordingly, there has been almost no effort in political science to conceive of a post-state order, or of political relations between human communities that are based on anything else than the State. The State, as analysed by Bourdieu, has become deeply ingrained in the way we see and think about the world; it *'thinks itself through us'*.

If we are convinced that we are living in the best of all possible worlds, there is no problem with that, but Leibnizian optimism is not warranted by the current state of global uncertainty. Although I have not yet broached state-building efforts in Somalia, the starting point for this research was the observation that state-building interventions most often lead to disappointing results, and that in the absence of an effective state, societies seem quite capable of reaching some levels of peace and development through self-governance. The lack of political theories that can explain self-governance seemed related to the hegemony of the State. Therefore, it was necessary to break through the notion that the State is the only sovereign power, and thus the sole source of political authority, in today's world.

By analysing the genealogy of the State, it turned out that the modern state was originally premised on the existence of a *State of Nature,* in which human beings are equal and free, and in which they self-govern according to the principles of *the Laws of Nature*. These principles are more or less the same everywhere in the world. They include, for example, the respect for life, 'thou shalt not kill', nurturing one's progeny, care for the weaker members of a community, contributing positively to the collective, preserving environmental resources, respecting the fruit of another person's labour, and even the search for knowledge and wisdom. Communities everywhere, and apparently since always, reject members who consistently break one or more of these rules. And since humans are social animals and need to remain in communities to survive, the laws of nature have a universal scope. In the State of Nature, each adult human being is *self-sovereign* and responsible for applying the laws of nature, with the primary goal of the preservation of self and the community; the notion of community being open-ended.

The philosophical tradition of the State of Nature and the Laws of Nature was well established in ancient Europe and developed by, among others, Aristotle, Cicero and Roman jurists. The latter developed *ius gentium* (the Law of Peoples) that approached the Laws of Nature as a form of universal customary law. This was revived by Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century, who made it a pivot of his political philosophy. It then remained a central consideration of European philosophy until the end of the 18th century. In the 19th century, however, the 'State of Nature' disappeared almost entirely from political philosophical debates, and by the end of the 20th century it seemed an antiquated curiosity.

The above-mentioned thinkers all considered that the State of Nature is insufficient for human beings, who cherish their freedom and equality, but also seek safety, predictability and development. While an isolated community may be able to provide these conditions, the city, where members of different communities interact routinely, required a different solution: the Law. Since humankind seemed endowed (by Nature, or by God) with *reason*, humans could leave the State of Nature and develop their own universe. Reason prefigures a universe of ideas and mental constructs that provide meaning to life, both individually and collectively: at best a solar world of conceptual beauty and fulfilment, where humans work together to achieve progress, order and collective safety.

Thus, humans came to posit their own laws, whence the term *positive law*, or civil law (*ius civile*) referring to the city where such laws should apply. To ensure that they are complied with, a *sovereign power* was needed—this could be a citizen's assembly, an oligarchy, a religious authority or a monarch—to enforce them. People had to forsake part of the self-sovereignty that they enjoyed in the State of Nature when submitting to the sovereign power, to establish a rules-based *civil society*. This painful sacrifice could only be legitimized on several conditions, including these three restrictions:

1. Positive law had to *derive its legitimacy from the Laws of Nature*; it could not go against the wider, universal principles.
2. Positive law *only applied to a specific human community*, and it was assumed that it would evolve over time within that community; thus positive law is time-and-space bound.
3. The scope of positive law had to be *as limited as possible*, leaving the rest of human affairs to the laws of nature. It was recognized that surrendering one's freedoms to a sovereign entailed a risk of tyranny and that, to minimize it, one had to lose as little self-sovereignty as possible.

Furthermore, the sovereign power could not be entirely bound by the positive law that derived from its power, and which it would have to enforce against itself, creating a paradox. *The sovereign thus existed in the State of Nature with other sovereign powers*.

I retain two central points from this tradition: One, that self-sovereignty and *self-governance is considered the natural condition of mankind*. Two, that philosophers argued for a *dual system of law*, in which positive law derives its legitimacy from its agreement with the Laws of Nature.

This political philosophy was reversed in the 19th century by positivism. In Chapter One I explain how this happened, and how the modern state came into being. Key to the State's power was its denial of the Laws of Nature, and of any external principle of legitimation. Positive law became the only source of law, the State occupying the entire political field. The result was that the three restrictions on positive law now disappeared, and that one form of *ius civile,* originally planned for only one context (that of 19th century north-western Europe), could claim universality.

There remained the problem of international order. Each state could wield absolute authority in its own society, at least in theory, but sovereign states together had no positive law to govern them, and thus co-existed in a state of nature. In the late 19th and 20th centuries, this was construed negatively, as anarchy. This reasoning led to the establishment of an international legal order. The League of Nations and the United Nations were set up as instruments for the formal regulation of relations between states. However, without a sovereign authority, no state could be forced to comply to international rules.

Before the establishment of this order, sovereignty in Europe was based on mutual recognition: first between aristocratic ruling houses, later between the national bourgeoisies of the 19th century. Since some countries were stronger than others, they—the 'Great Powers'—influenced the creation of the international legal order to their advantage. This was an example of leadership made domination by creating institutional structures (the 'international rules-based order') that sought to perpetuate their hegemony.

The narrative above has only examined one side of the political order, that of the state. To examine the other, the perspective of a self-governing society**,** I first closely looked at Somali pre-colonial history to discern native systems of political order. It transpires that Somalis had ample experience with central authority, but that they preferred self-governance (a political order close to the 'State of Nature'). This was the condition the Europeans found them in when they first set foot on Somali land, in the second half of the 19th century.

After an in-depth examination of the Somali clan system, I argue that it indeed constitutes a political order, but one that reflects *ius gentium*, based on customary rather than on positive law. I also note that all arboreal representations of such political order, to start with the clan 'tree' itself, are insufficient or even misleading. Deleuze & Guattari (1980) argue that the image of a tree belongs to the state, and they oppose it to the *rhizome*. For them the essential social manifestation of the rhizome is *nomadic society*, of which predominantly pastoralist Somalia is an excellent example.

The concept of the rhizome has not been developed much in philosophy or the social sciences, but in the field of forestry and ecosystems it has been intensely studied. Moreover, it is the model for the world wide web, and maybe also for the human brain. I applied these insights from life sciences to develop Bayart's intuition about the rhizome-state in Africa.

Upon reflection, a rhizomatic logic seems to underlie not only nomadic society, but society in general. Socialization, networking, affect, charisma, casual relationships: how these work in our lives can be understood through the model of the rhizome, but not through that of the hierarchical, homogeneous and centralized tree that seems to describe the State so well. Moreover, the clan-based political order in Somalia confirms the insights of forestry: the rhizome nurtures the ecosystem, which in human terms is society. I call this *social power*. This can be opposed, conceptually, to the power of the State, which, following Bourdieu, I call *symbolic power*.

Social power exists in all human communities. In Somalia it is more noticeable because of the absence of the State, and the self-governance it generates is thus more obvious. But in developed countries, too, social relations seem to follow the rhizomatic Laws of Nature, though as citizens we simultaneously comply with the laws posited by the State. The tree and the rhizome, social and symbolic power, thus coexist in our societies, expressing themselves in each political order in varying proportions.

Connecting this insight to that of the relation as reflected in ancient debates between the Laws of Nature and positive law, it is likely that a dual system of power has always existed. However, as the State of Nature is denied at the intellectual and conceptual levels, academic models of perception in the field of international relations and studies of political order do not integrate social power, the effects of rhizome, socialization processes, and everything related to the Laws of Nature. We may not see them, but they are there, and it is high time to bring them back into the way we perceive politics, recognizing the dual nature of power.

PART II:

Political Order in Somalia, 1890-2012

"To this day, even after colonial rule and independence, Somalis show immense resistance to the development and operation of statehood because their clan system, culture and socialization contradict the requirements of a modern state. Though they realize that they need a state to centralize authority and organize common defence, Somalis cling to the clan system that balkanizes them into smaller and often hostile but weak groups. Wanting to enjoy the personal freedom and egalitarian existence which their culture instils and their forefathers had known, they equate the state with the tyrannical rule they have thus far experienced under the colonial and autocolonial state."

Hussein Bulhan 2013[1]

Doctor Bulhan, a practicing psychiatrist, doctor in philosophy and founder/director of Frantz Fanon University in Hargeisa, here sums up the contradictory and complicated relation Somalis maintain with the State, how it has been shaped by culture and historical experience, and why the alternative (the clan system) is also unsatisfactory. These are all central themes in the second part of my dissertation: the historical development of the Somali state, how Somali self-governance has developed, the relations between state and society in Somalia and how they were shaped by external forces.

As seen in Chapter Two, Somalis had never submitted to an external man-made authority, and resisted formal rule, preferring '*the personal freedom and egalitarian existence which their culture instils and their forefathers had known*' as Bulhan puts it. The encounter between Somali society and the colonial system was the first time that Somali society was submitted to formal rule, and therefore the history of Somali state-society relations should start there.

This part is organized historically, dealing with the colonial rule (Chapter Four), the independent state of Somalia (Chapter Five), the collapse of that state in the Civil War and within the African context (Chapter Six) and the international interventions to rebuild a Somali state in the post-Cold War period (Chapter Seven). In the Conclusions to Part Two, I summarize the development of Somali state-society relations and question the role international intervention has played, before making some final analytical remarks to adapt my own theoretical framework to the findings.

[1] Bulhan, Hussein 2013: "In Between Three Civilizations Vol 1. Archaeology of Social Amnesia and Triple Heritage of Somalis"; p298

The dual focus on the state implied in the sub-hypothesis investigated in this part of the thesis—'*Efforts to build a modern state in Somalia throughout history have failed because they do not accept that Somali society is self-governed and seek to impose a foreign political order*'—will be maintained throughout the following chapters. This dual focus is the only way, I think, of dealing with the observer's problem: the position of the observer determines the result of the observation. I attempt to look both upward, at the state-tree and its atmospheric connections (the international state order) and downward, at the rhizome underground and how it connects to the roots of the state-tree (state-society relations in Somalia). The dual nature of power requires a dual focus, but the objective remains an integrated vision of how the state connects domestic Somali society to an international order.

Chapter 4: The Colonial Period, 1880s to 1960

Where we see how the colonial world impacted Somalia before it was colonized. Of the Scramble for Africa and the reasons for the occupation of Somalia. How the British established a protectorate in the North to secure minor strategic objectives, and let it languish. About grand Italian dreams to develop a profitable colonial state. Why resistance against the colonial occupiers could only be mobilized through Islam; of the Dervish revolt in the North and underground Islamic movements in the South.

Where the impact is measured of both colonial projects on Somali socio-political relations. How feeble European colonial rule was in practice, and how it needed to build on existing self-governance structures but institutionalized them. How the British invented the Somali native. Where we see that the image of the colonial state far surpassed its effectiveness and managed to imprint Somali minds with the hegemonic idea of the modern Western state.

How Somalia moved towards independence, first under a British Military Administration and then under a UN Trusteeship supervised by Italy. The role played herein by the Somali Youth League, which formed the nucleus of the national ruling elite. Of the insufficient efforts by Italy to lay the foundations for the independent state and economy, and the lack of preparations in British Somaliland.

"Everywhere the supervision exercised over them [African officials] must bring home the lesson that the sanction for their authority is no longer the goodwill of their own people, but the recognition accorded to them by the [colonial] administration."

Lord Hailey, 1938[1]

This quote by one of the most knowledgeable British colonial reformers nicely sums up the key contribution of colonialism to the practice of governance: the legitimacy of authority was henceforth provided by an external source (the British Empire), not the 'goodwill of their own people'.

[1] Hailey 1938: "An African Survey: A Study of Problems arising in Africa South of the Sahara"; p539–40.

4.1 Integration into the Colonial World

Although contacts between Somalis and external states such as Ethiopia, the Ottomans and the Sultanate of Zanzibar left their imprint on Somali history and culture, we saw that in terms of political order, Somalis never seem to have left the State of Nature characterized by self-governance. The British and Italian colonial ventures that started in the 19th century launched the trajectory of the modern Somali state and integrated Somali society into the Western world order.

One may wonder what drove the Italians, British, French and unsuccessful contenders like the Germans to Somalia in the 19th century. Building a state was certainly not a motivation. European imperial powers needed to secure their trading networks and military and industrial supply lines against other European states and local predators (the main objective of Great Britain and France) and they needed resources to feed their burgeoning industrial expansion (especially the recently unified Italy and Germany, latecomers in the colonial race) or increase their earnings on the global marketplace. From 1845 to 1885 terms of trade for African commodities rose steadily—meaning that the continent generated a trade surplus. This prompted investments by European traders and their governments to increase access to African resources. A less pragmatical but politically more popular objective was to feed the domestic grandeur and cement the hegemony of national ruling classes in Europe.[2]

The fate of the Spanish Empire, which spanned the globe by 1520 but was irremediably broke by 1557-1560, leading to the country's lasting decline, served as a lesson to other European states. Imperial policy had to be based on sound finances and the generation of a surplus; symbolic power came second and was derived from the control of wealth. This determined the nature of European expansion in Africa in the 19th century. Resources had to be extracted at minimal cost, and this meant dealing as pragmatically as possible with local political configurations while at the same time convincing colonial subjects of European superiority, to ensure their submission. In Africa the British, French and Portuguese were more experienced in this than the Italian, German and Belgian newcomers.

The Scramble for Africa

The 'Scramble for Africa' is the name commonly given to late 19th century colonial expansion in Africa. Whereas since the late 15th century colonial penetration in Africa had been in coastal settlements, focused on trade, and often with the agreement of local authorities, the burgeoning need for agro-industrial and mineral resources in 19th century Europe led colonial powers to search more direct ways of exploiting Africa. When the newly formed industrial powers Germany and Italy joined the fray, the competition became intense. In 1884 Chancellor Bismarck convened 13 Western powers and the Ottoman Empire to a conference in Berlin that was to last for three and a half months, and in which the principles and details of the partition of Africa were to be decided.

Of the five African polities whose independence was recognized at the conference, two were in Somalia: the rival Majerteen Sultanates in ‘alula and Hobyo.[3] Somalia was one of the last frontiers of colonial expansion. The country was not known to possess valuable resources, and its chaotic and warlike

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[2] There has been a debate about the reasons for the Scramble for Africa. Economists show that the percentage of world trade involving Africa was so low that it never justified European interests and hopes. There is therefore an impression that militaristic grandeur and the need to satisfy domestic audiences was more important than trade. Researchers mining large datasets about African trade conclude, however, that the economic prospects for African commodity production looked very bright at the time of the Berlin conference: See Frankema et al 2015: *"An Economic Rationale for the Africa Scramble: The Commercial Transition and the Commodity Price Boom of 1845-1885"*. But a glut in tropical production and falling demand caused the terms of trade to fall in the period between 1885 and 1939, causing many colonial dreams of prosperity to evaporate, leaving colonial economies that had been oriented toward export cash crop production in a pitiful state on the eve of decolonization.

[3] The others were Ethiopia, Morocco and Liberia.

reputation made it unappealing to rule. The passage of ships increased immensely with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, which shortened the trip between Europe and India/the Far East by eight to nine thousand kilometres. The coaling/transhipment port of Aden, occupied by Great Britain in 1839, soon became one of the busiest ports in the British Empire. Controlling the Somali coast on the other side of the Gulf of Aden, with its treacherous coastline and history of piracy and looting of stranded ships, became a tactical necessity. The rest of the country initially did not interest colonial powers. The Southern coast of Somalia (the Benadir) remained under nominal Zanzibari control until the mid-1890s.

Great Britain had imposed a protectorate upon Zanzibar in 1880, and in 1888 ordered the Sultan to cede the control over the Zanzibari coast around Dar-es Salaam (that would later become part of Tanganyika) to a German concession, keeping the Mombasa coast all the way up to the Jubba River (later British East Africa) for itself. In 1892 Great Britain arranged for the Sultan of Zanzibar to give the control of the last strip of mainland African coast it controlled, the Benadir, to Italy, to keep the French out of the area.[4] In 1888 and 1889 Italy had already entered into protectorate agreements with the Majerteen Sultans of Hobyo and 'alula in a desperate attempt to get a piece of the African 'cake'. Italy's main interest in Africa was Ethiopia, which it attempted to conquer from the Red Sea coast (Eritrea). But in 1896 the Italian invasion was defeated by the Ethiopian army in the battle of Adwa, which led Italy to focus more on Somalia. The French, who had attempted to gain a foothold in the Red Sea, contented themselves with 'La Côte Française des Somalis' (Djibouti) after they negotiated, in 1897, a trade agreement with Ethiopia. Ethiopia, in turn, claimed sovereignty over the Hawd and the Ogaden under the principle of 'effective occupation' established in the Berlin Conference.[5]

Thus Somalis, who had self-governed in non-state or very loose state structures and roamed across the Horn for millenniums, were separated between 1884 and 1897 (on paper at least) between three European powers and Ethiopia. The colonial period had begun.

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[4] Galbraith 1970: "Italy, the British East Africa Company and the Benadir Coast, 1888-93". Great Britain had no interest in controlling the Benadir Coast itself.

[5] Art. 35 of the General Declaration of the Berlin Conference declared that to lay claim to an area of Africa the colonial power had to effectively control it. This argument applied by extension to Ethiopia, whose status became akin to a Western colonial power after it defeated Italy in 1896.

Figure 14: Map with polities in the Horn of Africa. Provenance Wikipedia, source unknown.

The Colonial Economy Disrupts Somalia

Before colonial 'effective occupation' started, Somalia had already become increasingly integrated in the Indian Ocean economy, itself an essential hub of the budding global economic order of high colonialism. This significant changed the balance between Somali social, economic and political forces, preparing the ground for the subsequent colonial presence. The example given below describes the impact of this integration on the pastoralist Majerteen of Puntland; after that I briefly mention how Southern agricultural communities were affected by the colonial economy.

The Majerteen people of the coast lived in a precarious but successful balance with the harsh environment until the Majerteen/Mohamud Saleban/Osman Mohamud sultanate emerged as a strong player in the mid-19th century.[6] Coping strategies were based on the mobility of pastoralists, interdependence of coastal and pastoral communities, and a conservation ethic (frugal lifestyle,

[6] Durrill 1986: "Atrocious Misery: The African Origins of Famine in Northern Somalia, 1839-1884".

carefully managing herds etc). Thus, a drought between 1840 and 1843 apparently produced no victims.

But by the 1860s the establishment of commercial links with Aden, dominated by the Sultan's sub-clan, led to starvation during drought. "*The origins of famine in Northern Somalia lay not in active imperial exploitation but in the sultanate's hasty commitment to capitalism*".[7] The sultanate's primary external resource was the looting of stranded ships;[8] upon that base, it established its supremacy over the neighbouring clans. The Osman Mohamud based in Northern Bari (Bosaso, previously called Bender Qassim) and the nearby Warsangeli (Laasqoray) took over the livestock export to Aden and encouraged the production of livestock for export, thus upsetting the delicate environmental balance (overgrazing leading to famine during spells of drought) and causing strife among pastoral communities competing for scarce water and pasture.

During the 1868 drought the sultan's troops, armed with fire weapons, decimated a reported 800 Warsangeli warriors in one battle and 600 Dhulbahante in another.[9] This was a massacre on a new level, according to observers at that time, facilitated by firearms and suggesting a shift from clan fighting to state warfare. *Xeer* was helpless in solving such a complex problem with so much loss of life, and anyhow the Osman Mohamud Sultan could not be made to pay blood money, as he considered his position too strong.

The Osman Mohamud Sultan, starting in the 1850s, abandoned his fixed residence on the coast and his court moved around the Sultanate, returning to the coast only twice a year to collect taxes. The Sultanate also took over trading from Indian and Arab merchants, and coastal merchants belonging to the Majerteen now went inland to buy livestock and gum (frankincense) trading them against commodities, often on credit and at disadvantageous rates for local pastoralists who were unfamiliar with the monetary economy. Taxation of gum and livestock exports further drove down prices paid to the pastoralists.

The emergence of this intermediary merchant group weakened the relations between pastoralists and coastal peoples, and pastoralists had no option other than trying to increase herd size to pay off debts. On the other hand, coastal peoples, now largely bereft of relations with pastoralists, resisted commodification and diversified their economy by developing subsistence agriculture and fishing and engaging in other economic activities. The droughts of 1868 and 1880 decimated livestock and indebted pastoralists but did not affect coastal residents as much.

Patron-client relationships (from creditor to debtor, merchant to producer) were not kinship-based but cut through clans. According to Revoil, who spent almost a year in Majerteen territory in 1880, and who observed the 'atrocious misery' of the famine, the Majerteen were in a state of continual war amongst themselves and with their neighbours.

"*This was a political economy at war with itself. Herders required flexibility in managing the size of their herds, but British buyers and Majerteen merchants demanded continuous production and trade regardless of the ecological consequences. As a result, the pursuit of profits by Osman-Mohamud leaders undermined their clients' ability first to subsist and then to allocate by peaceful means political power amongst themselves. In doing so, the sultanate rendered Majerteen clansmen and their families*

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[7] Durrill 1986:306.

[8] "*By 1800 the Majerteen confidently expected two or three European ships to be wrecked on their shores every season*", Durrill 1986:289. The author provides a map with explanations on the treacherous currents that in July and August carry ships to the rocky coast between Ras Hafuun and 'alula. When they were stranded, these ships were either looted or a ransom would be extorted for 'protection' of the crew and the wares. The Osman Mohamud Sultan would try to either control this negotiation process or demand a cut from the local authorities.

[9] Durrill 1986:303. These numbers seem exaggerated but the intensity of the fighting surprised foreign observers such as Charles Graves who witnessed the destruction of the Dhulbahante and local commentators. Note that this area has seen frequent conflict; it was later at the centre of the Dervish rebellion, while today Somaliland and Puntland are fighting over it intermittently.

vulnerable to famine and made them easy prey to internal dissension and external enemies".[10]

Well into the early 20th century it seems many Somalis (outside the urban centres) were still not participating in the cash economy, preferring the barter trade. Early 20th century Somali poetry is full of scorn for the 'gold of the Englishman'. It seems the Somali pastoral economy actively resisted monetization,[11] considering that the only true marker of wealth was herd size, not currency.

Southern Somalia experienced economic revival in the 19th century due to the buoyant Indian Ocean trade led by Bombay-based trading houses. The Sultanate of Zanzibar reaffirmed its sovereignty over the Benadir coast by establishing garrisons in the old cities and encouraging inland trade. With rising demand for agricultural products (inputs for industrialization) and the availability of East African slaves, in the mid-19th century pastoralist clans from Central Somalia started operating small-scale commercial farms with slave labour along the lower Shabelle. Ten thousands of slaves were brought into the area.[12] Local sedentary communities were forced to cooperate by producing cash crops at the behest of the pastoral clans, but some also converted to cash crop production by themselves. Many of the pastoralist clans were Hawiye connected to trading families in Mogadishu, and this strengthened their dominant social status. Large plantations did not exist; typically, a dozen or less slaves worked on a single farm. Control of land became an issue beyond the sustenance of a local community, as land now produced a surplus/revenue. It can be said that the land problems which still cause much conflict in the Lower Shabelle have their origin in the 19th century introduction of plantation agriculture.[13]

These developments took place in independent Somali polities before colonial powers established protectorates or concessions. The integration into the modern world economy preceded direct colonial rule. It affected Somali society by transforming local economic relations and prompted the formation of 'clan states'[14] that could interact with the outside world on their own terms. As the famines induced by the commercialization for export of Somali livestock in Puntland and the massive introduction of slaves and expropriation of land in South Somalia demonstrate, these first steps of local rulers toward seeking external rent (and arms and political recognition) had a negative impact on the population and its development; by upsetting the clan balance they also led to much higher levels of conflict.

One more point to be made before describing the colonial period in Somalia is about conflict in Somali society. Most travellers[15] are amazed by the intensity of bloodletting between clans but also between individuals, describing daily killings; in their eyes, Somali life was 'nasty, brutish and short' to borrow Hobbes' phrase. Other travellers (such as Kirk, 1872-1873[16]) describe a more peaceful society and a

[10] Durrill 1986:304.

[11] Accounts by British colonial writers such as Margaret Laurence in "The Prophet's Camel Bell", 1963, and later Somali authors such as Nadifa Mohamed in "Black Mamba Boy", 2010.

[12] Cassanelli 1982: "The Shaping of Somali Society. Reconstructing the History of a Pastoral People, 1600-1900"; p168-176. Somalis never enslaved each other, nor were they enslaved. They bought slaves from Oromiyya and East Africa. No data was collected about the total amount of East African slaves brought into Somalia, but Cassanelli suggests about 50,000.

[13] Cassanelli 1982:174 notes that although the pressure by Zanzibari and Indian traders on local communities to produce cash crops increased, in a cultural sense Somalis were still not drawn to commercial agriculture. Profits would typically be invested in increasing herd size, not reinvested in farms.

[14] Besides the Majerteen/Osman Mohamud mentioned above there were many others efforts to set up clan-state structures: Ali Saleban in Qandala, Warsangeli in Laasqoray, Garhajis in Maydh, Habr Awal in Berbera, Issa in Zeyla', Bimaal in Merka, Majerteen in Kismayo…

[15] E.g. Lt. William Christopher, Richard Burton, Georges Revoil, Commodore Charles Guillain, Luigi Robecchi-Brichetti.

[16] Kirk 1872-73: "Visit to the Coast of Somali-Land".

friendly reception; but all are impressed by the poverty and squalor in which the local inhabitants live. In correction to the simplistic image that 'the civil war was the expression of ancient clan hatreds' Somali experts have sometimes come to claim that 'before colonization Somali clans lived in peace and harmony with each other'; but available sources contradict this image. Maybe harmonious relations among clans were the rule before the world economy and firearms made their entry into Somalia; but for lack of sources from that period it is difficult to tell.

4.2 British and Italian Somaliland

"One of the chief objects of our colonial administration should be gradually to guide the various races and peoples under our control along the path of real progress, and to teach them to take a more intelligent interest in their own affairs."

British Colonial Office, 1920[17]

Behold how the infidel lays traps for you as you become less wary!
The coins he dispenses so freely now will prove your undoing
First he will disarm you as though you were mere women
He will deceive you and rob you of your lands
And then burden you with onerous loads as though you were donkeys

Sayid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan, 1920[18]

Cinderella of the British Empire

The Ottoman Empire had held official sovereignty over the North-western Somali coast, centred on Zeyla', since the late 17th century; but it had in fact left Zeyla' to be exploited by Yemenis in exchange for a yearly payment; the Yemenis in turn appointed a local strongman to exploit the harbour with its intermittent income from the Harar caravan trade.[19] There were no investments until the late 19th century, when the Khedive of Egypt replaced Ottoman rule along the shores of the Red Sea. I.M. Lewis describes how Egypt under Ismail Pasha, during its occupation of the Northern Somali coast from 1874 to 1882, "improved the coastal ports, constructed piers and lighthouses, and they did much to encourage and promote Islam".[20] The old town of Berbera bears witness to this Egyptian investment. It is unique in 19th century Somali city planning and architecture.

Several British explorers, most famously Richard Burton in 1855, visited the Somali coast and some parts of the hinterland.[21] Comparing Berbera to Aden, that he refers to as a "mountain of misery", he remarks:

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[17] Colonial Office 535/62 Hussey's Memorandum on Somaliland Education 5/12/1920 (quoted in Kakwenzire 1986: "Resistance, Revenue and Development in Northern Somalia, 1905-1939").

[18] The last words of the Dervish leader Sayid Hassan. Laitin 1979: "The War in the Ogaden: Implications for Siyaad's Rôle in Somali History". He quotes Abdi Sheikh-Abdi 1978: "Sayid Mohammed Abdille Hassan and the Current Conflict in the Horn"; p6.

[19] Burton 1856: "First Footsteps in East Africa or An Exploration of Harar" Chapter 1.

[20] Lewis 1961: "A Pastoral Democracy"; p19.

[21] Burton's "First Footsteps in East Africa or An Exploration of Harar" remains one of the most complete descriptions from the 19th century, and he seems to have been the first European traveller who ventured so far

"*It was with astonishment that I reflected on the impolicy of having preferred Aden to this place*".[22] Nonetheless, his accounts of the lack of resources of the Somali interior, general hardship and frequent clan conflict dissuaded British officials to set up anything more than a skeleton presence in 'Somaliland'. At that time the coast was still under nominal Ottoman, *de facto* Egyptian control, as it had been since the 17th century. When the British annexed Egypt in 1880, they first ruled the Somali coast by proxy; but in 1884 the Egyptian troops abandoned the region to fight against the Mahdi revolt in Sudan, and Britain hastily established a protectorate, modelled on those they had set up in Southern Yemen and the 'Trucial Coast' (contemporary Gulf states). The British signed protection treaties with the Sultan of Warsangeli in 1884, followed by protection treaties with the Gadabursi, Issa, Haber Garhajis, Haber Toljaala and Haber Awal in 1884 and 1885.[23]

British aims in Somaliland were to protect naval interests, secure a regular meat supply for their colony in Aden and preserve peace among the tribes. The latter objective was a prerequisite for the first two and could prevent another colonial power gaining a foothold. Besides the livestock exported from the Somali coast to Aden they had no commercial or extractive interests (for example, in reviving the caravan trade between Harar and Zeyla', as suggested by Burton). The meat supply cannot have been a primordial British strategic interest, as meat could also be supplied from other regional sources, especially when the railway between Mombasa and the Kenyan highlands had been completed in 1901. In fact, Somali livestock exports were probably mainly directed toward the domestic Arabian market.

By all accounts Britain's investment in Somaliland was minimal. The British even dismantled some of the facilities recently built by the Egyptians (such as the lighthouse in Berbera) or let them fall into disrepair (such as the old town of Berbera, its fishing port and as an aqueduct bringing fresh water from the mountains). In 1939, Somaliland "*was evidently the only British dependency which did not have any form of Western education, social services, modern industrial activity, middle entrepreneur class, organized labour, cash crops, large-scale commercial farming or any other attributes of a developed or developing society*".[24] In 1907 Winston Churchill, then Under-Secretary of State in the Colonial Office, visited British Somaliland as part of a grand tour of some of Britain's colonies and protectorates. While he advocated maintaining and expanding British rule everywhere else, in the case of Somaliland he advocated either a complete withdrawal, or at least a withdrawal to the coast, noting that "*the revenues of the country which are raised entirely on the coast (...) are far from sufficient to support the forces necessary to rule the interior*". He disliked the protectorate, allegedly quipping that the governor's residence near Sheekh was '*not fit for an English dog*'.

In 1925 Douglas Jardine pointed out that the lack of development of what he called 'the Cinderella of the British Empire'[25] was costing the British treasury, as the country's revenues were only a meagre £80,000, while the British presence there cost the treasury £150,000 per year. The Colonial Office, as a rule, did not allow local administrations to appeal to the British Treasury; the fact that Somaliland, despite minimal expenses, could not cover its own costs was a source of continuous tension, and the English parliament and press kept questioning the value of the English presence there, especially during the Dervish rebellion (1899-1920, see below). To increase revenue, the Colonial Office insisted on direct taxation, as happened elsewhere in its African colonies. The protectorate's authorities resisted this measure, knowing it would lead to more conflict than income,[26] and relied almost entirely on

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inland, all the way to Harar.

[22] Burton 1856:173

[23] Baadiyow 2017 "Making Sense of Somali History" Vol 1:63.

[24] Kakwenzire 1986:659.

[25] Jardine 1925: "Somaliland: The Cinderella of the British Empire". Jardine also wrote a comprehensive account of the Dervish wars: "The Mad Mullah of Somaliland", in 1923.

[26] The Dervish leader's anger toward the British may have been sparked by a custom official's request, upon his return from Arabia in 1899, that he pay import duties on objects he carried with him. "*Did you pay the customs*

import/export duties levied at Berbera port for revenue.

One of the only arguments consistently given was the prospect of finding oil; the governor of Somaliland, in presenting his request for additional subsidies in 1920-21, remarks that "*local revenue is capable of considerable expansion by the impending development of Daga Shabel oil fields and other potential mineral resources*".[27] It is possible that this argument was used by local administrators in bad faith, to justify their expenses. A century later, no oil fields worthy of exploitation have been found in Somaliland, although their presence is still expected and there are still several companies prospecting for oil. Whatever the case, this British colonial attitude explains a reasonable fear among Somalis, which persists today, that the main reason for the foreign presence is to control and exploit the country's resources.

While British colonial authorities elsewhere were turning toward 'native administration' (also called 'indirect rule') to reduce costs, this was not possible in Somaliland, as there were no local political organizations to build on. The Isaaq Sultanate had no administrative capacity, was not accepted by all the clans and had been intermittently hostile toward the British presence. It has been demonstrated that in British colonial dominions in Africa there was an obvious correlation between pre-colonial levels of political organization and the success of shifting to indirect rule.[28] Self-governance did not provide any traditional authorities to mobilize as interface for colonial rule.

One measure of native administration that would have a long-lasting impact on local society was the creation of a stipended position for clan elders (*'uqaal*, from the singular *'aaqil).* The Egyptians, and most likely the Ottomans before them, had established the practice of indirect rule through '*uqaal* but the British made it a stipended position.[29] Each *mag*-paying group (*mag* is blood money, see above) was to have one *'aaqil.* The *'aaqil* was responsible for organizing blood-money when necessary, gaining a position of authority within his lineage. He became the intermediary between the British and Somali society also in other affairs. This entrenched lineage identities and the social practice of *mag*-paying groups, and introduced a hierarchy based on institutional position within clan politics. Since each lineage (which as we've seen is a flexible concept) desired to have its own representation and a paid position, the British were rapidly facing demands for more and more *'uqaal* to be appointed. They weighed each request and resorted to creating three tiers of clan representatives, with different monthly stipends, which suggested a hierarchy among lineages. Finally, since the representative was often an *abbaan* or other town dweller (to make representation easier), this system introduced a previously inexistent division between town and countryside, and a bias in favour of settled urban life. When in the 1950s the British established political councils and a parliament based on this system of clan representation, the rural/urban divide became more pronounced.

Mamdani analyses in his 2012 essay 'Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity' that: "*unlike what is commonly thought,* native *does not designate a condition that is original and authentic. Rather, (...) the native is the creation of the colonial state: colonized, the native is pinned down, localized, thrown out of civilization as an outcast, confined to custom, and then defined as its product*".[30] Mamdani argues that native administration and indirect rule created the colonial subject and the category of 'native'; although building on perceived local traditions of self-governance, they deeply transformed them by a) institutionalising what were fluid concepts and b) constituting a source of power and legitimation above these novel institutions, thus orienting them to implement colonial projects.

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duties when you landed here?" he retorted "*Who gave you permission to enter our country?"* B.G. Martin 1976: "Muslim Brotherhoods in 19th Century Africa", p181; quoted in Kakwenzire 1986:662.

[27] Colonial Office document 535/56 quoted in Kakwenzire 1986:669.

[28] Demonstrated by Müller-Crepon 2020: "Continuity or Change? (In)direct Rule in British and French Colonial Africa".

[29] Lewis 1959: "Clanship and Contract in Northern Somaliland"; p277.

[30] Mamdani 2012: "Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity"; p2-3.

The cases Mamdani builds his argument on (Uganda, Kenya, etc) had a much stronger British presence and a three-tiered colonial society where Indians played an intermediary role. As noted, Somali society was insufficiently organized to permit indirect rule. Nevertheless, the stipending of Somali elders politicized clan identity and laid the foundations for what would later emerge in independent Somaliland as a 'hybrid form of governance' where traditional self-governance is partially institutionalized to allow its co-optation by the state.

The British manner of dealing with clan politics sometimes suggests they behaved like a dominant clan themselves, establishing themselves as *primus inter pares* among Somali clans by exacting higher payments of blood money.[31] They also meted out more drastic collective punishment, they turned Somali clan leaders into clients through cash payments, and unapologetically took over the main source of Somali revenue: the port of Berbera. They imposed themselves by force.

After the second world war, England started investing a bit more in Somaliland, because of ethical pressure on the colonial apparatus as well as in response to the nascent Cold War. The administration headquarters were moved from Berbera to Hargeysa in 1946, signalling a shift in intent from controlling only the coastline to controlling the interior. Airfields were opened in Berbera and Hargeysa, and the protectorate was connected to the rest of the Empire by radio and postal service.

Somaliland remained an unprofitable enterprise to the British, and the colonial administration sought a way to prepare Somaliland for autonomy. The protectorate's authorities decided to invest in education, in the hope a future generation would take upon itself the burden of ruling Somaliland. But between this decision (documented in 1920) and its implementation (starting in 1939) another two decades of colonial lethargy would pass. From 1944 onward, Great Britain started building elementary schools, then a vocational training centre and secondary boarding schools, in Amoud (near Borama) and Sheekh (in the mountains above Berbera). Thus they prepared the future ruling elite of Somaliland. Many of Eastern and Southern Somalia's future elites attended these secondary schools, forming networks that crossed clan lines. The Italian police training academy in Mogadishu and the nearby secondary school of Lafole played a similar role.

Below we will pick up the final decade of British presence.

La Somalia Italiana

The Italian presence in Somalia can be divided into three periods: in the first, the Italians remained on the Benadir coast and sought mainly to profit from existing trade. After that they sought to encourage Italian immigration and develop agricultural production. Finally, during the fascist period Italy invested seriously in Somalia, trying to make it a profitable enterprise, but this effort became subordinate to the conquest of Ethiopia.

Compared to the sparsely inhabited and resource-poor north of Somalia, South Somalia had more to offer. Behind the old port cities of Mogadishu, Merka, Baraawe and Kismayo, with their existing trade networks, lay a fertile agricultural hinterland, largely unexploited, save for the presence of small farming communities and some cash-crop production by Somali notables. In 1892 Robetti-Bricchetti, sent to assess the potential of the new concession, noted that "*Somalia is not California, neither could one find there the rich pastures of Lombardy*" and that "*this country* (...) *would never offer resources to our*

[31] Somalis rapidly learnt that a British life was worth much more than a Somali one. After the murder of a British agent in Burco in 1922, the British colonial authorities requested 30,000 camels—300 times the normal price, and absolutely unpayable—in blood money from the perpetrator's clan; Bulhan 2013:307.

peasant emigrants", but that, "*on the other hand, this land is good for commercial ventures*[32].

Early Italian administrators like Cecchi, who thought Italians should directly exploit these lands, were dissuaded by the fierce resistance of local communities, especially the Bimal, who occupied some of the most fertile areas along the Lower Shabelle river, and who revolted several times against the Italians, besieging them at Merka in 1904-05. Cecchi himself was killed in 1897 by members of the Wa'daan clan at Lafoole on the road to Afgooye,[33] as he led an expeditionary force toward the Shabelle River. Henceforth, direct colonization of Southern Somalia would only take place on unoccupied tracts of land and seek good relations with local communities.

The Italians found it difficult to deal with the lack of political authority in Somalia; they had received assurances from the Sultan of Geledi, who nominally ruled over the area they were ambushed in, that he would provide them with protection. In 'Magiurtina' (later to become Puntland), which was almost entirely pastoral, they were again outdone by Somali self-governance, which meant that clan leaders had no authority over their clansmen. A letter from a colonial administrator to the Italian Prime Minister in 1890 expresses their lack of understanding: "*The Mijerteen State, if it could be qualified as such, is a complete oligarchy headed by a Sultan, whose authority is very limited due both to his personal character and to local custom. Therefore, whatever he might promise could not be fulfilled unless ratified by the most influential men in the country"*[34]. Contrary to the Italians, the more experienced British had their treaties of protection signed by clan elders and not only by their leaders[35].

The Filonardi company (1893-96) and the Banadir company (1896-1904), both of which received concessions from the Italian government to manage and develop the Benadir coast, avoided the danger of confrontation with inland Somali communities, and simply continued taxing caravans and trade as the Sultan of Zanzibar had done[36]. They refused to engage in agricultural and commercial development as other European concession companies did, and when confronted with a public-relations scandal in Italy because the concession appeared to condone slavery in 1903, it was handed back to the Italian government.[37]

In 1900, already, an American economist, considering the Italian experiences in Eritrea and Somalia, judged that "*It is clear enough that Italian colonization has been practically a complete loss and failure*".[38] The Italian government, which suddenly found itself in charge of an unwanted possession when the concessions had failed, decided to encourage Italian migration to Somalia. The mass emigration of poor Italians to the New World in the latter part of the 19th Century appeared a loss of national resources to politicians, and they hoped to convince their population to move to this new 'Italian land' instead. A scheme was implemented to encourage Italian agricultural entrepreneurs to start businesses in Somalia, but neither capital nor labour requirements could be met, making any

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[32] Quoted in Guadagni 1978: "Colonial Origins of the Public Domain in Southern Somalia, 1892-1912"; p1.

[33] The Wa'daan were led by Sheikh Ahmed Haji Mohaddi, previously preacher in several mosques of Mogadishu, who had denounced the 1891 treaty by which the ports of the Benadir were handed over to the Italians and had gone inland to fight a *jihad* against the Italians; Mukhtar 2003: "Historical Dictionary of Somalia"; p205-206.

[34] Letter from Branchi to Crispi, then Prime Minister of Italy, March 13 1890, quoted in Guadagni 1978:9.

[35] Guadagni 1978:10.

[36] Guadagni 1978:2.

[37] Most slaves in Somalia converted to Islam; according to sharia, a Muslim could not be a slave, and the owner would have to release them. Communities of manumitted Bantus established themselves as farmers on fertile land, often intermarrying with local people (this is part of the reason why Rahanweyn came to be considered 'inferior' by pastoral clans). They were more willing to work on Italian farms than other native residents. Besteman 1996b: "Violent Politics and the Politics of Violence"; p583-584.

[38] Keller 1900: "Italy's Experience with Colonies". As habitual in that period, only the economic aspect of colonization was taken into account, and the author scoffed at "*other states [who] think, perhaps, that they can afford the privilege of civilizing savages, developing through colonial possessions their trade and marine, and entering the circle of the colony-holding 'Great Powers*'"—he was referring to the USA's own colonial ambitions.

development slow and difficult. Italian farm investors were left to fend for themselves in the hinterland without capital injections and found themselves unable to persuade Somali peasants to work on their plantations. Considering the Somali character incompatible with employment, the Italians had hoped that freed slaves would be willing to work on the plantations, and they even offered relatively high day wages and a plot of land for own cultivation. Expeditions to capture freed slaves for forced (but paid) labour only had partial success.[39] In 1910 the new governor Di Martino reported that, of eleven farming concessions created, seven had been abandoned.[40]

Throughout the 1910s the Italian presence in Somalia languished; but with the advent of fascism Italian colonization started again with renewed energy. Mussolini's new governor, De Vecchi (appointed in 1923), decided to first establish effective territorial control. He disarmed the clans of South and Central Somalia, meeting the Galje'el of Hiran with exemplary force when they resisted.[41] The Majerteen Sultanates, who had offered little in return for the stipends and weapons they received from the Italians and were always on the verge of rebellion, were submitted *manu militari* between 1925 and 1927, and incorporated into La Somalia Italiana as administrative regions. To succeed in defeating the Majerteen Sultans, the Italians relied on old clan rivalries, arming the Haber Gidir to expel the Majerteen from Mudug and Galgaduud, pushing them to their current position beyond Galka'yo.[42] In addition, Italy negotiated the cession of Trans-Jubba (the region between the Jubba River and the current Somali-Kenyan border) with Great Britain; this included the port of Kismayo. In a show of force, Italy built forts and police stations in 'Oltre Giuba' and a column of armoured cars mounted with machine guns marched from Luuq to Kismayo through the previously ungoverned British territories.[43] By 1928, then, la Somalia Italiana, unified under one government, was ready for the next step: development.

The Italian military effort to subjugate independent-minded Somalis did not extend to an administrative effort to control or transform Somali territories. A 'hut tax' was introduced and successfully applied—it did not, surprisingly, lead to revolt—which significantly increased the revenue of the colonial authorities, although the main source of income remained the import and export duties levied in the ports. The colony remained heavily dependent on subsidy by the homeland, especially for its military expenses, but its agricultural revenues did steadily increase. Large farms/plantations, irrigation channels and agro-industrial processing plants were established; a railway was built from Mogadishu through Afgooye and Bal'ad to Jowhar, roads were paved in Mogadishu, and poor Italians were shipped to Somalia with the promise of a better life. The Duke of Abruzzi established an agricultural investment company (SAIS), which developed over 20,000 hectares of land around Jowhar[44] for cotton and sugarcane production, while another scheme developed banana plantations in the hinterland of Merka. Although these became profitable, this was at the expense of large state investments in transport and processing facilities and protective state monopolies, so altogether it was not profitable to Italy.[45]

Besides the government-supported plantations near Jowhar and Merka, many lands were allocated to private investors and farmers, but these were generally not successful.[46] In 1930, agricultural exports

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[39] The Italian campaigns to force 'Bantus' to work on their plantations strengthened Somali racial discrimination towards them; Besteman 1996b:584

[40] Hess 1966: "Italian Colonialism in Somalia"; p112; see also Guadagni 1978:3.

[41] Hess 1966:151.

[42] Hess 1966:154. This later became one of the theatres of conflict of the Somali civil war, 1991-1993.

[43] Hess 1966:158-159. This was probably the antecedent for the famous 'technical', a pickup with a mounted machine gun, a fixture of the Somali civil war.

[44] For a description of the plantation, including photographs, see Istituto Coloniale Fascista: "Somalia"; not dated but published around 1930.

[45] Hess 1966:164.

[46] For example, Count Enrico di Frankenstein set up a cotton plantation near Jilib on the River Juba. Most investors and farmers, including Count Frankenstein, withdrew after several years of mixed experiences. Hess 1966:166.

accounted for one-third of export duties; livestock and hides for another third; and salt (from a mine near Ras Hafuun) and aromatic gums most of the remainder. The colony was affected by the 1929 Wall Street crash, and income fell through 1934; after this it picked up quickly, mostly boosted by military and civilian preparations for the invasion of Ethiopia, sparked by the 5 December 1934 'Walwal incident'.

While Northern Somalia was very marginally integrated into the global liberal economy under British stewardship, Southern Somalia was thus introduced to a state-led paternalistic planned economy; but it did not penetrate society deeply. Most affected were the agricultural communities along the Shabelle and Jubba rivers, some of whom had already been integrated in the precolonial Indian Ocean trade. The Bantu Shiidle were employed in large numbers near Jowhar, the Digil Tunni near Janale (in the hinterland of Merka) and the Bantu Gosha benefited from private employment along the Jubba River. Thus, the most disadvantaged, discriminated communities were the first to become used to modern wages paid in cash, contract-regulated work, production targets and labour hierarchies: the social relations of capitalist production.[47]

Also affected were the inhabitants of administrative centres. Mogadishu, where Italian colonists had lived in the old houses of the Shingani neighbourhood until the 1930s, was targeted for development by the fascist colonial government with an urban masterplan[48] which besides beautifying the city clearly established zones for white people and others for the natives. It appears however that racial segregation was not applied systematically, and Italians intermarried frequently with Somalis—certainly compared to the more race-conscious British.[49] And although education was entirely neglected, with schools catering only to Italians and their Somali protégés (often the urban elites of Arab and Asian origin), Italian culture did impact Southern Somalia much more than British culture would impact the North. *Basto* (pasta), pizza and macchiato are still favourite Somali foods today, and the way Mogadishu residents gather in cafés at the end of the day reminds one of Italy, while Somalilanders do not sip tea from cups with saucers in the British manner (a practice adopted, for example, by Indian elites). Mogadishu's reputation from the 1960s to the 1980s as 'the Pearl of the Indian Ocean' can be largely attributed to Italy's efforts at urban beautification.[50]

Two other factors which contributed to some popularity of the Italians in Somalia were related to their attitude toward Christianity and the Ethiopian Christian Kingdom. When Emperor Menelik II sent a military column to Luuq in 1896, it was turned back by the Italians, who had arrived shortly before. Otherwise, Ethiopia might have extended the Ogaden to include part of the Upper Shabelle and Jubba rivers and the inter-riverine area. The migration of Somali clans living in the areas claimed by Ethiopia to those controlled by Italy and Great Britain indicate Somali preferences. Similarly, an Ethiopian expeditionary force came down the Shabelle river in 1905, heading straight for Mogadishu. They were turned away at Bal'ad, 40 km north of the capital, by a combination of local, Geledi and Italian troops.[51] Italy thus appeared to some Somalis as the best protection against Ethiopian imperial annexation, especially when it became clear, in the 1930s, that Italy was intent on finishing its aborted conquest of Ethiopia. 6,000 Somali troops participated in this invasion as *Zaptié* troops[52] and many more joined on

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[47] In 1929 the head of the Fascist party in Mogadishu, Zanetti, said "*The forced labour imposed on the natives of [Italian] Somaliland, and cynically disguised by a work contract in 1929, is far worse than real slavery*"; Strangio 2012: "The Reasons for Underdevelopment. The Case of Decolonisation in Somalia"; p4.

[48] Puzo 1972: "Mogadishu, Somalia. Geographic Aspects of its Evolution, Population, Functions and Morphology". PhD Dissertation University of California Los Angeles; p72.

[49] "*Perhaps for this reason, individual Italians are liked and respected in Somalia, as in Ethiopia, although colonialism as a whole is condemned in both countries*" Hess 1966:189. This was also my experience in both countries, 2015-2020: the descendants of Italians are generally well integrated and liked in Ethiopia, while in Somalia (where there are none left) the memory of the Italians is generally positive.

[50] Puzo 1972.

[51] Cassanelli 1982.

[52] Hess 1966:174.

personal initiative.[53]

The other factor was the prohibition on proselytism. This was the result of strained relations between the Italian state and the Vatican, of an understanding of deep-rooted Somali religiosity and of a fascist disdain for religion in general. The Italians did not allow any missionary activity, and instead supported traditional Islamic institutions,[54] paying stipends to *qadis* and occasionally to mosques and Quranic schools to offset the lack of investment in education. This only changed in the late 1930s when some modest investments were made in a national education system. Because of these two factors, Italian colonialism was not perceived by Somalis as a Christian invasion.

With the conquest of Ethiopia in 1935, Somalia became one of six provinces of 'Africa Orientale Italiana'; the Somali province included the Ogaden. In 1940 Italians drove the British out of Somaliland, and for a few months most Somalis, except the few living in Djibouti and others in North-Eastern Kenya, were united under one government. But the Italians were driven out of both by a British counteroffensive, and in 1941, with hardly a shot being fired, Somalia surrendered to the British, ending the Italian colonial venture in East Africa. "*From the outset of Italian colonialism, dreams competed with interests almost making the authorities lose a sense of proportion*" notes the Italian historian Novati.[55]

Resistance against Foreign Occupation

The Somali scholar Hersi calls his own "*a people whose opposition to authority has been noted by all those who came in contact with them*".[56] He notes that colonial practices Somalis found particularly grievous were custom duties, fines, imprisonment, flogging and other forms of public humiliation.[57] From other sources[58] we know that hated colonial practices also included forced labour and racial segregation laws. From sources in popular culture it is clear that Somalis strongly objected to having foreigners telling them how to behave and what to do in their own country. Most of all, Somali and foreign scholars concur that Somalis resented being ruled by non-Muslims. Recalling their attachment to self-sovereignty, seen in Chapter Three, one understands why this was such an issue for Somalis.

Both the British and the Italians met with resistance when they disembarked on the Somali coast. But the scattered nature of political authority in Somali society meant that there was no concerted clan resistance against the foreign presence; if one clan opposed the British or Italians for any reason, chances were that a rival clan would join forces with the colonizers to gain the upper hand over their historic rivals, preferably with donated firearms. After all, Somalis initially saw the colonizers as a passing presence. In their history, no external power had ever submitted them.

Whereas no concerted resistance by clans took place, religious sentiment did unite Somalis against the foreign occupier. Below are two very different examples of Islamic resistance: one from British, the other from Italian Somaliland.

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[53] A personal account of a Somali joining the Italian army in Eritrea, describing the animosity between Somali recruits and Italian officers, offers a useful counterpoint to the official version of history presented above; Mohamed 2011: “Black Mamba Boy".

[54] The cathedral built in Mogadishu was for the Italian population, which at its height in 1939 reached 20,000 people (Puzo 1972:77); many of them were military personnel.

[55] Novati 1994: “Italy in the Triangle of the Horn: Too Many Corners for a Half-Power”; p369.

[56] Hersi 1977: "The Arab Factor in Somali History"; p265.

[57] Hersi 1977:273-274.

[58] Cassanelli 1982: "The Shaping of Somali Society. Reconstructing the History of a Pastoral People, 1600-1900"; Touval 1963: "Somali Nationalism. International Politics and the Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa".

The Dervish Revolt

The Dervish revolt was led by Sayid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan (Sayyid Hassan), a preacher who returned from his studies in Arabia with the title of *khalifa* (representative, leader) of the Sahiliyya sect, an Islamic brotherhood that was known for its radical (today one would say Salafi or Wahhabi) puritanical views. He reportedly ran afoul of the British presence as soon as he landed in Berbera in 1899. He first had little success with his efforts to rouse popular sentiment against the British presence, but in his own clan territory he was more successful; partially because his Dhulbahante clan felt disadvantaged by British support of their Isaaq rivals. After several initial victories against local British garrisons and their levies he raised a fighting force of Dervishes—religiously inspired warriors, named after the Sudanese fighters of the Mahdi revolt that inspired him—which until 1920 created considerable conflict in the interior, in a region spanning the Ogaden and northeast Somalia. Most of the fighting was clan warfare but because of his verbal prowess as a poet[59] he attracted some members of other clans, including in Southern Somalia. Great Britain, after a few initial costly and inconclusive military expeditions, tried to confront him by arming Isaaq clans opposed to him and by withdrawing to the coast, as Churchill had advised. It was only after the first World War that the British decided to put an end to the rebellion of 'the Mad Mullah', which they did with a RAF bombing and subsequent capture of his headquarters in Taleeh. He fled into the Ogaden and died shortly after from influenza.

Touval gives as Somali national heroes Ahmed Gurey (the leader of the Muslim invasion of Ethiopia in the 16th century) and Sayyid Hassan.[60] But he adds, incongruently, "*It is significant that the Mullah's followers not only avoided tribal names but also the name "Somali."*" Sayyid Hassan always used terms such as "Dervishes" and "Moslems." Some of his letters indeed give the impression that he regarded Somali clans as his enemies. For example, in 1908, at the end of his truce with the government, he wrote to the British authorities complaining about harassment by "the tribes". His *jihad* would not be in service to Somali nationalism but take on a local or a universal character.

Sayyid Hassan failed to appeal to Somalis as religious leader, claiming to represent true Islam and treating his Somali opponents as unbelievers.[61] This tendency in Islam is called *takfirism*. His self-proclaimed Islamic credentials also liberated his troops from the obligations of *xeer*, and they showed no leniency towards the Somalis they defeated ("to rule Somalis you must kill them" the Mad Mullah reportedly said). Since his troops were obviously also motivated by clan sentiment, both other clans and other religious groups turned against him. While his anti-colonial stance, his successful military campaigns and his poetry did mobilize some Somalis in all regions against the colonizers, his claim to exclusively embody Islam while disregarding the social contract underlying relations between clans turned many more away from him.

The Dervish rebellion might have remained a footnote in history, were it not for the British press' avid interest in this quaint colonial episode, and its leader's elevation in independent Somalia as a national hero. Shortly after independence, Sayyid Hassan was seen by some Somali politicians as the figurehead of anti-colonial resistance.[62] He was seen as the prophet of the Somali nation and even compared to Prophet Mohamed.[63] This status was developed especially by Siad Barre, who had monuments erected for him. The clan-nature of most of the conflict he provoked and his disregard for *xeer* were ignored (they were taboo subjects in post-independence Somalia); his religious extremism and cruelty against his opponents was glossed over; and his appeal to Somalis living in other regions was exaggerated. This was clearly a case of political invention to provide a rallying figure for the Somali nation-state. But the

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[59] See Samatar, Said 1979: "Poetry in Somali Politics: The Case of Sayyid Mahammed 'Abdilleh Hasan" and 'Abdi Sheik 'Abdi 1993: "Divine Madness: Mohammed 'Abdulle Hassan (1856-1920)".

[60] Touval 1963:58.

[61] Bulhan 2013:303-304.

[62] Touval 1963:60.

[63] Laitin 1979: "The War in the Ogaden: Implications for Siyaad's Rôle in Somali History"; p96.

fact that Sayyid Hassan belonged to the same Darood clan family as Siad Barre did not help, and his myth sunk with the Somali state in 1991. Today, little remains of his hallowed status as a national hero, and his public image has been reduced to that of a bellicose, anti-modernist and intolerant religious preacher who shed much Somali blood in clan warfare. His poetry is out of fashion, and even among his own Dhulbahante clan he doesn't seem to enjoy much prestige.[64]

This judgement may be reviewed by future Somali historians and politicians; to me it seems the Dervish rebellion was the last manifestation of the pre-colonial socio-political order. It was unsuccessful because the Somali rhizome was already adapting to the changed external conditions.

The Uwaysiyya Brotherhood

One exception to the apolitical stance of the Islamic brotherhoods, besides Sayyid Hassan's Sahiliya dervishes, was the Uwaysiyya Brotherhood. It is worth investigating because this group would exert a subterranean influence on Somalia's later independence movement.

The Uwaysiyya brotherhood is a branch of the Qadiriyya Sufi order, established in Baraawe by Sheikh Uways in 1882 or 1883. It seems to have been the most popular Sufi tariqa in Somalia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[65] Allowing the syncretic merging of local culture (drums, singing) with Islam, it spread rapidly from Baraawe, owing to the charisma of Sheikh Uways. Appealing to both intellectuals and commoners—providing a safe haven for runaway slaves, for example—the movement politicized during the scramble for Africa. It had the blessing of the Sultans of Zanzibar and a following there, in Tanganyika, in the Congo and on the Arabian Peninsula.[66] The Uwaysiyya order resisted the Italian penetration beyond the coast, and participated in the Bimal rebellions, but it was also embroiled in a bitter struggle for influence with the Sahiliyya order led by Sayyid Hassan. The poetry jousts between the two religious leaders, insulting each other in lurid terms referencing Islamic history, became legendary. Like many religious orders before, the Uwaysiyya moved inland and established their centre at Biyoley, near Xudur in the intra-riverine area. Sheikh Uways was murdered in 1909 by followers of Sayyid Hassan, but the Uwaysiyya brotherhood thrived after his death, actively resisting colonial penetration until 1925.[67] when the fascist government started crushing all resistance. Sheikh Uways' grandson, Sakhawuddin, himself a Sufi mystic, was the founder of the Somali Youth Club.

The role of poetry in both Islamic rebellions may seem quaint to a Western reader, but also suggests the rhizome. Poetry may be the most effective method to spread messages in an oral society. Sheikh Uways composed poems in his native Tunni, in the Swahili dialect 'Chimbalazi' spoken in Baraawe, in the intra-riverine May language, in 'Mahatiri' (mainstream) Somali and in Arabic.

These examples show how important Islam was to forming a Somali national consciousness. This is often overlooked because religion is rather seen as a factor connecting Somalis to the wider Muslim community, in that sense *against* nationalism. As Abdirahman Baadiyow puts it, "*as a general trend and a common denominator among all this [Western] scholarship [on Somali history, the] history of Islam and its role are marginalized, unless recognized as posing a security threat to the Western powers*".[68]

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[64] Personal communication of Markus Hoehne, 2019. Interestingly, I found that in the Somali region of Ethiopia his image adorns public monuments and book covers. Sayyid Hassan was linked to the Ogadeni clan through his mother, and he seems to have retained some legitimacy as a national hero among them.

[65] Mukhtar 2003:220.

[66] Mukhtar 2003:220.

[67] Mukhtar 2003:258.

[68] Baadiyow 2011: "The Islamic Movement in Somalia: A Historical Evolution with a Case Study of the Islah Movement"; p10.

The currently common simplistic Western view of Islam, with little room for nuance between a political 'bad Islam' which is characterized as backward, violence-prone, manipulative and irrational, and a non-political 'good Islam' which is inoffensive, traditional, cultural and orthodox, seems to have prevailed already in the colonial period.

But it is not only foreign scholars who misjudge the potential of Islam to mobilize and unify an otherwise divided (because self-ruling) Somali society. The early Somali leaders, as we shall soon see, attempted to build a secular state, and today also Islam as a tool of political mobilization is mostly left to 'the enemy', Al Shabaab. Neither the lessons of Islamic resistance against colonial rule nor the role of Islam as unifying factor for the Ajuraan State and the Muslim sultanates of Northwest Somalia seem to have been assimilated by the political elites of modern Somalia.

4.3 The Colonial State

Assessing the impact of colonialism on the Somali political order gives contradictory results. On the one hand, it was huge, as the seeds for the future Somali state were planted and Somali society underwent a profound transformation. On the other, it was scant, leaving behind almost no material traces and leaning heavily on the existing (pre-colonial) political order, even strengthening it. To untangle this, the image of the state must be separated from its practice (see 1.4).

The Limits of Colonial Power

In terms of economic development, the direct impact of the colonial period was slight. The British left neither infrastructure nor even the imprint of a modern economy in the North. The Italians attempted grand economic development but, faced with non-cooperation by local socio-political forces, and hampered by unrealistic expectations, their efforts came to nothing—with marginal exceptions such as the urban development of Mogadishu. The public sector in both parts of Somalia was small (with minimal investments in, for example, health and education) and thus not a substantial employer. Few foreign investors were interested in Somalia. The main impact of colonialism on the Somali economy may have been its monetisation, which in turn allowed its integration into the global economy.

Both the Italians and the British left intact most of the clan-based institutions of self-governance (clan authorities and *xeer*) to minimize the cost of their presence. They stabilized an otherwise fluid social order by stipending clan elders, fixing clan identities (or trying to) and establishing territorial boundaries. The institutionalisation of clan would have far-reaching consequences, but at first it only seemed to confirm the existing political order. Rather than attempting to *replace* it a layer of authority was established above it: the British behaving as overlords, and Italy by introducing the idea of a state above Somali clan politics.

Herbst argues that colonial power was so weak that the differences between French and British colonialism, often resumed as 'direct' vs 'indirect' rule, didn’t really matter.[69] All colonial powers in Africa, with the exception of settler colonies in Southern Africa and Kenya, leaned on the local configurations of power they encountered and attempted to institutionalize them. As Cassanelli put it in 1982: "*Whether one is dealing with the Ottomans, with European colonial regimes or with the modern Iranian state, the pattern has been the same. To extend order and administration into the countryside, the [external] state threw its force behind lineages or clans who appeared to be dominant at the time,*

[69] Herbst 2000: “States and Power in Africa. Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control”; p84-88.

thus enabling the latter to solidify their position of dominance".[70] The imposition of an external order thus froze local socio-political relations; as Herbst puts it, "*The Europeans wanted to use the 'existing machinery' but they were not willing to allow the machinery to continually adapt, as it did in the precolonial period, to new political challenges and opportunities.*"

If the practice of colonial power was weak, it could only be sustained by the cooperation of local political forces, which is one of Bayart's main arguments in 'L'État en Afrique'.[71] In essence, there was continuity between African political practices before, during and after European colonialism. European imperial powers positioned themselves at the top of the pyramid of power, but it is not certain that Africans always saw them that way.[72] In Somalia, as in Northern Nigeria and elsewhere, there is considerable evidence that the colonial presence was used as a powerful instrument in ongoing feuds between population groups jostling for power. Many Somalis may have seen the colonial presence as a transient phenomenon, which their clan or lineage should use to bolster its position vis-à-vis other clans and lineages.[73] It is clear from the memoirs of many colonial administrators that they had a dim view of their capacity to really change local configurations of power. The firm grip of European colonial authorities over the subject populations in Africa may not be more than an invention destined to impress constituencies back home. The parliament, King or banks which backed the colonial enterprise needed to be reassured.

Such impressions of absolute colonial power were bolstered by a few 'Heart of Darkness' type of excesses of great colonial cruelty, for example in Namibia, the Congo, Algeria and Kenya. Such abuse of power occurred, but it may not have been paradigmatic. In many cases the colonial power itself did not condone such bestiality and removed the perpetrators. Not for love of humanity or respect of human rights, but because it was impractical; it was simply impossible to rule with such force, because colonial powers usually did not wish to incur the expense of sending enough white troops to keep an unwilling population subjected. Composing with local forces and playing them against each other (the divide and rule strategy) and seeking their consensus for administrative or economic reform was necessary. This suggests that the violence of the colonial state served to mask its actual feebleness and was mainly dissuasive.[74] This is certainly the repeated impression one gets when reading the memoirs of colonial agents. Violence is usually resorted to 'to teach the natives a lesson', not in the service of a greater goal or as a sufficient instrument to reach a policy goal. In both Italian and British colonial documents, one finds a constant preoccupation with justifying high security costs, but the British are more insistent on balancing the books than the Italians. The British government's reticence to pay for law and order operations explains why the Dervish revolt lasted twenty years.

British protectorate rule in Somaliland, which I have qualified as 'minimalistic', may not have been so different from British rule elsewhere in Africa. And native administration, which has been identified by post-colonial theorists (such as Achille Mbembe and Mahmood Mamdani) as a cultural project of European hegemony, did not exist as a set of practices; there was no clear set of principles for native administration.[75] As Frederick Cooper half-joked: "*The much celebrated policy of "indirect rule"…*

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[70] Cassanelli 1982:116-117.

[71] A summary of these arguments can be found in Bayart 2008: "Comparer Par Le Bas"; p4-5.

[72] Herbst 2000:83-84.

[73] See for example Cassanelli's study on how the clans most closely related to the Geledi Sultanate positioned themselves vis-à-vis the Italian presence, or how the Bimal, after several revolts, suddenly allied themselves with the Italians to profit from their willingness to invest in agricultural production. Cassanelli 1982.

[74] Phyllis Martin calls European rule in central Africa, at least before 1920, the "*rule of the feeble*"; Martin 1983: "The Violence of Empire"; p8.

[75] Herbst 2000:92 notes "*the official historian of the colonial office asked what the guiding principles of native administration were during the interwar years and could not find any*" with reference to Pearce 1982: "The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy, 1938–48"; p4.

represented an attempt to make retreat sound like policy".[76] In fact, Herbst argues against Mamdani, Europeans were not committed enough to pursue a cultural project of hegemony.

In practice, colonial authorities often got involved in local power struggles and would choose sides. As Lewis noted: "*anyone who has worked with Somali will appreciate how difficult it is to stand entirely aloof from the interplay of their sectional rivalries*".[77] For example, the British often sided with the Isaaq when they had conflicts with Darood clans.[78] Similarly, the Italians developed a better rapport with members of the Rahanweyn clan family, with whom they had more intense contact because of agricultural development projects. This display of sympathy for one side in a conflict delegitimized the colonial position of *formal* domination. This goes against the notion of the even-handed ruler who applies justice to all, irrespective of their identity, and who thus shows leadership and earns the respect of all; a principle of rhizomatic leadership (*riyasa*) which, as we have seen, was essential to the Somali clan-based political order. It is, in short, a sign of weakness.

Colonial Legacies

By establishing a system of centralized rule, introducing a legal-bureaucratic, impersonal form of authority, integrating the coastal settlements and inland society, boosting agricultural production and the socio-economic status of some of the sedentary populations vis-à-vis the pastoral ones—including some of the minorities—and by creating the nucleus of a modern urban 'state' class involved in keeping law & order and the civilian and commercial administration of the colony, Italy lay the foundations for the future Somali state. Some of independent Somalia's characteristics, notably a strongly centralized political authority and a discourse tending toward militaristic 'grandeur', notably concerning the unification of all Somalis under a central leadership based in Mogadishu, may be traced back to Italian fascism rather than indigenous Somali political culture.

The contrast with how the British protectorate was run was considerable; the British barely attempted to bring about the socio-political transformations mentioned above and refrained from any attempt to lay the foundations for a future Somali state until after World War Two (see below). I.M. Lewis believed that colonial rule hardly affected Northern Somali pastoral politics.[79] A 1927 article by a colonial official, H.B. Kittermaster, describes the incipient changes to Somaliland's society through agricultural reform, British regulations, the contact with foreigners, communications, and the prospects of personal development through education, industry and government—but it ends noting that to develop this potential would need serious investments, which are not forthcoming.[80] The main change the British

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[76] Cooper 1996: "Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa"; p11; quoted in Herbst 2000:89.

[77] Lewis 1961: "A Pastoral Democracy"; p29.

[78] The alliance between British and Isaaq probably benefited the Isaaq, who spread into Dhulbahante and other Darood grazing areas—such as 'aynabo in Somaliland—more than the British. On the other hand, it allowed the British to let raids against the mostly Darood Dervishes to be made by Isaaq levies. In the late 1940s, when the Ogaden was still under British Military Administration, Darood/Ogaden clansmen were disarmed by British accompanied by their Isaaq levies, further strengthening the position of the Isaaq vis-à-vis the Darood. See Barnes 2007: "The Somali Youth League, Ethiopian Somalis and the Greater Somalia Idea, c.1946-48"; p284. But this must be somewhat nuanced, for the Isaaq long remained angry at the British for having 'given away the Hawd', important grazing lands for Isaaq pastoralists, in a 1897 border treaty with Ethiopia that was confirmed, to the fury of many Isaaq, in 1954.

[79] William Reno disagrees with Lewis' assessment, pointing out the role of the British in institutionalising *mag*-paying groups. "*Headmen wanted to rigidify social boundaries to make sure that individuals and families did not try to reinterpret their lineage to escape obligations incurred by people unknown or distant from them. This artificial rigidity reinforced the colonial legal notion of blood group solidarity*" Reno 2003 : "Somalia And Survival. In The Shadow Of The Global Economy"; p12-13.

[80] Kittermaster 1927: "British Somaliland".

brought to the pastoral economy was the establishment of territorial limits, through efforts to demarcate clan grazing territories and by digging new wells to avoid or settle clan feuds, thus giving lineages claims to certain grazing areas/wells. This suggests a highly differentiated impact of British and Italian colonialisms. But looking closer, this may have more to do with the different socio-economic systems colonialism encountered in Somalia than with voluntary colonial policies.

For example, Puntland/Magiurtina, though ruled by Italy, found itself in a very similar situation to Somaliland throughout the colonial period. As we saw in 4.1, the major transformation of the Somali pastoral economy, namely its integration into the regional food market, happened before the occupation of Somalia by foreign powers. In 1930, Puntland's major export produce—skins and hides—was still traded against foodstuffs in Aden, not benefiting either British or Italian intermediaries. The Majerteen, like most Somali pastoralists, ignored the rule of the colonial authorities on both sides of the Sea of Berbera while benefiting from their presence. This can be seen as a continuation of nomads' patterns of behaviour towards the state, as described by James C. Scott (see 2.4).

The impact of Italian colonialism on inland sedentary communities is also ambiguous. The cash-crop economy had already emerged in the mid-19th century and Italian efforts to transform it and make it more productive and profitable almost all failed. Nonetheless, the agricultural economy became one of the pillars of the national economy, and thus also the object of future power struggles. This would provide farming communities with more influence than they had hitherto enjoyed. Village life became slightly more organized, in administrative terms, by the role Italians gave the elders, calling them *capo qabil.*[81]

The social function of religious brotherhoods, to provide cross-clan and inter-class linkages, including dispute mediation, was largely retained given the feeble penetration inland of the colonial administration and their apolitical stance. Islamic religion *per se* was not under attack in colonial Somalia. There was little missionary activity and there was no formation of a Somali Christian community, as in most other African countries, that was closer to the occupiers. But Islam, as seen, did provide the basis for resistance in the initial phase of colonial occupation, and it remained a largely underground reason not to accept European hegemony.

Of the three socio-economic Somali groups, coastal communities, lost the most in the colonial period; this is because of a direct takeover of the administration of ports by the colonial powers, putting local traders at a disadvantage.[82] They were also easier to tax than agricultural or pastoral communities. As Italian and British merchants took over their trade, some of these families sought employment instead in colonial bureaucracies or junior partnership in the new commercial ventures. Education and employment in British and Italian administrations and armed services, even if extremely limited in scope, provided access to colonial power. These urban elites came to form the nucleus of the future ruling elite, but with a new power base which extended inland, instead of across the Indian Ocean.

The Somali professor Hussein Bulhan developed Frantz Fanon's notion of psychological oppression and applied it to the Somali situation.[83] For him, Islam provides a first layer of oppression, and colonial rule a second one, over the original Somali identity (what I would call the Somali rhizome in the State of Nature). The social experience of Somalis, and their construction of social reality is severely distorted, he claims, through the double inferiority complex that has resulted from these layers of superego. Both destabilize and suppress, but have not completely overcome, a proto-Somali identity, which, when it

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[81] A mix of the Italian 'capo' (head) and the Somali 'qabil' (clan); Gundel 2006: "The Predicament of the 'Oday'"; p27. This term stayed in use until banished by the Siad Barre regime in 1969.

[82] Arab families dominant in trade initially resisted the Italian encroachment. They complained to the Italian government in 1902 that members of the Benadir Company were condoning slavery, and this led the Italian parliament to revoke the concession license and institute direct Italian government control. This, however, did not improve the coastal trading community's economic situation.

[83] Bulhan 1985: "Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression".

manifests itself, usually does so in the form of social disorder (typically: violence).[84] This Fanonian psychological perspective, which points towards the necessity of a psychiatry of liberation, will not be further developed in this dissertation but seems a fertile research angle.

One of the psychological aspects of colonialism which was crucial in establishing European hegemony was racism. Italian colonizers strictly applied segregation in Eritrea[85] but found it much harder to enforce in Mogadishu; it appears segregation laws were established but rarely followed. The same applies to the British who established white enclaves in all their colonies, but nothing of the sort in Somaliland. Although Somalis may not have accepted physical segregation in their own country, there is little doubt that European racism served to bolster colonial domination and a sense of superiority among the occupiers. Racism was also used as an argument for domestic approval of colonial projects. In Italy, the legal philosopher Giovanni Bovio argued in "Il Diritto Pubblico e la Razze Umane" (1887) developed the extraordinary argument that native populations had '*no right to remain barbaric*' and therefore they could not stop the European powers from exercising '*the duty to civilize them*'. This argumentation was applied by Italian colonial administrators specifically to justify the colonization of the Somalis, apparently unwilling to embrace 'civilization'.[86] The English had a similar notion of administrating colonies in 'trust' for the natives.

Colonial Encounters of the Third Kind - Inventing the Native

Reflecting on modern Somali historiography, Lee Cassanelli argues that Somali studies were conducted in three languages and their ambit was determined by the imperial interests of the respective colonial state: livestock production for export for the English, agricultural cash crop production for the Italians and Red Sea trade for the French. Three different portraits of Somalis emerged—as nomadic pastoralists, as settled proto-State builders and as sea-faring traders—which determined future scholarship and academic research.[87]

He reflects: "*We can also ask if the distinctions between "hierarchical" agro-pastoral societies in the south and "pastoral democracies" in the north genuinely separated the political cultures of each region or were these distinctions primarily the product of colonial categories and scholarship that Somali intellectuals internalized?*"[88] Although these political cultures were obviously not completely separate, the previous reading of Somali historical development suggests that these distinctions were not *invented* by colonial ethnographers but the result of environmental and precolonial historic forces; however, by conceptualizing them in academia and in administration the European colonizers did erect these different Somali identities into political categories, as Mamdani argues in 'The Invention of the Native'.[89]

Among these political identities, the pastoralist, nomadic identity was examined much more thoroughly then the other two, and it was done in English, which allowed this pastoral identity to reach a much broader audience than, for example, the Italian books by Enrico Cerulli on the Somalis of Southern Somalia. The British were eager colonial explorers and geographers, and accounts by British travellers

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[84] He develops this idea in Bulhan 2013: "In Between Three Civilizations Vol 1, Archaeology of Social Amnesia and Triple Heritage of Somalis". It must be pointed out that Prof. Bulhan is a practising psychiatrist in Hargeisa and deals with personality disorders; he finds that many of them have their origin in a structurally oppressed Somali belief system, including spirit worship, animism and the God Waaq.

[85] Wrong 2005: "I Didn't Do It For You. How the World Betrayed a Small African Nation".

[86] Guadagni 1978:11.

[87] Cassanelli 2009: "The Partition of Knowledge in Somali Studies: Reflections on Somalia's Fragmented Intellectual Heritage".

[88] Cassanelli 2009:7.

[89] Mamdani: "The Invention of the Native", 2012.

and colonial agents came to define 'the Somali'. This is a contentious point for many Somalis (and postcolonial theorists), but there are few other written sources available, and in their defence, many of these travellers tried to present a balanced, well-informed and sympathetic view of Somalis and their affairs.[90]

The portrait British authors (including colonial officers and journalists) sketched of 'the Somali' defined its international image: as a tough, ferociously egalitarian nomad who can best be left to his own devices. The riverine agricultural communities of the South and the more sophisticated inhabitants of coastal settlements never seemed quite as Somali as the Northern pastoralists. This image, rehashed by the media coverage of civil war savagery and Al Shabaab extremism, still predominates international thinking about Somalia, and influences how the international community deals with Somalia.

British cartographers sought to understand the territorial limits of each clan and draw them on the map; they defined a border with Ethiopia. They puzzled over where to dig wells to solve clan conflict, thus defining clan territories and establishing grazing rights. Both Italians and British divided the territories they controlled into administrative (and military) regions and districts, creating a new human and political geography which lasts, with modifications but essentially similar, until today. European ethnographers sought to codify the lineage structures in neat trees, hoping to establish definitive hierarchies. Classification, codification… these are sometimes called 'colonial sciences'[91] or instruments to 'See like a state'[92] but in essence, they are part of the Western epistemology associated with the state and formal, rational rule, and not applied differently from how they would be applied in, for example, a European province.

Colonial ethnographers and administrators may have been 'inventing tradition' as an essential ingredient of nation-state building.[93] As Hobsbawm and Ranger note, traditions are in general invented; the appeal to tradition, rather than ensuring a continuity with the past, seeks to provide unquestionable legitimacy to current practice. But this was not the intention or the role of ethnographers such as I.M. Lewis. His 1961 book 'A Pastoral Democracy' might have had a considerable impact on the enduring 'Northern pastoralist' national identity of Somalia, decried by many urban intellectuals and Southerners. But Lewis, as many other anthropologists and ethnographers of his time, had no desire to serve the colonial state.[94] His book was published in 1961, after the end of colonial rule. If it served to 'invent tradition', this was a posterior use made of his book which he certainly could not foresee.

Neither colonial administrators nor social scientists had an identifiable interest in 'defining the Somali nation', but it flowed from the European mindset, from how they had come to see *themselves*: as members of a nation. As seen in 1.2, that notion emerged together with that of the modern state, its territoriality, the administration of the population and national resources, participation in a borderless capitalist economy, and the notion of progress (positivism). Most crucial, as argued in 3.3, was that this system of human governance is based in positive law and the rejection of the idea of the Laws of Nature,

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[90] Descriptions of Somalis invariably stressed their love of independence and freedom and their unwillingness to submit to external powers, and therefore urged caution in trying to dominate Somalis. In this caricature by F. Elliot of the Somali man published in 1913, Somalis might readily recognise themselves: "*In appearance the Somali is an Arab, and sometimes a handsome Arab. Treat him with confidence and consideration, he is cheerful, intelligent, willing to learn and true to his code of honesty. Treat him harshly or unjustly, he becomes sulky, obstinate, mutinous and dangerous. He is an excellent scout, a wonderful marcher, and very proud if confidence is shown in him. It would be fatal to the peace of the country if the Somali should be treated with that contempt which is often shown to the black races by Europeans.*" Elliot 1913: "Jubaland and Its Inhabitants"; p561. Other portraits were less flattering. Richard Burton, for example, accustomed to the finesse of Arabs, was taken aback by what he saw as Somali savagery.

[91] Young 1986: "Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Class in Africa: A Retrospective"; p428.

[92] Scott 1998: "Seeing Like a State".

[93] Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983: "The Invention of Tradition".

[94] Hoehne & Luling 2010: "Peace and Milk, Drought and War"; p2.

and a vision of the State of Nature as negative, *anarchy*. Therefore, while in practice colonial administrations were based on the clan order and local self-governance capacities, the image of the state they projected negated this local political order. As to the role of Islam as a principle of political order, it competed with the hegemonic idea of the secular nation and submission to worldly authority. The anti-clan and anti-political Islam legacy of colonialism was adopted wholesale by the modernizing Somali political elites.

So although colonial praxis was weak, the *image* of colonial power impressed itself on Somali minds with a lasting impact. The confrontation with the vast, seemingly absolute power of the European state, and with its manifest intention to steer the destiny of the Somali people (whereas all previous foreigners and foreign powers had contented themselves with establishing trade operations on the coast, allowing Somalis to self-rule as they saw fit) forcefully introduced the notion of the modern territorial nation-state. The ideal of the modern nation-state was firmly planted in the minds of the young Somali elites who would go on to prepare for independence. In the North the British ideal of a liberal, laissez-faire state was dominant; in the South it was the centralized developmental 'modernist' state.

4.4 Preparing Somali Independence

The British Military Administration

When the British defeated the Italians in East Africa in 1941, they established a British Military Administration (BMA) in Somalia and Eritrea, returning Ethiopia (initially without the Somali areas of the Ogaden and Hawd, over which they retained control until 1948) to Emperor Haile Selassie. Until the end of the 1940s it was unclear what should happen to the ex-Italian colonies in East Africa; it was finally decided that the British would hand over Somalia to a UN-mandated Italian trusteeship in 1950. The *Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana in Somalia*, AFIS, aimed at preparing Somalia for independence in 10 years.

The BMA was a minimalistic wartime organ to administer captured territories and did not seek to develop them.[95] The British had other priorities. From 1941 to 1945 the war effort dominated British foreign policy, while after the war Great Britain was facing other pressing issues such as its own post-war reconstruction, the convoluted road to independence of its Indian colony and stirrings of independence in other colonies. The Colonial Office hoped to retain control over the Somali area, not as a colony but as a protectorate or trust territory—in the same manner as British Somaliland. It sought local allies who could provide the backbone of the local administration. British officers in favour of this idea courted the young urban modernist class, which came together in the Somali Youth Club (established 1943) and a good political relationship developed between them.[96]

As during the short-lived Africa Orientale Italiana, most Somalis remained under a single administration.

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[95] Instead, the BMA stripped what had been Africa Orientale Italiana of its assets, dismantling ports, railroads, industries and installations and shipping it to their colonies (or selling it to allies). Great Britain was still at war and they considered all assets brought by the Italians to Africa as war booty, deeming the Somalis (and Ethiopians and Eritreans) had no use for them (Wrong 2005: “I Didn't Do It For You”). K.C. Gander Dower, in “The First to be Freed: British Military Administration in Eritrea and Somalia” (UK Ministry of Information, 1944), states: "*Eritrea and Somalia are (...) two over-capitalised, bankrupt semi-deserts*" thus justifying the stripping of assets. Richard Pankhurst (in Wrong 2005:146) says "*They [the BMA] felt there was too much industry here. This was a native state and it didn't need this infrastructure. It could be used more effectively elsewhere, and, coincidentally, "elsewhere" meant elsewhere in British-administered territories.*"

[96] Barnes 2007: “The Somali Youth League, Ethiopian Somalis and the Greater Somalia Idea, c.1946-48”.

When, in 1946, Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin suggested that British Somaliland, the Hawd, Ogaden, Italian Somaliland and the North-Eastern Province of Kenya be joined together to form a 'Greater Somalia' this stirred up a lot of excitement among this group of young Somalis. This embodied the ideal of Somali nationhood, and as such became firmly implanted in the Somali political imaginary. Emperor Haile Selassie also offered members of the Somali Youth Club initial support, imagining a reunited Somali territory under Ethiopian imperial tutelage.[97] A Greater Somalia, inspired by the remarkable cultural unity (language, religion, customs, kinship) among Somalis was not a novel idea, but Lord Bevin's backing made it seem within reach for the first time.

The Somali Youth Club/League

The Somali Youth Club was established in 1943 in Mogadishu as a non-political self-help and discussion group among Somali youth; it drew upon the urban, literate youth who tended to find employment in the administration or the Italian companies; many of them were member of the Somali *gendarmerie* which maintained law and order for the Italians. Most Italians had remained in Somalia after the Italian defeat of 1942 (returning to war-torn Italy was not an attractive option) and they still ran the economy.

From the outset, the Somali Youth Club was supported by the British Military Administration. It was housed in a building where English classes were also being taught.[98] The club's members espoused British liberal views of society, economy and politics.[99] What they exactly stood for is hard to ascertain.[100] A British administrative memorandum 'on native clubs in Somalia' from 1947[101] gives the objectives of the club as "*fraternity, equality, liberty and progress in that order, and in the expression 'Somalia for the Somalis.' The fundamental policy is considered to be the complete unification of the Somali race.*" Behind this sociocultural objective there was a political intent, which became more obvious when the SYC turned into the Somali Youth League in a general congress in 1947.

The founder of the Somali Youth Club, Sakhawuddin, was the grandson of Sheikh Uways and thus the club was connected from the very beginning to the Uwaysiyya brotherhood which had a strong anti-colonial and reformist following (see above). Sakhawuddin had (according to himself) attained spiritual enlightenment (the Sufi state of *ilham*) and then set about to mobilize youth against the colonial powers in the late 1930s,[102] inspired by the Young Turks and young Arab secular reform movements in the Near East. He brought together a group of twelve followers to found the Somali Youth Club; later biographers (Mukhtar 2003, Abdi I. Samatar 2016) assume that the avowed non-political character of the club was a ploy to placate British administrators.[103] But is seems more likely that both the Somali founders and British backers believed that a social movement was necessary to create the basis for the emergence of

[97] Samatar, Abdi I. 2016: "Africa's First Democrats: Somalia's Aden A. Osman and Abdirazaq Hussen"; p42; and Barnes 2007:281-282.

[98] Touval 1963:86.

[99] Barnes 2007.

[100] I have not encountered a certified copy of the charter of the SYC. One handwritten copy of the 1947 Somali Youth League charter, composed in poor Arabic and thus confusing, was retrieved in Ethiopian archives in Harar. See Abuhakema & Carmichael 2010: “The Somali Youth League Constitution: A Handwritten Arabic Copy (c. 1947?) from the Ethiopian Security Forces Archives in Harär”. According to the authors it is the only extant copy of the SYL charter. This copy, despite its ambiguities, is used as source in my text. Even Abdi Samatar's well-resourced 2016 book “Africa's First Democrats” on the early Somali Youth League doesn't mention any primary source, only secondary ones.

[101] “Memorandum on Native Clubs in Somalia, 1947, p. 47, FO 371/63216, UK National Archives. Quoted in n3, Samatar 2016:232.

[102] Mukhtar 2003:20.

[103] Samatar 2016:39-40.

a modern political movement.[104]

The Somali Youth Club was connected to powerful business interests in Mogadishu through some of its founding members[105] and as a young urban movement seeking support, it maintained a business-friendly attitude, thus attracting members with means and ambitions. With ongoing British encouragement, the club's members stepped into the political void left by the collapse of Italian East Africa and the unwillingness of the BMA to fill it. The Somali Youth Club rapidly gained membership and influence, with local branches establishing themselves all the way to Harar and Hargeysa.

The major problem the British had with the Somali Youth Club was its policy that its members should abandon their clan identity. The British insisted they needed to record everybody's clan identity for 'judicial purposes', as they held lineages responsible for the behaviour and welfare of their kin, so they objected against the SYC's policy of responding to the lineage question with 'I'm Somali'. This is a striking example of what Mahmood Mamdani calls "the invention of the native". The British did not invent clan identity, but they made it *obligatory* by turning it into a juridical concept. The club's prohibition on mentioning clan identity did not, anyhow, put an end to clan politics within it, for the natural way of attracting recruits through social networking meant most early members belonged, unavoidably, to the same lineages of the Hawiye and Darood clan families[106] who already enjoyed some influence in the intelligentsia and business sectors of Mogadishu.[107]

In the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, for example, the Somali Youth Club and its successor the League "*was not just a Somali nationalist organization; it was also an expression by townsmen, traders and farmers of Darood solidarity. The SYC/L enabled local 'Ethiopian' Darood clans to unite against the powerful British 'Isaaq' clans (..) who were dominant economically in trade, and who also were rivals for land that the Darood clans utilized as farms and pasture*".[108] Very few Isaaq joined the Somali Youth League until the eve of independence.

The defining moment of Somali independence might have happened in 1947, at the founding conference of the Somali Youth League. What emerged then was a consciousness of belonging to one nation[109]—a notion which, during the intense media coverage of the war which Somalis had followed by radio, must have become a familiar one, as World War Two was usually portrayed by media as pitting 'nations' against each other. The one extant copy of the SYL charter (see footnote 100) gives as objectives of the league:

> A. To unite all Somalis in general and youth in particular and to reject all old habits such as tribalism, Sufi orders, clannism and the like. *'al-waHdat* [the SYL] will work towards the good of the country. Somalis must perform their obligations towards themselves and towards civilization.
>
> B. To teach the youth modern sciences through schools and weekly informational sessions, including science, industry, agriculture and languages. These [the youth] should seek each other's help in all religious and worldly affairs.
>
> C. To unite in rejecting, in a legal and orderly manner, everything contrary to Somali interests.
>
> D. To teach the Somali language based on the Somali writing system better known as Osmania.[110]

Interestingly, the document does not start with the usual Islamic exordium and does not mention Islam

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[104] According to my reading of Touval, Mukhtar, Samatar, Barnes, Lewis and others.

[105] Mukhtar 2003:51.

[106] Lewis 1958/1: "Modern Political Movements in Somaliland, Part 1"; p251-252.

[107] Mukhtar 2003:46.

[108] Barnes 2007:283.

[109] Samatar 2016:78-79.

[110] Abuhakema & Carmichael 2010:454.

in any of its principles. It specifically rejects the elements of the old political order: clan and Sufi orders. Instead it poses *civilization* as a lofty goal and seeks modern scientific education. It reflects a pure positivist agenda for Somali nationhood.

The Somali nation, in the prevalent views of that period, was entitled to have its own state. Somalia, perhaps with Botswana, was the only African colony inhabited by one people speaking the same language and following the same religion: the perfect basis for the nation-state. But instead of asking for independence, SYL delegates requested a UN trusteeship by all four great powers (the USA, the USSR, Great Britain and France); or failing that, under Great Britain. This preference likely came from the perception that the great powers had won the war, and therefore could assist Somalia more in its first steps as a nation-state, providing much higher degrees of funding and political access.

Even though later Somali biographers and historians tended to portray the SYC and SYL as anti-colonial independence organizations on a par with other African national liberation movements,[111] this choice for a UN or British tutelage rather than independence contradicts that. But it would be misleading to see the SYL as a creation of the British. It had its roots in domestic political developments, notably a rising nationalism that emerged through several strands: Islamic reform movements such as the Uwaysiyya in the interior, contact with secular reform currents in the Arab and Turkish worlds and exposure to the nation-state based international world order that had led to World War Two. This seems to have been the first political expression of a Somali national consciousness. But, as Lewis argued, it was the result of anticipated independence, rather than a reaction to past colonial rule and the grievances it provoked.[112]

As the Somali scholar Baadiyow notes, "*Somali nationalism is, one could argue, a child of colonialism and was at the onset geared towards weakening and suppressing clan consciousness by attempting to replace it with national consciousness. Thus, the Somali people were taught by their nationalists to identify with the nation and to pledge their allegiance exclusively to the nation-state. With respect to Islam, the Somali nationalists did not deny Islam as a religion, but rather chose to see it as apolitical, in line with the secular view, and according to the early conception of modernity and nation-states*".[113]

Devising the UN Trusteeship

After the War it had to be decided what to do with the Italian colonies in Africa that had been conquered by the allies: Libya, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia, all of them under British military administration when the war ended. Ethiopia was 'returned' by Great Britain to Emperor Haile Selassie but the destiny of the other three countries was referred to the United Nations.[114] The UN appointed a commission formed by the Four Powers to make recommendations. The three historic provinces of Libya were unified under the monarch King Idris and Eritrea was put in a federation dominated by Ethiopia. For a long time, the Four Powers could not agree on what to do with Somalia.

By the end of 1947 it was clear that Britain would not press the 'Greater Somalia' issue, as it was opposed by France, the USA and the USSR who considered it a threatening British imperial project.[115])

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[111] The most recent authoritative study of this period of Somali national history, Samatar's book "Africa's First Democrats" (2016) clearly attempts to construct a new nationalist narrative for current Somali democrats by portraying the Somali Youth League as a democratic national movement that genuinely stood above clan.

[112] Lewis 1958/1:252.

[113] Baadiyow 2008:37-38.

[114] This was the result of the peace treaty signed in 1947 between Italy and the Allied nations; its appendix 11 stipulated that the UN General Assembly was invited to formulate recommendations for the future of the Italian colonies and that the Four Power committee (USA, USSR, Great Britain and France) had to accept these recommendations.

[115] Marcus 1983: “Somalia and the Decline of US interest in Ethiopia, 1963-69”; p280-81: "*The White House strategists (...) opposed Greater Somalia because the resultant state would be weak and embryonic, easily*

Meanwhile, Italians who had remained in Somalia had devised a political solution favourable to them. To parry the pro-British SYL, Italians had supported the creation of a national movement that was favourable to continued Italian presence, composed largely of Rahanweyn clan-family members, loyal officers and businesses aligned to Italian mother companies. The Patriotic Beneficence Union (Jumiya) was the main such party; it came together with small lineage-based political organizations under an umbrella organization set up by Baron Beretelli in 1947 called 'Conferenza', supported by most Italians who had remained in Somalia.[116] The representatives of the Four Powers visited Mogadishu to conduct hearings with Somalis in January 1948; the suggestion that Italy return to administer the territories caused riots instigated by the Somali Youth League (SYL) and 52 Italians died in Mogadishu and Kismayo.[117] Undecided, the Four Powers referred the matter back to the UN General Assembly.[118]

The United Nations was itself still being formed and had many issues to deal with, and this was not a top priority. In the course of 1948 and 1949 it decided to put Somalia under a ten year UN-supervised trusteeship administration to prepare it for independence. Italy pushed hard to be awarded the trusteeship. Foreign Minister Carlo Sforza, in a speech on 1 Oct 1949, explained that "*Italy still has many important tasks in Somalia. Somalia's economic and social development still needs a hard Italian commitment. This commitment cannot be interrupted or changed without dangerous consequences in the process of Somali civilization*".[119]

Ethiopia also attempted to be awarded either all Somali territories or at least the trusteeship. While Somalis were divided about the future roles of Italy, Great Britain and the SYL, they seem to have all been against any Ethiopian role.[120] Also, Ethiopia did not have much influence within the UN system, and the great powers considered that allowing Ethiopia to be in charge of the federation with Eritrea should satisfy its territorial ambitions, notably providing it access to the sea.

The decision of the UNGA (Resolution 289, Nov. 21, 1949) to establish a trusteeship under Italian administration in Somalia was unique in several ways. While trusteeships were quite common at that time, they were usually awarded to the power in control of the territory, formally and minimally arranged by the UN Trusteeship Council and open-ended. The return to administration by a defeated power (Italy was at that point not even a member of the UN), with a stringent mandate to prepare the territory for independence according to a plan prepared by the UN Trusteeship council[121] and the ten-year deadline were all novelties. They inferred a greater responsibility for the UN, which had to adopt a more 'hands-on' approach, and indeed the UN Trusteeship Council made several visits to critically appraise progress in the 1950s.[122] Meanwhile Somali*land* remained a British protectorate.

AFIS, or the Period of UN Trusteeship, 1950-1960

The Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana della Somalia (AFIS) had to achieve three main objectives under the trusteeship agreement for Somalia agreed on by the UN General Assembly in January 1950: 1/ to

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manipulated by the USSR and Egypt, then under radical leadership. Since Somalia was already suspicious of close US ties with Addis Ababa, the State Department was directed to encourage Italy to continue 'its major role in the maintenance of Somalia's stability and free world orientation'."

[116] Samatar 2016:43.

[117] Mukhtar 2003:46-47 claims the SYL deliberately provoked the incidents to gain a stronger negotiation position over rival political organizations.

[118] Tripodi 1999: “Back to the Horn: Italian Administration and Somalia's Troubled Independence”.

[119] From Sforza's 1952 autobiography "Cinque Anni a Palazzo Chigi"; p180, quoted in Tripodi 1999:360.

[120] Samatar 2016:44-48.

[121] A Trusteeship agreement was drafted by the council and submitted to the UN in January 1950 (UNGA document A/1294).

[122] Finkelstein 1955: “Somaliland under Italian Administration. A Case Study in United Nations Trusteeship”; p6.

develop independent political institutions to democratically represent the Somali population; 2/ to create a solid economic base for the future of the country and 3/ to facilitate social progress of Somalis, including through health, the protection of rights and by fighting abuse.[123] The provision of education was specifically mentioned as a means to achieve these objectives.

Neither Ethiopia—which had by then retrieved control over the Hawd and the Ogaden—nor the Somalis were happy with the return of the Italians, but Italy rapidly assuaged both, cultivating ties with the Somali Youth League over the years until it practically delivered Somalia to the party in 1960. Despite initial hostility, Italy—as the BMA before it—found a useful ally in the SYL that could help it deliver on its promised goals.

The mandate to prepare Somalia for independence both politically and economically presented Italy with problems similar to those it had faced as a colonial overlord. Somali society, with the exception of the budding urban professional class, had expressed no interest in statehood; the levels of education and professionalism were desperately low, forming barriers for both an efficient civil administration and a diversified modern economy; the country was resource-poor and had developed a habit of dependency in the colonial period, financing the trappings of the state and essential imports with external support; moreover Somali culture, with its contempt for manual labour of any kind, was not propitious, in a Weberian sense,[124] to the development of a modern national economy.

Italy was, moreover, itself poor and in reconstruction, and did not have many resources to spend on Somalia. The governors of AFIS and their administration had to be creative. The carabinieri contingent was drastically reduced in the first years of AFIS (from 6000 to less than 700) to save money and a policy of 'Somalization' of the administration was rapidly implemented to replace expatriate with local wages. For some Somali critics, including the SYL leadership, this transfer of power did not go fast enough. They complained about Italian colonial attitudes. Since Italy was mostly sending personnel with previous experience in Africa, such attitudes were likely to occur.[125]

AFIS focused most successfully on two areas: education and administrative reform. "*At the moment of the transfer of authority* [to AFIS]*, there was in the territory no* [formal] *organ of self-government, much less of representative government, at any level; no Somali who had experience of governing or of administering in any superior post; no system of education beyond the primary level, and even the elementary education which existed was scanty*".[126] In British Somaliland, the situation was not much better, although there were two secondary schools at Amoud and Sheekh which Somalis from Mogadishu also attended.

Italy had no plans for education until the trusteeship period. In 1935, only 1250 Somalis were enrolled in primary schools.[127]. But in subsequent years AFIS embarked on an effort to provide schooling to all Somalis. By 1958 I.M. Lewis considered that education was more widespread in Somalia than in Somaliland.[128] In contrast to Great Britain, Italy focused on mass education without ignoring higher

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[123] Source: "Texte de l Accord de Tutelle pour le Territoire de la Somalie sous Administration italienne"; United Nations document, 1950.

[124] Weber 1905: "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism".

[125] Tripodi 1999:364.

[126] Finkelstein 1955:11. This quote reminds us that *informal* self-governance does not qualify as self-governance in strains of political theory that focus on formal rule. The type of formal self-governance Finkelstein misses takes place within a legal-political framework defined by state authorities. This will be discussed later with Ostrom's theories of (formal) self-governance.

[127] In 1954 there were only 3000 Somalis with a primary education degree (Tripodi 1999:373 quoting AFIS Governor Martino's address to UN Trusteeship Council, NY 1954).

[128] Lewis 1958/1:252.

education. By 1960 there were a few secondary schools in Somalia, as well as a 'School for Political and Administrative Preparation' (est. 1950 in the first year of AFIS), an 'Institute of Social Sciences, Law and Economics' (established in 1953) and a university (inaugurated in 1954). More than a hundred Somalis were studying abroad with Italian scholarships, mainly in Italy and Egypt.

Administration

On the eve of independence there was an elected legislature with the powers of a constitutional assembly; this assembly had selected a cabinet in 1956; there were 48 elected municipal councils with powers of taxation; a court system had been established (although AFIS left *xeer,* that it saw as customary law, undisturbed); and Somali civil servants were in control of 15 of the 19 government departments.[129] Civil service employment—notably the Somali gendarmerie—was the background of many political leaders of the post-colonial period.[130]

Despite the rapid 'Somalization' of the administration, political reform was slow and divisive. The Advisory Council established by Italy in 1950 to advise AFIS consisted of "*tribal chiefs who opposed virtually everything that smacked of modernization, including changes in traditional institutions*".[131] Italy soon gave up its hope that it could craft the new political elites from the old ones, and this is when the rapprochement with the SYL started in earnest. It was because of the heavy influence of the Somali Youth League in the political and administrative development of Somalia, that social modernization was so marked by 'declannification'.

I.M. Lewis noted in 1958 that the modern class of leaders in South and Central Somalia considered clan identity to be a thing of the past and refused to reveal their own clan background. "*In their attitude towards clanship and xeer [customary law] politicians in Somalia show a striking difference to those in the British Protectorate. Whereas in the latter territories the stranglehold of these traditional political principles is a burning question widely discussed, in Somalia their continued influence is discounted and even denied. In Somalia a deliberate effort is made to give the impression that the force of agnation is a thing of the past. The end desired is Westernization and the fiction is maintained that the goal has already been reached and that clanship is now so unimportant that it has no relevance in the new political field*".[132]

However, as Table 6 shows, Darood clan members and urban minorities benefited more from employment in the administration than other clans. The Darood were also predominant in the Somali Youth League (together with the Hawiye) and in the security forces.

Table 6: clan composition of AFIS government in 1956. Source: Lewis 1958/2

Clan group	Government workers	Population
Darood	35%	22%
Hawiye	28%	36%
Rahanweyn	15%	25%
Banadiri urban minorities	10%	2%

Municipal elections were held in 1954 and 1958, and in 1956 the first national government (still under Italian tutelage) was elected. A major problem for the elections was the lack of a population count. The

[129] Ware 1965: "Somalia: From Trust Territory to Nation, 1950-1960".

[130] Barnes 2007:280.

[131] Ware 1965:179.

[132] Lewis 1958/2: "Modern Political Movements in Somaliland part 2"; p353-354.

vast majority of Somalis, then as now, voted along clan lines, and when AFIS attempted to conduct a census among pastoralist tribes in 1957-58, clan elders presented grossly inflated numbers.[133] The AFIS had estimated the total number of voters in 1956 to be 300,000, but more than 600,000 ballots were cast in 1958, suggesting a high degree of ballot-box stuffing. This skewed the electoral results in favour of the pastoralist tribes (Darood and Hawiye), to the benefit of the Somali Youth League.

While the trappings of a modern state were established in Mogadishu and the major cities, most of (rural) Somalia still lived in traditional self-governance, with clan elders deciding on collective matters, including justice, according to *xeer*. AFIS set up elected local councils in the main towns (that was part of the UN mandate) but most decisions were taken outside them through traditional governance mechanisms. The UN Trusteeship Council noted, after trips made to Somalia in 1951 and 1954, that local/municipal councils were not functioning as expected, and suggested as a solution to increase their responsibilities, for example raising revenues through local taxation, to make them more relevant.[134] But AFIS had neither the resources nor the political will to thus formalise informal local self-governance, and continued to rule as in the colonial period, through the *capo qabiil:* clan elders who had been appointed government representatives without any specific process. Local communities were thus largely left to their own devices.

Preparing the Economic Base of Independent Somalia

In the economic field AFIS did not fare well. Economic development was hindered by the lack of professional skills and motivation and a dearth of investment capital: local capital did not exist (in a mobile, invertible form), Italy had insufficient resources, and foreign investors were concerned about what may happen to their investments after independence.[135] Besides Italy, only the US provided very modest amounts of development funding.

Experts agreed in any case that capital-based development would be unsustainable if Somalia did not increase its foreign revenue.[136] But it was difficult to generate revenue through exports. The production of livestock, Somalia's traditional export, was constrained by environmental factors and too dependent on fluctuations in the Arabian peninsula's domestic markets. Agricultural production was small-scale and not competitive (the market for the small and fragile Somali bananas in Italy could not survive Caribbean competition without subsidy and protection) and Somalia had few known natural or mineral resources to export.[137] The cost of imports far exceeded export revenues, leading to a shortage in foreign reserves.[138] This has been a constant feature of the Somali economy over the past century.

Internal revenue to cover recurrent costs was collected in exceedingly small amounts.[139] The tax base

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[133] "*Some of the chiefs presented numbers that exceeded the total population of Somalia*"; Ware 1965:178.

[134] Finkelstein 1955:12-13.

[135] See Hess 1966, Novati 1994, Tripodi 1999.

[136] Finkelstein 1955:3.

[137] Repeated Italian efforts to revive salt production in Hafuun, Puntland, floundered for a variety of reasons, including lack of infrastructure and local ownership. Interestingly, already in the 1940s Somali leaders had set their hopes on oil, which was one of the reasons they were reticent to 'abandon' the Ogaden, where reserves were suspected. This hope still animates politicians in Somalia, Somaliland and the Ogaden today. See Barnes 2007:287 and Lewis 1958/2:356.

[138] For example, in 1953, imports amounted to So 78.6 million and exports to So 34.7 million, Italy covering the deficit.

[139] Finkelstein gives the following figures for fiscal year 1955 in Somalia (1 USD = 7 Somalos)

- hut and income tax = 2.5 million So (in 1952-53)
- customs tax = 29.3 million So
- Total government revenue = 31.8 million So (4.5 million USD)

of the modern economy was already very reduced; Somalis resisted taxation and Italian settlers argued that they need not pay taxes if Somalis didn't.[140] Like all previous and subsequent governments, from the Sultans of Zanzibar to the Federal Government today, AFIS resorted to taxing imports and exports, covering additional expenditures with external assistance.

As to investments, Italian administrators suggested developments in line with previous Italian colonial policies, focusing on improving cereal production, improving the flow of water through the Jubba and Shabelle river valleys by building dams, irrigation channels and flood retainment walls, and settling nomadic pastoral populations in the inter-riverine area by creating water catchment areas and gradually converting them to agricultural sedentary communities.[141] But investors were not attracted to these development schemes.

According to expert observers of that period and subsequent years, it was clear that Italy could not have done much more, and that Somalia would remain dependent on foreign assistance after its independence.[142] Italy did, however, use its management of AFIS to maintain good trade relations and make profitable investments in Somalia.[143]

An interesting example of economic relations between Somalia and Italy is provided by the banana export sector. Established as a major export earner for the colony's economy in the Fascist period, AFIS attempted to boost banana production; but Somali bananas, due to high production costs and a short shelf life, were not competitive in the international market. Nevertheless, from 1950 to 1960 banana production increased from 22 to 73 thousand tons, of which nearly 80% (on average) was exported.[144] This contributed about 50% of total Somali export earnings, but it was only possible because of state-protected markets. The Italian consumer had to pay 50% more for these bananas, as the domestic market was protected by import tariffs until European authorities banned them. In return, Somalia paid on average 25% more for products imported from Italy by AFIS.[145] This arrangement benefited Italian industry (AGIP, Italcable, etc) and agro-industry (De Nadai controlled the Somali banana market until 1991; his group is today called Unifrutti) as well as Italian plantation owners and middlemen at the expense of Italian (and Somali) consumers.[146] "*Theoretically banana exports helped to lift the economy of the country, but the advantages remained in the hands of foreigners. The economic impact of the industry on the accumulation of capital in the country was marginal and, in spite of the growth in banana exports, workers did not benefit from higher wages or better working conditions*".[147]

Funding was provided to Somali banana producers to find new markets outside Italy, in anticipation of

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- running costs of government = 57.6 million So
- incl. development and military = 88.2 million So (12.6 million USD)
- The Italian government must cover the deficit with 56.4 million Somalos, i.e. 8.1 million USD.

[140] Tripodi 1999:373.

[141] Report by Governor Martino to the AFIS Trusteeship Council, Session XIV June 1954; quoted by Tripodi 1999:373.

[142] "*The [1954 UN Trusteeship Council] mission found a wide expectation that 'the United Nations must and will assume' to carry the post-1960 budgetary deficit*." The SYL leaders in the same year formally requested Italy to remain involved financially in supporting Somalia post 1960; Tripodi 1999:372.

[143] Novati 1994:375: "*Italy was confident that the SYL government would be doomed to rely on financial assistance from Italy because of Somalia's backwardness and craving for more goods, cash and know-how (...) the Somali republic was the main if not sole beneficiary of Italian external aid during the 1960s and 70s*." Ahmed Samatar points out that Italy was still the main source of imports to Somalia in the socialist 1970s. From 1973 to 78, 29% on average of officially registered imports to Somalia came from Italy (Ahmed Samatar 1988:120).

[144] Strangio 2012: "The Reasons for Underdevelopment. The Case of Decolonisation in Somaliland"; p63.

[145] Strangio 2012:64: "*Somalia imported a total of 27.3 billion lire of Italian goods between 1950 and 1956, paying on average 25% higher prices than the cost of the same goods in the international market*".

[146] Tripodi 1999:377.

[147] Strangio 2012:74.

the end of the preferential arrangement. The 'banana export quota' became a major source of corruption. Politicians and civil servants applied for and received these funds, even if they had no connection with the production and trade of bananas.[148] Access to government funds spurred on vote-buying and other forms of political corruption.

Throughout the 1950s, the Somali economy was still mostly pre-capitalist, with few changes since pre-colonial times, and in the early 1960s the largest commercial transactions in Somalia were still performed by Italians, Arabs and Indians.[149] Nonetheless, the Italians implanted the idea of a state-managed national economy based on the extraction of an agricultural surplus besides the taxing of trade, and they aligned the coastal trading elites with the Italian domestic economy.

Political developments before independence

Rather than *what* the state should look like, from the beginning the question seems to have been *who* should take control in independent Somalia and how power would be shared. The contours of the future Somali state had already been agreed on by the UN, with little input by Somalis or experts of Somalia. The trusteeship handed a list to Italy of institutions which would need to be built to establish the state. Italy set out to build them without consultation. When the traditional leaders of the Advisory Council objected against some of the planned reforms, Italy decided to ignore them, seeking Somali partners who would not object to the establishment of a Western liberal democracy. It found this partner in the Somali Youth League.

Conversely, the SYL programme for an independent nation-state does not seem to have been influenced by any considerations of local culture; culture intervened in the who and how questions of government, but not in the 'what'. No Somali thinker is known to have devoted thought to the question of how the European nation-state could be adapted to Somali society,[150] as Nkrumah, Lumumba, Senghor, Ben Bella and Samora Maciel did elsewhere in Africa in this same period.[151] See the discussion in 6.3 for a fuller treatment of parallels with other decolonizing states in Africa.

The staunchly secular outlook of the SYC and SYL in the 1940s was abandoned as the SYL turned into a mass party. Lewis in 1958 wrote that "*all parties - especially those with nationalist aims - have adopted a religious ideology (...) Islam, through the traditional organization and aims of the Sufi Dervish Orders (tariqas) has provided a precedent for pan-Somali solidarity*".[152]

Lewis also remarked that "*agnation [clan identity] remains far more important than party solidarity*". Political parties became the expression of clan politics. While the SYL federated the Darood and the Hawiye, the Rahanweyn formed the Hizbia Digil Mirifle (HDM). They felt uncomfortable with the departure of the Italians, who had lifted them out of their subordinate status through economic empowerment and political representation.[153] In 1956 they won 26% of the vote. Reflecting on Somali

[148] Samatar 2016:76 explains: "*Some politicians and senior civil servants who were not entitled to a banana quota, which was specifically earmarked for Somali farmers to break the Italian monopoly on banana exports, gained access to this opportunity. Since a number of senior politicians received banana quotas, elements in the civil service assumed it was legal and applied for their share.*"

[149] Compagnon 1995 : "Ressources Politiques, Régulation Autoritaire et Domination Personnelle en Somalie. Le Régime Siyyad Barre 1969-1991"; p244-246.

[150] I have not encountered the echoes of any political debate about the type of state to be built among SYL members, or indeed other Somali thinkers, in this period, not even in the monograph about early Somali nationalism and politics "Africa's First Democrats" by Abdi Ismail Samatar, 2016.

[151] Martin 2012: "African Political Thought".

[152] Lewis 1958/2:344.

[153] Ware 1965:175 and Lewis 1958/2:355.

political preparations for independence, I.M. Lewis remarked in 1958 that "*Where the elite is largely the product of superficial westernization, achieved through education and not the result of fundamental economic changes in the country as a whole, the traditional pattern of political cleavages is not changed but simply translated into a new idiom*".[154]

Under UN pressure, AFIS adapted the electoral system to avoid clan-based voting for the 1959 general elections: each party had to present a nationwide list of candidates for each of the 26 electoral districts. As a result, the HDM was nearly wiped out, while the Somali Youth League, the only party with a national implantation, won 83 of the 90 seats in the assembly, a comfortable majority to 'sail' into the post-independence era. This lesson in how electoral systems can be tweaked to ensure an outcome favourable to some political groupings was not lost on future Somali politicians.

Another familiar feature of post-independence Somali politics that emerged in the 1950s was vote-buying. The SYL was known to buy votes already in the late 1950s. The legislative elections in Feb 1956, in which the SYL won 43 out of 60 seats, were widely held to be strongly influenced by bribery and fraud.[155]

A draft constitution had been under formulation since mid-1957 in Mogadishu. A technical committee consisting of Italian and UN experts produced a draft constitution and submitted a charter consisting of 141 articles, accompanied by a 316-page commentary, to the Somali General Assembly in May 1959. A committee of that assembly examined the document and endorsed a revised version that had 64 articles. The Constituent Assembly, consisting of all assembly members and twenty other leading Somalis, examined and debated both versions and fashioned a draft constitution with 100 articles. On June 21, 1960 (ten days before independence), the Constituent Assembly adopted the constitution by acclamation.[156]

The constitution was one of the 'deliverables' that AFIS had to produce before independence. But here, again, little thought had been given to how this fundamental institution of the Western state would function in Somalia. Already in 1927 John Dewey noted that "*The idea that there is a model pattern which makes a state a good or true state is responsible for the effort to form constitutions offhand and impose them ready-made on peoples*".[157] In fact, there was not even a language to write it in. This was one of AFIS' responsibilities which it failed to achieve, and which would only be settled in 1972, when the Somali language finally got its own alphabet. The original constitution of Somalia, formally adopted on July 1, 1960, was written in English, and there is no doubt that its prime audience was the international community. Then, as now, Somalis had little interest in the document and generally ignored it.

Preparations for independence in British Somaliland

There was no official coordination between the Italians and the British to prepare for independence;[158] both parts of what is now Somalia became independent with different systems of administration, governance and law; even their official documents were often in mutually incomprehensible languages (Italian and English). The British were under no UN-mandated obligation to prepare their protectorate for independence, and their efforts to do so were lacklustre and mostly the result of initiatives by local administrators in the five years preceding independence.

There were few political institutions in British Somaliland. Only Hargeysa, Berbera, Burco and Gabiley

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[154] Lewis 1958/2:362.

[155] Samatar 2016:76-77; see also Lewis 1958/1:257 n5.

[156] Samatar 2016:82-83.

[157] Dewey 1927: "The Public and its Problems".

[158] Issa-Salwe 1996: "The Collapse of The Somali State: The Impact of the Colonial Legacy"; p66.

had elected municipal councils. A Protectorate Advisory Council, whose members were selected by the clans under supervision of British district commissioners, existed since 1955. They considered that *xeer* and *tol* (clanship) were major impediments to development. The first item on the Protectorate Advisory Council's agenda for 1956 was "*that the present Somali custom governing the payment of blood-money should be abolished*". But this agenda attracted little popular support.

The Advisory Council suggested setting up a Legislative Council whose members should be selected on the criteria of education, merit, and the capacity to contribute (not clan). The British administrators concurred and in 1957 a Legislative Council was set up with 15 members, who were partially elected by members of the Protectorate Advisory Council, and partially appointed by the British governor. But both councils wielded little power. As a measure of transfer of power to Somali hands, in 1957 only 30 of the 200 administration officials in British Somaliland were Somali.[159] Note that there were only 200 in the whole of Somaliland—the British presence was truly minimal.

Somaliland's politicians, although appointed and supported by their clans, continued trying to erode the clan factor in the protectorate's politics, inspired by Somali Youth League discourse and their resounding success in the 1956 and 1959 elections.[160] The definitive cession of the pastures of the Hawd by Great Britain to Ethiopia in 1954 mobilized nationalist sentiment in favour of independence, especially among the Isaaq who suffered the most from the Ethiopian border.

National political parties were formed with the express purpose to overcome clan politics. In consultation with the council members, the British agreed to only allow three political parties to compete, and each of them had to demonstrate a nation-wide implantation in Somaliland. The three parties—the Somali National League, the United Somalia Party and the National United Front—all profiled themselves as anti-clan, moderately Islamist and pro-modernization. It is difficult to discern any major differences in their political programmes. But in February 1960, when the British belatedly organized elections for an expanded National Legislative Council that could lead the country into independence, voting occurred along lineage lines.[161]

To understand how clan politics could defeat consciously anti-clan political structures and policies, the segmentation logic described in 3.1 must be recalled. As within families, the strongest and most noticeable tensions are often among close kin, for example two lineages sharing a same area. The three party system thus federated lineages from diverse clans in one party against lineages from the same clans in another party. The United Somalia Party, meanwhile, federated non-Isaaq clans from East and West Somaliland against the Isaaq clan families in Central Somaliland. The same political system and its drawbacks exist in Somaliland today and are discussed in detail in Chapter Eight.

The National Legislative Council elected a new Advisory Council, which functioned like a cabinet without full powers until the British left. The Prime Minister of the Advisory Council was Mohamed Egal, who would later become Prime Minister of Somalia (1967-69) and President of Somaliland (1993-2002)

On the eve of independence, a British observer noted that "*The Somalis have done well enough, and there is no reason why they should not govern their country without chaos ensuing, provided they are subsidized"*. He warned that "*It will be very unfortunate if they [Somalis of the Protectorate] are dragged along behind an independent Somalia, always looking to Somalia for leadership*".[162] This British attitude

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[159] Lewis 1958/2:349.

[160] Samatar 2016:78.

[161] The results of the elections may have increased communal tensions in the protectorate: Despite receiving 31% of the vote, the National United Front and Somali Youth League coalition only obtained one seat, while the coalition between the Somali National League and the United Somali Party secured 32 seats with 69% of the vote. This was the consequence of a 'first past the post' system and the electoral circumscription borders. Touval 1963:106.

[162] Waterfield 1958: “Address to the Royal Africa Society and the Royal Empire Society, Oct. 3, 1957”.

reflects what seems to have been a prevalent belief among British officials (for whom I.M. Lewis was a reliable source) that Somalis best be left to self-govern; an attitude present since the first years of British occupation. The authorities in Berbera, and later in Hargeisa, probably brushed aside Lord Hailey's recommendation quoted at the start of this chapter, knowing direct colonial control would not work.

When Somaliland became independent on 26 June 1960, it had much less institutional autonomy than the rest of Somalia, which it joined five days later, on July 1st, and it had little choice but to 'look to Somalia for leadership'. Anyhow, almost all Somaliland's inhabitants wished to join Somalia.

The belief that collective progress is possible, and that it can be achieved by a state with the right policies—the modernist ideal—was absorbed by Somali society, which was assured of the coming independence. In the course of the eight decades of external domination, Somali elites came to *believe* in the State. This psychological preparation was, I believe, necessary for the subsequent implantation of the (post-colonial) State. In the next chapter we will examine how the independent Somali state fared during the three decades of its existence.

Chapter 5: Independent Somalia, 1960 to 1990

Where two recently independent states fuse as the core of a Greater Somalia that does not emerge. How the Somali rhizome invades the state-tree legated by the UN and Italy, stunting its growth and that of the national economy. Why the distribution of rents extracted through the state and the economy takes place in a peaceful manner. Of the unique position of Somalia in post-colonial Africa, with so little interference by former colonial powers.

Where the Somali army intervenes to redress the state. How, under the leadership of Siad Barre, the Somali state for the first time becomes an autonomous actor instead of only a site for competition. What is meant by 'scientific socialism' in Somalia. How the regime's attempts to transform Somali society by replacing clan allegiances with loyalty to the State were defeated by its own clan politics.

In which Siad Barre squanders his political capital by going to war in the Ogaden. Where Somalia's reluctant betrothal to the Soviet Bloc crumbles and Barre switches to the Western Bloc. How his regime becomes increasingly autocratic and corrupt with tacit Western support. In which Somali society survives by developing a parallel society and economy.

This chapter traces the evolution of the Somali state in the three decades of its independent existence. This timeframe can be divided into three periods, each corresponding to roughly a decade: the democratic period from 1960 until the coup of 1969; the socialist period from 1969 to 1978; and the pro-Western period until state collapse, from 1978 to 1990. Another equally relevant division of the thirty years of Somali independence is in two periods of 15 years each: from 1960 to 1975, international intervention in Somalia remained at a low level. Somalis were responsible for their own affairs. From 1975 to 1990, foreign aid levels rose drastically, and Somalia was much more involved in Cold War and regional politics. My own, Somali-state centred approach is to first examine the democratic period; then the early years of socialist state-building by Siad Barre; and at last the period of Somali embroilment in Cold War politics, when external support became crucial for Barre's regime survival.

5.1 Democratic Period, 1960 to 1969

The much aspired-to state has faltered,
Charlatans and impostors have ravaged the essence of parliament,
Lost are the guiding Constitution and sense of direction.
Since the leading demons are devoid of care,
Nor will there be a new moon or a saviour,
Incoherent are the objectives and aspirations of the leading party,
A revolution sleeps but will soon shake awake.[1]

La Hubsandoonee, Hirsi Ali Qonof, 1969

This poem, composed before the 1969 coup, speaks of the frustration of the Somalis with their state, but it also expresses the belief that a better state is possible. Its dynamic tension lies in the contrast between the (positive) image and the (negative) practice of the state.

By all accounts, the independence of the Somali state in 1960 was an upbeat moment, celebrated by all Somalis in North and South, and even beyond the borders of the new nation. The British government had approved the wish of the new legislative council in Somaliland, elected in February 1960, for reunification with Somalia. This desire was expressed in the legislature in Hargeisa in April 1960. But the British government saw no need to prepare the union with AFIS, nor did AFIS. It was up to the Somalis. Thus the reunification was singularly ill-prepared.[2]

On 26 June 1960 Somaliland became independent; on 01 July it was the turn of Somalia. The 33 members of Somaliland's legislature travelled to Mogadishu, fused with the 90-member Somali assembly and elected, on the same day, Aden Abdullah Osman, one of the founders of the Somali Youth League, as the first President of the independent state. But then the difficulties started. The rest of the positions of power had to be divided between Northerners, Southerners and the different political parties—clan, although taboo, was also taken into account—and it took Aden Osman a while to present a cabinet that satisfied all major stakeholders in Somalia. Egal, who had been Prime Minister of an independent Somaliland for five days, became Minister of Defence of Somalia.

Reunification meant that the position of each important clan and lineage would be diluted; from a clan-power perspective, it was not a logical step.[3] But a feeling of nationalism predominated among politicians in both Northwest and South Somalia. The Greater Somalia agenda, which aimed at the absorption of Somalis in Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti was the main Somali foreign policy aim at that time. Great Britain had promised to hold a referendum among the Somali population of the North Eastern Province of British East Africa before the independence of Kenya (1963) and the French had similarly suggested self-determination for Djibouti, and the impression was that Ethiopia might relinquish its hold over the Ogaden region, entirely inhabited by Somalis and ruled from Mogadishu between 1935 and 1948, if the internal pressure was high enough.

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[1] *Habbis baa ku dhacay dowladdii lagu han weynaaye / How-howlayaal soo geliyo heeran baa dilaye / Dastuur lagu hagaagiyo la waa hilin la qaadaaye / Kolna haddaan dujaalada hurriyo hoosta dhuganayne / Ama aan hilaal noo dhashiyo haadi imanaynin / Kala maqan hawada Leegadiyo himiladoodiye / Inqilaab hurdada uu ku jiro la hubsandoonee*

[2] Touval perceptively notes that "*had preparatory negotiations been held, they would have led to the crystalization of diverse interests and thus inhibited unification.*" (Touval, Saadia 1963: "Somali Nationalism"; p111)

[3] Touval 1963:118

But France fudged the results of the 1958 and 1967 referendums for independence, by only allowing a percentage of the Somali population to vote; the Afars, who were less numerous than the Somalis but received more voting rights, preferred to remain part of France in both plebiscites. It was only in 1977 that Djibouti became independent, but firmly attached to France as a strategic asset, and without the option to join Somalia. As to northeastern Kenya, after British preparations for a referendum had indicated a clear preference of the population to join Somalia, the referendum was scrapped and the province allotted to Kenya upon independence, greatly angering Somalis, whose government broke relations with Great Britain in 1963. Remained the Ethiopian province of Ogaden. The effort to join it to Somalia would lead to the 1977-78 Ogaden war.

Somali, we have seen, did not have a written form until 1972 and so North and South Somalia used (mutually often unintelligible) English and Italian for written administrative documents, and the legal, administrative, monetary, law & order and political systems were not attuned to each other. Professional translators and specialists that could harmonize both systems were scarce. For both regions, trade with the other region had represented less than 1% of total imports and exports in 1959[4] and it was difficult to integrate the economies, both oriented towards the former foreign power, as it was to decide on common import and export tariffs, civil service salary scales etc. In 1962 the UN sponsored and led an 'Establishment Commission' to harmonize the administrative and legal systems of North and South Somalia.[5]

Somalilanders today often portray the union as being full of tension and discriminating against Northerners, citing this as a historic reason for Somaliland's independence. It is true that in 1961, 54% of Somalilanders voted against the constitution in the referendum, whereas all other regions voted in favour. Later that year, Somaliland officers attempted a coup to undo the union, but it appears there was little popular support for the coup. Somali public opinion was still vastly in support of Greater Somalia, also among the Isaaq. In fact, many Northerners were quickly integrated into the new administration. Mogadishu needed the often better educated and English speaking ex-Somalilanders. Businessmen from Hargeysa established successful branch offices in Mogadishu and other Somali towns, while Southern businessmen invested in Berbera port and the Northern livestock trade with the Arab world.[6]

In terms of economic development, Somalia lacked the required expertise to establish national plans. The country's first Five-Year Development Plan (1963-1967) relied heavily on foreign donors and private investors but lacked a strategy to find/engage them, so most of the planned activities did not materialize.[7] Faced with this failure, the Somali government requested West German experts to prepare a short-term development plan in 1968, which again, for lack of domestic funding, relied heavily on external investments. Foreign investors chose some sectors for development, improving transport and storage facilities for Italy's agro-business giants in South Somalia, for example. Rather than facilitating the growth of an autonomous public sector in Somalia, these plans increased the economic imbalances among Somalia's regions and were more beneficial to foreign investors than to the national economy.[8]

As to institution-building, it is hard to find evidence of serious efforts to expand state power, besides the recruitment of civil servants,[9] which led to an inflated public administration. All the government revenue

[4] Touval 1963:116.

[5] Samatar 2016: "Africa's First Democrats"; p148.

[6] After the first two years, Somalilanders came to accept the new framework of national politics. Lewis 1972: "The Politics of the 1969 Somali Coup"; p393.

[7] Strangio 2012: "The Reasons for Underdevelopment"; p114-115.

[8] Strangio 2012:116.

[9] Samatar 2016:148-149.

was spent on salaries, leaving almost nothing to develop the minimal infrastructure inherited from colonialism.[10] In the first years after independence this did not pose a major problem, but as the decade progressed the population grew and the colonial infrastructure deteriorated, leading to a much higher popular demand for state infrastructure which the political class could not satisfy.

This UN Establishment Commission had suggested a public administration reform which was picked up after the 1964 elections by Prime Minister Abdirazaq Hussen. The firing of 450 senior and mid-level civil servants in early 1965 created a political storm which lasted through much of the year, as each fired person could count on sustained efforts by allied MPs and other influential people to recoup his position.[11] This indicates that by 1964 what could be described as the rhizomatic capture of the state administration by Somali lineages was already deeply entrenched.[12]

The same was obviously true of Somali politics. What struck all observers about the first decade of Somali independence was the intense but peaceful political turmoil in the young country.[13] The graceful transition of power from President Aden 'Adde' Osman to President Sharmarke in 1967 appears to have been the first time that power was handed over without conflict from an incumbent to a new president in Africa.[14] This created the impression among Africa observers that Somali politics could be democratic, which was not certain in other African contexts. This favourable democratic impression was reinforced by Somalia's non-aligned politics; Somalia was not (yet) becoming, like many other African states, a client-state of a superpower or a former European colonial master.

But under the rather attractive surface of Somali politics, clan identities, although never mentioned, had taken over the entire socio-political spectrum. In 1964, for example, Somaliland's political parties allied with the Hawiye to counter the Darood's growing power within the SYL. All these contestants for political power belonged to the ‘noble’ lineages from Darood, Hawiye and Isaaq pastoralist clans, who thus dominated the political scene. In contrast, the HDMS party, which had represented the Rahanweyn people from South Central Somalia, lost almost all its seats in parliament, and smaller clans, weaker lineages and minorities had to content themselves with subordinate positions in patronage networks led by the strong clans.

As noted above, in the AFIS elections of the late 1950s there was already evidence of elections fraud (inflated numbers of voters, ballot-box stuffing and vote-buying); after the departure of the UN, electoral fraud blossomed. One of the consequences was the gradual transformation of multi-party democracy to a one-party state, as follows:

In the 1964 parliamentary election, the Somali Youth League won 69 of the 123 seats, the other 54 spread between opposition parties which mostly represented clan blocs. However, in the following years 36 of these opposition MPs defected to the Somali Youth League, buoying its numbers to 105/123. The reason for defection was that it made no sense to be in the opposition: all opportunities went through the government and ruling party. In 1969, 62 parties fielded 1002 candidates. Some of these, it was

[10] Mansur 1995: “Contrary to a Nation: The Cancer of the Somali State”; p113.

[11] Samatar 2016:151-156.

[12] Abdi Samatar, from whose 2016 book "Africa's First Democrats" the information in this paragraph is extracted, gives a positive valuation of the actions of Prime Minister Hussen, also for example in his fight against corruption and nepotism. His book clearly has the intention of setting a positive example in Somali political history for current politicians to emulate. This influences his reading of President Aden Adde Osman and Prime Minister Hussen's actions in government. Other authors concur that these politicians seemed more honest and dedicated to the national cause than others but consider their impact less meaningful. During their period of rule, 1964-67, the political climate deteriorated and corruption increased—see for example Ingiriis 2016, Lewis 1972, Laitin 1976

[13] This is described in detail in Samatar 2016.

[14] According to Samatar 2016:184: "*June 10, 1967, marked the first time in modern African political history in which a democratically elected president was defeated in an election, gave up power with dignity, and walked away freely as an adored citizen*."

estimated, had spent up to 15,000 pounds on their election and urgently needed to recoup their costs.[15] *All* of the elected 50 parliamentarians who were not member of the Somali Youth League joined the 73 elected SYL MPs shortly after the elections, except one (former Prime Minister Abdirazaq Haji Hussen, who remained the lone opposition figure). This left the population who had voted for opposition candidates, as well as those who had backed one of the 879 losing candidates, feeling cheated. As I.M. Lewis wryly remarked about this result: "*Thus the Somali Republic had at last joined the ranks of African one-party states*".[16]

Despite being part of the official ruling party, most individual MPs expected a bribe in return for a vote favourable for the government. "*According to a detailed statement made after the coup by a spokesman of the Supreme Revolutionary Council, and based on a close study of the accounts of the Premier's Office, Egal expended £500,000 of public funds in payments to members of the assembly in the period between January and October 1969*".[17] These could only be bribes. As a result of the monetization of political support, and in the absence of oppositional politics, the government led by Egal and Sharmarke could embark on policies which were unpopular with the Somali public, notably abandoning the Greater Somalia project in order to establish more cordial relations with the West and its regional allies Ethiopia and Kenya, a 'détente policy'.[18]

The Somali state had become a political marketplace where clan lineages struck deals to share government revenues. "*Democracy had lapsed into commercialised anarchy, and strong rule of a new type was desperately needed if the state was to be rescued from its present morass of poverty, insecurity, and inefficiency, and set on the road to progress*", I.M. Lewis remarked shortly after the coup.[19]

The last two years of the pre-coup period, under President Sharmarke and Prime Minister Egal, were later characterized as "democracy gone mad"[20], because the political bargaining process grew particularly intense, while the needs of the population were not attended to, in particular in terms of state services and economic growth. When President Sharmarke was assassinated in Laas 'aanood in October 1969, his Army Chief of Staff Mohamed Said Barre quickly intervened to 'restore order' through a military coup.[21], It is assumed by many Somalis that Siad Barre was behind the killing of Sharmarke,[22] and some also believe that the USSR was involved in the assassination.[23]

The first decade of Somalia's existence as an independent state thus barely saw any attempt at either state-building or nation-building; instead, the minimal and inadequate legacy of the UN Trusteeship–not

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[15] In comparison, the government budget that year was 15 million pounds (Lewis 1972:397). See also David Laitin: "*candidates openly and unabashedly [were] buying their parliamentary seats*" Laitin 1976: "The Political Economy of Military Rule in Somalia"; p453.

[16] Lewis 1972:397.

[17] Lewis 1972:398.

[18] Expression used for Somalia by the US Secretary of State, quoted in Ingiriis 2017: "Who Assassinated the Somali President in October 1969? The Cold War, the Clan Connection, or the Coup d'État"; p134.

[19] Lewis 1972:400.

[20] Mansur 1995:114.

[21] The murder was passed off at the time, and by Barre's subsequent regime, as the work of a malcontent clansman (the President's Majerteen/Osman Mohamud subclan would have taken the two parliamentary seats for the Northern Puntland constituency, instead of sharing it with the Majerteen/Ali Saleban sub-clan of the murderer); Ingiriis 2017.

[22] See for example Bulhan 2008: "Politics of Cain: One Hundred Years of Crises in Somali Politics and Society"; p160, noting that all the co-accused of the assassin were released after the assassin 'retracted' his earlier statements in a secret military trial organized by the new military regime, and he was executed shortly afterwards

[23] Ingiriis 2017 develops this theory.

more than the foundation for a future state–was overtaken, so to say, by rhizomatic clan-based power struggles. Quite literally, the Somali nomadic element took over the state: powerful lineages of the 'noble' pastoral clans vied to increase their share of state power. The state-tree proliferated in terms of civil service employment, but it gained no structure and therefore couldn't elevate itself, resembling a sprawling bush rather than a majestic tree. This is what the poem quoted above regrets.

That this happened peacefully—in the decades preceding the assassination of Sharmarke it seems *no violence at all* was employed in Somali politics—can be ascribed in part to the principles of *xeer*, which had survived the colonial and trusteeship period relatively unscathed. These principles mandate a peaceful resolution of conflict and the maintenance of an overall balance, as in the State of Nature: nobody is entitled to have more than what they can use, and the entire community must either benefit from it or at least not be made to suffer—otherwise it rebels. Because these principles were applied, there was widespread resentment but no popular rebellion against the corruption and inefficiency of the democratic regime because, after all, each Somali had access to the clan-based patronage system.

The peaceful character of the first decade of Somali politics was also the result of the modernist aspirations of the Somali elites. Wearing suits and ties, and speaking the sophisticated language of the international community these elites, though irremediably tied to their lineage loyalties, had no desire to return to their grandfathers' camels and spears, but sought to impress their peers in Addis Ababa, New York or Rome with their progressive democratic outlook, in the hopes of full recognition and its potential rewards—such as foreign partnerships and investments. The Somali rhizome was adapting to the new conditions of the evolving environment (the UN state system) through socialization. But the state image ('Africa's first democrats') and practice (a stagnant national economy and barely any social development) diverged too strongly. The military stepped into this gap.

What is remarkable about the first decade of Somali independence is the absence of foreign intervention. In the rest of Africa, former colonial powers kept in power their allies and maintained close ties with local political elites, including opposition forces. But Italy and Great Britain withdrew from Somalia and left it to its own devices; they did not try to establish the same kind of dominance over Somali politics as France and Great Britain largely maintained over their ex-colonies.

The British rapidly lost their influence in Somalia. The few hundred British officials and citizens left Somaliland shortly before and after its independence. In the second half of the 1940s, Britain had enjoyed popularity among Somali leaders mostly because of their support for the Greater Somalia idea, and because of their laissez-faire style of colonialism, which suited Somalis better than the directive and paternalistic Italian style.[24] But to most Somalis the British were narrowly associated with the Isaaq clan family and seen as anti-Darood, and neither clan group could forgive the British for having 'given away' the Hawd pastures to Ethiopia in the treaty of 1954. A final perception of 'betrayal' by Britain came when, against the recorded will of local inhabitants and its promises to Somalia, it granted the North-Eastern Province of British East Africa to Kenya at its independence in 1963. The British thus had no leverage over Somalia until they returned in the late 1970s to support Siad Barre.

As to the Italians, many thousands remained after independence; they formed an important community until Siad Barre's policies expropriated or sidelined them in the early 1970s. Afterwards their influence remained circumscribed to two domains: commercial and educational. Italy remained a main trading partner of Somalia until 1990, and it continued offering scholarships and academic exchange opportunities to Somalia's educational institutes - Italian remained the main foreign language used at Mogadishu University. But Italy did not attempt to influence political processes in Somalia and it refrained from power politics generally. Internationally, it positioned itself expressly as a 'middle power' eager to help mediate through its connections with actors abroad and in Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea,

[24] Tripodi 1999: "Back to the Horn"; p364.

rather than pursue its national interests.[25] Commercially, however, Italian groups retained monopolistic benefits in some sectors (such as bananas, spare parts, consumer ware, fertilizers etc.)

Upon independence Somalia declared itself non-aligned, and it participated in the Yugoslav conference establishing the 'Non-Aligned Movement' in Belgrade, 1961. Its foreign policy truly was non-aligned until the 1974 Somali-Soviet friendship treaty (which only lasted three years). Almost all other ex-colonies contended with domineering efforts by former colonial rulers to maintain their influence and interests in the ex-colony. Within the post-colonial world, then, the Somali case was an exception, which may explain why it rarely figures in textbooks about African politics since independence.

The Somali state was cut loose and navigated the choppy waters of the international state order from centre to left and left to right until it floundered.

5.2 State-Building under Siad Barre, 1969 to 1975

Siyaad our dear father - the father of knowledge
The founder of our nation - the father of courage
The enemy of imperialism - the father of Marxism
The twin brother of Marx - our saviour
Long life for always![26]

Guulwaade Siyaad (Victorious Siyaad)

On October 21, 1969, six days after the assassination of Sharmarke, a Supreme Revolutionary Council led by the Commander in Chief of the Somali Army, Colonel Mohamed Siad Barre, took power in a military coup. The Somali parliament, Radio Mogadishu and the Ministry of Information were occupied and soldiers sent into the streets to keep order. The coup met no armed resistance; even political or civilian resistance was minimal: the following days there were no demonstrations against the coup.

Military coups in democratic regimes invariably seek to reimpose order in a socio-political setting perceived as anarchic. The hierarchical organization of the army with its rational use of resources seems like a perfect model for society, and the solution to the threat of the nation falling apart. The army, of all social institutions built by man, maybe most closely resembles the tree in its structure, as its organigram suggests. A difference it has with the similarly structured civilian administration is that soldiers and officers almost exclusively socialize with each other, whilst civil servants have a social life outside the office. Limiting the experience of life to the barracks leads to an 'esprit de corps' which the military usually find lacking in society. In terms of the conceptual opposition between rhizome and tree, a military coup is thus always an effort to impose the order of the tree on the unruly rhizome.

The 'esprit de corps' when applied to a society corresponds to the concept of national solidarity. All early pronunciations and activities of the Somali putschists are evidence of a concerted effort to save, strengthen or create the Somali nation-state. The period of intense reforms lasted until 1975; then it

[25] Novati 1994: “Italy in the Triangle of the Horn"; p380-381. Italy offered to mediate in the 1974 Ethiopian revolution, the 1977-78 Ogaden War and the 1990-91 collapse of the Somali state, but its services were turned down each time by the United States and the regional powers involved in the conflict.

[26] There are several songs online with the same title from the 1970s, as an internet search reveals… but the lyrics are hard to find. These were translated by me from the French version given in Compagnon 1995 : “Ressources Politiques, Régulation Autoritaire et Domination Personnelle en Somalie"; p324.

stalled. That is the subject of this section. The next section will deal with Somalia's Cold War relations and how they allowed Barre to stay in power until 1991.

Institutional reforms

The coup put an end to existing political institutions, especially multi-party democracy, which was seen as the paramount political expression of clan politics and thus the immediate cause of Somalia's woes. The Somali Youth League (SYL) was banned. The civilian administration was submitted to military authority to make it more hierarchical, obedient and predictable. All regional and district commissioners were replaced by military officers.[27] Whilst public servants had been notoriously lacking in sense of responsibility and few civil servants worked full hours, the new military regime made sure *all* civil servants were put to work, or they would lose their jobs. The patronage system which had allowed many laid off civil servants to recoup their positions after Prime Minister Hussen's attempted 1965 reforms had disappeared, and civil servants now had to earn their pay as each Ministry and department had a military oversight board.[28]

Daniel Compagnon, who has produced one of the most comprehensive overviews of the Somali state until its collapse in his PhD thesis uses the term 'institutional *tabula rasa*' for Siad Barre's state-building approach.[29] New institutions established in the first years include the Supreme Revolutionary Council itself, the Public Relations Office (in charge of propaganda), the Political Office (in charge of ideological and policy affairs), regional and district revolutionary councils and parastatal organizations. The single party (Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party) was only established in 1976 with Soviet encouragement and guidance; its Central Committee replaced the Supreme Revolutionary Council. Other important parastatals were local Orientation Centres, state-owned media—all private media were banned, and by 1980 foreign correspondents were no longer welcome—the *Guulwadayaal* (the revolutionary youth that functioned as militias) and women's organizations. The core of the new regime, besides the Supreme Revolutionary Council/Central Committee, were the national security institutions: the National Security Service and a National Security Court to oversee the judiciary and establish a national network of military tribunals.

The military regime abolished the independence of the judiciary (the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court) and legislated against customary law (*xeer*) and sharia, making the practice of both illegal. There was only to be one legal system, that of State Law, under control of the executive. In courts, elders were no longer allowed to represent their kinsmen and sharia practitioners were also banned.

The Somali territory was reordered administratively through the decentralization law of 1974, which replaced the 8 regions and 47 districts inherited from the colonial period with 15 regions and 78 districts.[30] But the 'decentralization' law in fact centralized state authority in Barre's hands. There was no scope for any form of local autonomy or self-rule, unless it was under the guidance of the central state (such as agricultural cooperatives).

In a recent appraisal of the Siad Barre regime, Dominik Balthasar argues that "t*he early to mid-1970s constituted the most promising state-making period in Somali history*".[31] He explains that Siad Barre's

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[27] Civilian rule of districts and regions was only reintroduced in 1974. Lewis 1994: "Blood and Bones. The Call of Kinship in Somali Society" p154; Compagnon 1995:334.

[28] Laitin 1976:454.

[29] Compagnon 1995:305. Sadly, I could only find the first half of his thesis online. Neither the author (who only retains a version on floppy disks) nor the archivists at HAL and Sciences Po could retrieve the second part of the thesis).

[30] Lewis 1994:154.

[31] Balthasar 2018: "State-making in Somalia under Siyad Barre"; p142.

state-building was successful among others because it introduced a set of predictable and enforced rules about how politics should be conducted (which had been lacking in the 1960s). This is partially true, especially for the first years of military rule. It also seems evident that the Somali population welcomed this new foundation for politics, and still looks back on this early period with relish.[32] But to call Siad Barre's state-building successful one must adopt a purely political perspective (he survived in power for 21 years), not an institutional or social or economic one. The institutions of government were geared towards perpetuating Barre's personal power and did not survive him, he led Somali society into its most brutal civil conflict ever, and the economy stagnated and became hopelessly dependent on foreign aid. The true institutional strength of Siad Barre's state lay, increasingly throughout his stay in power, in the national security institutions which are discussed in the next section, not in establishing the rule of law and building the institutions of state as Balthasar suggests.

Balthasar also underlines how Barre's efforts were largely aimed at nation-building, not at state-building, referring to Lemay-Hébert's argument that state-building cannot be successful if not accompanied by nation-building, which is necessary to reorient a society towards statehood.[33] Barre's approach was never very institution-focused, but sought to mobilize the Somali people, especially in his early years.

Nation-Building

A few days after the coup, Siad Barre proclaimed: "*The purpose of the Revolution is to guide us back to our true Somali characteristics; to clearly understand what we are, and what we stand for, and to work for our people in sincerity and devotion.... We have to embark upon the task of creating a nationalism that will not detrimentally differentiate the rich from the poor, and the educated from the illiterate, the urban from the nomad, and the high from the low*".[34]

This egalitarian nationalist objective was supported by almost the entire Somali population, it appears. But to build such a society, it first need to be 'declannified'. Barre repeatedly stressed the evils of tribalism and repeated that the only way in which the Somali people could overcome the triple threats of poverty, disease and ignorance was by overcoming clannism.[35] In 1971 public ceremonies were held all throughout the country in which effigies of tribalism, corruption and nepotism were burnt. It became illegal to ask from which lineage another Somali was; such a question could lead to imprisonment. Affective lineage-based ways of calling each other: 'cousin', 'uncle' or 'brother' were also banned, and replaced by the term '*jaalle*' (comrade). Siad Barre insisted in public speeches throughout his reign that 'tribalism' was the greatest obstacle to the formation of a Somali nation.

As all Somalis well remembered, the Somali Youth League had initiated a similar (but voluntary, instead of coercive) policy in the 1940s and 1950s. The SYL's nationalist legacy was hijacked by the regime. Siad Barre appeared in manipulated photos as the person behind the creation of the Somali Youth League in 1947, and was cast as its inspirer and grey eminence,[36] even though he was a member of the colonial police (first Italian, then BMA) and was not involved in politics throughout his formative years. He re-founded the organization in the late 1970s as the Somali *Socialist* Youth League (SSYL), but that para-statal organization never became very influential.

Xeer was particularly targeted. The ancient principles of collective responsibility and blood money were

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[32] Ingiriis 2016b: "How Somalia Works: Mimicry and the Making of Mohamed Siad Barre's Regime in Mogadishu".

[33] Lemay-Hébert 2009: "Statebuilding without Nation-Building? Legitimacy, State Failure and the Limits of the Institutionalist Approach"; p22.

[34] Maxamed Siyaad Barre "My Country and My People" Vol 1 (Mogadishu, 1970); quoted in Laitin 1976: "The Political Economy of Military Rule in Somalia"; p455.

[35] Lewis 1994: 151-152.

[36] Compagnon 1995:325.

abolished (offenders were henceforth to be held individually responsible for their crimes, and murderers to be executed by the State) and so were dowry payments; men and women should marry without lineage interference or financial considerations. Orphans had traditionally been taken care of by the extended family/lineage; from now on they were removed from their kin to be educated in 'Revolutionary Youth Centres', state-sponsored orphanages where they were taught "*now I have a father in Siad / a mother in the October revolution*".[37] These orphans would fight loyally for Barre until 1991.

The Siad Barre regime targeted traditional forms of *socialisation*; henceforth, socialisation should mainly take place through state structures. Siad Barre ordered that all social events such as weddings and funeral ceremonies were henceforth to be held in orientation centres, putting them in the purview of the state. All communal affairs had to be conducted in these centres, under the guidance of party cadres and volunteers: no more debating under a tree by elders.[38] These orientation centres were set up in neighbourhoods, towns and even villages throughout Somalia. But it appears the Somali population generally avoided these social reforms when they could.

As Bourdieu among others points out, school plays an essential role in socializing youth in the values of the state. Barre abolished school fees in 1971 and in 1972 brought all private schools into the public system. Schools were built even in remote areas. The national education system was overhauled and within a few years a new nationalist and 'scientific socialist' curriculum was rolled out with military precision. Total school enrolment tripled from 38,439 in 1968-1969 to 107,403 in 1973-1974.[39] On an estimated total population of 3.6 million in 1974, this figure is still quite low, indicating a child school enrolment rate of only about 10%.

To re-socialise grown-ups and make them participate in the revolution, the practice of community work (or corvée labour) was made mandatory by the Siad Barre regime. Each household had to participate, either through free work or donations (in money or in kind) to the Fridays of voluntary community work: cleaning roads, digging irrigation canals or wells, building community structures and so forth. This practice was already widespread among Somali communities, and the same term (*iskaa wab u qabso*) had been used in British Somaliland in the 1950s.[40] Its appropriation in the name of public projects like stabilising coastal dunes and irrigation projects by the Barre regime replaced clan and community frameworks for action with a national one. In the first half decade of military rule the *principle* of community work seems to have often been accepted (in *practice* Somalis still despised and avoided manual labour), but later it came to be resented as an imposition by the State unrelated to community interests, and rarely well carried out. It is doubtful many good results came from it, except where it coincided with previous community structures and their own plans.[41]

One of the main tools introduced by Siad Barre to unify the Somali nation was a written national language. For decades Somalis, and their erstwhile colonizers and AFIS administrators, had been incapable of deciding on a script for the Somali language, which when written used whatever alphabet the writer was familiar with (Arabic, Latin, a modified Latin script like the Turkish alphabet of 1928, even Amharic). Moreover, several languages were used in Somalia, including Arabic, English, Italian and Swahili, besides Somali; and within Somalia local languages such as Chimbalazi, Tunni, Garre, Kibajuni and Mushunguli, some of them of Bantu and others of Cushitic origin, are still spoken by ten thousands of people each. Somali language itself knows two main versions: the Mahatiri dialect which was most

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[37] Abdi Sheik-Abdi 1981: "Ideology and Leadership in Somalia"; p169-70.

[38] Lewis 1994, Compagnon 1995.

[39] Nelson (ed) 1982: "Somalia: A Country Study"; p281.

[40] Lewis 1994:172 n10.

[41] Compagnon 1995.

widely spread, used by Hawiye, Darood and Isaaq pastoral tribes and the Maay dialect spoken by most Rahanweyn, which is sufficiently different from Mahatiri to be considered, by some, a different language. The regime imposed Mahatiri written with a modified Latin script as the national language, putting at a disadvantage Maay and local language speakers as well as scholars of Islam and people trained in Arab universities.

The alphabetisation campaign to educate Somalis in their language, in urban areas from 1973 to 1974 and in rural areas from 1974 to 1975 (all high schools were closed for a year to allow their teachers and students to participate) was another effort to declannify society (In a speech on 8 March 1974, Barre postulated that alphabetization "*will be the weapon to eradicate social balkanization and fragmentation into tribes and sects. It will bring about an absolute unity*",[42] by instructing people in the official dialect of the state and sending students and teachers to whatever area needed them, instead of to their own clan areas. Besides teaching the new script and official language, the campaign intended to vaccinate children, count the population and livestock, and provide veterinary care for livestock. It had little traction among nomads, who escaped control of the authorities.[43] In the settled agricultural areas inhabited by the Rahanweyn, where police could more easily verify mandatory attendance, enrolment figures were higher but many people were unfamiliar with the Mahatiri dialect of Somali and unwilling to stop using Maay. Nonetheless, the introduction of a written form for the Somali language and the alphabetization campaigns were successful in imposing the new standard.

Barre’s reaction to the long drought which hit Northern Somalia in 1974 was to relocate many of the pastoralists from Puntland and Somaliland to the lower reaches of the Shabelle river, where his regime had planned new agricultural lands. Soviet aircraft assisted in the relocation, which threatened an estimated 250,000 people with famine. The response of the Barre regime to the drought was effective and provided it with credit at home and abroad. Although it was a response to a natural disaster, transferring large population groups from one part of the country to another, and providing them with land there, is a well-known instrument in the hands of autocratic rulers who desire to 'divide and rule' or simply re-structure society. I.M. Lewis notes that the sedentarization of pastoral tribes was also one of the regime's objectives, and that the drought response allowed this. Moreover, since the drought response coincided with the rural alphabetisation campaign, the resettlement drives provided a captive audience for the regime to propagate the 'values of the revolution'.[44]

In 1975 Siad Barre pushed through a major effort at social reform, the *xeerka qoyska* (family law) which effectively liberated women from Islamic legal restrictions. It replaced traditional Islamic family law with a new, socialist modernizing law. Barre had been careful from the outset of the revolution not to attack Islam, by stressing Islam's egalitarian values and its natural harmony with the principles of scientific socialism. But in his public speeches he would denounce reactionary Islamic forces as an enemy of the revolution, and he consistently defended the emancipation of women from traditional Islamic patterns of subjection.[45] The announcement of the Family Law prompted the resistance of conservative religious scholars. When ten of these had been rounded up and executed, unrest spread through many areas of Somalia. It was the first of Siad Barre's reforms that elicited obvious social resistance. The Somali scholar

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[42] Lewis 2002: "A Modern History of the Somali"; p217.

[43] Compagnon 1995 quotes a figure of 12% adult enrolment in the alphabetization campaign of Lower Juba.

[44] The effort to transform pastoralists into farmers in another part of the country, without sufficient follow-up, predictably failed. There is also no indication that the resettled communities felt more loyalty to the regime or had weakened clan-based social ties. At the start of the civil war many of the transferred people returned to the North, while others had already made their way into the urban areas of Kismayo and Mogadishu, increasing the Harti Darood population there – one of the factors aggravating the civil war.

[45] Lewis 1994:150-151.

and specialist of Islamic movements in Somalia Abdurahman 'Baadiyow' considers the opposition to the family law one of the roots of contemporary political Islam in Somalia.[46]

A crucial element of Barre's nation-building efforts was the personality cult; as the song 'Guulwade Siyaad' quoted above points out, Barre was seen as the father of the nation, while the mother was the October revolution. This song was played through the loudspeakers of the orientation centres at regular intervals, at the start and at the end of state radio broadcasting every day, and sung in classes and workplaces. If the nation-state is represented as a tree, Barre became, by himself, the entire trunk of the Somali nation-state. He was omnipresent in public institutions (his portrait next to those of Marx and Lenin), news reports and songs. Barre would often speak to the Somali population on the radio and in public encounters, where he would appear as a simple, humble leader eager to listen to his Somali comrades. He avoided the pomp and luxurious lifestyle of previous Somali presidents and would even feign bewilderment at the carefully choreographed cheering, singing and dancing crowds that greeted him wherever he went. I.M. Lewis argues that Barre, who had visited North Korea twice before the coup, was inspired by the personality cult of Kim Il-Sung, the North Korean leader.[47]

Efforts to understand the socialist ideology of the regime by Somali and foreign scholars all end up in confusion.[48] The military coup by Siad Barre was not at first ideologically oriented. It was only after one year, on the first anniversary of the 'revolution', that Barre announced his regime would follow the path of ‘scientific socialism’, a term earlier adopted by other African leaders to differentiate their regime from ‘doctrinaire’ Marxism. But there never was an effort to develop this ‘ideology’ into a political program; scholars looking for one have to piece it together from Barre's many public speeches. Socialist ideologues were removed from the ruling organs of the regime early on, and again a few times later; they were convenient scapegoats when public opinion turned against some of the harsher social reform measures, such as the new family law.[49] But this did not stop Barre from continuously referring to his social reform program and his policies as 'socialist'.

It seems that Siad Barre's 'socialism' referred to a new, modern footing of traditional Somali egalitarianism in a regimented nation-state ruled by him. From his public locutions as well as analyses of his regime by scholars, it is clear that he believed that clan identity could never be completely overcome. His own power-base was, from the outset, lineage-based; and this only became more pronounced in the two decades of his reign. He was himself a child of his society, of his Marehan father and Ogadeni mother, and these two clans, together with a third Darood clan, the Dhulbahante, would constitute his power base until 1991.

So, although his social reforms suggest an outright attack on clannism, what he was aiming at was a channelling of clan identity politics in a way favourable to his rule: with his own trusted clan lineages in control, and the rest of Somali clan society debilitated by his policies. The family law, and the land law (also of 1975) which turned all lands not privately owned (with a title/deed) into state property—thus negating the communal ownership of land which was the traditional base of clan power—both served to weaken (but not entirely disrupt) the grip of Somali clans on Somali society. His judiciary reforms similarly sought to break the social power of clan elders and traditional religious authorities. In theory, these reforms extracted individual Somalis from their previous social allegiances (to lineage and the

[46] Baadiyow 2017: “Recovering the Somali State. The Role of Islam, Islamism and Transitional Justice”; p57-58.

[47] Lewis 1994:153. The title of Chapter Seven of 'Blood and Bones', which appeared previously in 1979 as a contribution in the book "Politics in Leadership - A Contemporary Perspective" is '*Kim Il-Sung in Somalia: The End of Tribalism?*".

[48] See for example Laitin 1976:462-463.

[49] Lewis 1994:165.

respect of *xeer* and elders) and placed them in a social relation with the State. The State guaranteed the individual's rights and offered prospects in life, and in return demanded absolute submission. But it must have been obvious to Barre that this would not affect the lineages that thanks to him had access to power, and which therefore remained based on rhizomatic clan patronage networks.

This mode of leadership is evidenced in Barre's security organs. The main instrument of Siad Barre to remain in power was the National Security Service, NSS. Trained by the KGB, the service was headed by Barre’s son-in-law General Dafle (Dhulbahante). A law passed four months after the coup gave the NSS sweeping powers to arrest and search without warrant. Members of the NSS killed, tortured and raped with impunity.[50] From the outset, the NSS recruited based on lineage to ensure loyalty of its members. It may have been the first state institution to be fully structured by lineage identity. Another son-in-law of Barre led a voluntary militia outfit known as the victory bearers (*Guulwadeyaal*) modelled after the Soviet *Druzhina*; composed mostly of street-boys and other social outcasts, the victory bearers were submitted to intense indoctrination. They then functioned as the eyes and ears of the regime on the streets and had the official function to guide the public along the right path of the revolution; they were authorized to autonomously punish dissent and deviant attitudes. Finally, the most feared repressive institution was the Red Berets, an elite military formation led by Barre’s son, who took direct orders from the President. The Marehan-dominated Red Berets even stood above the NSS. Initially these security organs operated with self-restraint, mostly persecuting members of the old regime; but later Siad Barre increasingly unleashed them on the population, creating a reign of terror.

These three security organs and their modes of recruitment are evidence of Siad Barre's system of domination. At the very top a select group of his own clan members taking orders directly from Siad Barre and his son, with military discipline and 'esprit de corps' in addition to lineage loyalty. The main organ of repression, the NSS, is controlled from within the family but has a bit wider clan base, and is trained by a mix of national and foreign (Soviet) experts. And then, on the 'other side of clan society' so to say, are the outcasts of the clan system, the street rabble. These young boys can beat a clan elder if they so desire; their affiliation to the regime makes them more powerful than the elders.

In Barre's vision, then, he was the supreme ruler over a patronage system exercised through the lineages loyal to him, and that patronage system, through the institutions of the state he had crafted, kept control over a society that was naturally structured into rival clan groups but which, subjected to a mix of ideological ('socialist' or 'nationalist') conviction and coercion, could not politically express those identities. There was no space for independent political organization or even expression. Barre probably hoped that individual Somalis, frustrated that their lineage identity could no longer help them get ahead in life, would instead turn to the state he presided over. The liberation of women from the chains of traditional Somali Islam and clan culture could provide an enormous social boost to these plans.

This project faced two major obstacles. First, it was patent to all Somalis that Siad Barre's regime was itself clan-based, and that clan continued to form the main, if not only, channel to access power. Lewis wrote in 1979 that the Marehan-Ogaden-Dhulbahante power base of Siad Barre's regime had already become obvious in 1974.[51] The prohibition on mentioning clan can thus mainly be seen, not as an effort to truly reform Somali society (a reform whose starting point is denial can hardly be successful) but as a way to obfuscate the regime's clan base, to make it literally unspeakable. Calling out the clan nature of Barre's regime itself constituted the punishable offence of clannism.

Second, opportunities for personal advancement outside one's lineage support system barely existed. If Barre's regime had pursued a Maoist developmental path, Somalia's emancipated women and other new orphans of the clan system could have found jobs in industry, new rural developments or

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[50] All the information in this paragraph is extracted from Ingiriis 2016: “The Suicidal State: The Rise and Fall of the Siad Barre Regime, 1969-1991”; p95-99.

[51] Lewis 1994:165.

commerce. But such opportunities were scarce, and individuals had to rely ever more on lineage connections to survive.

Examining the GDP per capita, between 1969 and 1972 there was a sharp surge, from 15,738 to 18,131 USD/capita (See chart 1). This probably corresponds to the energising of Somali society that took place in the early years of the regime, noted by all observers. But over the coming eight years it dropped to 12,225 USD/capita and the average yearly GDP/capita remained near 12,500 USD throughout the 1980s, with the variations shown in the chart below.

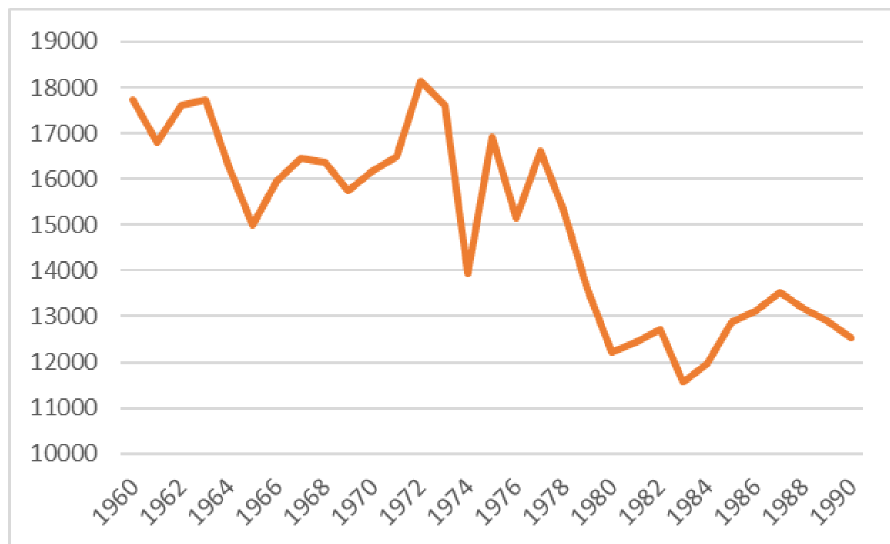

Figure 15: Evolution of GDP per capita in constant US$, Somalia 1960-90 (source World Bank).

The economic objectives Siad Barre proclaimed shortly after the revolution were to increase Somali food production and reduce its dependency on foreign imports, to improve the negative trade balance of the previous regime and to achieve strategic self-sufficiency. But despite spending 30% of early government budgets on agriculture, these goals were not achieved. Between 1969 and 1973 food imports remained at comparable levels while the trade deficit grew.[52] Siad Barre's attempts at industrialization with Soviet Bloc assistance, to set up farming collectives and to increase state control of the private sector were similarly not successful. All Somali imports and exports and the banking system were brought under state control, with the important exception of livestock export, the country's main export earner, which continued to be privately organized—a concession to the strong pastoral clans of which he derived himself and whose antagonism he did not wish to provoke. The pastoral economy did benefit from increased services: veterinary, transport (on the North-South tarmac road built by China) and holding areas.

The 1970s were the period of the oil boom in the Gulf States, and many Somalis found employment there. Thus a remittances economy emerged, which came to constitute a significant percentage of national income. Although the state tried to control the inflow of remittances,[53] this was too disadvantageous for the recipients and the telephone-based *hawala* system was resorted to, to circumvent the state-controlled banking system. [54] This was at the root of an informal economy which

[52] Laitin 1976:457.

[53] The Somali banking sector unsuccessfully attempted to capture the remittances market through devaluation and special offers; Jamal 1988: "Somalia: Understanding of an Unconventional Economy"; p256.

[54] Hawala is a trust-based money transfer system. An example of how it works: a Somali labourer A in Saudi Arabia gives a sum in riyals to a Somali trader B in Jeddah to send to his family in Mogadishu. B calls his contact trader C in

grew in size throughout the Siad Barre years, and eventually replaced the formal economy when the state collapsed. The informal economy was a major factor in allowing the recomposition of lineage politics and resistance against the regime in the 1980s. In an economy with few opportunities, remittances and the hawala trade they gave rise to became essential for the survival of many groups that did not enjoy access to power.

Appreciation of Siad Barre's Early Rule

David Laitin, a specialist on Somalia in 1976 provided an overall positive assessment of Siad Barre's rule: "*The important thing to note about the military regime is that it appears to be honest and public spirited".*[55] He credited General Barre with establishing a serious foundation for a true nation-state, by combating corruption, putting an inflated but inactive civil service to work, and collective work by the administration and the population on public projects that foster a sense of nationhood; this was strengthened by the adoption of a national script in 1972, investments in education, sending high-school students to the countryside to teach literacy to pastoralists, national solidarity programs in the 1970-71 and 74-75 droughts, etc. His heavy-handed effort to combat clannism seemed to Laitin a necessary antidote to clan-based corruption.

The opinion of Laitin represented a consensus among foreign scholars that the military coup had been good for Somalia. It was only later, after Jimmy Carter put forward human rights as a central objective of US policy (rapidly followed by other Western nations and later the UN) that military coups came to be seen as indefensible in Western public opinion and scholarship. Laitin's opinion counts because he was one of America's top Somali specialists by the 1980s, testifying before Congress on the US Somali policy, and he later became a prominent American political scientist of the rational actor school.[56]

"*Siad has restored the commitment to egalitarianism that is so well attuned to traditional Somali life. While he has overthrown a parliamentary system of government, disregarded civil liberties, maintained his authoritarian role, and failed to transform the economy, Siad has begun to restore the social basis of democratic life in Somalia*".[57] The link laid here between authoritarian military rule and the revival of traditional egalitarianism is highly unusual in political science, and contestable not only in principle, but also in the Somali case: 'democratic life' did not flourish in Somalia after Siad Barre's reforms.

But Siad Barre's authoritarianism initially seemed beneficial if not benign, not only to David Laitin but also to other eminent foreign scholars such as I.M. Lewis (1972), Basil Davidson (1975) and Charles

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Mogadishu, and tells him to give an equivalent amount of Somali shillings to A's family. Trader C now has a credit with trader B in Saudi riyals, which he can use to buy goods for import into Somalia. The benefit for users is that fees are much lower than in the banking sector, and transfers are not traced or taxed. The benefit for hawala traders is that it gives them access to foreign exchange which they might not obtain—or against high commissions—from banks. It is also safer for all parties since there is no actual money transfer. Hawala has been used in the Indian Ocean and Silk route trade since the 8th century (wikipedia link accessed July 2022).

[55] Laitin 1976:453.

[56] David Laitin came to Somalia with the Peace Corps in 1969, returned to study the Somali language reform, included these insights in his PhD, and later returned regularly to Somalia for field work, often with the Somali scholar Said Samatar. After the Ogaden war and the publication in 1979 of Laitin's negative comparison of Siad Barre to the Dervish leader Sayyid Hassan, the two were harassed by Somali security forces; Laitin had to 'toe the line' to retain access to Somalia (Ingiriis 2016:128 & 308 note 53). This earned him the invitation to a long private discussion with Siad Barre in 1983, which he used for a cautiously positive reappraisal of Barre's regime in 1985. In 1987 Laitin and Said Samatar gave a 'realistic assessment' of Siad Barrre's repressive military regime ("Nation in Search of a State"), believing he had successfully mastered clan politics and would remain in power. Laitin ceased publishing about Somalia after the Barre regime fell. He co-authored with James Fearon several well-known articles on ethnicity and violence from a comparative politics perspective. In 2022 he is a recognized authority on immigration, religion and ethnicity at Stanford University and a member of the American Academy of Sciences.

[57] Laitin 1976:468. See also Ingiriis' comments 2016:33.

Geshekter (1979). In his paper “Socio-Economic Developments in Somalia”[58] the latter resumes the achievements of Siad Barre’s first decade of rule as follows:

1. A diffusion of the ‘cleavage’ between the countryside and the city
2. An improvement in the relations between the bureaucracy and society
3. A restoration of a sense of professionalism and responsibility to the civil service
4. A significant extension of opportunities for women
5. A rooting of socio-economic priorities and development strategies in local realities

In view of later developments, the support of American and English scholars to the military coup seems suspect;[59] it was followed by uninterrupted Western support to Siad Barre in his most autocratic years. From their writings, it seems they were charmed by Siad Barre's declared intentions, quoting often from his speeches. Their wishful expectations may be coloured by a bias for the developmental state. But the positive assessment of Siad Barre's nation-state building efforts in the early 1970s is shared by most Somalis. Noticeable in interviews with a range of Somalis, from common people to intellectuals, is the conviction that Somalia needs strongman rule to develop. Mohamed Ingiriis points out: “*Remembered with relish, his regime stands as a reference to the state-rebuilding projects in Mogadishu and elsewhere in Somalia where efforts at reconstituting a state are evaluated to the extent that they draw from the military regime*”.[60]

Under Siad Barre the Somali state for the first time became an *instrument* to restructure society, whereas before it had been a (principally foreign-built) *arena* for social political forces to access national and foreign resources, or a *portal*. In this sense, the first six years of the military regime saw the establishment of the first *Somali* state, and also an attempt to craft a nation-state. It is remarkable how focused Siad Barre was on internal Somali affairs in this period; until 1975 he barely pursued the Greater Somalia agenda, as Lewis remarks with some puzzlement.[61] In terms of nation-building, most of Barre's initiatives failed, with one notable exception. In retrospect, the most lasting achievement of the Siad Barre regime was probably the language reform, providing Somalia with a written language for the first time in its history.

5.3 Barre's Authoritarian State, 1975 to 1990

Siad Barre's state was authoritarian from the outset, but it was also developmental and sought to re-energize the Somali society and economy; but after 1975 no major new reforms were attempted (or they were insincere) and the authoritarian character of Barre's regime became increasingly pronounced. After 1975 foreign assistance to Somalia also rose, allowing the regime to rely on external sources of funding. This is why 1975 can be proposed as the main inflection date in Siad Barre's 21 year rule.

[58] Geshekter: “Socio-Economic Developments in Somalia”, as quoted in Samatar, Ahmed 1988: “Socialist Somalia: Rhetoric and Reality”; p146.

[59] see for example Ingiriis 2016 on what he sees as Lewis' bias and his determinant influence (p4) and on Laitin (p128).

[60] Ingiriis 2016b:60.

[61] Lewis (1994:167) remarks that the destiny of the Ogaden in Ethiopia could not leave Siad Barre indifferent, given the prominence of Ogadenis in his ruling apparatus. When Haile Selassie fell and Ethiopia was at its most fragile, in 1974-75, he could have attempted to annex the Ogaden province (and probably stood a much better chance than three years later) but he was too focused on internal affairs.

Rekindling the Greater Somalia Dream

Somali foreign policy had been driven mostly by the 'Greater Somalia' agenda until 1967. This had been disastrous for the country's regional and international status. To neighbouring states, Somalia was a constant threat, and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), one of its founding principles being to not question the colonial borders, strongly opposed the Greater Somalia agenda. Somalia could not count on any international support for its expansionist policy.

Siad Barre continued the last democratic government's appeasement strategy towards Djibouti (still part of France until 1977), Ethiopia, Kenya and the OAU. His chairmanship of the OAU between 1974 and 1975 went well, adding to his prestige. He was considered a pan-Africanist leader and suggested to shake up the OAU's bureaucracy in the same way he had done in Somalia, turning it into an executive agency; he also offered to support the OAU with Somali troops to liberate the last colonized countries in Africa.[62]

But Barre was preparing for war. This can be judged from his rapid build-up of the Somali army with Soviet assistance, making it one of the most formidable fighting forces in Africa, and in his diplomatic manoeuvres. The USSR had been assisting Somalia with the formation of its armed forces since 1963, after Somalia had rejected an aid package by Western nations ($10-18 million according to the sources) in favour of a Soviet assistance package that amounted to $63 million. The reason Somalia chose for the USSR, besides the more generous package, was Soviet readiness to build up Somalia's army. Since the countries the Greater Somalia policy would adversely affect—Ethiopia, Kenya and France/Djibouti—were all solidly in the Western bloc, one can understand Western reticence in providing military assistance.

In June 1970, several months after the coup, the USA and West Germany cut their aid programmes while other Western bloc countries, including Italy, reduced theirs.[63] Throughout the 1970s Somalia also received Western support, mostly in the field of development: on average 38 million USD per year; aid from non-Western countries was twice that amount, according to OECD data.[64] But it was not accompanied by political support.

After the 1969 military coup with its socialist rhetoric, the alliance with the Soviet Bloc became much stronger, culminating in the 1974 Soviet-Somali friendship treaty. The USSR invested in fish-processing plants in Berbera and Bosaso, and a meat-processing factory in Kismayo, as well as a dam project on the Jubba River (all of these projects came to nothing). The Soviet Union had also granted Somali products preferential access to its market. Besides Soviet assistance, the country was also the beneficiary of Chinese and Cuban aid; China's aid programme, which had started in the 1960s, offered non-military development assistance: the North-South paved road from Bosaso to Kismayo, advantageous terms of trade and generous lines of credit. China’s aid, focusing on infrastructure, was more popular than Soviet assistance, delivered through counsellors, not workers and materials. From the outset, Siad Barre was careful to keep some distance from the USSR, re-affirming Somali non-alignment, and the USSR never fully trusted the new Somali regime. This explains why it took five years for the signing of the 1974 friendship treaty between the USSR and Somalia. It was only in 1975 that Soviet aid surpassed the aid by China.[65]

Estimates vary, but by 1977 the USSR had poured about 600 million dollars, much military hardware and

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[62] Black World/Negro Digest November 1974, p35-36.

[63] Issa-Salwe 1996: "The Collapse of The Somali State: The Impact of the Colonial Legacy".

[64] OECD data may not fully take into account non-Western aid, for example Chinese material support, Soviet military support and private donations from Gulf donors, while all support from Western countries is neatly accounted for. So the balance between Western and non-Western aid was probably even more heavily inclined toward the latter.

[65] Compagnon 1995:242.

thousands of experts into Somalia.[66] It was joined in this effort by a contingent of Cuban military advisers. What the Soviet Union gained in exchange, besides an unreliable political ally, was access to facilities it had built in Berbera port: oil storage, transhipment, Africa's longest runway and a secret missile-handling area. The Soviet fleet also had access to Kismayo port.

To decrease his dependency on Soviet assistance, Barre sought rapprochement with Arab countries, whose financial and geopolitical clout became obvious in the 1973 OPEC oil embargo. When Somalia joined the Arab League in 1974 (as the first non-Arab member) Barre hoped to find political support for his Greater Somalia agenda. Indeed, the Gulf states, motivated by historical suspicion of Ethiopia and their fear of a hostile power on the other side of the Red Sea/Sea of Berbera, supported the Greater Somalia project as a check on Ethiopia. The 1974 Marxist revolution in Ethiopia added to their worries. But the Gulf States did not determine Arab League policies, and the Arab League never supported the Greater Somalia agenda, especially Libya who after the 1969 takeover by Muammar Gaddafi and the demise of Nasser in 1970 came to lead and finance the Arab-African alliance. Gaddafi supported revolutionary Ethiopia. As to the Gulf states, they were prepared to assist Somalia but not at the expense of their relations with the USA, and funding to Somalia remained modest until the late 1970s, when Somalia joined the Western bloc.

The successful adhesion of Somalia to the Arab League, the pan-Africanist allure of the Barre regime and the rhetorical commitment, in his speeches to Somali audiences, to the Greater Somalia agenda all increased Barre's popularity at home, and contributed to a sense of national cohesion. Barre's foreign and domestic policies thus seemed in harmony and in service of a greater goal: strengthening the Somali nation-state.

The Ogaden War

Barre's decision to invade the Ogaden in 1977 inverted the Cold War alliances in the Horn. Although the details of how the decision was made were never elucidated, it seems most likely that Barre seized what he sensed was a final opportunity. In 1974, a radical left-leaning military committee, the 'Derg' led by Mengistu, had deposed the pro-Western emperor Haile Selassie in Ethiopia. The armed takeover and following purges destabilized Ethiopia. The Somali leadership hoped Ethiopia would fall apart under pressure of the armed opposition to the Derg (in Eritrea, Tigray, the Bale mountains of Oromia, Afar and other areas[67]) and would relinquish the Ogaden and Hawd to Somalia. In 1975, Barre started propping up the Ethiopia-based Western Somali Liberation Front for guerrilla warfare. There is also evidence of direct Somali Armed Forces involvement in covert operations in the Ogaden.

What probably tipped the balance for Barre was the gradual rapprochement between the Soviet Bloc and the Derg. In August 1976, Mengistu visited Moscow and received assurances of support; Castro had visited in February and conveyed his favourable impression of the Ethiopian revolution to Moscow. Meanwhile, the Carter administration, concerned by the Derg's radical left-wing politics and human rights abuses, was backing out of its alliance with Ethiopia.[68] Somalia, with one of the strongest armies in

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[66] Laitin gives the following breakdown of Soviet military assistance: "*By mid-1974, about 1,725 Somali soldiers had been to the Soviet Union for training, and the army's inventory [included] an estimated 150 T-35 and 100 T-54 tanks, mostly fitted with 105-mm guns. Also, over 300 armed personnel carriers, 200 coastal batteries, 50 MIG fighters, a squadron of Il-28 bombers, and an SA-2 ground-to-air missile complex now belonged to the Somalis. Up to 3,600 Soviet advisers supported this effort*"; Laitin 1979: “The War in the Ogaden: Implications for Siyaad's Rôle in Somali History”; p99.

[67] Clapham 1990: "The Political Economy of Conflict in the Horn of Africa".

[68] President Carter announced in Feb. 1977 that he was cutting military aid to Ethiopia by $100 million because of the Derg's poor human-rights record. Wright 1983 "President Carter's Response to the Horn of Africa Conflict: The

Africa, thought it could wrestle control over the Ogaden from the enfeebled Ethiopian regime. It seems Barre gambled that the Soviet Union would either support its ally (the treaty of friendship was three years old) or remain neutral in an armed conflict between its erstwhile and new allies.[69]

In July 1977 the Somali army crossed the Ethiopian border in full strength; over the course of the next months they advanced on Harar, briefly took Dire Dawa and occupied Jigjiga as well as most of the Ogaden. They stayed put until early 1978. But the Soviet Union neither supported Somalia, nor did it remain neutral: it sided with mainstream international and African opinion by condemning the invasion. Cuba had already started transferring its military advisers from Somalia to Ethiopia in 1976, giving the Derg inside knowledge of the Somali armed forces. The massive donation of Soviet military materiel to Ethiopia and the influx of 20,000 additional Cuban troops from Angola turned the course of the war that initially seemed favourable for Somalia. Barre broke with the USSR and Cuba, expelling them from Somalia in November 1977. The public celebrations in Somalia that followed this announcement clearly indicated that the Soviets had not endeared themselves to the Somali public.

Barre turned to the USA instead, in a volte-face that stunned the entire international community by its hypocrisy. The USA had already made overtures towards the Somali regime in 1977, which Barre took as promises of support.[70] But the USA would not risk a military confrontation with the USSR, even in a proxy war. Carter had embarked on a policy of détente with the USSR. Frantic manoeuvres by Barre to enlist US or European or even Iranian military support did not materialize in time.[71] Somalia lost the war, and by mid-1978 had withdrawn all its troops from the Ogaden. This did not end Barre's Greater Somalia ambition; for years afterwards he mulled over options to take his revenge on Ethiopia.[72] It was only in 1988, after Somalia and Ethiopia agreed in a treaty to end the support to groups fighting the neighbour's regime, that this policy was definitively abandoned by the Somali state.

The defeat in the Ogaden had strong repercussions for Barre. It is remarkable that he managed to stay in power for another twelve years. The foreign policy successes mentioned above that had added to Barre's prestige were all reversed. Somalia had suddenly become a pariah state, spurned by almost all other African countries and kept at a distance by Arab ones. Barre's cooperation with a West German squad to liberate a Lufthansa plane hijacked by Palestinians in Mogadishu in October 1977, thus 'betraying the Palestinian cause', damaged Barre's standing among Arab public opinion. He further lost diplomatic credence when he replaced the internationally respected Foreign Minister Umar Arteh (1969-1977) by his close relative Jamaa Barre (1977-1991), who had no international experience.

Selling of Cold War II"; p373-374.

[69] Laitin 1979:100. There was a final attempt by Cuba to avoid a confrontation between the two neighbours. In February 1977, Fidel Castro met all parties concerned in Aden, proposing an anti-imperialist federation of Ethiopia, Somalia and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, with an autonomous status for Eritrea and the Ogaden, but this suggestion was turned down by the Somalis. Brind, 1983:77. See Castro's account of his mediation attempts to DDR chancellor Erich Honecker on 3 April 1977, describing his frustration with Somalia's position. The transcript was retrieved on 21 May 2018 from the digital archive of the Woodrow Wilson Center.

[70] Barre may have been swayed by declarations of support to Somalia by the Carter administration, made between April and July 1977. Laitin (1979:106) mentions, *inter alia*, a press statement by the State Department spokesman in July 1977 "*We do think it is desirable that Somalia knows it does not have to depend on the Soviet Union but can obtain arms from other sources.*" See also then US ambassador Thurston 1978: "The United States, Somalia and the Crisis in the Horn". By 1979 the cash-strapped Barre regime was so upset at the lack of substantial Western assistance that he unsuccessfully approached the USSR again, with the suggestion for a new entente.

[71] Ingiriis 2016:148-149. Laitin (1979 op cit) also explains in detail how Barre's lack of diplomatic finesse soured relations with all parties, one by one: the Soviet Union, the Arab world, the African states, Western Europe and the USA.

[72] In a long private interview in 1983, General Barre was still preoccupied with how he could muster US support for his effort to retrieve the Ogaden. See Laitin 1985: "The American-Somali Alliance: Whose Agenda?".

In addition, the conduct of Somali troops during the Ogaden war had defiled the Greater Somalia nationhood dream. Somali troops had not only pilfered the Ethiopian state infrastructure but also looted common Ethiopian-Somali citizens as well as their own logistic supplies.[73] A person who had served as artillery officer during the war told me that his unit on the front line rarely received artillery or food supplies "because we were an Isaaq unit".[74]

In the immediate aftermath of the war, a group of disgruntled officers, from the Majerteen clan attempted a coup against Barre.[75] The coup failed and most of the initiators were rounded up and executed. Subsequently, the regime started discriminating against the Majerteen clan. It was convenient for Barre to have scapegoats after the failed war had diminished his standing. The Majerteen were an ideal target because they had always been influential, providing many of the SYL cadres and senior politicians, and they were Darood like the Marehan, Ogadeni and Dhulbahante, so it appeared he was attacking members of his own clan-family. In response, Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, one of the survivors among the coup plotters, formed the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) together with other disgraced prominent Majerteen, and they started conducting operations from neighbouring Ethiopia. For each operation, Barre retaliated violently against Majerteen clan members in Puntland and Jubaland: destroying wells and water reservoirs, confiscating herds, denying access to government services and by arming and encouraging their Hawiye/Sa'ad historical opponents.[76] As a result, many Majerteen fled their home areas to Ethiopia and joined the SSDF, which was but the first among several armed movements that emerged in response to Barre's dictatorship (Colonel Yusuf Ahmed would become President of Puntland in 1998 and the first President of the Transitional Federal Government from 2004 to 2009).

Barre seems to have been delusional about how important the Horn of Africa was to the USA. Even today many Somali commentators overstate the strategic importance of the Horn of Africa, taking their cue from Cold Warriors, who in turn assume geostrategic importance because of superpower rivalry in the Horn. But documents from both the Kremlin and the White House indicate that the region was not considered of vital interest for either.[77] Cold War dynamics turned the Horn into a zone of proxy war, as each superpower tried to contain the other—without risking direct confrontation. It may be true that the Ogaden War was the starting point for the unravelling of the détente between the USA and the USSR but this had little to do with local factors; the process was shaped by developments in Washington DC, Moscow and elsewhere.[78]

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[73] Marchal 2000: “Mogadiscio dans la Guerre Civile: Rêves d’État”; p11.

[74] Interview with Yusuf Weyne, Hargeisa, 2017. He thought that the intercepted supplies had been sold by army units close to the regime to the civilian population or even to the Ethiopian army. A damning personal account of how the Somali army conducted the war is also given in Juha 2020: “Koombe’s Struggle. A Life Story of a Somali in Exile”.

[75] In the closing days of the Ogaden war, the regime had executed dozens of officers in Jigjiga and Hargeisa for treason, to prevent them expressing their discontent about how the war had been conducted; Issa-Salwe 1996:86-87.

[76] Issa-Salwe 1996:87-89; Lyons & Samatar 1995: "Somalia. State Collapse, Multilateral Intervention and Strategies for Political Reconstruction"; p17.

[77] Brind 1983: “Soviet Policy in the Horn of Africa”; p76: "*It is easy to overestimate the strategic importance of the Horn and of the facilities it can provide to the superpowers. (...) The Soviet Union was not greatly inconvenienced when Somalia expelled its military personnel in 1977*". Similarly, one can find much evidence that Somalia and the Horn was of no specific geostrategic interest to the USA. See for example Habte Selassie 1983: “United States Policy towards the Horn of Africa”.

[78] See Woodroofe 2013: "Buried in the Sands of the Ogaden. The United States, the Horn of Africa, and the Demise of Détente". The US National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski remarked that the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) that the US had been negotiating with the USSR was 'buried in the sands of the Ogaden' after the

Proximity to the Arab world and oil-shipping lanes is not a unique position, and Somalia clearly lacked the capacity or will to disrupt either. The historic antagonism between Muslim Somali pastoralists seeking access to rich highland pastures and Christian Ethiopians seeking access to the sea was only of regional importance, with scant global strategic impact. The Horn also lacks unique natural resources that could whet the appetite of an external power. From 1967 onward, the Soviets had a good foothold in the region in Southern Yemen; that same year, the Americans replaced the base in Kagnew, Eritrea, with a much bigger one in Diego Garcia, islands strategically located in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Neither superpower sorely needed facilities in Somalia or Ethiopia.

Barre Joins the Western Bloc

After 1978 a lukewarm relation developed between the Barre regime and the USA. If it were not for the Iranian revolution and Soviet participation in the Afghan civil war, US President Carter might not have been moved away from his détente-minded approach of Cold War politics; but given the regional context, he followed the containment policy advocated by his national security advisor Brzezinski and started investing in the USA's relationship with Somalia.[79]

The cooperation with West German authorities to liberate the hijacked Lufthansa plane and the expulsion of the Soviet and Cuban advisers had warmed European countries to Siad Barre; the United Kingdom in 1978 became "a conduit for the sale, supply and servicing of the military equipment being deployed to Mogadishu",[80] thus returning for the first time since the British departure in 1960 as a main actor in Somalia. China, France, and to Siad Barre's glee also Saudi Arabia all contributed with military aid over the coming two years, allowing him to reinforce his security apparatus, on which he would rely to remain in power throughout the 1980s.

To become more acceptable to the West and regain the initiative on the restive domestic front, Barre in 1979 instituted liberal reforms, such as a new constitution spelling out civil rights and general elections. But the constitution was suspended by a state of emergency declared in 1980 and never lifted, and only the ruling Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party, which had been purged of critics, was allowed to contest the elections that were held once in 1984; it received 99.8% of the vote. During the 1980s Barre remained committed to 'scientific socialism' and the portraits of Marx and Lenin that accompanied his official portrait in many places were not taken down (nor were they refreshed).[81]

In 1980, the US signed a deal with Somalia delivering military aid in exchange for use of the Soviet-built facilities in Berbera to become a naval base protecting oil shipping routes. This was the US security priority in Somalia.[82] It was to be home to a Rapid Deployment Force unit set up to deal with Cold War emergencies, and to be used as an emergency landing strip for the Space Shuttle. In the decade of the 1980s, Somalia received 'well above' $100 million per year from the USA, most of it military assistance, the rest humanitarian relief (feeding the Ogaden refugees) and development assistance.[83]

This was less than Barre had hoped for. As Chart 2 shows, US official development assistance remained relatively modest throughout the 1980s. However, US political support to Barre did not waver. A declassified Pentagon document from 1983 sums up the US position: "*Since President Siad's* [sic] *rise to power in October 1969, Somalia's problems have become so extensive that his position could easily weaken, making Somalia an even more fragile and troubled ally for the US (...) if he were overthrown, it*

Soviet involvement on the side of the Ethiopians.

[79] Brzezinski had been an early advocate of improving US-Somali relations; see Ingiriis 2016:148.

[80] Ingiriis 2016:149 quoting FCO documents.

[81] Laitin 1985:"The America-Somali Alliance. Whose Agenda?".

[82] Laitin 1985:22.

[83] This estimate comes from Laitin, 1985:40.

probably would result in the surfacing of leaders who would request substantially more outside military and economic aid. In Siad's absence, the United States would face difficult policy choices as the struggle to consolidate power evolved and rapprochement with the Soviets became a possibility, particularly if US aid were not forthcoming."[84]

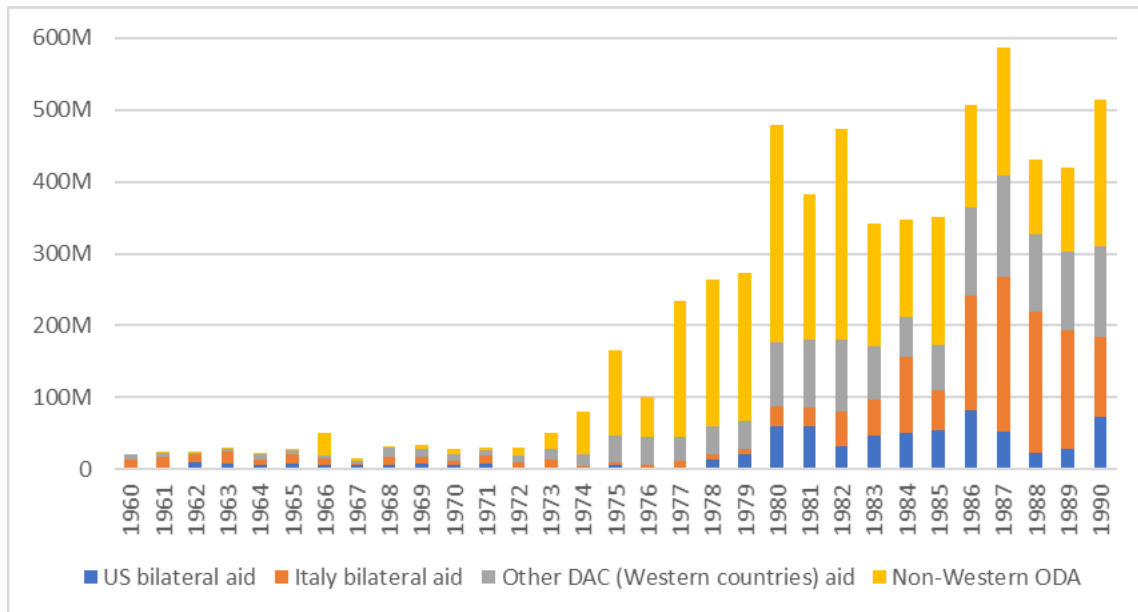

Figure 16: Somalia's official development assistance in USD by donor group, 1960-1990 (source World Bank). Note: DAC (from the OECD's Development Assistance Committee) countries include the USA, Canada, the EU, individual Western and Central European nations, South Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Non-Western ODA came mostly from the Soviet Bloc in the 1970s, and from the Arab world in the 1980s

Figure 16 brings into stunning relief the increase in development assistance starting in 1975. The yearly average of development assistance provided by Western nations jumped from 38 million US$ in the 1970s to 250 million US$ in the 1980s. But it must be balanced with two other factors. The first is the overall vast increase in development assistance that was sparked by Western monetary policies (away from Keynesian to what would be called neoliberal) and the availability of petrodollars that flooded global financial markets after the OPEC price rise of 1973. The second is the evolution of the Somali economy.

[84] US Department of Defense, 3 June 1983: “Defense Estimative Brief: Somali Democratic Republic”.

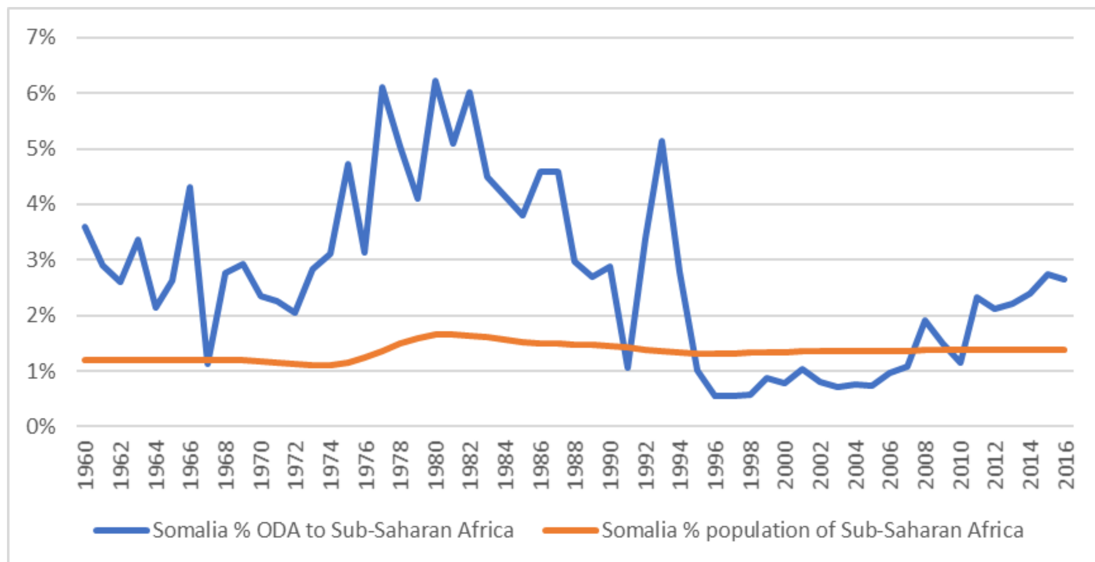

Figure 17: Percentage of Sub-Saharan African ODA allotted to Somalia (source World Bank)
Note that the relative population increase between 1975 and 1980 corresponds to the influx of refugees from the Ogaden

Somalia extracted relatively high rents from the international community. From 1960 to 1969 Somalia received 2.38 times the average ODA per capita allotted to Sub-Saharan Africa; in the decade of the 1970s that proportion grew to 2.82 and in the 1980s to 2.85 (Chart 3). This favourable ratio is partially due to the small population but significant land-mass of Somalia, but it can also be attributed to the negotiation skills of Somali ruling elites dealing with international donors (as per Bayart's 'Trickster State'[85]). However, the dependency of Somalia on development assistance grew continuously (Chart 4), eventually turning Somalia into a client state of Western and Arab largesse. Although the Gross Domestic Product of Somalia took a hit in the Ogaden War, it grew steadily afterwards and until 1989—but, as Chart 1 shows, not faster than the population. Meanwhile, development assistance in the 1980s represented on average 52% of GDP in the 1980s, whereas in the 1970s that ratio had been 23 % and in the 1960s 12%. If one compares the first fifteen year period to the next, the ratio's are 11% from 1960-1974 and 47% from 1975-1990. Perhaps Somalia's economy, but certainly Siad Barre's regime survival became dependent on foreign assistance after 1975.

[85] Bayart 1998: "La Guerre en Afrique: Dépérissement ou Formation de l'État?".

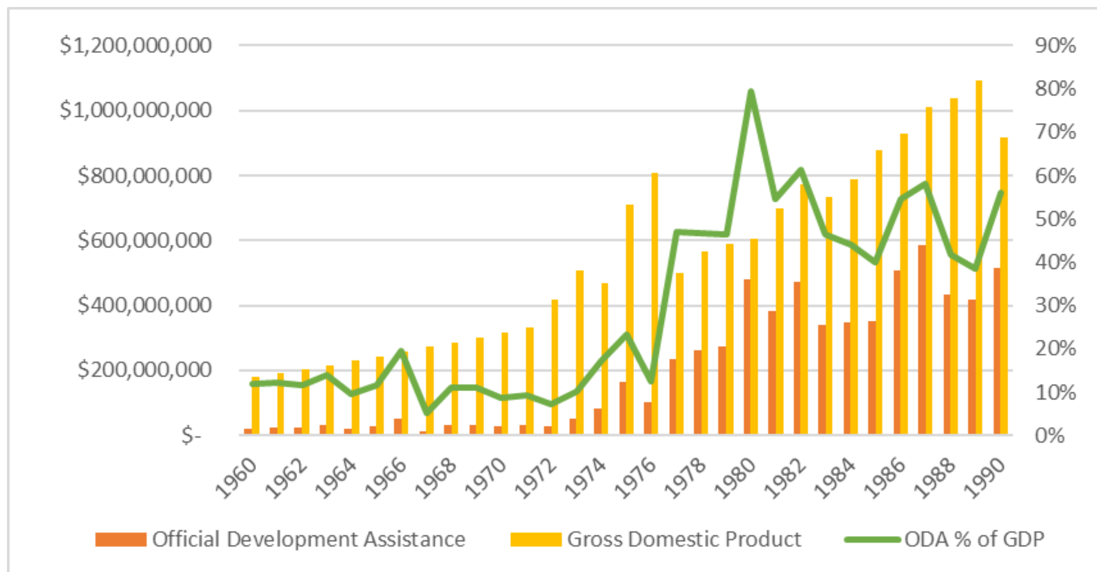

Figure 18: Relation between Somali GDP and external assistance (source World Bank)

Western Support to the Barre Regime

Somalia's economy had been negatively affected in the 1970s by Siad Barre's command-economy policies of collectivization, nationalization, state monopolies and price controls. Agricultural output had not kept up with the population growth.[86] Industrialization, even of the most elementary 'light' kind, had never taken off. GDP per capita dropped by a third from 1960 to 1990 (Chart 1). Moreover, some 700,000 refugees from the Ogaden had stranded in refugee camps in Somalia as a result of the war.[87] They were entirely dependent on external assistance as Somalia could provide them with nothing. The Somali state, with the highest per capita rate of military expenditure of all African countries,[88] had no cash left for development or social services.

In 1980, the Somali economy was in shambles. It was unavoidable that Somalia accept structural adjustment policies of the IMF and the World Bank, a precondition to further loans not only from these institutions but from most Western donors. In 1981, a structural adjustment program was signed with the IMF, followed by a structural adjustment loan from the World Bank. These required privatization of public assets (notably real estate, collective farming facilities, industries—all that had been nationalized in the early 1970s), shrinking the public sector, currency devaluation, and export-oriented growth.

Although all observers agreed that the Somali economy needed profound reform, the standard recipe of the International Financial Institutions was not adapted to the Somali context. The economic reforms did not produce the expected results. The privatization mostly benefited Siad Barre's family, clan and loyalists, giving them cheap access to those economic sectors that stood to benefit most from export-oriented growth.[89] Shrinking the public sector gave Barre a chance to purge the ranks of the civil service of all potentially hostile clans and bar their access to government. The loan was used to pay interests on

[86] See for example Abdi Samatar's study on the banana sector, showing production fell by 65% from 1973 to 1981, mostly as a result of command-economy related policies. Samatar, Abdi 1993: “Structural Adjustment as Development Policy? Bananas, Boom and Poverty in Somalia”.

[87] Figure given by Samatar, Ahmed 1988:139. Other sources, in particular Western aid agencies, usually mention the amount of 1 million.

[88] Samatar, Ahmed 1988:148.

[89] Samatar, Abdi 1993:28, "*Although only a handful of the senior members of the government (including the President's wife and daughter) became plantation owners, most took advantage of their offices to lead the charge toward the privatization of public resources*".

debt and finance imports, mostly consumed by the wealthy class.[90] In one word, structural adjustment *strengthened* Barre's grip on power.

Somalia's overall economic situation worsened during the 1980s,[91] although one may argue this was not the result of the Structural Adjustment Programs but due to other factors. IMF conditions were successful in creating some growth; for example the Italian agribusiness De Nadai revived the banana plantation industry that had suffered under Barre's command economy, in a joint venture (Somalfruit) with the Somali government that enjoyed monopoly rights. But 75% of profits accrued to De Nadai and its investors, and the remaining 25% mostly went to regime cronies who had become plantation owners in the privatization drive. Earnings and labour conditions for banana plantation workers had barely changed since the days of Italian fascism, including a reliance on child labour and the prohibition of labour unions.[92] 'Economic development' was not reflected in social development or any noticeable change other than a few more luxury cars and villas for the privileged classes.

After the retreat of the Somali state from the economy and from the provision of social services, international donors, humanitarian and development agencies and a host of NGOs came to fill the gap. By 1985, remarked David Laitin, the IMF, the World Bank and other experts virtually ran the Ministry of Finance to implement the Structural Adjustment Programs.[93] Although it was still not providing the desired military support, the US was engaged in its largest aid programme in Sub-Saharan Africa by 1986.[94] In 1987, the journalist and writer Graham Hancock observed that "*almost every international aid agency is represented in one form or another in Mogadishu*".[95]

One of the consequences was that Mogadishu came to look like a coveted prize, a foreign bride, 'the Pearl of the Indian Ocean' as the town was known because of its languid beauty. A semblance of Western modern life could be upheld in the capital thanks to external funding of luxury consumption; this further divorced the regime and foreigners living in Mogadishu from the rest of Somali society.[96] Despite a very large UN presence, humanitarian assistance failed to reach its beneficiaries in the drought which hit central Somalia in 1986, according to Hancock mostly because UN officials enjoying the expatriate life in the capital did not take the many signs of imminent disaster seriously.[97] The disparity between life in the capital and the war, drought and general hardship outside of it may explain the large-scale looting that took place in Mogadishu in the early 1990s—in fact, much of the initial fighting seems to have been motivated by greed as much as clan animosity.[98]

Siad Barre cumulated the positions of Head of State, Commander of the Armed Forces, Secretary General of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party, and Chair of the Council of Ministers and of the High Judicial Council. He brooked no opposition, even from the inner circles of power or his family. In 1982 he charged seven members of the Central Committee of the SRSP with treason, including a relative. After rumblings about his lease of the facilities in Berbera to the USA, he declared a state of emergency in

[90] Structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s posited many conditions before receiving the loan (political, economic, fiscal reform), but very few conditionalities on spending.

[91] For example, in 1987 export earnings were $135M, debt service $216M and aid in cash and kind $400M; data provided by Graham Hancock, 1989: “Lords of Poverty: The Power, Prestige and Corruption of the International Aid Business”; p23 ff.

[92] Samatar, Abdi 1993:35-39.

[93] Laitin 1985:33.

[94] Bridges 2000: "Safirka. An American Envoy".

[95] Hancock 1989:24.

[96] see the description of luxurious expatriate life in 1987 by Hancock 1989:23-31.

[97] Hancock 1989.

[98] Ingiriis 2016a:226 notes that "*Western embassies became sites of booty*". Looting happened also at the UN compound, the National University, and residences of foreigners; see Kapteijns 2013: “Clan Cleansing in Somalia"; p125.

1980 that was never lifted. He relied ever more on the small circle of loyal people within the security services and armed forces. Besides the institutions mentioned in the last section, as a result of the coup attempt in 1978 a military police was established—the *Hangash*—which was supposed to monitor loyalties within the armed forces and the NSS, but which was more often used against the civilian population.

Barre's 'big man' type of personal rule regime was financed largely from external sources. Besides grants and loans from the international financial institutions, military assistance provided by Western powers went straight into the hands of Barre's cronies, who also captured a share of humanitarian aid and development assistance. For example, despite announcing that Ethiopian Somali refugees had the same citizen rights as other Somalis, Barre's regime did not allow them to leave refugee camps, to ensure the continued flow of international assistance.[99] An audit of USAID funding destined for Somali refugees in 1986 found that only 12% was reaching them, and up to 75% of aid was routinely embezzled.[100] Barre used the flow of international aid to convince domestic audiences, who by now mostly loathed him, that he was supported by the USA and other powerful countries, projecting an image of strength and control on domestic audiences.[101]

Marchal points out that the Barre regime consciously used international aid to consolidate its political regime after it lost legitimacy through its defeat against Ethiopia[102] and that the principal donors to the Barre regime—the USA and Italy[103]—continued supporting him even in his final years, when he was waging a war of genocidal proportions against the Isaaq population of Somaliland. Marchal believes the Barre regime would have collapsed earlier were it not for international aid.[104] As Mohamed Ingiriis puts it: "*Somalia under Siad Barre became an army with its own state instead of a state with its own army*";[105] between 1981 and 1984 the share of the national budget spent on defence and security rose from 30 to 36%.[106] A 1990 report by Africa Watch on the killings of civilians in Somaliland notes "*the military emerged increasingly as a political elite that sustained its privileges with violence*".[107] The Somali army could not survive without foreign support, whether it be direct military aid or indirect support such as 'human

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[99] The antecedent for later warlord abuse of humanitarian aid through 'gatekeepers' of IDP camps clearly lay in this era.

[100] Marchal 1993b: "La Militarisation de l'Humanitaire : l'Exemple Somalien"; p3, quoting the study by Askin: "Food aid diversion", *Merip Report* vol. 17, n° 2, March-April 1987. Even the 12% of aid that did reach Ogadeni refugees was used politically, to retain their loyalty to the Barre regime; the Isaaq in Somaliland, in particular, suffered at their hands.

[101] Simons 1995: "The Beginning of the End"; p53.

[102] Marchal 1993b:2-3.

[103] As Chart 2 shows, a significant proportion of non-military official development assistance (ODA) provided to Somalia in the late years of Barre's regime came from Italy. which provided one billion dollars in assistance to Somalia between 1984 and 1987, officially. Given that public money in Italy, in those years, often disappeared into private pockets, it is not known which part of this sum actually reached Somalia. What is clear, however, is that besides subsidizing its commercial interests, Italy focused on higher education. At the Somali National University, lectures were given in Italian and many Somalis went on to Italy for a doctorate. Thus, Italian remained a language spoken by Somali elites until 1991. The Italian embassy was the last to be evacuated in Mogadishu in January 1991. The 'final-days–of-the-regime' accounts by Italian diplomats are among the most harrowing witness accounts of the outbreak of civil war. See Sica 1994 : « Operazione Somalia: la dittatura, l'oppozitione, la guerra civile nella testimonianza dell'ultimo ambasciatore d'Italia a Mogadiscio », and Pacifico 1996 : « Somalia: Ricordi d'un mal d'Africa italiano ».

[104] Marchal 2000:12.

[105] Ingiriis 2016b: "We Swallowed the State and the State Swallowed Us"; p241.

[106] Samatar, Ahmed 1988:151.

[107] Human Rights Watch 1990: "Somalia: A Government at War with its Own People. Testimonies About the Killings and the Conflict in the North"; p47.

rights training'.[108]

Therefore, the international community was not a neutral bystander, as it likes to see itself, but complicit in the regime and its exactions on Somali society.[109] Of course, not all foreigners were enjoying pool parties in the Lido beach area of the capital. But even those foreign NGO workers toiling away in rural districts to implement development projects or provide humanitarian assistance, were, in a way, enabling Barre's regime by taking over state functions without engaging in oppositional politics and grudgingly allowing the regime to take its cut. It is also possible that many foreigners were at first not aware of the extent of Barre's terror regime and exactions on civilian population. Foreign journalists were not granted visas, no independent reporting, human rights monitoring or independent civilian activities were permitted to Somalis, and even telephone connections were scarce. As Hancock describes, foreigners lived in a bubble and only spoke to government contacts.[110]

Most scholars of Somalia downplay the role of external factors in the fall of the Barre regime, pointing to internal dynamics instead.[111] But when he was still a student at Buffalo State University, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed 'Farmaajo' put forward a perspective that many common Somalis seem to share: "*When the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991, so too did the polarization of the world. The United States no longer had any real need for Somalia. It was now convenient to withdraw the support that had long enabled Barre's rule and the illegalities that characterized it. When the United States suspended all financial aid to the Barre regime, his security apparatus swiftly collapsed*".[112]

Although, as we have seen, it was true that the US was propping up the Barre regime, blaming it for the collapse of Barre's government may be factually incorrect. Even if the Soviet Union, the Cold War and US support to Barre would have continued undiminished, it is difficult to imagine how Barre's regime could have survived the civil war that erupted in Somalia in 1988. However, this perspective is evidence of the prevalent sentiment among Somalis, from the 1980s to now, that the USA is an untrustworthy ally. The US is reticent to commit and whatever support it gives is often 'too little, too late' according to its allies, and purposefully undermining according to its detractors.

As the corrupt, unpopular and illegitimate nature of Barre's regime became ever clearer, Western political support decreased. This generally did not affect financial support – as Figure 16 shows, some donors, in particular Italy, kept up high levels of aid – although the UN started scaling down its high level of support in 1988 (from 115 million USD in 1987 to 48 million in 1990). However, the West avoided confronting the dictator or alienating him entirely. A new US ambassador who arrived in September 1990, while the Barre regime was in its final throes, "continued the policies of promoting the Siad Barre regime as part of cold war politics".[113] However, there was no love lost on either side. The US embassy was mainly looted by Barre's 'Red Berets' in January 1991 and Western embassies and diplomatic personnel in general had at least as much to fear from uniformed personnel as from clan militias and armed criminals in the early phases of the civil war.

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[108] In his 1991 budget, President Bush requested 900,000 USD of support to the Somali army "*to inculcate American human rights values*"; Marchal 1993a: "Les 'Mooryaan' de Mogadiscio"; p3, quoting J. Lefebvre 1991: "Arms for the Horn", p242-244. Congress wisely refused this budget allocation.

[109] Compagnon 1992: "Political Decay in Somalia: from Personal Rule to Warlordism".

[110] Hancock 1989:25.

[111] For example Ingiriis 2016a:272: "The catastrophe that confronted Somalia had its roots in the psychological effect of the legacy left behind not by colonialism, but considerably by the ideology of the Siad Barre regime".

[112] Farmaajo 2009: "U.S. Strategic Interest in Somalia: From Cold War Era to War on Terror"; p13. It should be pointed out that the USSR disintegrated in December 1991, 11 months after Siad Barre's regime, so Farmaajo's reasoning is faulty.

[113] Ingiriis 2016:226.

Survival of Somali Society

Over the course of his tenure in power, Siad Barre's support base in Somalia continuously dwindled; after having attacked the Majerteen (Puntland) as described above, the Isaaq of Northwest Somalia were targeted, but other groups such as some Hawiye clans were also purged from the government and targeted in their home areas. Besides such large-scale operations, lineages were pitted against each other by the security services. This provided some flexibility, because it was always possible to incur the regime's favour, typically by denouncing a rival lineage or by loyally toeing the regime's line. One's clan identity could be a liability, but it was rarely a fully determinant one. Isaaq, Majerteen and other targeted clans still had people in positions of power in Barre's last government. This was also, of course, in Barre's benefit, so he could refute that his government was clan-based–which anyhow remained a severely punishable accusation, even when said in private. Barre's manipulation of the clan element, through which he made it possible for Somalis to access state power if they played by his rules, was begrudgingly admired by Somali and foreign observers alike. But this access became ever more restricted and costly: one had to betray one's lineage, friends and even family and adapt to changing rules or pay a high price.

The reign of terror unleashed through Barre's security services, the National Security Court and detention centres such as The Hole (*Godka*) where prisoners were routinely tortured to extract confessions, has become a legendary feature of Siad Barre's rule.[114] This happened from the outset but became worse throughout his reign. The result, as that of any state terror regime, was to atomize society, as even family members feared one another. But this social fragmentation had its limits. To survive economically, people needed each other's help. As Barre's regime became loathed by all Somalis except the dwindling group that was part of it, the fear of informants subsided. Meanwhile, the informal economy, and one might say *informal society*, flourished.

What Marchal calls the 'second economy'—the unofficial one, fuelled mostly by remittances and the hawala trade—was much bigger than the formal, 'first' economy,[115] and it survived the collapse of the state, allowing for Somalia's economic regeneration after the early 1990s. He also notes that this informal economy was articulated on the first, which despite smaller sums continued to play an essential role; it would be impossible to find a big businessman not linked to the regime in the second half of the 1980s. But the fact that the informal economy survived after the collapse of the formal one indicates that it had developed its own roots and, when the need for political protection disappeared, it could function without the State.

I have used official figures in my charts, provided by the Somali government to International Financial Institutions and donors, and frequently directly collected by these organizations in Somalia as they became involved in the Ministries of Finance and Planning. These figures allow for a comparison from year to year, but they do not correctly reflect the Somali economy. As Vali Jamal concludes in an extensive study of the Somali economy conducted intermittently from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s and published in 1988,[116] according to official figures the Somali population must be starving, especially the nomadic population. Despite the occasional media images of starving Somali children, he finds in repeated field trips that the Somali economy is doing quite well, also among pastoralists, and even booming in urban centres. Using background data and his own research, he points out that the two main sources of income left out of official figures are the pastoral and the remittances economy (any rural family consuming their own produce is also omitted from these figures). If one includes his estimates on the informal economy, Somalia becomes a middle-income country and the nomadic population is doing

[114] See for example Yahya 2005: “In Siyaad Barre’s Prison: A Brief Recollection”; and Ingiriis 2016:95-97.

[115] Marchal 2000; Jamal 1988: "Somalia: Understanding of an Unconventional Economy".

[116] Jamal 1988 op. cit.

better than urban and rural/agricultural groups.

"*Not only is there very little food poverty in urban Somalia, there is actually a consumer boom going on, shared by all sections of the population. This boom has taken off since the late 1970s- i.e. precisely since the time that GDP and wage figures depict catastrophe for the urban population. The explanation of this paradoxical situation is provided by the fact that a greater part of the money income in Somalia now arises from remittances of Somali workers abroad*."[117] He concludes by observing that the structural adjustment programmes are based on a wrong diagnosis and thus do more harm than good. They aim to establish a free market in Somalia while the informal economy is already completely free, and propose currency devaluations to improve the balance of trade while the free market rate is already above the official rate.

Instead of expressing puzzlement at the fact that a formal and informal economy exist alongside each other, and that measures such as Structural Adjustment Programmes do not take into account the informal economy, we may now return to the Dual Power Theory and vegetal imagery developed in Chapter Three for an alternative explanation. The goal of the measures proposed by Western donors and international financial institutions was to integrate the Somali state-tree into the global economy as a supplier of food and raw resources and consumer of goods produced on the global market. This objective reflected neoliberal orthodoxy and was applied to nearly all developing countries through similar programmes (see 6.3).

The Barre regime was thus increasingly suspended in and sustained by international webs of support, from which it extracted the resources it needed to continue imposing itself on the Somali population. As a result the roots of the Somali state-tree – the social institutions supporting the State, such as the formal economy, schools, legally established social organizations (NGOs, political parties, civil associations, official culture, licensed media) – shrivelled and became increasingly disconnected from the rhizome of Somali society and its life force, transmitted through the informal economy, social networks based on kinship and regulated by *xeer*. This left the tree dry and stiff: it fell easily and completely in 1991. The exports of cash-crops and official exports of livestock and hides did not cease to nourish the international economy until 1991, but they gradually became less important to the average Somali citizen than the informal economy. Importantly, economic and sociopolitical survival were deeply linked. In section 6.2 I discuss the social transformations wrought by the civil war.

[117] Jamal 1988:257.

Chapter 6: Somali state collapse, 1988 to 1992

In which a modern, urban and nationalist opposition to the regime becomes clan-based and a civil war is sparked by extreme state violence. Of the rotten roots of the Somali state-tree, its hollowing out and its collapse. How state elites fled, creating a global diaspora, while a quarter million Somalis die in a famine. Of heated debates between Somali and foreign scholars about the role of clan in the civil war, and how the Dual Power theory can provide a way out. Where the relations between the social rhizome, the clans and the State-tree are finally elucidated. Putting the Somali state-tree in the context of the African state-forest. Why decolonization led to independence but not to sovereignty, and how the neoliberal revolution reaffirmed Western hegemony

Chapter Five focused on the evolution of the Somali state; here the focus first returns to Somali society. In the first section I propose a rather conventional narrative of the beginning and unfolding of the civil war from 1988 through 1992, to provide the base for the subsequent discussion. In the second section I introduce the debate about the role of clan in the civil war and in Somali society more generally, which led to heated exchanges between foreign and Somali scholars, and I suggest my own framework of analysis based on the Dual Power Theory. In the third section I zoom out and place the trajectory of the Somali state since independence in post-War UN order, African decolonization, the wave of structural adjustment programmes and in the scholarly debates about the State in Africa.

6.1 Civil War

The beginning of the Somali civil war–when tensions and sporadic conflict turned into permanent conflict–can be traced to the April 1988 peace treaty between Somalia and Ethiopia. The Siad Barre and Mengistu regimes restored diplomatic relations, withdrew their forces from the border and most importantly, agreed to no longer host each other's armed opposition groups.[1] This meant that the Somali National Movement (SNM) had to return to Somaliland, which led to open conflict that spread to other parts of the country. By 1990 Barre was nicknamed 'the mayor of Mogadishu' as that was the only territory he still controlled.

But the seeds for the Civil War clearly lie in the defeat in Ogaden. His repression of dissent increased markedly after his defeat, and focused on Puntland and Somaliland. It led to the creation of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) in 1978 and the SNM in 1981.

How the Opposition to Barre Became 'Clan-Based'

Both of these movements were not 'clan-based but consisted of disgruntled officers and urban intellectuals who had fallen out with the regime for political reasons. Since dissent in Somalia was not possible, many of them were in exile while others were in Ethiopia or in hiding in Somalia. The SNM was set up in Jeddah and London. The SSDF first recruited among Majerteen, and the SNM among Isaaq, but both organizations were expressly against clan identities and gave senior positions to members of other clans, initially. They contested the Barre regime in political and intellectual terms, not, at first, with violence; their aims were national, not local.

In Hargeysa, for example, the troubles started in 1982 when a group of medical personnel, alarmed at the deterioration of public health facilities, and supported by middle class family and friends, started the self-help group 'Uffo' to improve the conditions at these facilities. The Barre regime linked this to the SNM, defined it as threatening political opposition and proceeded to put its leaders on trial, giving them heavy sentences.[2] When supporters (mostly students) protested and threw stones at the police, the regime identified them as a 'backward clan movement' and it retaliated against any Isaaq, whether in Hargeisa or Mogadishu, resorting to mass arrests. When a group of Isaaq elders sought to mediate with the regime for the release of the students, they were detained in the high-security prison in Mandera, between Hargeisa and Berbera.

We saw in 5.3 that the regime reacted in the same way to the activities of the SSDF; in May and June 1979 the Red Berets killed/starved over 2,000 Majerteen villagers and pastoralists and arrested many others, destroying their wells and water reservoirs, looting or killing their herds, raping the women and girls and denying access to government facilities such as health care. A similar treatment was meted out to restive Hawiye clans in Hiiraan and Ogadenis in Gedo.

One may be surprised that the Ogadenis were also targeted. Weren't they supposed to be part of the regime, the 'Marehan-Ogadeni-Dhulbahante' or MOD alliance? The case of the Ogadenis reveals the intricacies of Siad Barre's clan-based policies, and how he was impelled forward with his divide and rule strategy until Somali society was so divided (and united against him) it could no longer be ruled. But first we should remember that the lineage-based system means that one sub-clan lineage, in competition with a neighbouring closely related lineage, may either support or attack the central government for that reason—to improve its position vis-à-vis its immediate rivals. Generalizations about 'the Ogadenis' or 'the Isaaq' and 'Majerteen' are therefore never quite correct, at least not until 1988 when the Barre regime was still able to attract allies among rival lineages. Afterwards, it became clear to all Somalis that

[1] New York Times, Apr 26 1988: "Ethiopian and Somali Forces Withdrawn Under Agreement".

[2] Jama 2003: "A Note on My Teachers' Group".

the regime was going to fall, or had become too tainted by its crimes to be an acceptable political ally (something representatives of Western nations belatedly realized only in 1990-91). Now back to 'the Ogadenis'.

During the war, when Somalia had occupied most of the Ogaden, local politicians expected to set up an autonomous regional government. Barre objected and appointed a non-Ogadeni to rule the region for the government in Mogadishu. The unpunished misbehaviour of Somali military and security personnel against the local population created bad blood too. When Barre, at the end of the war, invited all Ogadenis in Ethiopia to settle in Somalia (in refugee camps) he realized that some of these refugees were against him, and he let his security services monitor and harass them. In addition, in the region of Gedo there was (and still is) rivalry between the roughly comparable (in size) Ogadeni and Marehan clans; it was assumed Barre favoured his own people. The MOD alliance further crumbled over the years as the Marehan became ever more dominant. For example, when Barre had a nearly fatal car-crash in 1986 and was evacuated to Saudi Arabia on the private jet of the Saudi King, his clansmen in the security services placed Vice-President Samatar under house-arrest to prevent him from constitutionally exercising presidential authority, fearing the Marehan would lose power. The 1988 peace treaty with Ethiopia—definitively giving up on the Greater Somalia dream—was received as a stab in the back by many Ogadenis. Barre preventively imprisoned an Ogadeni general, which caused Ogadenis stationed in Hargeisa (led by Omar 'Jees') to mutiny and join their kinsmen in Jubaland, forming the armed opposition Somali Patriotic Movement, SPM, in 1989.

By then opposition groups had become clan-based. The United Somali Congress (USC) was established in 1987. ‘Ali Wardhigley, who had been vice-chairman of the SNM from 1984 to 1987, travelled to Rome to mobilize his Hawiye clansmen; the successful model of the SNM was simply copied. Unlike the SNM, the USC, which would become the main and decisive opposition movement against the Barre regime, did not have time for ideological or policy debates, and barely produced any documents for posterity. While the USC headquarters remained in Rome, a clandestine USC 'executive committee' was set up in Mogadishu and an armed faction was established by Col. Mohamed Farah Aidid in the Habar Gidir border areas between Somalia and Ethiopia. Given the state of communication networks in late 1980s Somalia, these three USC groups were largely unconnected.

The naming of these new, clan-based groups ('Somali Patriotic…' and 'United Somali…') suggests a national scope. That is because clan was (and still is, today) considered an illegitimate base for political mobilization: it is parochial and divisive. None of these movements, even the SNM, sought to establish an autonomous clan-based state; they all wanted to (co-)rule Mogadishu and the rest of Somalia, also Somali brethren in Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti. Their scope and objective remained the reestablishment of the Somali nation-state. The core of the armed opposition groups remained composed of disgruntled army officers, purged or at-risk-of-being-purged government employees, the economically sidelined urban middle class and educated but unemployed youth. They did not self-identify as clan.

Jutta Bakonyi[3] points out that this reluctance to self-identify as a regional clan-based movement nearly caused the demise of the SSDF, Puntland’s main armed opposition group. It received substantial support from Addis Ababa and Colonel Gadhafi’s Libya as a *national* anti-Barre movement in the early and mid-80s. The SSDF did therefore not depend on popular support and by the mid-1980s had become an insignificant actor in the Somali opposition, better known in Addis Ababa than in Somalia.[4] It was 'saved' by the 1988 agreement that forced it to return to Puntland and the need of the Majerteen to have their own armed opposition group.

[3] Bakonyi 2009: “Moral Economies of Mass Violence: Somalia 1988-1991”; p434-454.

[4] See the 2020 novel of the Puntland writer F. Saeed Juha: “Koombe’s Struggle" which describes the protagonist's life in Addis Ababa working for 'Radio Kulmis', the propaganda channel of the SSDF; p58-60.

The SNM similarly was originally mainly supported by the diaspora and Islamic charities from the Gulf. Traditional clan elders initially played no role in these organizations. During the 1980s Islamist movements from the rest of the Arab world, mainly of the Muslim Brotherhood tendency but also some Salafis, gained some influence in the SNM by providing funds and linking the opposition to external sources of political support. But in none of the mentioned movements did they become very influential. At the outbreak of the war, they would form their own organization, Al Itihad (see below).

One final point that can be made about the armed opposition to Siad Barre before the narrative of events is resumed, is that it was composed entirely of the 'noble' (*bilis*) Somali pastoral clans: the Isaaq SNM, the Majerteen SSDF, the Ogadeni SPM and the Hawiye USC. Some Rahanweyn clans formed a defensive armed faction in 1992 but it was incapable of resisting assaults by the stronger clans, and it was only when the civil war subsided in 1995 that they formed a regional administration. Minorities, whether urban, professional or racial, could not establish any armed opposition. This points to a sense of entitlement which the pastoral clans had and which allowed them to impose 'the rule of the strongest' over other Somalis.

The Civil War Tips in the Favour of the Insurgents

As Jutta Bakonyi has pointed out, the typical reaction of pastoral populations to state pressure is ‘exit’ (in the terms of Albert Hirschman’s 1970 treatise ‘Exit, Voice and Loyalty’: the different strategies of adaptation to authority). Somali pastoralists move to new areas, typically across the border with Ethiopia.[5] This also relates to James C. Scott's 'states vs nomads' framework: nomads typically flee rather than fight the state. However, the 1988 agreement between the Barre and Mengistu regimes to stop supporting each other’s armed opposition, together with omnipresent state security services and heavy-handed repression on both sides, made ‘exit’ no longer possible, and forced the opposition to take up arms (which were readily available in large quantities, thanks to superpower largesse).

The SNM briefly occupied Bur'o and other towns in Isaaq areas, sparking a ferocious counterattack by the Barre regime. The regime attacked the Isaaq population in 1988, carpet-bombing the cities of Hargeysa and Bur'o (most buildings in both cities were destroyed), executing thousands of able-bodied men in house-to-house searches (and raping women and girls), and strafing columns of fleeing civilians. According to Human Rights Watch, 50,000 to 60,000 Isaaq residents were killed in 1988 and 1989 and 300,000 to 500,000 fled over the border to Ethiopia to escape the violence.[6] In Mogadishu dozens of Isaaq were arrested and summarily executed on Jazira Beach. Isaaq clan elders decided to set up militias to protect their communities and naturally joined forces with the SNM, thus transforming the left- and Islamist-leaning Somali *National* Movement into a clan-based resistance body overnight. The centralized command and control structure of the guerrilla movement gave way to a decentralized, mass-driven movement.[7] To organize this, a *Guurti* (ruling committee) was established which included clan elders alongside military leaders.[8] Clan elders assured logistic and political support and new recruits. Despite the extreme violence meted out by the regime, the SNM resistance did not yield.

The SNM thus became the model for successful insurgency against the government. Clan elders had understood that for their community's survival in the coming turmoil, they had to set up clan militias which could join one of the movements. The armed opposition groups, in turn, understood that they would have to mobilize along clan lines to have any chance of success, even though they never espoused clannism as a political objective. This double nature made the opposition movements loose coalitions of clan militias with little command-and-control capacity. For example, within the USC a split soon emerged

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[5] Bakonyi 2009:438-439.

[6] Human Rights Watch 1990: "Somalia: A Government at War with its Own People"; p3.

[7] Bakonyi 2009:440-441.

[8] Compagnon 1998: “Somali Armed Movements”; p77-79.

between the military (General Aidid, Habar Gidir) and political (Ali Mahdi, Abgal) leadership. Ali Mahdi did not want Aidid to advance on the capital but he could not stop him.

In August 1990 the SNM, USC and SPM made an agreement to share power once they had deposed the dictator. But there was no planning for what the coming regime would look like beyond rhetorical commitments to democracy and national unity.[9] It seems that one of the causes that prompted the three armed groups to make an agreement was the Manifesto published on 15 May 1990 by what would later be called the Manifesto Group. This group consisted of mainly Hawiye clan elders, statesmen and ex-officials, together with a group of Majerteen and a sprinkling of other clan members.[10] They attempted to salvage what was left of the Somali state by calling the President to step down, and suggesting to hold a national conference to decide on the future government, its economic and social policies, and drafting a new constitution for Somalia. This was not the first such attempt by Somali elders to call upon the President to step down, but the initiative takers, among whom Somalia's first President Aden 'Adde', circulated the Manifesto to foreign embassies and the press, forcing President Barre to react more circumspectly.

Barre didn't take this last chance to find a peaceful solution to the conflict that was by then engulfing most of Somalia. He executed some of the signatories, imprisoned others (so that elders, by coming to beg for their release, would be forced to make compromises with him, a standard instrument of his rule) and tried to split the movement; most of the Majerteen among the signatories split with the rest and attempted to negotiate, with US support, a new Darood (but democratic) government for the post-Barre era.[11]

Barre was facing increasing popular unrest, even in Mogadishu. In July 1990 his Red Berets shot at a crowd of booing people in Mogadishu's stadium, killing dozens of them. Barre also made conciliatory gestures: he dissolved the hated National Security Service and Courts and in September appointed a new cabinet, with an Isaaq/Habar Awal Prime Minister (he hoped but failed to split the SNM with this move) and a more civilian mix of ministers, although many of them were still related to him. This failed to impress the Italian and US Embassies, whose support he needed. Given the insecurity which had gripped Mogadishu, with several foreigners killed during 1990, some embassies started to scale down their presence in the summer of 1990. Barre tried to gain more support from the Gulf countries by offering Saudi Arabia a contingent of Somali soldiers to fight in Operation Desert Shield and sent emissaries to Washington and Moscow, but by the end of 1990 it was clear to all that his regime was irremediably lost.

The objective of Barre's efforts to attract international support was invariably to obtain new supplies of weapons. Barre even sent a delegation to South Africa, by then Africa's (and perhaps the world's) most despised state, to buy new weapons. Barre's obsession with weapons and violence as the only way to save himself are truly remarkable.[12] In popular songs, he was compared to the Liberian dictator Samuel Doe who had also fought to stay in power by all means possible until he was ignominiously tortured to death by his opponents in his presidential palace in 1990. We will return to the aspect of violence in the next section.

The reason that so many prominent Hawiye supported the Manifesto Group's last ditch effort to save the Somali state was their predominance in Mogadishu. Although the Darood had been ruling Somalia from Mogadishu and had a large population in the capital (and as in any capital there were people from all other clans), and Mogadishu has its own (Benadiri) minority, the Hawiye dominate the capital. Due to the drought in Central Somalia, the economic crisis and the growing insecurity, many Hawiye from rural

[9] Compagnon 1992: “Political Decay in Somalia: from Personal Rule to Warlordism”; p11.

[10] Ingiriis 2016: "The Suicidal State"; p210-214.

[11] Ingiriis 2016:213-214.

[12] Ingiriis 2016:221.

areas had moved to Mogadishu over the past years, swelling the capital's peripheral neighbourhoods. It was clear to all that Barre would not surrender power and would rather 'go down fighting'. The attempt to save the Somali state was therefore also an attempt to preserve the capital from destruction and bloodshed and to shield their properties and families from dispossession or worse. This made the Manifesto Group suspect to the armed opposition movements fighting in the bush. There seems to have been little effort to coordinate between the triple alliance of SNM-USC-SPM and the Manifesto signatories.

Collapse of the Somali State

The Mogadishu uprising started on 30 Dec 1990 in reaction to the killing and looting of a wealthy Hawiye businessman by the Red Berets. It was not coordinated by any armed faction; it was fuelled by spontaneously emerging clan militia. That it lasted so long (until mid-Feb) was due to the arrival of militias from outside Mogadishu (from the USC, the SPM and smaller independent ones) who desired to join the fight, often motivated by booty.[13] The USC attempted to coordinate the riots, but to no avail. The US Embassy was evacuated and looted on January 6, and Siyad Barre and his Red Berets, family members and a few remaining loyalists retreated to Villa Somalia, from where they started shelling the rest of the city rather indiscriminately. By then Barre's support group was mostly restricted to the Marehan/Diini/Reer Kooshin sub-clan to which he and almost all Red Berets belonged.

Bakonyi points out that the first phase of upheaval and looting was mainly political in nature, targeting the government and the state infrastructure. The Army in Somaliland and the Red Berets in Mogadishu started plundering state enterprises and public property; Siad Barre was rumoured to have emptied the vaults of the central bank; if state actors were looting, there was little reason for private and clan actors not to do so. Looting was, in the eyes of many perpetrators, a legitimate way of securing some public goods for one’s kin. Drysdale speaks of a 'Robin Hood' attitude toward state assets: redistributing public funds to your kinship networks is a noble thing to do, not criminal or corrupt.[14] Not surprisingly, foreign embassies, the UN and humanitarian compounds were considered part of the state and plundered too.

After the flight of Barre in January 1991, violence became clan-based: first against the 'wrongdoers of the previous regime' (mostly Marehan, regardless of their actual politics) and then widening to all the Darood. Fighting erupted between SPM and USC militias in Afgooye, and the SPM fled back to Jubaland. The Darood regrouped (SPM, the SSDF and remnants of Barre's security services) and tried to recapture Mogadishu in March 1991. The USC and Hawiye militias beat them and pursued them back to Kismayo, which was captured by Aidid's forces in April. This brought clan cleansing to the Lower Shabelle region, where the plantation economy had attracted settlers from all clans. All the Darood were expelled from Mogadishu and Lower Shabelle[15] and their properties looted or confiscated by members of other clans. The death toll of this round of fighting in Mogadishu was 14,000.[16] Barre withdrew to Gedo and established his own Marehan armed opposition group, the 'Somali National Front' (SNF). Majerteen fled to Puntland, where the SSDF was engaged in fighting USC militias in and around Galka'yo.

By now, clan-based fighting had erupted all throughout Somalia.[17] During the early years of the civil war

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[13] Bakonyi 2009:444.

[14] Drysdale 2000: “Stoics without Pillows. A Way Forward for the Somalilands”; p19.

[15] Kapteijns in 'Clan Cleansing in Somalia', 2013, mentions 400,000. but this figure is disputed and may be on the high side.

[16] Human Rights Watch 1992: “Somalia. No Mercy in Mogadishu. The Human Cost of the Conflict & the Struggle for Relief”.

[17] Besides the armed groups mentioned above, the following clan factions can be mentioned: in Somaliland, the 'Ise *United Somali Front*, the Gadabursi *Somali Democratic Alliance* and the Dhulbahante and Warsangeli *United Somali Party* (already established in the late 1950s); in South Somalia the Bimal *Southern Somali National*

most of the fighting outside of towns happened in the agricultural areas along the Shabelle and Jubba rivers, and in the intra-riverine areas in between. The smaller clans of the Rahanweyn and the 'Bantu' minorities which had for centuries lived off subsistence agriculture along these rivers were defenceless against the new invaders. Their properties, food supplies and women were easy booty for the militias of the strong clans. While the USC, the SPM and the SNF were fighting each other, they would prey on local civilian populations for their sustenance, pleasure and enrichment; but they also sought to establish their control over the richest and most fertile areas of Somalia.

In the past decades, ownership had passed from local hands to urban absentee Hawiye and Darood landlords as colonial cash-cropping, socialist nationalization and neoliberal privatization succeeded each other in waves. The resulting land disputes especially fuelled conflict in the Lower Shabelle area, the fertile hinterland of the Banadir coast. Eventually the Rahanweyn formed their own militia (the Rahanweyn Resistance Army, RRA) in 1995, to take back some of their captured lands and form their own regional administration in Baidoa; but conflict over land tenure in the Lower Shabelle area continues until today, making it the most violence-prone area of the country, together with Mogadishu.

The expulsion of all non-Hawiye fighting forces from Mogadishu by April 1991 produced a lull in fighting in the capital, but tensions immediately arose between the two largest USC factions, that of Ali Mahdi (Abgal) and that of Mohamed Farah Aidid (Habar Gidir). Both claimed the presidency. It was a symbolic post, since the institutions of the state that had survived the Barre regime had been gutted in the first round of civil war (even all the public buildings). There was no attempt by either faction to rebuild the institutions of the state or even clear the damage of the civil war. Each sub-clan militia controlled its own neighbourhood and the USC faction leaders had nearly no authority over them. The Benadiri minorities, who for centuries had been the core of the urban population had fled or kept a very low profile. The next round of fighting pitted Hawiye groups against each other for control of Mogadishu, mainly Ali Mahdi's Abgal *vs* Aidid's Habar Gidir (November 1991-March 1992), but also sub-clans against other sub-clans over control of a neighbourhood. It was as deadly as earlier rounds of fighting, and less conclusive as both population groups remained in Mogadishu.

The First Militant Islamists and Negative Experiences of the State

Alongside the clan-based militias, there emerged also a cross-clan Islamic movement called Al Itihad Al Islamiyya (Islamic Unity), often abbreviated AIAI; here we will follow the Somali practice of calling it 'Al Itihad'. This group, the only one of Salafi persuasion, had formed clandestinely in 1983 out of other underground Islamic movements.[18] After the fall of Barre it attempted to establish a foothold in Kismayo in 1991 and in Bosaso in 1992, but was routed from both places by local forces. Al Itihad later established a base in Luuq, Gedo, where it survived until it was routed by an Ethiopian military expedition in 1996. The episode of Al Itihad would later prove not to have been insignificant, as it was the seed for a much larger Islamist movement. But this brief summary shows that there was barely a religious element to the civil war. All sides, including Barre, the Manifesto Group and the armed factions, routinely appealed to Islam but it would only be in the early 2000s that an Islamic political movement that appealed to the masses emerged.

Somalis may have regretted the collapse of some of the State's services—roads, hospitals, education—but these were underdeveloped anyhow, and their absence in rural areas was one of the sparks of the popular revolt against the State. Besides urban elites, not many Somalis had losses to bemoan when the State's institutions, already hollowed out by severe corruption and nepotism, ceased to function. Marchal argues that the Somali state had already effectively collapsed by the late 1980s. In 1990 there

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Movement and the Digil & Mirifle *Somali Democratic Movement*. Lewis 1994: "Blood and Bones: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society"; p234-235.

[18] Baadiyow 2017: "Recovering the Somali State. The Role of Islam, Islamism and Transitional Justice"; p204.

were only 611 teachers on the payroll of the government, for 644 schools.[19]

Only the coercive forces were still functioning, not the civil service. But even the army, police and security services were functioning on a clan-base rather than according to their internal statutes/law and hierarchy. The security vacuum caused by their retreat was quickly filled by local clan militia, who generally were more welcome than Barre's predatory security forces. Several young people growing up in the 1990s in Kismayo and Mogadishu, which were particularly hit by the civil war, told me that they were happy and felt safe protected by their own people, and that the situation was generally good for them as children.[20]

The experience most Somalis had of the state was a negative one: abuse by security forces and taxation, with little to show in return, in terms of social services or physical infrastructure. The vicious campaigns the regime unleashed against perceived hostile clans in the countryside, or against Islamists and political opponents in towns and cities, may have been the primary face of the state for many Somalis. Nevertheless, the image of the state as a provider of wealth and influence, popularly referred to as *Mandeeq* (lactating she-camel) still persisted, and this explains the ferocious competition between groups to capture the state in the Civil War and thereafter, even though its institutions and resources had crumbled away.

The Somali voices most heard abroad and relayed in the global media and academia belong to the political class or urban elites (such as the writer Nuruddin Farah); they of course regret the collapse of the state and its institutions, as well as the destruction of their beautiful capital. Their lamentations about what appears to be the defeat of civilization by barbary are readily understood by people who assume a State is necessary for a peaceful and prosperous society. The famine of 1992 contributed to this perspective, though the famine seems more the result of the socio-economic disruption caused by the war than of the absence of a Somali state to provide relief to its people.

We may wonder whether Somalis disliked the Somali state or its government. Of course, it was mostly Siad Barre's government that was despised, but as seen in 5.2 from the beginning of Barre's rule the two had come to be identified. Somalis did not only want Barre and his clan-allies and ruling elites to leave, they also desired a democratic state that would guarantee basic freedoms and rights. In fact, they expected the international community to step in and provide/impose a new state-model in collaboration with the victors of the civil war, not only a new government.

The Creation of a Somali Diaspora

A historic characteristic of state collapse is the fleeing or dispersal of its subjects.[21] In the established narrative, where the State is the primordial harbinger of human civilization, the effects of state demise on its people is naturally dramatized. The historical record and archaeological evidence, however, show that those who flee beyond the state's boundaries take with them their culture, knowledge and lifestyle, and do not necessarily face a worse life in their new environment than when they were subjects of the collapsing state.

This applies quite clearly to the Somali diaspora. Unlike in past centuries, there are no longer any unsettled areas to migrate to, so the Somali diaspora has become the subject of many other states. The wave of emigration that took place from 1990 to 1992 differed from earlier emigration of unskilled or lowly skilled labour and businessmen to Gulf countries, but it could build on existing communities of (often educated) Somalis in Western countries, notably the USA, the UK and Italy; as a result of asylum policies, large Somali communities also formed in the Netherlands and Sweden.

[19] Marchal 2000: “Mogadiscio dans la Guerre Civile: Rêves d’État”; p10.

[20] Personal interviews, 2016-2018.

[21] Scott 2017: “Against the Grain”.

In most cases the political freedom and scope of opportunities of emigrants improved. Despite its dispersal over the globe, Somali culture is thriving in the diaspora. The Somali presence online is huge, and the production of books, songs and other forms of popular culture has reached higher levels than before the collapse of the state, when the production of Somali culture was tightly controlled by the State.

In representations of migration to the West, there is a telling gap between recipient countries—where the focus is on the failures, the misery, the deaths along the way, dependency on social security handouts—and 'emitting' countries, where the focus is on the successes, remittances, happy families and fulfilling work lives of the migrants. Available evidence seems to support the second, positive image of migration. The Somali diaspora is globally successful and generates considerable wealth. Remittances are the first source of national income, and investments by returnees drive the growth of the private sector in Somalia.

Besides financial support, Somali diaspora members often leverage their new status and skills to seek a fresh involvement with their home country alongside the international community, in the fields of politics or by joining the civil society organizations such as media, academia, think tanks, professional groups etc. This involvement can be problematic for Somalis who have stayed in Somalia, as diaspora Somalis tend to get the better jobs in a foreign patronage-based political economy. This is described in Chapter Nine.

In summary, one can say that the collapse of the Somali state may have been less dramatic for Somalis than often assumed. Ordinary Somalis never had much ownership over the state, which was a foreign construct, entirely put to profit for its own benefit by a political elite. When the political leaders, buoyed by foreign assistance and loans in the 1980s, antagonized a growing proportion of Somali citizens, popular hostility towards the government grew. Before the international intervention to build a new Somali state started having an impact (around 2012), Somalis generally experienced a rise in their levels of economic welfare, cultural vitality and political freedom. This was the result of state collapse and a return to self-governance, as I shall show in the next chapter.

We have seen how clan-identities were practically imposed by Barre's regime on what were originally political movements seeking to address the social and economic ills of the country. Media portrayals however typically portrayed the violence and mayhem of the civil war as the result of clan frustration, as if clan identity were a primordial force in Somali society that drove the civil war. A superficial reading of the last paragraphs above may confirm that impression. There's a tradition, from the British 'inventing the native' (see 4.3) to modern media portrayals (think of the movie Black Hawk Down) to cast the Somali as an exotic, wild and tribal nomad: the antithesis of modern civilization. At best a human in the 'state of nature' (a *noble savage*), at worst an example of primeval human savagery. This has angered quite a few Somali intellectuals as well as their foreign friends, who have detected this 'othering' attitude also among Western academics. I shall now turn to such debates, because given my own emphasis on self-governance in Somali society and the evidence that this happens along clan lines, it is very important to understand the 'clan factor'. To do so, alternative explanations for the civil war must also be examined.

6.2 The Clan Factor

"One must conclude, therefore, that even a scholar whose analysis of the causes of the civil war includes increasing class inequalities, state-imposed modernization schemes, and changes in the gender regime, looks for a solution to the Somali conundrum primarily in accommodating Somalia ' s warring clans".[22]
Lidwien Kapteijns, 2008

This section starts with the debate about clan between scholars who see the civil war primarily as an expression of clan conflict and scholars who advance alternative economic and sociological explanations for the civil war. The arguments of the latter, including the transformation of the clan system, are examined in detail. I then describe the 'instrumentalist' approach to the clan factor and try to reach a synthesis between these different explanations for the civil war. But I find some questions are left unaddressed, which leads me to the requirement for a fresh approach. In the second part of this section I develop my own vision on the Somali clan factor by applying the rhizome-society vs state-tree dual power theory. I sketch the evolution of clan-state relations since the colonial period, and also reflect on the surprising levels of violence experienced during the civil war.

Scholarly Controversy about the Clan Factor

A scholarly debate about the clan factor in the Somali civil war flared up between 1996 and 2000. It pitted Catherine Besteman against I.M. Lewis in the journal Cultural Anthropology, and later Bernhard Helander against Besteman in the journal American Ethnologist. Lewis was seen as 'the dean of Somali studies', notably because of his work 'A Pastoral Democracy' published in 1961, the main source for my own description of Somali clan society in 3.1.

In the conclusion of his book "Blood and Bones: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society" published in 1994, Lewis suggests that nothing has really changed in Somali clan society, which reaffirmed its power by destroying the Somali state in the civil war. "*Given then, that like nationalism, clanship is a human invention, is it in the 1990s basically the same phenomenon that it was in the 1890s? Linguistically the answer must be "yes," since the same terminology has been employed throughout the recorded history of the Somalis. Sociologically, the evidence also supports this view. Indeed, the argument of this book is that clanship is and was essentially a multipurpose, culturally constructed resource of compelling power because of its ostensibly inherent character "bred in the bone" and running "in the blood," as Somalis conceptualize it.*"[23]

Somali scholars and foreign sympathizers accused Lewis and other scholars (and the Western media) of 'othering' Somalis by casting them as fundamentally different to 'us Occidentals', essentializing Somalis and reducing them to an object of colonial studies;[24] what Mamdani would call 'inventing the native'. Besteman suggests socio-economic factors that apply in other countries too: the creation of a state class intent on expropriating rents from agricultural communities. She says that not only has the clan factor changed beyond recognition since pre-colonial times, but socio-economic explanations are more plausible. Lewis responded, in an article titled '*Doing Violence to Ethnography*' that Besteman's arguments are based on ideology rather than an intimate knowledge of the Somali clan system and its history. Helander took a view close to Lewis', criticizing her work on the roots of conflict in Southern

[22] Kapteijns, Lidwien 2008: "The Disintegration of Somalia: A Historiographical Essay"; p17

[23] Lewis 1994:233

[24] Besteman, Catherine 1996a: "Representing Violence and 'Othering' Somalia"

Somalia. Besteman rebutted Lewis' response and Helander's criticism with the same arguments as in her earlier article: Somali society has changed, and Western academics should remove their 'primordialist blinders'.[25]

Below I will explain the difference between primordial and instrumental approaches to clan, but I suggest to first explore the line of reasoning followed by Besteman, which was pioneered by Somali scholars.

One can find many written sources about the post-colonial period in Somalia, written both by Somalis and foreigners, and there are several general narratives about the independent Somali state.[26] Most of these authors are quoted abundantly throughout this dissertation. In the following I will focus on the first two, the brothers Abdi and Ahmed Ismael, proponents of the intellectual current of 'Somali Scientific Socialism'.

Socio-economic explanations of state failure

Abdi Ismail Samatar criticizes scholarship that posits clan and kinship as the driving force of Somali politics and the civil war.[27] He points out that I.M. Lewis and cohorts (Laitin, Said Samatar) ignore the qualitative changes that have taken place in Somali society during colonialism and afterwards. He says that they ignore the debates on structure and agency and allow no agency for Somalis to alter the structures of kinship. "*The logic of the traditionalist discourse leads to the conclusion that the trouble with Somalia is the nature of its culture, grounded in the clan system, with cruel individuals [Siad Barre] proving divisive for projects of modern nation-building*".[28]

Abdi Samatar goes on to ask why clannism had not earlier driven Somalia to a fratricidal orgy, before suggesting a transformationist explanation, also championed by his brother Ahmed I. Samatar. He identifies two major historical changes: the commercialization of the livestock economy and the imposition of the state. Both brothers call the Somali ruling class a 'petite bourgeoisie',[29] Abdi Samatar saying that in 1969 the 'petit bourgeois democracy' was replaced by a petit bourgeois dictatorship'.[30]

The communitarian pastoralism that Lewis c.s. refer to, which supports an egalitarian and self-sufficient society, has been gradually replaced (colonialism playing an important part) by what Abdi Samatar calls 'peripheral capitalist pastoralism' producing livestock for a world market. As described in 4.1, this integration started in the pre-colonial period. As a result livestock producers had to support, besides themselves, two external actors: a merchant class and a state elite, which competed over the extraction

[25] Besteman 1998: "Primordialist Blinders: A Reply to I. M. Lewis".

[26] Among Somali authors having produced historical monographs, the most prominent are Abdi Ismail Samatar (1989: *The State and Rural Transformation in Northern Somalia, 1884-1986*; 2016 *Africa's First Democrats: Somalia's Aden A. Osman and Abdirazak H. Hussen*); Ahmed Ismail Samatar (*Socialist Somalia: Rhetoric and Reality*, 1988; co-authored with Terrence Lyons *Somalia. State Collapse, Multilateral Intervention and Strategies for Political Reconstruction*, 1995); Said Samatar[26] (co-author of *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State* with David Laitin, 1987; at the time of his death in 2015 he was working on a book tentatively entitled *Fool's Errand: The Search for a Central Government in Somalia*); Abdisalam Issa-Salwe (*The Collapse of the Somali state: The Impact of the Colonial Legacy*, 1996); Hussein Bulhan (*Politics of Cain: One Hundred Years of Crises in Somali Politics and Society*, 2008); Mohamed Ingiriis (*The Suicidal State: The Rise and Fall of the Siad Barre Regime, 1969-1991*, 2016) and Abdurrahman Abdullahi 'Baadiyow' (*Making Sense of Somali History*, Volumes 1, 2017 & 2, 2018, as well as *Recovering the Somali State. The Role of Islam, Islamism and Transitional Justice*, 2017).

[27] Samatar, Abdi 1992a: "Destruction of State and Society in Somalia: Beyond the Tribal Convention".

[28] Samatar, Abdi 1992a:629.

[29] Samatar, Ahmed 1988: "Socialist Somalia: Rhetoric and Reality"; p153.

[30] Samatar, Abdi 1989: "The State and Rural Transformation in Northern Somalia, 1884-1986"; p112.

of surplus. This competition did not take place within the framework of clan, kinship and *xeer* but superseded that framework with a commercial urban one, whose rules and ethos were far removed from communitarian pastoralism. As the rest of Somalia's economy stagnated and the state's need for foreign currency earnings grew, Barre reversed his earlier policy of allowing the private market to regulate the livestock market and attempted to increase state rents in the sector. As a result, livestock producers increasingly engaged the informal market, using clan ties to escape the government channels (but not in any way related to *xeer*).[31]

Speaking about the 1960s, Samatar notes that "*The leadership in the old tradition had no public resources that they could compete for and loot.* [In contrast,] *the competitive and the Xeer-less nature of the post-colonial social system made state revenues, including foreign assistance, the bone of contention in a stagnant economy*".[32] As both the colonial/trusteeship powers and the Somali state failed to develop the pastoral and agricultural economy, the state became the main source of revenue for the nascent urban elites. "*The state, which mediates conflict between competing social groups in advanced capitalist societies, was here both the object and the price of the struggle.*"

In such a context a state class and national consciousness could not gel, as each individual within the proto-national elite competed with each other for the state's resources. Certainly, kinship was mobilized to win elections and government positions, seen as the key access to state resources. But the practice to *pay* for clan support shows that already the 'clan motivation' had given way to venal factors. Within one lineage several individuals competed for an electoral seat. Instead of clan elders debating together under a tree and appointing the most appropriate person to represent the clan, each contestant had to reward his own blood relatives for their support, and pay his way into office.

One must not confuse blood ties and clan lineage. That blood ties are one of the underlying factors of the degeneration of the Somali state project under Siad Barre is unquestionable; but this is different from (pre-modern) clan identity. "*Somali society has been torn apart because blood-ties without the Xeer have been manipulated by the elite in order to gain or retain access to unearned resources* [through the State]".[33]

In his study of the Somali banana export industry,[34] the author shows how the social relations of production in the banana plantation sector have not changed since the colonial times. Neither the trusteeship, democratic Somalia, the military command economy nor the structural adjustment policies brought significant change. The banana plantation remained a source of income that mainly accrued to external actors (with the exception of the socialist period, that was the Italian agribusiness giant De Nadai, which enjoyed a monopoly on the export of Somali bananas and on the import of agricultural inputs after the first Structural Adjustment Program of 1981) state elites (in the form of taxes or participation in benefits) and plantation owners. But plantation workers throughout the 20th century received miserable wages and the banana plantation sector basically contributed nothing to national development, all profits being skimmed away and only rarely reinvested.

Insofar political elites used blood ties to share proceeds or increase their share in the profits, this had nothing to do with traditional clan structures. "*It is the precipitous decline of the constraining role which the household economy played in the social affairs of the community, as well as the rise of an influential minority whose command of the state machinery 'liberated' them from the rules of the Xeer and the values of Islam, which led to the Somali calamity*".[35] This statement deserves further analysis.

[31] Samatar, Abdi 1992b: "Social Classes and Economic Restructuring in Pastoral Africa: Somali Notes"; p120.

[32] Samatar, Abdi 1992a:634.

[33] Samatar, Abdi 1992a:640.

[34] Samatar, Abdi Ismail 1993: "Structural Adjustment as Development Policy? Bananas, Boom and Poverty in Somalia".

[35] Samatar Abdi 1992a:640.

In the past, a man had to take care of his direct family and contribute to the welfare of his community—the household economy had its limits and there was no need to have more than what it was useful to carry around. There was no reason or legitimation for unlimited accumulation. As per Locke, the notion of private property was restricted to the resources a person could develop for the community and the tools/materials needed to do that: in the Somali case one's herds/flocks or plot of land. The rest was the 'common good' and belonged to everyone and no-one in particular. That changed with the integration into the Western economy, which removed limits to private accumulation. Each individual needed money, and it was never enough: a Landcruiser, bribes for politicians, even buying a stake in a business abroad or paying for one's children's university studies; this is what Samatar means with *the constraining role which the household economy played in the social affairs of the community*. The other point he makes is that access to state power 'liberated' Somalis from their community obligations, transforming the bonds of community into venal patronage networks that the new ruling class (not elders) could manipulate through their *command of the state machinery*.

Catherine Besteman extends the argumentation of Abdi Samatar to the agricultural economy in South Somalia.[36] She argues that the Barre regime's efforts to monopolize rents led to the emergence of an urban political elite (bureaucrats, others connected to the government) that caused rapidly widening inequalities. She calls this as a state class. The main target of this state class, she explains, were the fertile agricultural lands along the rivers. This added a dimension of class-war to the racist and cultural discrimination against Southern minorities and farmers, which as we saw above predated colonialism.

Besteman argues that class formation was a more important driver of violent conflict than clan identity: "*Jubba Valley farmers, for example, were dispossessed of their land by their bilis (noble) fellow clan members as well as by non-clan members".*[37] She builds her argument on comparative studies of state-class formation in other African countries. The rural-urban divide which cut across lineages also supports her thesis that class, not clan was the principal driver of conflict in Somalia.

In a similar vein, Alex De Waal[38] argues that conflict over resources was at least as important as clan identity in the Somali civil war. He defines the 1980s Barre regime as 'state-mediated capitalism' that supported favourite clan constituencies in Mogadishu, its hinterland and the central rangelands. The vast tracts of riverine and pastoral lands captured by the Darood elites in privatization drives were impounded by USC commanders and other clan forces in 1991 and 1992, and much of the conflict over the state in the 1990s was about who would be in charge to resolve this conflict in his clan's favour. The political conflict among clans thus had a solid economic base and was not resolved according to clan structures but through neo-patrimonial patronage networks.

Roland Marchal follows a socio-economic line to explain the discomfiture of the Somali polity. In several texts he argues clannism is rather a symptom than a cause of the civil war. The mismanagement of the economy was one of the factors that led to the crumbling of Siad Barre's state. The capture of state resources (civil service employment, industrial investments, agricultural rents, trade monopolies, foreign loans and development assistance) by an increasingly small clique structured around the President turned the victims, or the deluded would-be beneficiaries, away from the state. The gradual separation of entire population groups from the official economy was worsened by droughts; in 1986 the central and northern regions were particularly afflicted.

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[36] Besteman 1996b: "Violent Politics and the Politics of Violence: The Dissolution of the Somali Nation-State". She had earlier performed fieldwork among the Gosha Bantu minority and local agricultural and pastoral clans living along the Juba river; see Besteman 1993: "Public History and Private Knowledge: On Disputed History in Southern Somalia".

[37] Besteman 1996b:586.

[38] De Waal 1996: "Contemporary Warfare in Africa".

Socio-economic distress contributed to strengthening kinship relations. Marchal explains how urban social groups in the capital were 're-clannized' by their kin in the 1980s; because of migration (for work opportunities, fleeing drought or conflict), politics (persecution) but also because the economy was increasingly structured by the informal sector based on trust, thus kinship connections. Somalis often say that their clan is their social safety net, and this explains not only why civil war strengthened clan identity, but also how it is fortified by poverty and lack of opportunity. (In corollary, one could say that Somali society may only be able to surpass its division in clans if it goes through a phase of sustained prosperity).

The atomization of Somali society under Siad Barre forced society to recompose itself along kinship lines. Marchal insists on the radical decentralization of power that occurred in the early phases of the civil war to further explain the resurgence of clan, reinvented as it were from the ground up.[39] When he refers to the return of the *abbaan* (see 3.1) he sees it as evidence of the breakdown of clan society, instead of its confirmation.[40] The *abbaan* brought back governmentality to Mogadishu by reconfiguring clan relations.[41] Although his lineage position is essential, it is not based on tradition, but on his insertion into the recomposed socio-economic tissue.

Other authors who follow a similar line of reasoning about the social and economic consequences of the Somali state's policies, and how they led to civil war, are Alice Bettis Hashim[42] and Jasmin Touati.[43] Hashim focuses on the deleterious effect of Barre's state on state-society relations first, and on society in general, while Touati examines how Barre's mismanagement of the Northern pastoral economy prepped social groups for civil war. Another authoritative voice on Somalia, that of Lee Cassanelli, agrees that "*Explanations that focus on how the Barre regime and the warlords who succeeded him mobilized support along clan lines are not without meaning. However, by ignoring the struggle for control of resources of all kinds that underpins such power, they confuse "the form the conflict took with its substance and objectives".*[44]

The accusation of primordialism

All the mentioned analyses clearly agree with that of Abdi Samatar above, emphasizing that the economic dynamics which reconfigured social relations were not clan-based or obeyed any 'traditional' logic of Somali society. As Samatar notes, the important social regulation function of *xeer* as described in Chapter Three had ceased to function, at least in the public sphere. Nevertheless, all agree that lineage politics or blood-relations determined the outbreak and course of the civil war, and Somali politics since then.[45] At no point of the civil war did Somalis organize in class-based socio-economic structures. There were no revolts of plantation workers against owners, no attacks by pastoralists on the merchant class that had squeezed their profits and no efforts by workers to set up self-management cooperatives in industries or the institutions of the state. All conflict took place along clan lines.

It was this evidence that comforted I.M. Lewis, Bernhard Helander and others in their interpretation that put clan identity central to the civil conflict. Certainly, clan conflict was triggered by non-clan dynamics, for example social injustice or the violent state, but it remained clan conflict nonetheless. As Lewis wrote in his response to Besteman, she was accusing him and fellow ethnologists and anthropologists of applying 'pre-civilized, dark, primeval forces' of kinship that *determined* Somali behaviour, thus 'othering

[39] Marchal 2000:29-30.

[40] Marchal 2000:32.

[41] Marchal 2000:36.

[42] Hashim 1997: "The Fallen State: Dissonance, Dictatorship and Death in Somalia".

[43] Touati 1997: "Politik und Gesellschaft in Somalia (1890 – 1991)".

[44] Kapteijns 2008:39-40.

[45] Kapteijns 2008:17.

them', and she attempted 'to rescue Somalis for modernity' by applying instead concepts of race and class where they supposedly had agency.[46] Why would kinship determine people's behaviour and race and class not, and how was imposing an interpretative framework based on race and class somehow emancipatory, less colonial, less Western and more respectful of Somali agency? For Lewis, clan was obviously a cultural construct that individual Somalis used as it pleased them, not an inescapable structural determinant. But Besteman, fortified by mainstream academic opinion that was in those years turning 'post-colonial', maintained that Lewis' view was *primordialist*[47] and that he ignored the profound changes Somali society had gone through in the past century.

This bitter debate seems to have split the community of foreign scholars of Somalia; as Markus Hoehne & Virginia Luling explained in a book published to commemorate the death of I.M. Lewis, 'the truth lay in between' explanations emphasizing the role of class or clan. They point out notably that north Somalia (Galmudug, Puntland and Somaliland) and south Somalia (the Benadir, the Shabelle and Jubba River valleys and surrounding areas) differ, with race, the urban-rural divide and class mattering much more in the south.[48] However, as Luling, also a specialist on Southern agricultural communities and minorities, pointed out in a different text, "*Certainly no Somalis define themselves in terms of class*".[49] This is also my experience; it is a more foreign-imposed concept than clan, however well-meaning. Even two decades of 'scientific socialism' did not create any class consciousness among Somalis.

A careful reading of the works of authors accused of 'primordialism' demonstrates a much more nuanced approach to the clan factor. Conversely, it may be noted that no Somali or Western 'post-colonial' writer could ignore the role of clan identities in Somali history and produce a narrative of the civil war that avoids any mention of clan. Both groups of authors pretty much agree that clan identity is not a primordial driving force of Somali politics, but that it is fluid and changeable and has changed over the years; and also that it is instrumentalized and manipulated by political elites.

The instrumentalist argument

"Clan Cleansing in Somalia", the 2013 book by Lidwien Kapteijns on the Somali civil war, is a prime example of the 'instrumentalist' perspective. She approaches the bloody events through the lens of poetry and popular culture, in an attempt to circumvent the usual Western epistemology which forces Somali events into foreign frameworks of analysis. Poetry, songs and stories were the most common forms of self-expression before the mobile phone and internet, and she collects these sources because they are disappearing. To make her point she quotes both examples of belligerent clan poetry (an old form of popular expression, also practiced by the Dervish leader Sayyed Hassan and his rivals) and of poetry and oral history that bemoans the falling apart of the Somali nation in clan conflict.

Kapteijns refuses to provide the main agency for the cleansing to the social construct of clan, demonstrating instead that this agency lies with the politico-military entrepreneurs who exploited a clannish narrative (that did exist before the war but was rarely violent, she argues). She relates examples of individuals saving members of other clans to demonstrate that this political clan narrative was often not integrated into personal convictions. However, she also describes how clan discourse and the associated politics became predominant among *all* population groups after 1991, giving clan identities a semblance of autonomous political reality. Kapteijns notes that the denial of clan cleansing and genocide is an innate feature of these war crimes and can be found in every instance they are committed. This denial explains why no thorough study of the mass crimes committed during this period has appeared to date.

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[46] Lewis 1998: "Doing Violence to Ethnography"; p105.

[47] Besteman 1998.

[48] Hoehne & Luling 2010: "Introduction: Lewis and the Remaining Challenges in Somali Studies"; p7.

[49] Luling 2006 "Genealogy as Theory, Genealogy as Tool: Aspects of Somali 'Clanship'"; p478.

Another controversy was stirred by the appearance of this book. It attracted criticisms from two sides. David Laitin criticized her for not acknowledging the long-term centrality of clan in Somali society, and ignoring its violent nature–clan violence was a constant of Somali history, Laitin argued together with I.M. Lewis, and had only become more deadly between 1988 and 1992 because of modern weapons.[50] On the other hand, in a review of her book Somali scholar Mohamed Ingiriis pointed out what he saw as many mistakes in her book, which in his point of view exonerated the Darood and lay too much blame on the USC for the clan cleansing, thus making her account 'politicized'.[51]

His underlying message, which I found echoed among several Somalis who read the book upon my insistence, was: 'don't poke your white nose into things you cannot understand about our history' (which may seem a bit unfair as Kapteijns speaks Somali, is married to a Somali and made her own translations of Somali wartime poetry). Among my interlocutors there is a recurrent sense that foreigners should not dwell on Somali clan issues. There is obviously a sense of shame that derives in part from the extraordinary clan violence of the civil war,[52] but also from being seen as 'primitives' by Westerners, because clan always seems opposed to State, the vector of modernity.

This echoes a growing post-colonial criticism of epistemology: why should white foreigners have the monopoly on interpretations of Somali history, society and politics? The launching in March 2015 of the academic journal "Somaliland Journal of African Studies" without any Somalis on the editorial board (consisting of nine Europeans and Americans and three Ethiopians) provoked a harsh exchange between critical young Somalis and members of the Journal's board, led on social media under the hashtag #Caddaanstudies, meaning 'white studies'. This makes me self-conscious about my own attempts to theorize about Somali society and politics–some modesty is required! But instead of engaging the debate in the given terms of 'primordialist' vs 'instrumentalist', I prefer to return to the insights gained on clan and self-governance in Chapter Three and examine how the 'clan-rhizome' evolved in relation to the 'state-tree' and whether this evolution influenced the civil war.

Why a more comprehensive vision is necessary

To conclude, one might make the following observations about the role of clan in the destruction of the Somali state and the ensuing civil war.

First, the fractious nature of clan identity obliges one to always provide caveats when ascribing political dominance or actions to a clan or lineage. Clan, Lewis also agrees, is a social construct and should never be reified: 'clans' do not do anything, there are only individuals doing things in the name of clan. Members of the Habar Gidir/Saleban were known to offer refuge to Darood inhabitants of Mogadishu, as they did not agree with the leadership of the USC exerted by the rival Habar Gidir/Sa'ad sub-clan, or simply out of compassion. That fractious nature of clan identity ultimately boils down to individual choice ('*shall I help this old lady of a rival clan or not?*') and actions may be influenced but they are never *determined* by clan identity. Insofar group action does occur ('the Habar Gidir' expelled 'the Darood' from Mogadishu) based on the social construct of clan, this is complicated by the fluidity of alliances. This all obliges to more circumspection when using the clan argument but does not invalidate it.

Second, explanations based on clan are insufficient. They need to be supplemented with other explanations, typically based on economic, religious or cultural (class) factors. While a fighter may be simply mobilized to defend his lineage interest, one finds that in general other reasons play a role: illegal

[50] Laitin 2013 in World Peace Foundation: "Patterns of Violence in Somalia. Notes from the Seminar"; 43-46.

[51] Ingiriis 2013b: "Review of Lidwien Kapteijns 'Clan Cleansing in Somalia'".

[52] Since all clans and many of today's political leaders participated in this period of clan cleansing, and through the principle of common responsibility, no-one is innocent, and any foreign investigation may feel like an ICC-like invasion of Somali socio-political space, with likely negative effects for all concerned.

expropriation of land, a business concession awarded to a rival lineage, injustice suffered at the hands of state security forces, a perception of religious offence, etc. As Somalis are loathe to publicly explain their actions because of their clan identity, they usually provide such a reason. Those triggers are important but they should not obscure the fact that collective action almost always occurs along clan lines.

Third, current clan identities are not 'traditional'. Traditional clan elders were ignored and actively disempowered from the AFIS period onward. The clan leaders that led armed factions during the civil war were rarely traditional authorities, and often they cared little for the legitimacy such traditional authorities could provide. *Xeer* was almost entirely forgotten, and as a principle of clan balance it was replaced by political and financial capital. Working links with clan businessmen and others who could provide resources to the factions were more important than following an ancient code of honour. The term of political clan entrepreneurs is more appropriate than that of clan elders. In this sense, the clan field was profoundly reconfigured before and during the civil war. But as we have seen, evolution through contact with external factors is characteristic of the rhizomatic field ('reproduction without copying'). And we shall see that *xeer*, the role of elders and associated notions of clan self-governance made a surprising comeback after the collapse of the State.

The reading above of the clan factor in the Somali civil war, and in society more broadly, seems satisfactory in the light of the mentioned debates. But there are two important features about 'traditional clan society' and *xeer* that cannot be explained by this interpretation. The first is the complete lack of visible reaction, violent or political, to the Somali state's attacks on clan, in the 1960s and 70s. If clan society was so strong, why was there no reaction to the outlawing of *xeer*, the sidelining of the elders, even the ban on mentioning clan? The country erupted in revolt after the killing of ten *ulama* in 1975; why was there no comparable reaction to the much greater pressure on clan society?

The second feature is the surprising speed with which clan elders mediated *xeer*-based political settlements to end the fighting of the civil war, and maintain peace and a semblance of order… not always successfully but overall effectively. Where did these elders come from; had they been hiding? And it turned out that *xeer*, declared defunct by urban intellectuals and foreign specialists, hadn't even changed much. Throughout Somalia the standard compensation for manslaughter remains 100 camels, which must be paid collectively by the perpetrator's community, just like a century ago.

These two features seem contradictory, one indicating great weakness, the other much vitality. I believe an analysis of the clan factor through the dual power lens, examining it in terms of rhizomatic self-governance and the state-tree, can explain the role of clan in Somali society and politics with more precision.

Explanation Through the Dual Power Lens

In fact, *Xeer* and the role of the elders never disappeared from Somali society. The Sharmarke/Egal government in 1968, then again the Barre government in 1971, made the practice of *xeer* in criminal cases illegal, notably banishing the principles of collective responsibility and the payment of blood money. Both legal reforms were unsuccessful because they were impossible to enforce, and the Barre regime silently dropped it in 1974.[53] Instead, the government proceeded to register and validate in district courts the decisions reached by elders through *xeer*. Given the low level of state penetration in most areas of Somalia, most communities were left to fend for themselves, seeking to arrange for example access to education, healthcare, infrastructure, jobs etc, and they interacted on the basis of *xeer*, as they always had.

[53] Puntland Development Research Centre 2003: "Somali Customary Law and Traditional Economy".

In 1993 the elders of Somaliland decided on the future structure of their state, reserving an important role for themselves, and the same happened during the formation of Puntland in 1998. How clan self-governance was gradually reintroduced is seen in Chapter Seven, and how it works today is described in detail in Chapter Eight. But Northern Somalia was not exceptional, and community self-governance automatically took over throughout Somalia, also in rural and urban areas—in the latter with more difficulty.

That traditional self-governance kicked in so quickly throughout Somalia during the civil war is something of a state-focused optical illusion. In fact, the practice had never ceased. That clan elders played such a minor role in the armed factions, or for that matter the government itself, is not a sign of their weakness or, as suggested above, their *replacement* by clan-entrepreneurs vying to lead patronage networks. It indicates they were busy doing something else: self-governing their communities. The failure of the Somali State and of the armed factions to bring order and development to Somalia led to crisis, and that increased the pressure on these self-governance structures to ensure the survival of their communities.

There were two levels of clan structure: the barely visible level of the community, still led (by default) by clan elders according to their interpretation of *xeer,* and the overt one consisting of patronage networks extending clan influence to the state and other formal structures such as the armed factions. One might expect the clan elders to also dominate the patronage networks from the ground up, but in patronage networks power comes from above, imposing a new set of clan members who could access that power: the 'clan entrepreneurs'. In Somalia each adult male is an 'elder', and experience with the outside world is a valuable asset, so many clan entrepreneurs naturally became 'elders' in the sense of a respected member of the community whose opinion counts. The traditional elders should be conceptually distinguished from the more urbane clan entrepreneurs, but in practice these could be the same people; each individual Somali adult male could combine elements of both in himself.

There was certainly conflict between these two identities. A young upstart from a minor lineage within the clan might bypass clan elders, appealing to the youth of his generation with dollars, guns and ammunition, or with qat, sunglasses and 'cool' music. An urban businessman might kindle ties with distant rural relatives for his personal benefit, hoping for example to mine minerals in their lands, buying the votes of recalcitrant elders. Such 'clan entrepreneurs' could steer the community into dangerous waters with reckless decisions. But for their social survival, they would anyhow need to compromise with those elders sooner or later. Thus the visible part of clan society, clearly non-traditional, without regard to *xeer* and driven by individual aims, ultimately responded to the invisible rhizome of clan society, where 'elders', *xeer* and communal values still predominated.

The evolution of clan-state relations

In the Somali clan system, that extended with minor variations from pastoral to settled and urban communities (but not to the minorities considered outside the clan-system), each adult male was considered sovereign, and only delegated his authority on a temporal, recallable base to an elder that may represent him in *xeer* arrangements that regulated inter-clan relations. When a community had agreed on something, each adult male in turn had the individual responsibility to abide by the agreement. This was exemplified by the institution of collective blood-money responsibility.

A higher authority existed, which was God; first the Waaq of the Cushitic peoples and later Allah. This higher authority could bestow its grace (baraka) on an individual, whose leadership was charismatic. In some instances, this authority was transmitted through royal lineage, but the lack of political institutions of rule meant that if a descendant had insufficient personal charisma, other lineages could ignore him and revert to self-governance.

Somalis easily integrated islamic religion and political concepts, albeit in a gradual manner over at least 1,000 years. Islam did not contradict clan self-governance, although it encouraged nomadic populations to settle and form new religious communities that transcended clan identity. Sharia was integrated in a subordinate manner in *xeer* arrangements. Lineage genealogies were reoriented toward a common ancestor who was of the family of Prophet Muhammad.

The presence of Arabs in the ports and along caravan stops in the profitable trade between the Ethiopian highlands, the Great Lakes area and the Indian Ocean/Red Sea allowed Somalis to interact, indirectly, with foreign state structures. In the late Middle Ages this brought prosperity to the Horn of Africa. But when the Portuguese disrupted this trade and the Arabs left, the Somalis did not seek to maintain the structures of rule they bequeathed, and they reverted to self-governance.

The colonial state introduced a new principle of authority, which was bestowed from above not by God, but by colonial powers. Its main instrument to exercise that authority was the State. The State conversely became a channel for Somalis to access power. For practical reasons the colonial powers relied on Somali self-governance, but to make it conform with their own systems of governance they transformed fluid practices into political institutions; such as stipended elders who now derived part of their legitimacy and income from the colonial authorities.

Colonial penetration was feeble and state power was limited, but Italian efforts at state-led development in South Somalia created a precedent which later elites would follow. The *image* of the state as a powerful tool to shape socio-economic relations to the benefit of a ruling class became ingrained, divorced from the *practice* of the state which remained embedded in personal relations and dependent on self-governance.

During and after World War II a Somali state class emerged around the departing colonial administration and its institutions of governance. Encouraged by progressive Western backers, this group developed a nationalist and modernist discourse divorced from Somali political praxis and Islam, fully oriented towards acceptance by external powers. During the 10-year UN trusteeship preparation for Somali independence, and in British Somaliland, the keys of the future Somali state were delivered to this political elite.

During the first decade of Somali independence, the state remained little more than a portal to external power and resources. Although the developmental state remained the ideal, intra-elite competition, which gelled around lineage-based patronage networks, exhausted all the state's resources without generating sufficient new ones. This created a divide between the state class and the rest of the Somali population, preparing the ground for the coup by Siad Barre. The coup put an end to the competition for the state's resources. They were held securely in Barre's hands, through tightly controlled patronage networks. This allowed the State to become an autonomous actor for the first time.

One might reflect that if Barre's gamble had succeeded, and his investments in agriculture, pastoralism and industry had paid off, his direct attacks on the clan system, through nationalist ideology, legislation and coercion, could have transformed Somali society; regardless of their clan affiliation, young Somalis could have found jobs in these state-managed sectors, or gained access to higher education and employment. Somali men prefer not to pay a dowry, and Somali women prefer to have a say in who they will marry instead of being 'sold'. If they had been as successful as Mao's, Barre's reforms could have effectively made clan identities anachronistic. A period of sustained prosperity in a complex modern economy could achieve the same. But such opportunities simply did not emerge, and the deepening economic and then security crisis forced communities to close ranks.

Relations between the Somali rhizome and the state-tree

To understand the clan system, another concept next to '*xeer*' (social contract, law, agreement) needs to be introduced: that of *qaaraan*.[54] It means 'contribution' or 'money collected', more generally 'solidarity' in material terms. Like mag (blood money) it is a social obligation towards one's clan members. Typically it is used to pay for school fees, hospital bills, emigration costs, legal fees etc.[55] It is not something typically Somali: the notion exists everywhere in the world, also in the West. But in a society under such stress as Somalia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, it became a very important tool of survival. It is *qaaraan* which made urban Somali families help their clan members fleeing drought, poverty or insecurity settle in town and get a start in life, what Marchal described as 'reclannifying urban society', turning educated urbanites who might have stopped thinking about clan in their daily lives into *abbaans* mediating problems for distant kin. *Qaaraan* may be one of the most prevalent practical applications of the abstract concept 'blood ties'.

Qaaraan is clearly a rhizomatic function, completely informal, even more than *xeer* is, because *xeer* still has formal aspects (principles as: a man's life = 100 camels, a woman's life = 50). If so few authors even mention it, despite its importance, it is because it is seen as unproblematic (unlike the paying of blood money to absolve a crime, a much less frequent expression of clan solidarity which receives overwhelming attention). As Bourdieu pointed out, it is precisely these social practices which seem so unproblematic, such 'common sense', that should alert researchers to the presence of something worth their attention. I suggest translating *qaaraan* as 'material solidarity' and establish it as a rhizomatic principle at the level of *xeer*, or even lower than that; for after all, solidarity in deeds is arguably a value underlying the acceptance of *xeer*. It also seems a principle of the State of Nature, essential to community survival.

Returning to the vegetal imagery of the Dual Power Theory provides a key to understanding why clan society did not revolt against the Somali Youth League's or Barre's attacks against it. **The clan system doesn't mind state-building efforts as long as they respect the natural balance**. Throughout this text it may seem like 'clan' is opposed to 'State', but it is not. Like the rhizome and the tree, the two *concepts* are opposed, but intertwine in practice.

We can admit, for example, that the Somali state is an entirely imported concept. From the SYL days in the 1940s through independence and the different phases of Barre's state to the formation of armed opposition groups, there is no trace of a debate among Somalis about what kind of state they wished, for example constitutional debates, or even an explanation by Somali politicians or associated scholars of what 'scientific socialism' is supposed to mean in Somalia. The model came from outside and the foreign state tree was planted with the help of foreign hands (AFIS); and when it seemed to suffer, such foreign hands would again intervene, through the root-fertilizing of technical cooperation or the violent pruning of structural adjustment programs, to assist it. Somalis appropriated the state tree and inhabited it—they were told the state is theirs—but there seem to have been few attempts to make it conform to existing Somali social practices. Why? For example, why were there barely efforts to integrate *xeer* and sharia as practiced in the country into the framework of constitutional law? Or to integrate institutions of self-governance into the administration, like the British and Italians had done?

This question leads us to the heart of society-state relations. It calls forth another question: what do Somalis want from their State? The assumption is that Somalis want to be ruled fairly, efficiently and stably by their state. But what if the State is purely an instrument to access foreign power? It appears most adult Somalis do not want to be ruled by the State. As one middle-aged Somali put it to me: "*we don't expect good governance from our state, because we don't want to be governed by it. We prefer to*

[54] Bakonyi 2009:439-440.

[55] Communication with Somali friends, August 2022.

govern ourselves and that is what we are used to doing".[56] Somalis, curiously, want the state but not government. If the state is mainly an instrument to access foreign sources of power (money, weapons, international prestige) then there is no point in contaminating it with local factors which will make it less amenable to channel these foreign resources. This explains, then, why the Somali ruling elites, from the 1940s to today, and even (rhetorically) during the civil war, have always proclaimed their opposition to clan and *xeer* and kept traditional authorities at arms' length. They do not want the precious oak tree planted by the *ajnabis* (foreigners), which provides access to the global world with its seemingly endless resources, to be overgrown by the thorny shrub of the Somali rhizome.

In forestry, the rhizome adapts to imported saplings, trying to connect to them in fruitful ways because the rhizome wills the tree. Even when it is a foreign seed, it will do its best to make it work for itself because the tree, through photosynthesis, creates most of the nutrients and energy that the rhizome needs. As foresters know, foreign saplings fail when they don't connect to the mycelium (rhizome).[57] Both the tree and the rhizome need the connection with the other, the former for its immediate survival, the latter for its long-term flourishing.

So if Somali society wanted a state, and a modern Western state at that, then why did it fail? The 40-year old Somali state tree (if one takes the beginning of the UN trusteeship period as a beginning) collapsed, dry and brittle, and it was consumed by the flames of the civil war like dry firewood. State-building efforts that have taken place since Somali state collapse can be compared to attempts to plant a new sapling, not to rescue the previous Somali state. We can say, then, truly, that it failed.

The reason, I believe, is that the Somali State brought too much imbalance to the rhizome. People who benefited from the clan order did not rebel when the State frontally attacked the clan order because the State seemed itself like an expression of clan balance, meaning that those people could still manoeuvre into positions of power using their clan identities. Siad Barre was sometimes described as a genius when it came to manipulating clan.[58] He long managed to find sufficient connection points between the Somali rhizome and his State tree; he would sever one connection and immediately establish a new one (as when he appointed an Isaaq Prime Minister late 1990 while his armed forces were still killing Isaaqs in Somaliland). Remember that one of the rhizomatic principles is 'insignificant rupture', because individual nodes can always establish other more roundabout connections when their direct connection is ruptured, unlike the branches of a tree. But if too many connections are severed, access becomes difficult. This is what happened to the Barre's state-tree in the late 1980s.

Abdi Samatar, above, expresses a similar thought when he gives as one of the reasons for the Somali calamity that *the state machinery 'liberated' them* [ruling elites] *from the rules of the Xeer and the values of Islam.* By wielding power from an external source, not answerable to the Somali rhizome, and using that power in manners which disrupted the natural rhizomatic clan balance—notably when large-scale killings of influential clans like the Isaaq occurred—the rhizome came to reject the tree that was damaging it instead of feeding it. In 1988 and afterwards, communities decided that their common good would be served better by supporting the armed factions opposed to the regime than by seeking access to the State, a strategy they had pursued until then. This change in attitude spread quickly through Somali society. From that point onward the State was doomed. All efforts (including by Barre and his cronies) consisted in emptying the tree of its resources, for personal or collective/community gain. The rhizome emptied the tree of its remaining sap, breaking it down, plundering its resources.

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[56] Interview 11 March 2019, Mogadishu.

[57] This is one of the findings that drives Suzanne Simard's research in her autobiographical novel 'Finding the Mother Tree'.

[58] See, for example, Laitin 2013:45. For instance, Barre's Vice-President Samatar was a Tumaal, from the discriminated professional minority of blacksmiths. With this unusual choice Barre both secured the unswerving loyalty of that community and his VP, and he secured the safety of his position, for a Tumaal would never dare claim the highest power in Somalia for himself.

The stateless landscape that emerged as a result was a familiar one for Somalis. After all, the independent Somali state was only thirty years old, and its penetration had always been weak. In Chapter Two I argued that Somalis were familiar with state structures, but had preferred to return to self-governance after the demise of the Arab sultanates in the 16th century. But over the past century, the desire for a State has become universal among Somalis. Why this change? Because the rhizome adapts to external pressures. Until the early 19th century there was no external pressure; above and around the lowlands of the Horn of Africa there was only eternal God, in the perception of the Somalis. Then the colonial economy appeared in the Indian Ocean, and decades later the colonial state, gradually integrating Somali society into the global economy and state-order. Since then external pressure has become so pervasive that the rhizome needs the state-tree so that can prosper in this order, by extracting the maximum of resources from it.

We may return to the other period of great violence in 20th century Somali history, the Dervish rebellion. The object of this rebellion was not the colonial state in itself, but the imposition of colonial authority over Somalis. The rebellion was not the in the first place either Islamic or nationalistic or clan-based, but the rejection of external governance by elements of a society that sought to preserve their precious autonomy. The failure of that rebellion, that as we saw was not supported by a majority of Somalis, was the last manifestation of the pre-colonial political order (that of the State of Nature). From the ruins of World War Two, in the post-War world order symbolized by the United Nations, emerged the perception that Somalis could have their own state; since then Somalis have been reconciled with the idea of the State, even desired it. But, as seen, it has little to do with the image of the all-encompassing State Western populations have come to believe in: the modern state as described in Chapter One. Somalis don't want to be governed by the state, because they prefer self-governance.

The rhizome and the tree are not in competition: they feed each other. Perhaps the transformation of an unconscious, rhizomatic clan identity to a conscious, tree-like state identity is something people generally desire. The tree does produce much more energy, life and beauty than the rhizome does. The state is a more attractive political order than clan self-rule. Since the revolt by Sayyed Hassan there has been no attempt to revive the pre-colonial political order. The state is an alternative and complementary source of power to the rhizome. Actual trees extract most of the biomass they produce from the air, transforming energy (sunlight) into matter through photosynthesis but also extracting nutrients from the air (for example, separating and keeping the carbon element from CO_2). By contrast, the tree takes only some essential minerals and water from the ground. The tree gives more to the rhizome than it takes. The Somali state, in terms of resources, seemed to follow a similar pattern, extracting most of its resources from abroad. As long as it transmits this surplus in an even-handed manner to the Somali rhizome, there need not be any conflict between society and the State.

So the problem is not the fundamentally antithetical nature of the tree and the rhizome, opposing the Somali state to clan self-governance, as I earlier suggested. It is when they work at cross-purposes that the conflict emerges. Somali society seeks to establish good connections with the State with all its resources from abroad: symbolic, coercive and material. The rhizome is flexible and can adapt to many circumstances. But when the State channels external power in such a way that it produces a fundamental imbalance in society, it is rejected. This is where Siad Barre's patronage-based police state, buoyed by Cold War funding, went wrong. In the eyes of contemporary observers, the Somali state was increasingly disconnected from society, its values and its needs, and then it literally started destroying society; it was only then that society rejected the state. As the title of one of Ingiriis' articles puts it: "We swallowed the State as the State swallowed us".[59]

[59] Ingiriis 2016a: "'We Swallowed the State as the State Swallowed Us'. The Genesis, Genealogies, and Geographies of Genocides in Somalia".

In conclusion, I would advance that the principle of Somali self-governance through clan has never disappeared; it was not even so fundamentally affected by the modernization drives of the ruling elites. If we take *qaaraan* (material solidarity with kin) as a fundamental rhizomatic principle of Somali self-governance instead of *xeer* (which retreated to the community sphere while being replaced in the public sphere by State Law and a venal political marketplace) then the social reconfigurations in Somalia were clearly guided by self-governing principles. *Qaaraan*, in contrast, remained (and remains) operative in the public sphere.

What changed was the interface between the self-governing society and the State. Whereas the British and Italian colonial authorities could count on the turbaned, white-bearded clan elders as interface, in the early 1990s the interface had become 'warlords', faction leaders whose strength derived from their access to foreign sources of weapons and money, not wisdom and the respect of their communities. The interface determines how external actors such as the international community interact with domestic actors, and thus it is understandable that most foreign and many Somali scholars focused on the changes in the interface, the visible changes in how the Somali clan system operates. But a change of interface does not necessarily mean a change of operating system. The clan-based self-governing operating system of Somali society remained remarkably intact over the past century.

Was civil war violence clan-based?

I would like to finish with a note about the violence of the civil war, which surprised many Somalis. The position of foreign social scientists such as I.M. Lewis and David Laitin was that Somali clan society had always been violent, for it is based on the law of the strongest, and many historical references mention the fierce, warrior-like nature of Somali society. To this Somali commentators–such as Abdi Samatar above–opposed that the recent history of Somalia, since the 1930s at least, had been quite peaceful. Somali politics were violence-free from 1948 to 1969. In Somali history (Chapter Two) there are few records of political violence, such as wars between neighbouring states or against Arabs and other foreigners settling along the coast. The main exception, the violence of the later Ajuraan state towards its own citizens became legendary, suggesting that it was something unique and that Somalis expected peaceful relations.

The standard view of the Somali civil war is that clan-based guerrilla's destroyed the central state, in a 'nomads vs state' vision reminiscent of Clastres' *machine de guerre*[60]; and then, drunk on blood, they went on to massacre each other. In fact, something close to the contrary happened. Small nationalist, political opposition groups seeking other policies for Somalia, mostly composed of the educated, urban and modern classes—grievances expressed were economic and political, and sometimes tinted by religion—were forcibly identified with clan. Then the regime brutalized pastoralists and ordinary townspeople belonging to that clan. This created a link—a clan-link—between these Somalis and the opposition movements, who could not ignore the exactions committed against their kin. One can therefore say the Barre regime *created* clan-based armed opposition movements. It was only between 1988 and 1990 that this link really solidified: in those years, opposition groups realized they needed a solid implantation among the population, not only in the diaspora and among urban intellectuals. All options for political or intellectual opposition had been exhausted, and they faced the options of being killed, disappearing into exile or languishing away in prison; the only alternative was an armed insurrection. When lineage elders had understood that they had to raise their own clan fighting forces and collaborate with the armed groups to secure their community's survival in the growing unrest, that armed insurrection became possible.

Moreover, it appears that the denial of clan identity was essential to its successful manipulation. As in

[60] Except that nomads normally lose this conflict, at least since the 16th century (Scott 2017), making the victory of the Somali clans over their state seem anachronistic.

the Uffo incident of Hargeysa, it allowed delegitimizing all political opposition by casting such opposition as against the ideal of Somali nationhood. If observers remarked that most new appointments came from specific sub-clan lineages, they could be accused of 'clannism' : were not all appointees Somalis? It was as if the apartheid regime of South Africa had banned all discussion of racism as anti-South African. It seems that the denial of clan identity and the repression of any public discussion about it contributed to the violence with which clan identity expressed itself during the civil war.

While the manipulation of the clan factor by the regime contributed to the violent outburst, it seems a more proximate cause was the use of violence by the Siad Barre's state. As a Human Rights Watch report of 1990 states about the violence in Somaliland: "*The blanket indemnity granted to the army and security forces, the absence of human rights organisations to monitor and publicize abuses, the lack of an independent media and the denial of visas to foreign journalists, removed any constraints on the behavior of government forces.*"[61] What was novel about Barre's state violence was indeed its unconstrained nature.

A central concept of *xeer* is the notion of restraint in violence. For example, in warfare one is not allowed to harm certain categories of people (women, children etc) who are protected by the concept of *biri mageydo* ('not to be touched by the knife', also mentioned in 3.1). The concept of violence that can be committed with impunity was introduced by the state, it is not part of 'clan culture'. More generally, in the State of Nature violence exists but it must be justified, limited and 'serve the common good' (even when that means the right of the strongest). This kind of violence was present in the clan system, but the 'violence with impunity' was introduced by the State. The freewheeling violence of the Somali state might even have been what led to the downfall of his regime.[62]

This observation about the *modalities* of violence can also be made about its *objectives.* According to *xeer*, clan violence is justified to restore balance. But by the late 1980s, so many imbalances had been introduced and left to fester that the objective of restoring balance was beyond range. The goal of the armed factions which channelled the violent energies of clan was not to restore a long-lost balance, but to capture *everything*: the State, its resources, its prestige. So both the unconstrained exercise of violence and its objectives were introduced by the state, not part of 'clan culture' as many observers suggested. As we saw in Chapter Two, the historical record provides no evidence of clans using violence to capture each other's polities.

A twist to this is that, from the theological point of view on the State exemplified by Carl Schmitt, any violence deployed by the state is *per se* legitimate, because it is the State (to be more precise, ruling elites through the instruments of the state) that defines what is legitimate. Siad Barre could believe that the unconstrained violence unleashed by his security services was necessary to preserve state security, and thus legitimate. He regularly said as much in response to queries by foreign visitors. In contrast, and by the same account, violence by non-state actors is illegitimate by definition. The state should have the monopoly of violence, according to state theology (Chapter One). This different weighing of the use of violence by the state and non-state actors is probably what made so many observers proclaim that the obviously illegitimate violence of the civil war was due (it *could* only be due) to clan culture.

In conclusion, I believe the clan factor in the Somali civil war has been misconstrued. We must first recognize that clan self-governance has continued, at the local level, quite undisturbed throughout the past century. True, among the ruling elites in urban settings a modern, state-oriented culture had emerged, but the lack of development of the state within society and the economy meant that most Somali communities had to fend for themselves and continue relying on clan solidarity (*qaaraan*) within an informal economy, as they always had. What changed were the manners in which clan society was

[61] Human Rights Watch 1990:47.

[62] Besteman 1996b:592.

connected to the state, what I call the interface. Since the state became the main source of patronage in Somali society, those who were most adept at accessing its resources became the privileged intermediaries between society and state—the clan 'entrepreneurs'. As Barre's state unleashed a spiral of unrestrained violence, the capacity of these intermediaries to access resources of violence became central, leading to the 'warlords' leading armed clan factions.

Somali society, including the clan system, is not against the state; to the contrary, the state is desired: not as an instrument of governance (that is rejected) but as an essential portal to access foreign resources. Since the defeat of the Dervish rebellion,[63] Somalis have accepted and back the idea of the State. Until 1988, Somali society accepted Siad Barre's state, hoping to form profitable connections with it; it was only in that year that community elders, first in Somaliland and then rapidly everywhere in the country, decided to support the armed factions instead of Barre's state, in response to what had become unacceptable levels of state violence. Once society had withdrawn its support of Barre's state, it withered away and collapsed entirely in 1991. But this did not diminish the overall desire of Somalis for another state.

In this chapter, I have so far focused on clan as an intrinsic factor of Somali state collapse, but in the previous chapter I demonstrated the role of Western countries in supporting Siad Barre's state to the very end, thus enabling it to survive so long, ultimately leading to an orgy of violence. Most of these policies, it seems, did not aim at supporting Barre's regime itself (it was an unimportant and altogether undesirable ally) but were part of broader Cold War and post-colonial Africa policies. To put them in perspective, a comparison with overall international approaches to Africa is helpful. Broadening the framework of analysis is also a step to the next chapter, which begins in New York at the dawn of the post-Cold War era.

6.3 Somalia as a Post-Colonial African State

The destinies of Somalia and the United Nations seem strangely tied up. Both share turning points in their history. Somalia was the first elaborate UN trusteeship, actively supervised by the Trusteeship Council unlike other trusteeships that fell under it. Somalia was the one African country to gain its independence under the UN. In the 1980s one of the UN's major humanitarian operations was in Somalia; then Somalia became the first test for the UN's projection in the post-Cold War era. The alliance between the UN and the USA to become a leading actor of the 'New World Order' together was forged and, after two years, broke again in Somalia (7.1). After a decade of withdrawal Somalia has again become one of the UN's most significant operations in the state-building, security provision, humanitarian and development fields (10.2). Somalia thereby has become a testing ground for successive UN strategies to fulfil its tasks, notably in its approaches to Africa.

In the following section the history of independent Somalia is put within the African context. Having dwelt on Somali state-society relations, the gaze of the reader is drawn back to the other half of the equation, loosely called 'the international community', and to the phenomenon of intervention. Somalia and Africa shared the framework of the UN-led decolonization process and the Cold War. Did developments in the rest of Africa influence the course of action in Somalia? Does the study of the post-colonial state in Africa add to our understanding of developments in Somalia?

[63] The Dervish leader Sayyed Hassan warned Somalis that the State was an instrument of domination and that they would lose their freedom if they accepted it.

Why did the West (or 'First World') force Somalia to accept Structural Adjustment Programs? And why did it continue supporting Siad Barre until the very end? (5.3) These questions can only be addressed within the wider context of global neoliberal reforms and the last phases of the Cold War. They provide a basis for the discussion of state-building interventions in following chapters, and I will reach beyond matters of direct concern to Somalia to strengthen this basis. But first the evolution of the international order itself needs to be described. I pick up its history where it trailed off in Chapter 1.3, at the creation of the League of Nations.

The creation of the post-World War Two order

The League of Nations was generally considered successful in the 1920s, but in the 1930s it was weakened by its incapacity to confront contender nations who felt disadvantaged by the international power relations, Germany first and foremost but also Italy and Japan. These countries dropped out of the League of Nations to embark on a successful state-led growth path and (re)armament, mobilizing their citizens through aggressive nationalism and social benefits. The League of Nations was incapable of halting the wars of aggression by Japan in Manchuria (1931), Italy in Ethiopia (1935) and Germany's annexation of Sudetenland and Austria (1938), and it was also incapable of preventing Axis support to General Franco and USSR support to the Republicans in Spain's Civil War (1936-39); in short, it failed at maintaining collective security.

The desire of some powerful nations to quit the League of Nations, as well as the unwillingness of the remaining members to stop them, were largely due to the Great Depression that followed the 1929 Wall Street crash. It demonstrated how interdependent the world had become. Although previous stock market crashes also had an effect beyond their borders, this was the first time that the entire world was affected (even Somalia, as mentioned in 4.2). The global impact of the US stock market crisis demonstrated that the international economy and financial system needed to be regulated; this would lead to the birth of the Bretton Woods institutions.

The international order that emerged at the end of World War II was still based on the might of a few 'Great Powers' but it also included two frameworks for cooperation addressing the issues of collective security and global economic interdependence. The first, the United Nations, is not only the key political institution of the current world order, but it is also a major actor in Somalia, so its genesis deserves some scrutiny here. The second framework was that of the international financial institutions created at Bretton Woods; they are less vital for Somalia today but have arguably played a greater role in shaping the current world order than the United Nations.

The United Nations System

The United Nations is commonly thought to have been created in 1945, in a spirit of brotherly equality between founding states, and the emphasis is often laid on the designation of human rights as a core value of the new world order. But in fact it was created in 1942 according to a plan by the USA and Great Britain.

The term was devised by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill at the end of 1941 to designate the Allies fighting against the Axis Powers. The United Nations Declaration, issued on New Years' Day, 1942, was a treaty based on the August 1941 Atlantic Charter declaration by the USA and the UK, which set out their vision for the post-war world. The salient points of this charter were a world where people could live free of fear and want, free seas and low trade barriers, an effort to strive for global economic cooperation and social welfare, self-determination, disarming aggressor nations, and that the USA and UK would not seek territorial gains in the war. The United Nations Declaration stipulated that signatory governments agreed with the Atlantic Charter and would cooperate together

to defeat the ‘Tripartite Pact’ (Germany, Italy and Japan) and not conclude separate armistices or peace treaties. It was signed by the USA, the UK, the USSR, nationalist China and 43 other countries, not all of them fully independent yet. From then on, the United Nations was the official name for the Allies fighting the Axis powers.

Figure 19: Wartime poster for the United Nations, created in 1943 by the US Office of War Information

The same allied countries gathered in Washington DC in 1944 and San Francisco in 1945 to establish the United Nations *Organization*. US leadership, and the Atlantic partnership with the UK, were thus crucial for the formation of the UN, which unsurprisingly was biased toward the liberal democratic regime of the USA, host of the conference and victor of World War II, and Western preferences. The USSR went along with this because it was suffering heavily from the Nazi invasion and needed Western support, and it saw that it could play a leading role in the post-War UN world order as one of the superpowers. Non-Western founding members of the UN were enticed by US and Soviet intentions to put an end to European colonial empires and by the prospect of formal equality with Western nations.

The main purpose of the United Nations remained that of the League of Nations: to ensure collective security.[64] To achieve that, the UN system introduced as a novelty a commitment to human rights and to

[64] Article One of the UN Charter states that "The Purposes of the United Nations are:

- To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;
- To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;

improving the economic and social circumstances in which the world's peoples lived. A preference for democracy was also palpable among most founding members, but this was left out of the founding charter to not antagonize non-democratic countries. One may note that this preference for how a state should be internally organized, and the responsibility the UN thus seemed to assume for the well-being of the world's peoples, obviously undercut the principle of national sovereignty which had been a core notion in the League of Nations. Whereas the League of Nations had posited as fundamental values of the world order *inter-state* principles such as peaceful cooperation, non-aggression and free trade, the UN lay a novel emphasis on *intra-state* relations, proclaiming its support for human rights, fundamental freedoms and equality for all citizens, not countries.

The United Nations can be seen as a wartime alliance that, once the war was over, sought to preserve world peace by engineering the international state system according to the preferences of the victorious powers, and by suggesting a framework for internal state relations that agreed with US and Western leadership interests without contravening those of the USSR and non-Western powers such as nationalist China. These principles were cast in the comprehensive structure and legal basis of the UN.

While the Covenant of the League of Nations consisted of 26 articles and was written in a declarative style reminiscent of Wilson's Fourteen Points, the UN Charter consists of 111 articles and lays out the institutional structure of the UN and how power is distributed through this structure in legal terms. It was a big step in the formalization of the international state-system. The institutions of the United Nations were created ex-nihilo. There was barely a League of Nations institutional infrastructure to refer to, so international civil servants in charge of designing institutions and drafting regulations adopted the practice of the states they were familiar with, overwhelmingly Western.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ), the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), along with the General Assembly and the Security Council, were set up in the original UN Charter. From the outset the UN spawned new departments, programs and organizations, thus presiding over the bureaucratization of the international order.[65] The United Nations system not only regulated or attempted to regulate international relations, it also defined itself as the principle hub for socialization between world leaders, who gather every year in September to participate in the General Assembly. The UN is a discussion and decision-making forum among international civil servants, diplomatic or otherwise. The Security Council sieges permanently seeking a consensus between the 'Great Powers' on what they consider the world's most pressing issues. The UN Secretariat, led by the Secretary General and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) is a political actor in its own right. UN agencies have also become important actors with

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- To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and
- To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends."

[65] Some of the major UN agencies, programs or UN-affiliated organizations include the UN Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO, 1945), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF, 1946), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 1946), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO, 1947), the World Health Organization (WHO, 1948), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 1950), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA, 1957), the World Food Program (WFP, 1961), the UN Development Program (UNDP, 1965), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA, 1969), the UN Environmental Program (UNEP, 1972), the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS, 1973), the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, 1976, renamed UN Women in 2010) the UN Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT, 1978), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA, 1991), and the UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 1997). The UN also has localized missions such as the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine (UNRWA, 1949) as well as a myriad of peacekeeping missions, about ten training and research institutes like the UN University (1961), bodies overseeing the implementation of conventions (such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, OHCHR, 1993 or the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1994), affiliate organizations such as the International Organization for Migrations (IOM, which joined the UN family in 2016), and a host of other bodies overseeing Tourism, Property Rights, Outer Space Affairs, Seabeds etc etc.

some degree of autonomy on the international scene. Finally, through its complex structures, the UN has influenced the development of other international organizations; international NGOs need to adapt to its rules if they want to operate with or within the UN system.

The call for a world government or at least a world federation may never have been so strong as it was at the end of World War II.[66] But the world order based on peace and progress imagined by the founders of the United Nations did not materialize immediately; instead, the USA and the USSR engaged in a struggle for supremacy, bringing about a world order marked by polarization between two superpowers: the Cold War. The UN's capacity to ensure collective security was impeded by Cold War rivalry, which blocked any significant decision-making by the Security Council from the late 1940s to the early 1990s. In the meantime the General Assembly was roughly divided into First, 'Second' (Socialist Bloc) and Third World factions, which rarely agreed. In 1949, already, it was clear to observers that the UN had failed to provide collective security and would be unable to do so.[67]

In passing, one can reflect on the perception of United Nations *failure*. The failure of the UN is a recurrent complaint, heard decade after decade. But here again the idea and the practice should be separated: the practice of the UN may have been deceiving, but that can only be measured against an ideal, given the novelty of this type of international organization (the UN cannot be compared to anything else). The *idea* of the United Nations has been spectacularly successful. It is difficult, today, to imagine a world without the United Nations. Complaints about the weakness of the UN are usually followed by suggestions to strengthen it, (e.g. endow it with armed forces, provide it with more funding or make its decisions binding). The view that the UN should be disbanded is only held by a fringe, mostly right-wing rich white people. All other population groups rather would like the UN to function *better*. This can be taken as a measure of the idea's success.

Unable to provide global security, the UN focused on achieving regional security. The United Nations system, most importantly, provided the framework for decolonization and the accession and recognition of new states. The most crucial test for a country's international recognition is whether it is accepted as a full member of the UN. Practically, this means not being vetoed by a member of the Security Council and the acceptance by a majority of states in the General Assembly. This greatly restricted the options for prospective members: they had to 'play by the rules' which had mostly been drafted by diplomats of Western nations.

Since the UN is the ultimate arbiter of statehood and only states can be sovereign, the UN also became the guardian of sovereignty in this world. As seen above, sovereignty has always been tied to mutual recognition between states (independent of how strong the domestic sovereignty of the state is). The United Nations provided a new forum for this mutual recognition. During the decolonization wave, the new state's form was conferred by the colonial power, who had also drawn its borders and given shape to its public administration; however the aspirant state also needed to conform to UN expectations such as the "respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion"[68] and other expectations not always clearly enunciated by UN members, such as respecting the national economic and security interests of Security Council members. Thus, one may wonder how much scope there ever was for self-determination, or for that matter even true *sovereignty*—in the basic sense of not having to obey anyone else.

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[66] Yunker 2011: "The Idea of World Government. From Ancient Times to the Twenty-First Century"; p55.

[67] See for example Meyer 1949: "A Plea for World Government" and McClintock 1949: "The United Nations or World Government". See also Yunker 2011:55-56.

[68] UN Charter Article 1.

The Bretton Woods Institutions

The objectives of the League of Nations were to ensure collective security and to regulate the global economy, by maintaining free trade regimes and, to a lesser extent, by proposing the regulation of domestic labour markets through the International Labour Office (later: Organization). These two objectives were separated in the Post-World War Two order, the UN incarnating the first, and the Bretton Woods institutions the second.

The Wall Street Crash of 1929 led to shortages of money worldwide; countries cut spending, notably by decreasing imports, reducing social expenditures and intervening in their domestic economy with attempts to stabilize it, through monetary, social or coercive policies. To increase exports and thus redress the balance of trade, countries devaluated their currencies. These 'beggar-thy-neighbour' policies as the economist John Maynard Keynes called them led to a chain reaction of economic contraction and the Great Depression.

Roosevelt's New Deal, which lifted the USA out of the depression, demonstrated that Keynes' recipe of government spending to benefit large swathes of the society through public works and employment creation worked. Although the New Deal is always quoted as the basis for the social democratic welfare state, in fact Nazi Germany followed largely similar economic policies, and so did fascist Italy and other totalitarian states, with a similarly successful outcome. In Western states, both fascist and non-fascist, Keynesian policies pre-empted communist revolution by making the working class a stakeholder in national progress. The political integration of the working class could either take place through the expansion of democracy (the corporatist model), or by charismatic leadership focusing on external enemies.

The Wall Street crash and the subsequent Great Depression were seen as responsible for the run-up to the Second World War. Therefore, a 'United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference' was held bringing together experts in financial structures from the allied governments to discuss how to stabilize the post-War financial, monetary and economic order. In July 1944, more than 700 delegates from 44 allied countries met in a luxury resort in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire (the place would give its name to the conference and the institutions it spawned). The conference was the result of two and a half years of planning for postwar reconstruction by the Treasuries of the U.S. and the UK. Keynes led the British delegation, Harry Dexter White the American one. The delegates agreed on a monetary system based on a return to the gold standard, fixed exchange rates and the establishment of two financial institutions to oversee it: the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (which later became the core institution of the World Bank group).

Through policy advice and by providing soft loans the International Monetary Fund was meant to support expansionary fiscal policies by countries, instead of the reflexive austerity measures which had caused the Great Depression.[69] The IMF's main objective was to avoid a new global depression. However, Keynes' ideas for an international clearing union that would have introduced a global currency (the *bancor*) and stabilized international trade relations were rejected by the USA, as they included a sanction on countries running an excessive trade surplus[70] The US government successfully defended the supremacy of the US dollar and the legitimacy of its huge trade surplus in the final version of the

[69] Stiglitz, Joseph 2003: "Democratizing the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank"; p112.

[70] The so-called 'use it or lose it' policy: if a country accumulated foreign exchange through a balance of trade surplus, it should use the money by importing more from that country, by investing in that country's domestic economy or losing it/simply donating the money back; in that time, countries did not allow other countries to buy their productive assets, which was the solution capital ultimately found to the balance of trade surplus. One can imagine how different the global economic order would have been had the *bancor* been adopted.

agreements.[71] The USSR, which had participated in Bretton Woods, did not ratify the final act because the Soviets considered the institutions that had been created 'branches of Wall Street'[72]. The rejection by the USSR of an international monetary system that benefited the USA and other capitalist countries led the newly created financial institutions to be separated from the UN. They would only operate in the 'capitalist' world in their first decades of existence.

The World Bank's core objective was to provide loans for postwar reconstruction. Its focus soon shifted to providing loans for grand infrastructural development. In 1956 it created the International Finance Corporation to provide loans to private organizations and national financial institutions; in 1960 it created the International Development Association to provide grants to developing countries, and later an investment dispute settlement agency and a Multilateral Investments Guarantee Agency to encourage other donors to invest in countries with poor credit ratings. Over the years the World Bank refocused its mission towards development and 'poverty eradication', but it remains a bank with a preference for large loans and high volumes of financial transactions.[73]

The third Bretton Woods institution, the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs, which became the World Trade Organization in 1995, was originally concerned with regulating global markets to ensure mutually advantageous trade in products; after becoming the WTO it came to also cover the trade in services and intellectual property rights. The three Bretton Woods institutions opportunely served the interests of an already strong American industrial economy, pumped up by the war effort—the USA, at that time, produced one third of global manufacturing output—seeking to expand beyond its borders. The IMF and the World Bank headquarters are in Washington DC, that of the GATT/WTO in Geneva.

Decolonization in Africa

Somalia obtained its independence at the time of the decolonization wave that transformed the African continent. Africa's most prominent nationalists at the time–including Patrice Lumumba in Zaïre, Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Ahmed Sekou Touré in Guinea and Julius Nyerere in Tanzania—advocated building a state that integrated, or rested upon, local traditions of self-governance.[74] This can be partially explained by their experience of mobilising local groups in favour of independence, but it also seems to have been the result of an original and genuine reflection about African statehood. Nkrumah and Amilcar Cabral developed their theories in books and are the foremost political exponents of this reflection, while the most famous one was Frantz Fanon, who after his 1961 book 'The Wretched of the Earth' published essays advocating the creation of a 'United States of Africa'.[75]

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[71] See Steil 2013: "The Battle of Bretton Woods".

[72] USSR representative before the UN General Assembly, 1947, quoted in Mason & Asher 1973: "The World Bank since Bretton Woods"; p29.

[73] Informal discussions with several World Bank staff members in Nairobi, 2015-2017. They noted that the concept of a 'bad loan' does not seem to exist within the Bank, and that operators who clinch large loans to African governments, independently of the actual results of those loans, are promoted faster than those who approach such matters critically. The autobiographical account by Perkins, John 2006: "Confessions of an Economic Hit Man" of his years at the World Bank demonstrates that this mentality already prevailed in the 1970s and 1980s, when the World Bank was publicly engaged on a track of improving economic governance. There appears to be a double culture at the Bank. The more public one favours critical discourse, but at the core, as my interlocutors assured me, the World Bank 'remains a bank', which means it is mostly interested in making money and increasing the volume of its operations.

[74] See Martin 2012: "African Political Thought".

[75] His political essays were bundled in a book published in 1964 "Pour la Révolution Africaine"; most of them deal with the issue of necessary African political unity.

Indigenous governance

Crawford Young, in his study of Africa's 'first wave' socialist regimes from the 1960s, identifies some common traits in the politics of these countries, which he terms 'populist socialism'.[76] These include a general radical attitude, the exaltation of African socio-political values and a rejection of both capitalism—as a neo-colonial pattern of relations—and dogmatic Marxism—as a framework of thought that couldn't apply to the African pre-industrial condition. The new African leaders were gripped by optimism: independence would transform the colonies into functioning states. From Marxist theory African political leaders retained the belief that a social vanguard could transform society creating a new African political man.

It appears plausible that this wave of optimism also reached Somalia, and that the Somali Youth League (SYL) was inspired by it.[77] The SYL also saw itself as a vanguard that would transform society; its failure to do so provided legitimacy to Siad Barre's coup in 1969.

Somalia differs from other African nations however in its staunch Islamic religious attitude, which limits available political options. The early African socialist populist movements were inspired by indigenous traditions, as well as Islam and the colonial experience of the West. The notion of Africa's *triple heritage*, first introduced by Nkrumah in his concept of 'philosophical consciencism', and later developed by the Kenyan thinker Ali Mazrui,[78] provided a legitimacy to traditions of African self-governance equal to those of Islam and the modern Western state. African social traditions, including community self-governance, provided a unique identity to African politics in the decades before and just after independence. This led the scholar of Africa John Lonsdale to remark: *'the most distinctively African contribution to human history could be said to have been precisely the civilized art of living fairly peaceably together not in states*'. He follows by highlighting "*the evolutionist assumption that it is in some sense "better" to live in states, a premise so deeply rooted in most of us that it can seem almost an insult to explore analytically "the notion of statelessness, long abandoned by historians of Africa*" (quoting Godfrey Uzoigwe, 1980).[79] But the Somali political elites embraced only the third part of the triple heritage, paying lip service to the second and denying the first.

Whereas other African statesmen drew on ancient traditions of governance–based on lineage, collective property, spiritual legitimacy, community input, elders' advice[80]—there was no place for indigenous beliefs in Somali thinking about political systems (as opposed to practice). I.M. Lewis' musings about 'a pastoral democracy' in Somalia seem not to have influenced early post-independence leaders or Siad Barre's regime. They attracted more attention by Somali and foreign scholars after the collapse of the Somali state. The modernist Western approach to statehood adopted by Somali leaders would only be challenged by Islam, marginally in the 20th century and more squarely in the 21st.

Many of the strongest and most influential proponents of a radical different African approach to statehood were removed from power early on. The hand of formal colonial powers was evident behind

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[76] Young 1982: "Ideology and Development in Africa".

[77] In fact, there is little evidence for African political influence on the SYL, as there is little documentation about the movement, in general. One can assume, however, that through international travel of its members, studies abroad and radio broadcasts, SYL leaders were aware of political developments elsewhere in Africa. This requires further archive research or oral history investigation.

[78] Mazrui 1986: "The Africans: A Triple Heritage". For a discussion, see for example Keita 1987: "Africa's Triple Heritage : Unique or Universal?".

[79] Lonsdale 1981: "States and Social Processes in Africa"; p139.

[80] See for example Kofi Busia's theoretical work on a liberal Western-oriented Ghanaian state based on Asante traditions in Martin 2012:50-51. Busia was prime minister from 1969 to 1972 but he barely put into practice the theories which he had developed during his time at the universities of Leiden and Oxford. Instead, he developed good relations with the West and undid much of Kwame Nkrumah's heritage.

many of these assassinations and coups.[81] It must have been obvious to African elites that they did not have the freedom to invent their own political system, and that they had to establish a modern state acceptable to the former colonial powers who through their membership of the Security Council could deny statehood. The alternative was to seek the patronage of the USSR (not in itself sufficient to be accepted by the UN). Independence, formal sovereignty, domestic popularity and effective political action were not a sufficient basis to design an autonomous state. The early leaders of independence that survived turned to strengthening their states instead.

African socialism

Leaders such as Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Modibo Keïta in Mali and Sékou Touré in Guinea, continued with their efforts to transform their societies—mobilising it to achieve development—but came to place the emphasis on the role of the state, instead of employing indigenous governance systems. A top-down approach was substituted for the bottom-up ideal. The state apparatus and cadres they had inherited from the colonial powers did not appear suited for popular mobilization, so these needed to be transformed first. To achieve this transformation, many of these regimes accepted support from the Soviet Union, who offered it because of the socialist-leaning policies adopted by these rulers.

Dependencia theory had emerged in Latin American studies in the 1960s and was soon also applied to Africa. It argued that the African state could not emancipate itself from the relations of dependency in which it was embedded, either to former colonial powers or to Cold War dynamics, unless it underwent industrialization. Otherwise the 'Third World' would remain embedded in unequal terms of exchange, providing raw materials to the West and buying manufactured products in return, on terms dictated by

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[81] A non-exhaustive list of African leaders who pursued the pan-African dream and/or self-governance and were violently removed from power in the first decade of African decolonization:

- Barthélemy Boganda (leader of Central African Republic, committed to a 'United States of Latin Africa') died in a plane crash in 1959;
- Patrice Lumumba (leader of the Congolese anti-colonial resistance, Congo/RDC's first Prime Minister and a committed pan-Africanist) killed by Belgian agents in 1961;
- Sylvanus Olympio (Prime Minister and President of Togo, 1958-1963, attempted to decrease Togo's dependency on France by self-reliance and links with the Anglo-American world) assassinated in 1963;
- Ben Bella (the Algerian FLN's most popular leader at independence, in favour of self-governance and pan-Africanism) deposed by his defense minister Boumédienne in 1965 and kept under arrest until 1980;
- Kwame Nkrumah (early pan-African agitator and first President of Ghana 1957-1966) deposed in a military coup in 1966;
- Modibo Keïta (leader of the Senegal-Mali federation 1959-1960 and first president of Mali 1960-68, African socialist, non-aligned and pan-Africanist) deposed in a coup d'état in 1968 and died while still in detention in 1977.

Another wave hit African intellectual politicians advocating for the independence of Portuguese colonies, which was granted in 1975:

- Eduardo Mondlane (Mozambique, head of FRELIMO, seeking not only power but a fundamental change in social relations through African socialism) killed by a letter bomb in 1969;
- Amilcar Cabral (leader of Portuguese Guinean/Cape Verde resistance, one of the most prolific theorists of the independent African state) assassinated in 1973;
- Samora Machel (successor to Mondlane and Marxist-Leninist President of Mozambique 1975-1986) killed in an airplane crash in South Africa in 1986.

At the national level, killings have also removed radical leaders who sought more African autonomy and pan-African solidarity, such as Tom Mboya, the Kenyan pan-Africanist trade union leader (Chairman of the 1958 All-African People's Conference convened by Kwame Nkrumah) assassinated in Nairobi, 1969 and Steve Biko (South African nationalist, socialist and anti-apartheid activist) beaten to death by the police. This list has been pieced together by me from different sources and is incomplete.

the former colonial powers. These relations continued to benefit the West and a local bourgeoisie aligned with it that monopolized the smaller share of benefits accruing to developing countries. With its Marxist materialist base, Dependencia theory did not focus on the ideological superstructures which bound the domestic and Western elites. A state-led industrialization was required to increase national autonomy; but before industrialization could take off, the local bourgeoisie and society in general needed to undergo a transformation.

The content of the local traditions on which statehood could be based was now defined by the state elite. The 'Ujamaa' experience in Tanzania was the result of a contradictory effort to impose a supposedly socialist local traditional culture by a heavy-handed top-down approach.[82] Most observers agree it was effective in creating a new Tanzanian identity, but that it thoroughly disrupted Tanzanian society, undermined its local cultures, and ruined its economy and environment.[83] With hindsight it is easy to conclude that one cannot impose a vibrant civic culture by top-down state intervention but, until the collapse of communism, many politicians believed in the vanguard function of the single party, which could transform society in its image—Mao's cultural revolution being a contemporary example for them.

Although there is no evidence of direct influence of the mentioned African rulers on Mohamed Siad Barre, his regime followed a similar approach from 1969 onward. The label of 'scientific socialism' he used to designate his government policies was a term already used by Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana (1957-66) and Modibo Keïta in Mali (1960-68), in the same way: to distinguish it from 'ideological socialism'. Barre came to power the same year as the revolutionary socialist governments of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya and Gaafar Numeiri in Sudan—these were also the waning years of Nasser's socialist Egypt. Although Barre himself did not have tight links with the Arab world, many of his co-revolutionaries did. There were close academic and cultural ties between Mogadishu, Khartoum and Cairo (including a shared antagonism towards Ethiopia until the fall of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974).

But the state apparatus and national mobilization were in general not sufficiently strong in Africa to implement the required social reforms and fell hostage to community politics instead. It also appears that in many cases, these efforts were not genuine but rhetorical, and their main objective may have been garnering the support of the Soviet Bloc.

One may take the central issue of land ownership as example. The point made by Nyerere in his 1967 Arusha declaration, which outlined his political program, is that land ownership is traditionally seen as being communal, not individual. Other African socialist leaders, including Barre, made a similar point. Among many African communities, the appropriation of land for personal use is not only seen as an attempt to defraud the community today, but it is also an offense against ancestors and descendants, who are all present in spiritual form, providing a cultural reason to cherish community lands. As Scott shows in the case of Ujamaa in Tanzania,[84] the communal ownership of land was used as a pretext to claim *state ownership* of all communal lands in the name of a national community that only benefited state elites. State-led nationalism, then, cancelled the traditional autonomy of communities. Similarly, village councils composed of the 'revolutionary forces of society' annulled, at least formally, the power of elders. In this, again, the early Barre regime closely resembled other socialist governments in Africa.

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[82] Hyden 1980: "Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry"

[83] "*Nyerere's policies . . . resulted in many features that are the opposite of what ujamaa was intended to achieve: forced villagization, the absence of participation coupled with alienation from the state, bureaucratization, increased class differentiations, low agricultural production and industry acquisition of most of the state's development resources*"; Idahosa 2004: “The Populist Dimension to African Political Thought”; p212. See also the extensive analysis of the Ujamaa scheme of villagization in Scott 1998: "Seeing Like a State"; p223-261

[84] Scott 1998 op. cit.

Debates about the State in Africa

Joel Migdal traces the return of the strong state in political science back to the decolonisation in Africa.[85] Migdal explains that for social scientists concerned with African development, "*the organization of the state became the focal point for hopes of achieving a new social order, a unified channel for people's passions that until now had run in countless different directions. The state was to be the chisel in the hands of the new sculptors*".[86] As the quote by Lonsdale above reminds us, the emphasis on the state as the only tool that could transform society betrays a strong ideological belief in the state and a disregard for local, non-state governance systems.

The authors consulted for this research[87] agree that the modern African state is an imported and imposed structure. No scholar would argue that the post-colonial African state was created by domestic social forces who decided to pass a 'social contract' together and create the state, as the contemporary genesis myth of the Western state suggests. Most research focuses on state-society relations, examining how this imported but necessary structure can be made to 'work' in society.

A debate about the State in Africa took place in the 1990s between the French scholars Bertrand Badie and Jean-François Bayart.[88] Badie says that the state is unworkable in Africa because it is a historic Western construct that does not correspond to local political traditions—a very similar point to that made in Chapter 1. Bayart, while agreeing that it is an imported construct, points out that African elites have managed to shape their states to their benefit by the principle of extroversion. This term refers to the external orientation of African elites, who seek to gain wealth and influence ('rent') from their leading positions in the domestic social, political and economic systems, by establishing profitable relations with foreign actors.

This debate has also been held in other, but similar terms, in regard to the external embedding of the African state: (neo-)colonialism and (neo-)patrimonialism. The former sees African states and their ruling elites as subservient to the former metropolitan powers, who use their dominant position to dictate unequal relations of exchange, for example by forcing African states to open their markets to Western products while keeping their own markets protected. The second view does not deny this but focuses on the role of African elites in establishing and maintaining such unequal relations, and how they use the power they derive from this relationship to dominate domestic societies through neo-patrimonial clientelist networks. 'Patrimonial' refers to treating the public domain, including the resources of the state, as private property, while the prefix 'neo' acknowledges that power has shifted to new hands and is no longer vested in the traditional authorities.[89]

One may remark that the two opposing positions in both debates are based on the same premise (unequal relations between Western and African states) but lay the emphasis on the actors differently. In the neo-colonial/imported state perspective, the African elites can do little to change the equation; they are helpless and can only try to opt out of the relation entirely, in a rebellious or isolationist mood. Regarded through the lens of extroversion, African elites do have agency, although their options are

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[85] Migdal 2001: "State in Society. Studying how States and Societies Constitute and Transform One Another"; p41.

[86] Migdal & Schlichte 2005: "Rethinking the State"; p10.

[87] Among whom Allen 1999, Badie 1992, Bayart 1993 ea, Bulhan 2013, Clapham 1996 & 2017, Davidson 1992, Fanon 1961, Hagmann & Péclard 2011, Herbst 2000, Mamdani 1996 ea, Mueni wa Muiu & Martin 2009, Schlichte 2018, Young 1982, 1986.

[88] Bayart 1996: "L'Historicité de l'État Importé" in response to Badie 1992: "L'État Importé. L'Occidentalisation de l'Ordre Politique" and Badie & Birnbaum 1978: "Sociologie de l'Etat"; p178 & 181.

[89] Neo-patrimonialism is a "*form of organisation in which relationships of a broadly patrimonial type pervade a political and administrative system which is formally constructed on rational-legal lines*"; Clapham 1985: "Third World Politics. An Introduction"; p48.

limited. They can instrumentalize and divert foreign support for purposes unanticipated by their international partners. As J.F. Bayart puts it, colonialism was not only imposed, but was a form of exchange between Europe and Africa.[90] If one takes African agency into account, it is also evident that the transatlantic slave trade could not have taken place without the complicity of local African rulers.[91]

Although Africa is often regarded as only having joined global society and its economy—on the disadvantageous footing of colonialism—in the past 150 years, it has been well integrated in world trade systems much longer than that as we saw in the case of Somalia,[92] and if until 1885 the terms of trade were advantageous for Africa, domestic elites were shaping relationships with external powers to their benefit already. J.F. Bayart also notes that when seen through the '*longue durée*' lens of the Annales school, many contemporary conflicts on the continent have their roots in pre-colonial African history. It is wrong, therefore, to have African political history start in the colonial or post-colonial period.

A contribution by Bayart to the field of political studies of Africa was to bring back African agency; in his analysis of the 'rhizome state in Africa' (3.2) he examined how African political elites formed in the colonial administration appropriated the post-colonial state to their advantage, and to that of the social rhizomes to which they are connected. Borrowing from Gramsci (passive revolution), he demonstrated how the principle of acculturation operated between Western and African elites through formal institutions and language,[93] thus linking both elites together in networks of socialization and shared interests.

In terms of domestic state elite formation, Lonsdale made an interesting observation in 1981: ready access to state institutions makes classes dominant. Institution-building is therefore more correctly construed as class formation than as political development. This is why recruitment is more important to the state elites than what the institutions actually do—as in 1960s Somalia. It is an exclusionary process before it is an integrative one. Dominant classes have internal access to the state apparatus as its operators; dominated classes have external access only, as supplicants.[94] This naturally contributed to the formation of patronage networks along lines described by Bayart as the 'rhizome-state'. But this development did not make the state, in any way, less legitimate.

As Béatrice Hibou reflects, *"Far from being a product imposed by colonization, the state in this part of the world was, until the 1980s, legitimate in spite of its violent and coercive power, precisely because it embodied many things simultaneously, all related to the ideal of modernity. The state thus represented the modernizing aspirations of the people through respect for the administration, and, to a certain extent, what is known as the Weberian ideal of the state* (…) *the 'politics of the belly' should not be understood as the spread of corruption and cronyism; it is, instead, the mode of appropriation of a hegemonic project that integrates the entire population, a process of making access to the state and its 'benefits' more widespread".*[95]

Bayart's approach led to subsequent theories of the political marketplace and elite bargains, both paradigms on how African states work which are based on the agency of domestic elites (see Chapter 10). In defence of his position, one can note that when African elites embraced socialism they were not somehow dependent on the USSR to do so, but did so freely, availing themselves, at most, of an

[90] Bayart 2000: "Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion".

[91] "*Europeans possessed no means, either economic or military, to compel African leaders to sell slaves*" John Thornton claims in "Africa and the Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800"; p125.

[92] Bayart strongly argued this point, see for example Bayart 2000:217-218, against a majority of scholars who seemed to think Africa was isolated until the late colonial period and never became fully part of the international system, in a Hegelian train of thought.

[93] He compares the 'idiom of multi-party democracy' to "*a pidgin language which indigenous kings use to parley with the agents of the new world economy*": Bayart 1993:xiii.

[94] Lonsdale 1981:162.

[95] Hibou 2017:"The Political Anatomy of Domination"; p160.

opportunity for funding and political support from the Soviet Bloc; just like Siad Barre.[96]

One observation to finish this part of the overview is that it is hard to find texts that contain an *African political theory of the State*. Nkrumah, Cabral and Nyerere may be among the few African leaders who developed their ideas in written form. Frantz Fanon was not African. Lumumba, for example, seems to have been surfing political waves, not following a theoretically defined state-formation path or seeking to define one. This kind of opportunism seems to have been quite prevalent among early revolutionary African leaders. This does not reflect on their objectives (there is no reason to doubt they sought true autonomy and the development of their people) but on their methods. If there is no African political theory of the state, this could mean that most African leaders never were swayed by the *theology of the State* but understood from the outset that the State is an instrument to access foreign resources, a chain-link in a system of external domination that Africans realistically had no chance of reversing but that might, at best, work also in their advantage.

Neoliberal Reform in Africa

Most new states that emerged out of decolonization pursued state-led development policies (like Somalia during Siad Barre's first decade in power), supported either by the Soviet Bloc or by Western states. Theoretical foundations for this could be found both in Keynesian theories of the social welfare state and in 'Dependencia Theory' efforts to end ex-colonies' economic submission to the former colonial powers and replace an extractive, export-based economy by industrialization and a domestic market. To finance this effort, developing nations, when they could not access loans from the World Bank, either set up regional financial institutions such as the the African Development Bank (1964), Asian Development Bank (1967), and the Islamic Development Bank (1973); or they borrowed on the private capital market. From 1973 onwards, rising oil prices flooded the global market with petrodollars, giving developing states access to cheap loans.[97]

The result was a web of global finance institutions that entrenched the division between donors and developing countries ('shareholders' and 'clients' in World Bank parlance). This points to an oft-ignored aspect of institution-building: when an institution is set up to remedy a certain imbalance, chances are (especially if that institution is endowed with far-reaching power) that the institution will perpetuate the imbalance which is the very foundation for its existence, rather than resolve it which would cause the institution to become superfluous, and its staff to lose their jobs. Alternatively, the institution may find new grounds for its existence by modifying or reinterpreting its core objectives.

This is what the IMF and the World Bank did after US President Nixon officially terminated the Bretton Woods system by delinking the dollar from the gold standard in 1973. As each economy could henceforth define its own monetary policies in a world of free-floating currency exchange, it became impossible to regulate the global economy in the manner foreseen at Bretton Woods. Both institutions

[96] In defence of Badie, he develops a sophisticated critique on the "universalist pretensions of the State', noting, in the vein of my own critique in 3.3, that "*the State is the only form of government that systematically denies any form of particularistic identity*", which are all assumed by other regimes (the city, kingdom, empire, segmentary) bound to a certain community and time. See Chapter Two 'La Prétention Universaliste de l'État' in Badie 1992: "L'État Importé. L'Occidentalisation de l'Ordre Politique". I have not studied this academic debate or its ramifications in any detail, but reading both authors, I am struck by the similarities in their overall appraisal of the external embedding of African states, with the internationally-oriented Badie looking closer at the international side of the relationship, and Africanist Badie more at the African side.

[97] The manner in which international financial institutions such as the World Bank encouraged developing countries to take big loans for projects which according to experts were obviously going to fail is highlighted by John Perkins, op.cit.

refocused from managing financial relations between developed economies to providing loans and advice to developing nations, and to establishing the rules for the global economic order—whence the effort to establish the World Trade Organization. The World Bank took the lead in defining the post-Bretton Woods system, especially in intellectual terms.

Structural Adjustment

Africa's economic performance in the 1960s and the first half of the 70s was quite strong. Moses Khisa argues that this was a result of the statist development model, including efforts to substitute imports through industrialization. But the relatively successful statist model of development was forcefully and prematurely ended by Structural Adjustment Programs in the 1980s.[98]

The prelude to this was the 1973 coup in Chile, against President Salvador Allende's socialist, dependencia-theory and national mobilization-based state. The coup was one in a series of many US-supported military coups in Latin America, undertaken to protect US interests in what the Monroe Doctrine defined as its sphere of influence. What made it different is that it was accompanied by a radical new market-based approach to economic development, pioneered by Milton Friedman and the Chicago School of Economics. This approach was fully implemented in General Pinochet's Chile. The resulting integration into global markets led to high growth rates and many profitable investment opportunities for Western capitalists, now buoyed by petrodollars. World Bank experts, among others, were impressed.

It also caused rising inequality, poverty and repression in Chile, but those political effects seemed incidental to economists. There was long a division of labour between economists and politicians. The former saw it as their task to ensure economic growth, leaving questions of distribution (social justice) to politicians. Academically, 'International Political Economy' only brought together both disciplines in the 1990s, while the World Bank would refuse to recognize responsibility for the political impact of its policies until the 2000s, after the efforts of Stiglitz among others.

After Chicago School policies—soon called neoliberal—seemed to prove their success in Chile, concerns grew among Western experts that loans provided to developing economies, in particular those pursuing import substitution industrialization, were accentuating what seemed to be 'misguided policies': a state-led command economy, import tariff barriers and exchange rate policies which increased the purchasing power of local populations while discouraging exports. According to the Chicago School, the reverse should happen: markets should lead the economy, there was no justification to protect internal markets by import tariffs and a developing country should seek to improve its balance of trade by currency devaluations.

When in the early 1980s interest rates suddenly rose (as a result of 'Reagonomics' money supply management) many countries that had borrowed on international markets risked defaulting on their interest payments. This allowed the IMF and the World Bank to impose conditionalities on future loans through 'structural adjustment programs'. These exacted that borrowers open their economies (by reducing tariffs and trade barriers that protected domestic markets), remove subsidies, drastically decrease state spending (especially on salaries and social services), float exchange rates, and privatize state industries. Since many countries needed to access new loans to pay the suddenly increased debt service—the alternative was defaulting, i.e. state bankruptcy—they had no option other than accepting these conditions. Milton Friedman had won the Nobel prize in 1976 and it seemed the sensible thing to do. By 1990, the International Financial Institutions had more than 180 Structural Adjustment Programs running in 60 countries.[99].

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[98] Khisa 2019: "Whose Africa is Rising?".

[99] Moore 1995: "Development Discourse as Hegemony".

The results of the imposition of structural adjustment policies have been good for the financial sectors in the West, providing many new profitable investment opportunities in the developing world. Profits do not need to be reinvested in the domestic economy where they are generated but can be freely repatriated. Since many countries compete on the global market to sell the same raw materials, neoliberal reforms have led to low prices for natural resources from developing countries, thus cheap industrial inputs, while the abandonment of industrialization attempts and import barriers obliges these countries to import manufactured goods, against prices determined by producers. This has reinforced the subaltern position of developing economies in the world market and led to rapidly growing income and wealth disparities between the developing and the developed world. The countries most successful in breaking through this barrier—the 'East Asian Tigers' or Newly Industrialized Countries of the 1980s—all followed state-led economic development policies (against neoliberal prescriptions) coupled with an external free market orientation.

For the populations of developing countries, the results have not been positive, overall. Besides curtailing the freedom of African governments to determine their own economic policies, they have caused a stagnation or breakdown in social services, rising prices, rapidly increasing income and wealth disparities, more precarious livelihoods, a notable rise in social conflict and a deteriorating trade balance. The African state lost a lot of domestic legitimacy in the process, leading to an outbreak of civil wars and other forms of domestic conflict in the 1980s and 1990s.

For ruling elites in developing countries, in contrast, structural adjustment has generally been positive. As we saw in Somalia, structural adjustment facilitated neopatrimonial rule. It was simple for state elites to use privatization for self-enrichment; to shield their loyal supporters from dismissal while firing potential opponents from the civil service; to grab control of the valuable sectors of the economy with the help of foreign investments; to use the loans and the disappearance of tariffs to import luxury goods for their own consumption; to erase the socio-economic basis for contestation by fragilizing local economies; while enjoying the whole-hearted support of the international community for all these reforms, thus delegitimizing domestic contestation.

Neoliberal re-ordering in perspective

Bayart sees a continuity between how African ruling elites responded to the Structural Adjustment Programs and the political order in Africa in the *longue durée*. He explained it through the concept of extroversion: Africa had never been disconnected from the world; on the contrary, its ruling elites had accustomed themselves to make their dependence on the colonial metropoles and donors both productive and advantageous. In other words, African elites, like those in Somalia, convert the very 'dynamics of dependence' within which they operate into assets.[100]

One of African elites extroversion strategies, as defined by Bayart, is trickery. The Trickster State is an evolution–or African version–of Tilly's state, that formed through war and crime; it also has roots in African popular culture: a 'Big Man' is typically also a trickster.[101] The Trickster State draws advantages from what Bayart terms an 'invisible political economy' (or informal economy) formed in the interstices of the official global trade economy and local political bargains. African elites thus benefit from both the formal economy (loans and investments) and from the informal economy (which they dominate through patronage networks). Neoliberal reforms opened many new opportunities for private engagement with the global economy, liberating African ruling elites from dependency on the domestic economy, thus also from local constituencies. Instead, the domestic economy became dependent on the ruling elites. The vastly increased flow of capital through the international system—in a nearly exponential growth since the late 1970s—made it possible to build patronage networks based principally on external

[100] Bayart as summarized in Hagmann 2016 "Stabilization, Extraversion and Political Settlements in Somalia"; p11.

[101] Bayart 1998: "La Guerre en Afrique: Dépérissement ou Formation de l'État?".

resources (for example, oil rents, security rents or aid). This opportunity became possible not only to the state's ruling elites, but also to contenders who derived their power from the informal economy.

By the early 1990s the disastrous effects on local societies and economies of the structural adjustment programs in Sub-Saharan Africa were becoming clear, but the International Financial Institutions and Western countries did not reverse course. From a neoliberal perspective, Fukuyama noted in 2004 that "*given their ultimate political dominance, neopatrimonial regimes used external conditionality as an excuse for cutting back on the modern state sectors while protecting and often expanding the scope of the neopatrimonial state (...) spending on the military, diplomatic service and jobs for their kin*".[102] In this perspective the economic policies were correct but the problem was political: the blame lay with African state elites who misused the reforms for their own benefit, through the mechanism of the (neo)patrimonial state. This explanation shielded the neoliberal ideology from criticism and provided the solution: democracy.

One should not ignore how beneficial these 'free-market' policies were to capitalist sectors in the West. The debt crisis allowed the takeover of many sectors of Third world economies by Western capital and preserved the supremacy of Wall Street, the City of London, other Western financial markets and the US Dollar. It also allowed the establishment of an international regime of property rights that safeguarded the acquisition by private capital of key assets in the public sector, at home and abroad.[103] Moreover, there *was* no other policy as the stagnation of the Soviet Union became evident in the early 1980s. As Thatcher had said while introducing neoliberal reforms in the UK, *there is no alternative.*

To tackle growing social conflict in Africa, donors advocated democratization and human rights—these became the foreign policy priority of the West in the 1990s. J.F Bayart has argued that African societies that did undergo a democratic transition in the 1990s benefited more from the end of Cold War patronage of authoritarian regimes than from Western pro-democracy policies such as the UN's 1992 *Agenda for Peace* or Mitterrand's new Africa policy as outlined in his La Baule discourse of 1990.[104]

But here our search for parallels between the evolution of the state in Somalia and in other countries of Sub-Saharan Africa trails off, because by 1991 the Somali state had collapsed. In Chapter Seven we will continue examining the influence of systemic changes in the world order on interventions in Somalia.

[102] Fukuyama 2004: "Statebuilding: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century"; p17.

[103] D'Souza 2018: "What's Wrong with Rights?"; p28 and 129-155.

[104] Bayart 2000:224. Bayart also rejects the implausible theory of 'transitology' that democratization in Africa was somehow the domino effect of the democratization wave in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Concluding thoughts on Somalia in the African Context

From this short examination of the African state between 1960 and 1990, the following becomes clear: parallels are obvious, but there is no evidence that Somalia was influenced by sub-Saharan Africa (or, for that matter, vice-versa). The observed parallels can be ascribed to the international conjuncture in which Somalia and other African states evolved: the UN system, the Cold War and the neoliberal reordering of the global economy. In 5.3 I argued that structural adjustment programmes in Somalia certainly contributed to the isolation of the regime from domestic society, and increased conflict. In this section we have seen that this happened almost everywhere in Africa.

Retrospectively, the collapse of the Somali state may be due to the *weakness* of neo-colonial relations between domestic ruling elites and former colonial powers, which assured some degree of regime stability in many other 'fragile' African states. Italy attempted to play this role, but from the mid-1980s it was engulfed in political turmoil itself, and despite its investments in the higher education of Somali elites it did not have the same tight social relations with the Somali ruling class that characterized French and English relations with their ex-colonies. The Belgian and Portuguese ex-colonies that like Somalia had weak ties to the former metropolis were also engulfed in civil war in the 1980s and 90s.

African community self-governance was seen by early African leaders as one of the essential ingredients of a truly African state, often combined with an emphasis on pan-Africanism. The modern state bequeathed by the colonial powers thus risked being overtaken at both the sub-national and the supra-national level. That this did not happen is partially due to direct interference by ex-colonial powers (including assassinations and supporting military coups), partially to the restricted framework for state autonomy in the UN system (new states had to play by the rules and accept that they would have no say in changing the rules), but also to a pragmatic bent in African political culture. Despite efforts by a few early African intellectuals and political leaders to develop autonomous African statehood, most African ruling elites never 'believed' in the state as most Western people do. They saw it as an instrument they could use to access international resources and dominate domestic societies. They were not victims of neo-colonial Western (or, if one wishes to broaden the notion of colonial, Soviet) policies but active 'players'. This lack of belief in the state made it appear to Western critics and would-be sympathizers that African reformers were not genuine, or not committed enough.

Insofar a few African ruling elites genuinely tried to transform their societies and economies to create the basis for a strong independent national state, they were thwarted in their efforts by a renewed push, from Western centres of power, to subjugate the continent and maintain its subaltern status in the global economy as a provider of prime resources. This may not have been the *intention* of those who sincerely believed that the market and capital were better suited to steer the economy than states, but it was certainly its *effect*. These neoliberal reforms consolidated African ruling elites, who used them to increase their hold over vital national economic assets and weaken opposition to their rule. In Chapter 1.4 I described how the return of Weber's emphasis on the state as exercising a monopoly of violence within a legal-bureaucratic order—a coercive, not a developmental state—coincided with an effort in the 1980s to redefine the state from a site of contest between domestic political forces to an actor that could implement neoliberal reforms and safeguard the interests of capital. African elites agreed with global ones in the instrumental nature of the state.

In the logic of extroversion that has characterized African ruling elite relations with the West since early colonial times, domestic elites use their integration into the global economy to consolidate their patronage networks, leading to neopatrimonial regimes. The 'Politics of the Belly', to use Bayart's famous phrase, whereby elites compete to provide access to the state for the social rhizomes of which they are part (family and in-laws, a clan/tribe/ethnic group, an officer's school, a business sector, a network of politically mobilized friends; usually several of these at once) are not in themselves a problem, nor do they delegitimize the state or national politics, as long as they maintain a social balance

and each important group has 'its turn to eat'.[105] However, as in Somalia, the reliance of patronage networks on external sources of support destabilizes the domestic balance of power, allowing the same groups to remain in power indefinitely with the support of their foreign patrons. This leads to higher levels of conflict.

The USA, USSR and ex-colonial powers had flooded Africa in subsidized and free weaponry since decolonization, and the availability of more arms on the private market as the Soviet bloc floundered allowed opposition groups to increase their firepower too. This facilitated the transformation of social tensions into armed conflict in many African countries, and the 1990s were a particularly bloody decade in much of Africa. But most African regimes did not collapse thanks to the support of ex-colonial powers. In the neo-colonial world Somalia was somewhat of an orphan, its colonial parents having withdrawn early on. In their absence the United Nations Organization had functioned as a foster mother, and it intervened again in 1992 to put an end to the Somali civil war.

[105] "It's Our Turn to Eat" is the title of a 2009 book by Michela Wrong about Kenyan whistle-blower John Githongo, describing his efforts to combat the corrupt practices of successive ethnic group-based Kenyan governments that loot state resources when in power.

Chapter 7: Crucible of New World Orders, 1992 to 2012

In which Somalia serves as the test-case for an increased role of the United Nations in the post-Cold War era, and unwittingly derails the UN's Agenda for Peace. How the UN-US military humanitarian intervention in Somalia fails, its withdrawal followed by the partial return of peace based on self-governance. Why efforts to achieve a national peace settlement benefit clan faction leaders and stoke conflict, leading regional and international actors to propose a federal state with local settlements as building blocks. Where the reader's patience is tested with discourses about failed states, good governance and the relation between human development and security, that reflect a global consensus in favour of state-building. *In which the Great Powers are drawn back into Somalia under the banner of the Global War on Terror's Failed State doctrine. How a phantom enemy gradually becomes real. In which the international community grows a new Somali state tree in a Kenyan nursery; and how efforts to transplant it to Somalia are hindered by a political alternative arising from Somali society's need for justice and order: the Islamic Courts. Of the liberal application of the epithet 'terrorist', and the Ethiopian invasion to defeat the courts and install the Transitional Federal Government in Mogadishu. Of native shrubs, imported trees and trees whose roots lie in the sky. In which the conflict between local and international governance provokes another humanitarian catastrophe.*

The collapse of the Somali state coincided with the end of the Cold War. New perspectives opened for both Somali and global society, although they were doubtlessly brighter outside Somalia. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the bipolar world order came as a surprise to both policy makers and political scientists in the West. Unexpectedly, the 'First World' had emerged triumphant, capitalism and democracy were no longer a contested ideology, and for the first time in world history, one superpower – the USA – ruled virtually unopposed over the entire world.

International Relations had been dominated, until then, by superpower rivalry and terms such as 'balance of power', 'containment' and 'mutually assured destruction'. The new situation required a new terminology and the adaptation of successful strategies like neoliberal reforms to a unipolar world. All the countries of the previous Soviet Bloc were suddenly 'in transit' to becoming Western, and this justified a completely different set of foreign policy practices and discourses.

Somalia, as we shall see in this chapter, became the sandbox for these new practices and discourses directed at the developing world, Islamic countries and sub-Saharan Africa. Human security, the development-security nexus, failed states and good governance, the War on Terror, maritime security and the threat emanating from ungoverned spaces were discourses that seemed relevant to Somalia. Among practices pioneered or refined in Somalia are the humanitarian-military intervention, remote management of humanitarian and development operations, drone strikes, national conferences to

establish new state structures and intense support to building the institutions of state.

One of the most immediate consequences of state collapse for Somalis was that there was no longer any barrier to international intervention. Without a state, the country was a free-for-all, a place that from the point of view of legal sovereignty resembled the High Seas (or the American 'Far West') more than a modern country. This made it a unique place to test these new practices and discourses. There were always multiple powers claiming to represent official sovereignty over Somalia or over part of it. This chaotic situation lasted 20 years. With the establishment of the Federal Government of Somalia in 2012, the international community agreed that there was now again a credible government that wielded effective sovereign power over Somalia, even though we will see in the next part that both Somaliland and Al Shabaab wield more effective power, over greater territories, than the Federal Government does.

Somaliland seceded in 1991, and I will not deal with it here, because it embarked on a different political path. Somaliland is the subject of Chapter 8. Nor do I deal with the formation of Puntland (touched upon briefly in Chapter Nine). Instead I focus on Mogadishu, South and Central Somalia.

7.1 UN Intervention, 1992 to 1995

The year 1991, which was the most intense period of the Somali civil war, prefiguring the 1992 famine, elicited no response from the UN. 1991 was a busy year, internationally: the first half of the year was dominated by the Gulf War, and the second by the break-up of the USSR and Yugoslavia and the start of the Balkan War. The diplomatic lassitude caused by Somalia's rogue behaviour may also have played a part in the initial lack of reaction of the international community. But from 1992 to 1993 Somalia was the theatre of the most forceful UN intervention, backed by US and international military support, ever attempted by the organization.

A New Role for the United Nations

With the end of the Cold War there was a 'window of opportunity' for a different international order to be built. Military spending could now be drastically reduced; this 'peace dividend' could be spent instead on international cooperation.[1] The superpowers' support to authoritarian regimes in Africa and other developing nations would cease, allowing liberal democratic forces in those countries to flourish. The UN, hamstrung since its creation by the veto power of the opposing blocs in the Security Council, could finally play its intended role, spearheading conflict resolution and development throughout the world.[2] Young idealistic leaders such as Bill Clinton (1992-2000) and later Tony Blair (1997-2007), who spoke of human rights, global peace and debt cancellation, seemed to incarnate this new hope.[3]

Progressive forces were ready when the Cold War architecture collapsed. Led by the UNDP, development agencies in Nordic countries, critically minded NGOs and scholars,[4] intervention efforts

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[1] Between 1988 and 1996 global military spending indeed decreased by 30%, from slightly over 1.5 trillion to under 1.1 trillion per year (in constant USD). Source: SIPRI database.

[2] In the words of then UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali, "*The adversarial decades of the cold war made the original promise of the Organization impossible to fulfil*"; UN Security Council document S/24111 "An Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping", 17 June 1992.

[3] Colonomos, Ariel 2008: "Moralizing International Relations: Called to Account". He speaks of an ethical turn away from realpolitik, in an era marked by 'secular messianism'.

[4] A key intellectual from this era was Mahbub ul Haq, former Finance Minister of Pakistan, key advisor to the World Bank and to the UNDP, who developed the Human Development Index to measure human well-being and established the Human Development Report. See ul-Haq, Mahbub 1995: "Reflections on Human Development".

were refocused on human development and human security. But the UN recognised from the outset that human development could only take place within a secure, peaceful context—this was termed the 'development-security nexus'—and thus a role was maintained for states in providing security, both at home and abroad, through international peacekeeping interventions. This set of policies was first proposed by then UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali in his 1992 *Agenda for Peace.* The Agenda for Peace was immediately put to the test in Somalia, as policy made practice.[5]

The institutions that had grown strong in the Cold War (the military, national security apparatuses and their constituencies, including what President Eisenhower once called the 'military-industrial complex') did not embrace the Agenda for Peace. Searching for a new security threat to focus on, the focus was first on 'rogue states' such as Iraq, Libya and Iran. "*We have slain a large dragon, but we live now in a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes. And in many ways, the dragon was easier to keep track of.*"—said James Woolsey in February 1993, before becoming director of the CIA.[6]

The 'New World Order' first proclaimed by Gorbachev, and then by President Bush (senior) in 1990-92 had elements of both the transnational, peace-dividend based movement, and the 'world of snakes'.[7] New and far-reaching collective security arrangements would need effective policing by the remaining superpower and its allies. But the hopes of Western progressives and liberals were dashed when the US first crushed the Iraqi army when they routed it from Kuwait, but then let Saddam Hussein unleash terror on his citizens. This demonstrated that the US still deferred to the sovereignty of Hussein's Iraq and was unwilling to assume the responsibility for the welfare of its people. Ideologically, the 'New World Order' was old wine in new bottles, as Noam Chomsky remarked in his in-depth study of the concept.[8] He argued that Western capitalism no longer needed to be diluted by social democratic principles and could now rearrange the world to its own benefit. This is indeed what happened.

The Gulf War of 1991 showed that the remaining superpower could limit the UN's margin of manoeuvre in implementing the Agenda for Peace. But US interests did not preordain all world affairs, and the US government's agreement to provide the UN mission in Somalia with 25,000 troops did seem a concession to the UN's new agenda.[9] Unlike interventions in the Cold War era, this one was not opposed by any international or even regional state. Somalia, a deeply underdeveloped country with a relatively small population facing clear humanitarian needs, hostage to what seemed small-time criminal armed factions, seemed a perfect test-case for the capacity of the UN to implement its vision for a peaceful world and demonstrate the palpable effects of the development-security nexus.

The UN intervenes in Somalia

By January 1992 it was clear that a massive humanitarian crisis was in the making in Somalia. The first UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR) on Somalia in the post-Barre period was taken in January 1992. UNSCR 733 proclaimed an arms embargo, urged all parties to agree to a cease-fire and find a political solution, and instructed the UN to start a large-scale humanitarian operation. A cease-fire was declared between the two main contenders for the presidency (Ali Mahdi and Mohamed Farah Aidid) in Mogadishu in March 1992, but this did not reduce strife in the rest of the country. The UN Security

[5] Richards 2014: "Understanding Statebuilding: Traditional Governance and the Modern State in Somaliland", p30.

[6] See New York Times, Feb 3 1993: "C.I.A. Nominee Wary of Budget Cuts".

[7] Chomsky notes that the term was also used in a 1990 report issued by the non-governmental 'South Commission' headed by Julius Nyerere: "*the Commission called for a 'new world order' that will respond to 'the South's plea for justice, equity, and democracy in the global society'*". Chomsky 1994: "World Orders Old and New"; p4.

[8] Chomsky 1994:17.

[9] It has also been argued that the mission, which Bush agreed to after having been defeated in the November 1992 elections, was a poisoned gift to the incoming Clinton administration; but this could only be known after it failed, and at the time failure was not anticipated.

Council convened again in March 1992 noting that the cease-fire was not being respected and urged (UNSCR 746) the Somali factions to abide by it. With no changes being observed on the ground, the UN Security Council established the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) in April 1992 (UNSCR 751), whose main purpose was to deliver humanitarian aid under a 90-day operation called ‘Emergency Humanitarian Assistance’ (April-July 1992) to be channelled through the port of Mogadishu. UNOSOM I only included 50 unarmed military observers, so it needed guarantees from the militias controlling the areas where humanitarian assistance was most needed. However, the arrival of aid sparked new rounds of conflict, causing delays in the deployment of the UN mission and most aid to be looted between its arrival in Mogadishu and its distribution to the needy.

By July 1992 the UN Security Council, aware of the lack of progress, used threatening language to force Somali factions to facilitate aid delivery: “*In the absence of such cooperation [by all parties, movements and factions to assist in general stabilization] the Security Council does not exclude other measures to deliver humanitarian assistance to Somalia*” (UNSCR 767). Under Operation ‘Provide Relief’ (Aug.-Dec. 1992) aid was delivered directly by US cargo planes from Mombasa (Kenya) to the areas of operations. Faced with massive looting of aid and deliberate attacks on organizations and people delivering it, the UN ratcheted up the intervention by establishing four zones and increasing its deployment of military, but unarmed personnel (UNSCR 775). But this was still insufficient to deliver humanitarian aid and bring Somali factions to establish peace.

The UN Special Representative, the Algerian Mohamed Sahnoun, deployed in April 1992, developed an approach to the conflict considered by most scholars to be more sensible than those of his successors.[10] He strove to restore peace at the local level by the involvement of clan elders and local authorities in ceasefire agreements, aid delivery, disarmament[11] and re-establishing law and order. He argued for a multi-centred approach, delivering aid through Bosaso, Kismayo and Berbera as well as through Mogadishu. This led Matt Bryden to later see him as an early advocate of the ‘building block approach’, a federalist approach to Somalia.[12] He warned against elevating factional leaders politically by inviting them to peace negotiations. He criticized the UN for being too slow and bureaucratic, not listening to experts, taking decisions in New York without even informing him and focusing solely on Mogadishu and the central state; he also blamed them for partiality in dealing with Somali factional leaders.[13] He was against the military solution favoured by the UN and in particular against the deployment of US troops.[14] He generally advocated for a small UN role[15] This criticism resulted in Sahnoun’s termination in October 1992. His last action was to convene a meeting of Somali intellectuals in the Seychelles, who argued for a bottom-up, participatory reconciliation process and called on the UN and international partners to

[10] This is a widely shared opinion, for example by Ken Menkhaus, Jutta Bakonyi, Matt Bryden, Mark Bradbury & Sally Healy, Issa-Salwe, Abdurahman Abdullahi ‘Baadiyow’ and Sarah Phillips. Mohamed Sahnoun published a widely read book in 1994 named ‘Somalia: the Missed Opportunities’ in which he developed his critique of the UN Security Council and Secretary General’s policies at the time.

[11] Sahnoun instituted a ‘food for arms’ programme with widespread support by local leaders; after his resignation it was superseded by a failed military policy of confiscating weapons. Ahmed & Green 1999: “The Heritage of War and State Collapse in Somalia and Somaliland: Local-Level Effects, External Interventions and Reconstruction”; p122-123.

[12] Bryden 1999: “New Hope for Somalia? The Building Block Approach”; p134-135.

[13] Sahnoun had been discussing law and order provision in the capital with Aidid when he found out that Boutros Ghali had directed UN planes to bring funds and equipment to Ali Mahdi. Aidid broke the negotiations. Sahnoun requested an investigation but that was not undertaken by the UN (Sahnoun 1994:9).

[14] This position was supported wholeheartedly by humanitarian operators in Afghanistan such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). See MSF 2013: “MSF Speaks Out. Somalia 1991-1993”; p10.

[15] Sahnoun 1994a: "Prevention in Conflict Resolution: The Case of Somalia".

stop distrusting local intelligentsia.[16]

The UN had adopted an 'incumbent-insurgent' binary logic,[17] where it accepted Ali Mahdi as the head of government after he had been confirmed in this role in the Djibouti Peace conferences between faction leaders of June and July 1991, and considered Aidid a spoiler. But for most Somalis, Ali Mahdi was a man of the previous regime[18] and his support base was the Abgal urban and commercial bourgeoisie, while Aidid had helped 'liberate' Mogadishu and other areas from Barre, providing him with popularity and charisma among fighters. Mahdi, arguably, had been defter at managing international public opinion and enlisting diplomatic support and had a more civilian appearance compared to Aidid's military profile, but despite nominal recognition, the international community had done little to support him when it mattered, in 1991.[19]

The United Nations was in an unfamiliar terrain. The organization could not fall back on previous experience for this novel type of mission and it improvised as it went along (Menkhaus ea. 2009:27); the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) which later would organize similar 'integrated' missions, had only just been set up in 1992. Menkhaus notes that national reconciliation, peacebuilding and the political process were not an area of focus for the UN and the US political leadership, which were more concerned with countering security threats (dealing with Aidid and other warlords). The consultative group of Somali experts set up by Sahnoun continued meeting but their recommendations (notably, not empowering armed faction leaders and building on self-governance capacity) were not heeded.

Of course this should not be taken to mean that the UN wished to see Somalia ruled by warlords. In processes also observed elsewhere, when the international community sets about (re-)building a state in a conflict zone or otherwise fragile state, they naturally seek out partners who share the same vision of what such a state should be. This is usually called 'civil society'. The interveners also seek to integrate all main powerholders such as warlords, religious and tribal chiefs, which then crowd out civil society; but it is clear that in the long run international organizations hope/expect their efforts will bring civil society to power. In Somalia this civil society was weak after two decades of dictatorship, and most of its members had fled abroad during the civil war. Because of the UN's preferential treatment towards civil society, faction leaders saw them as rivals for their political survival.[20]

Meanwhile, famine struck central and south Somalia. The death toll was impressive, with an estimated 250,000-300,000 of Somalia's estimated six to eight million population perishing, notably in the intra-riverine area where agricultural production had been most severely disrupted. "*According to a study by the US Center for Disease Control at least 40 percent of Baidoa's population died between August 9 and November 14* [1992]*; relief organizations estimated that as of September, 25 percent of all Somali children under five years of age had died*".[21]

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[16] Mukhtar 2003:197-198.

[17] Malito 2017: "Neutral in favour of whom?".

[18] His wife had worked in Barre's Presidential Office until the collapse of the state, and he was a well-known businessman.

[19] Menkhaus ea. 2009: "The Search for Peace. A History of Mediation in Somalia since 1988"; p11.

[20] A purge took place in Kismayo with the massacre of about 100 Harti middle class people between 8 and 19 December 1992 by Colonel Jees, the leader of the SPM and at that time an ally of Aidid. Kapteijns quotes contemporary and local US and NGO sources that clearly understand this as a measure taken to prevent this group allying with the incoming UN/US mission (scheduled to arrive on 19 December). The strategy worked even though the internationals, not wishing to deal with Jees and warlords, decided to form local committees of elders and other respectable people. But all those potentially opposed to the warlords had been silenced or had fled already, so the Belgian peacekeepers and US troops ended up working with Jees' and Aidid's cronies anyhow. Kapteijns, Lidwien 2013: "Clan Cleansing in Somalia"; p50.

[21] Metz (ed) 1992: "Somalia. A Country Study"; p.xxxii.

As news of the mass deaths in Somalia reached global audiences, UNSCR 794 of 3 December 1992, for the first time in the UN's history, appealed to Chapter VII of the UN Charter[22] which allows the application of force to maintain or restore international peace and security. The fiction of Somali sovereignty and the integrity of the state was finally abandoned after resolutions 733, 746, 751, 767 and 775 had failed to deliver the expected results. The third phase of the intervention (Dec. 1992 to Oct. 1993) was called 'Operation Restore Hope' and was to be implemented by a US-led military intervention under the umbrella of a United Nations International Task Force (UNITAF). Outgoing President Bush pledged 25,000 US troops to support this operation and other countries also contributed troops, to a total of 37,000. Coming from 27 countries, including 13 Western ones, South Asia, the Arab world, Turkey and Africa, UNITAF was the first truly global military force of the post-Cold War era.

That seemed like a large amount in a country like Somalia. On 8 December 1992, the first US troops dramatically landed in an amphibian operation in and around Mogadishu. With the US troops came media coverage, and with that coverage—dubbed the 'CNN effect'[23]—came additional funding for humanitarian operations. NGOs started flooding into the country; many of those that had left in 1990/91 came back in 1992 for the relief effort. By one count, there were 40 international NGOs operating in South Central Somalia by 1994.[24]

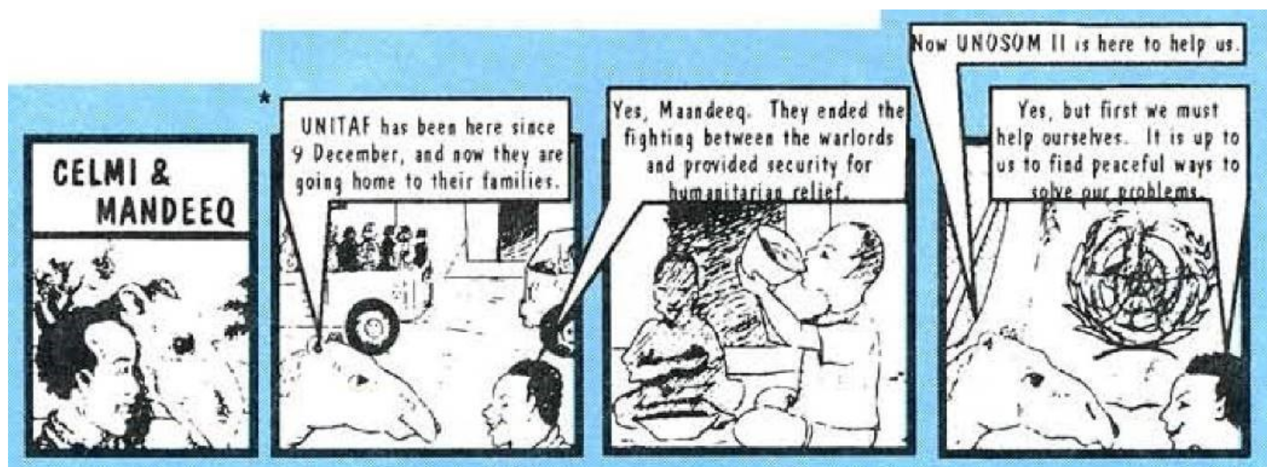

Figure 20: An example of US PsyOps as part of Operation Restore Hope, in the newspaper 'Rajo'. This publication was in Somali; the example here was translated. Mandeeq, a lactating she-camel, was how Somalis often referred to the state, especially in poetry: as a source of wealth to be milked.[25] Celmi sounds very close to Cilmi, 'scientific and may refer to Siad Barre's socialism. Is it a coincidence that these two figures defended the UN-US presence?

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[22] Article 41 of the UN charter: *The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the Members of the United Nations to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations*. Article 42: *Should the Security Council consider that measures provided for in Article 41 would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the United Nations.*

[23] The 'CNN effect' refers to the influence that the media have over the policy agenda. Once networks start providing saturation coverage to a specific crisis, it becomes impossible for politicians not to address them. The term started being used in the early 1990s, and the Somali crisis – together with the Gulf and Balkan Wars – was one of the first instances of its use. See Livingston 1997: "Clarifying the CNN Effect. An Examination of Media According to Type of Military Intervention".

[24] Bradbury 2010: "State-building, Counterterrorism, and Licensing Humanitarianism in Somalia"; p4.

[25] Ahad 2015: "Somali Oral Poetry and the Failed She-Camel Nation State".

UNITAF was successful in quelling much of the fighting, allowing the delivery of aid, and bringing some peace and stability to Somalia, while also providing some necessary cash and jobs to the economy. By early 1993, it seemed that finally the UN (and US) response had been adequate. Emboldened by this success, the Secretary General, when writing to the Security Council to request their endorsement of UNOSOM II,[26] envisioned a vast scope of responsibilities for the revamped UN mission. Besides a force under direct UN command of 28,000 international troops, UN Security Council Resolution 814 of 26 March 1993 went far in its statebuilding ambitions: disarmament, setting up a Somali police force to eventually take over security provision, settling IDP issues, continuing aid delivery, restoring a civil administration throughout the country and engineering economic revival. "*Not only the largest peacekeeping force in the UN's history, but also the most ambitious*" as a report by Interpeace stated. It seemed the UN mission in Somalia, despite its shortcomings and slow beginnings, heralded a new global role for the United Nations

In its rapidly succeeding Security Council resolutions of 1992 and 1993, the UN repeatedly called for a 'cessation of hostilities' to be followed by 'a political settlement', based on 'national reconciliation'. There was no specification of what such a political process should lead to (no mention, for example, of elections or a 'broad-based government') and the state-building objective was generally secondary to that of delivering aid. For practical reasons, the UN mostly dealt with the factional leaders that militarily controlled areas of Somalia where the UN wanted to deliver humanitarian assistance.

The successors of Mohamed Sahnoun decided to invite the principal factional leaders ('warlords') to a peace conference, of which the main purpose was to secure an end to the fighting while aiming at a more permanent political settlement. This reflected a prioritization of security issues for the international forces, who wished to defuse potential aggressors by offering them a place in the solution. There was also an assumption that the faction leaders truly represented their clans.

Resolution 814 was taken while a UN-sponsored meeting between the factions was taking place in Addis Ababa,[27] and the UN avoided pre-determining its outcome, so it left open the political settlement. The Addis Ababa conference was the centrepiece of UNOSOM's strategy to form a national government and bring an end to the war. UNOSOM had invited 15 factional leaders, each one representing one armed clan,[28] to the conference. The hope was that a new Somali government would form and that Somaliland would be persuaded to reunite with Somalia (the SNM declined the invitation to the conference).[29] Despite its manifest importance, the Addis Ababa conference was organized by an unexperienced team of UN political officers with little previous experience of Somalia.[30] It resulted in an agreement where the faction leaders agreed on establishing a Transitional National Council with executive departments, Regional and District Councils that within two years would prepare a constitutional process and work on disarmament, establishing peace and reconstruction with UNOSOM support.

The agreement became undone as soon as the participants left the Ethiopian capital; attempts to set up the Transitional National Council were soon abandoned. One of the reasons the Addis Ababa agreement didn't hold was the opposition by General Aidid.[31] Although he was one of the fifteen signatories of the agreement, he was the first not to abide by it, probably because he had not been appointed head of the government (the key unresolved issue of the Addis Ababa conference) while he already considered

[26] Letter 'S-25354' by UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to the Security Council, dated 3 March 1993

[27] The National Reconciliation in Somalia conference was held in Addis Ababa between 15 and 27 March 1993 under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, UNECA.

[28] Menkhaus e.a. 2009:12.

[29] Menkhaus e.a. 2009:24.

[30] Menkhaus e.a 2009.

[31] See for example S24992 (of 19 Dec. 1992), S25168 (26 Jan. 1993) and S26317 (Aug. 1993).

himself Head of State. This further soured his relations with the international community. While Aidid had good relations with the US forces initially and had benefited economically from the influx of international military and humanitarian forces, he repeatedly spoke out against the presence of international forces in Somalia, even warning the Security Council they should be withdrawn. As the leader of the main armed faction in the country, Aidid felt the international military presence was stopping him from assuming his rightful place as the new president. In turn, General Aidid was frequently singled out for criticism in reports by the UN Secretary General on the situation in Somalia.[32]

In May 1993 UNOSOM II, dubbed ‘Continue Hope’, replaced UNITAF. Far from Mohamed Sahnoun’s vision, UNOSOM II advocated for a highly centralized process, contesting both the secession of Somaliland and local peace deals, such as the one that put an end to two years of fighting between the Habar Gedir and the Majerteen in Galka’yo. In Somaliland UNOSOM II actively undermined the local peace process, engaging ‘representatives’ of Somaliland who were against the secession for whatever reason and offering them a place at the negotiation table.

The killing of 24 Pakistani peacekeepers on 5 June 1993 as they were inspecting one of Aidid’s weapon depots was a turning point; the following day, the Security Council issued resolution 837, calling for a UN-led investigation into the killing, calling to account those responsible and broadening the strike and deterrence mandate of UNOSOM II. UNOSOM counted on the support of rival faction leaders and residents of Mogadishu tired of the exactions by clan militia to turn on Aidid. Messages were distributed by tracts and megaphone telling residents that the UN was not against the Habar Gidir, but only needed to capture Aidid for his crimes. Habar Gidir elders, apparently with Aidid's agreement, set up a council without him to represent their clan[33] and mediate between Aidid and the international forces. However, as a result of faulty intelligence, US helicopters fired missiles at the house where that meeting was taking place on 12 July 1993, killing the elders.[34] This incident, added to other operations from helicopter gunships strafing presumed enemies in the streets of Mogadishu or firing rockets at their buildings, turned the population against UNOSOM. Suddenly the entire Somali population seemed to back Aidid and wanted the 'foreign oppressors' to leave. This allowed Aidid to mobilize a number of Somalis that the foreign intervention forces could impossibly defeat, even with 28,000 troops. In the late summer and early autumn UNOSOM lost control of many neighbourhoods of Mogadishu. Troop contributing countries developed tensions among themselves, with Italy taking the lead in criticizing the militarized US approach.

This led to the infamous ‘Black Hawk Down’ incident of 3 October 1993, in which 18 US servicemen were killed (as well as hundreds of Somalis).[35] The televised images of the US soldiers’ bodies being dragged through the street by Aidid’s clan militia struck a raw nerve in American public opinion. The ‘CNN effect’ did the rest: a few days later President Clinton announced the withdrawal of the US contingent. By March the following year all US troops had left.

UNOSOM dragged on until March 1995, when it was officially ended. A year before that, not only the US, but also other Western nations[36] had withdrawn their armed forces, leaving the operation very diminished.[37] Up to the end, the UN forces were involved in conflict throughout the country and could

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[32] The first US military operation, in February 1993, was against Aidid’s archenemy Col. Morgan in Kismayo.

[33] Pouligny 2004: “Ils Nous Avaient Promis la Paix”; p226.

[34] Four foreign journalists investigating the 12/7 incident were killed by an angry mob.

[35] Wikipedia mentions 800-1000 Somalis killed (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle of Mogadishu (1993). Marchal and Menkhaus mention ‘hundreds of Somalis’ killed. Marchal, Roland 2000: “Mogadiscio dans la Guerre Civile”; p5. Menkhaus, Ken 2007a: “Mediation efforts in Somalia”; p36.

[36] Besides the US, Italy, Belgium, France and Sweden also withdrew their contingents in March 1994.

[37] Nov. 1994: UNSCR 954 extended the mandate of UNOSOM II until March 1995. By then UNOSOM only operated in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa; it focused its attention on reaching a political settlement.

not tip the scales in favour of a peaceful resolution. In fact, the violence was often directed at the intervention forces and was motivated by looting the humanitarian supplies they protected, their armament, vehicles and bases.[38]

There was a decrease in conflict in Somalia over the years of the intervention, but this cannot be credited to the intervention, but to local dynamics of conflict. Much of the 'getting even with each other' and looting had been done by the end of 1992. One may see it as a restoration of a certain social balance that had been upset by Siad Barre's state and policies, even if it does not conform to any idea of justice (stronger clans abusing unarmed ones, theft, rape, starvation). Predatory behaviour by armed factions and large-scale fighting continued but it was gradually dealt with by self-governance mechanisms, as discussed in the next section. Informal settlements, often undocumented, took place throughout the country but the formal peace settlement that was the objective of the UN remained elusive. In Somaliland (Chapter Eight) formal peace settlements were achieved alongside and thanks to the accumulation of informal ones in the early 1990s, and Puntland would go through a similar informal/formal process at the end of the decade. But the armed factions in control of Mogadishu and the rest of the country could not agree with each other.

All observers and experts agree that UNOSOM II was a resounding failure. The mission left in 1995 without having achieved any of its objectives. The net results of UNOSOM II were:

- The UN's reputation was tarnished globally as it did not achieve the objectives it had set itself. The UN lost confidence in its capacity to pursue its 'agenda for peace' (to provide security for development) in a civil conflict.
- US public opinion turned against the UN, as it was believed that 'our soldiers have fought bravely' and that they were the victim of a political quagmire caused by fuzzy UN planning. The US administration realized it neither had the capacity to operate in a 'World of Snakes' nor a vital necessity to do so, and withdrew from its global policing role until '9/11' in 2001.
- The US and the international community came to fear military intervention in civil conflicts, avoiding involvement in Rwanda and ex-Yugoslavia.
- Somalia henceforth was seen as a country too chaotic and violent to allow intervention, so the international community disengaged.
- Somali trust in UN impartiality was not restored, as the UN had become a party to the conflict.
- Somali faction leaders came to see themselves, and to be seen by foreigners, as the heirs to Somalia's sovereignty.

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[38] See SG report S/1994/1068 of September 1994, paragraphs 25 to 27, for a sample of incidents faced by UNOSOM II: "*On 7 September a UNOSOM logistics convoy of 18 trucks was ambushed near Wanlaweyn. Only one vehicle reached Baledogle (…) On 29 July, in Belet Weyne, troops of the Zimbabwean contingent were completely overrun by a strong militia force. One UNOSOM soldier was killed and the UNOSOM troops had to abandon all their equipment to the militia (…) On 22 August, an Indian unit escorting a supply convoy was ambushed by armed militia near Burlego, on the Baledogle-Baidoa road. Seven Indian soldiers were killed during this incident. On 31 August, three Indian doctors were killed in Baidoa when a rifle grenade exploded as they were leaving the officers' mess (…) During a ceremony [in Bal'ad on 9 September] to hand over some United Nations equipment to the local authorities, the latter demanded that all United Nations equipment be handed over to them. In the afternoon of the same day, approximately 100 militia, supported by "technicals", attacked a UNOSOM position protected by troops of the Zimbabwean contingent, with a view to seizing all the equipment before the troops withdrew. UNOSOM troops reacted immediately in self-defence. Four militia members were killed and 39 captured during this incident. No casualties were incurred by the UNOSOM troops. The Zimbabwean contingent finally left Bal'ad with all equipment and stores intact. Immediately upon their departure, some 300 men, women and children rushed into the camp to pick up leftovers*".

Writing in 1993, Marchal reasoned that it may be understandable that NGOs, for practical reasons, sometimes need to negotiate with armed actors to reach beneficiaries. But it is 'unpardonable'[39] that United Nations agencies and donors participate in this logic and remain wilfully blind to the political consequences of aid delivery, empowering illegitimate and unaccountable 'warlords'. From a local perspective, it is expected of powerful external actors that they remain above the fray; when they join it and become partial, they debase themselves and lose the respect of the population.[40] This was one of the major weaknesses of the 1992-1995 UN-US intervention, which found itself locked in battle with the forces of Aidid—and lost.

Despite its unprecedented scale, UNOSOM failed to create a safe operating environment for humanitarian aid delivery and to further a political settlement. With crises in Rwanda and the Balkans claiming the attention of the international community, and with Somalia being perceived as of no strategic interest, political engagement diminished. With no acute emergency and no peacekeeping forces, foreign aid declined, from a budget of US$1.5 billion for UNOSOM II in 1993, to $20-25 million for UN operations in the second half of the 1990s. Many international agencies closed their operations or contracted them out to local Somali NGOs.

Effects of the failed UN intervention on Somali society

One effect of the UN intervention on Somali society was a huge influx of resources into Mogadishu and other towns. Almost of all these accrued to the faction leaders. Besides the food aid that was routinely looted, rented houses cost 10-12,000 dollars a month, an additional $2,000 were paid per month for each security guard, and a so-called 'technical' cost $300 per day.[41] Considering that at least 100 houses were rented, each with about a dozen security guards, and about 380 'technicals' were used by the UN agencies and international NGOs every day in Mogadishu, business was good. In addition, duties and fees were slapped on everything entering the country by the armed factions controlling the entry points. International agencies also provided work to Somalis for all kind of services, usually contracted through the factions. Only in recruitment, non-looted aid disbursements and non-security service provision could ordinary Somalis secure a share of this bonanza.

Muhammed Farah Aidid profited most from the international intervention. The fighting between Aidid's Habar Gidir and Ali Mahdi's Abgal factions between November 1991 and March 1992 had left Aidid in control of the port and the airport and the areas where internationals used to work and live, while Mahdi controlled the North of Mogadishu. The first shipment of food aid from the World Food Programme to arrive in Mogadishu port, in March 1992, was greeted by mortar fire, and had to stay at large until local businessmen related to Aidid had sold their own stocks of food.[42] Doubtlessly aware that they were being extorted, foreign organizations developed a hostile attitude towards Aidid while continuing to buy services from his people, thus effectively subsidizing the attacks against themselves.[43] Hansen terms this 'failures in the economic intelligence of the UNOSOM II operation'.[44]

This allowed the clan leaders to consolidate their grip over the informal economy (nothing was left of the formal sector, so the entire economy was informal). As seen previously, the informal economy had

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[39] Marchal 1993b "La Militarisation de l'Humanitaire : l'Exemple Somalien"

[40] See Baczko 2016: "Legal Rule and Tribal Politics" on a very similar dynamic in Afghanistan, where the conviction by US special forces that they had to choose sides in local conflicts (deciding who the 'good guys' were and who the 'bad') caused them to lose the respect of the local population, ending in their defeat.

[41] Hansen 2003: "Warlords and Peace Strategies: The Case of Somalia"; p5/13

[42] Marchal 2000:28

[43] Menkhaus & Pendregast 1995: "Political economy of Post-Intervention Somalia"

[44] Hansen 2003: 7/13

been growing apace in the 1980s and it was organized along clan lines; this economic infrastructure doubtlessly contributed to the rapid rise and success of the clan factions. Informal operators benefited from the looting of public assets, selling them in Kenya, Ethiopia or the Gulf, and from the private property and businesses taken over from defeated clans and social groups. This did not subordinate independent businessmen to the faction leaders at first: they were partners. The inflow of aid and cash tipped the balance of power in the domestic informal economy towards the faction leaders who could control this bonanza. Later the business sector would come to resent the leadership by faction leaders.

The transfiguration of the urban social-economic tissue through the civil war and the subsequent intervention reconstituted the crucial role of the *abbaan* (3.1). As in the past, the role of the abbaan was never institutionalized or even codified; he mediates between persons using his cross-clan connections to solve problems. The *abbaan* is usually not a 'respected elder'; businessmen, because of their resources and dense network of cross-clan and external relations, are more likely candidates. The *abbaan's* capacity to solve cross-clan problems naturally predisposes him to becoming a political-economic entrepreneur in his own right. The prime location for the operation of *abbaans* was (and still is) Mogadishu's Bakara market, which remained open even for merchants from Barre's defeated Marehan clan.[45] Bakara market thus became not only the economic, but also in many ways the political centre of Somalia.

An *abbaan*-like figure which appeared in response to the massive population displacements to Mogadishu, and the efforts of humanitarian organizations to reach them, is the 'gate-keeper'. His role is to provide a place for Internally Displaced People (IDPs), typically on a ground of which he is the owner or which he has rented or otherwise occupied. He takes payments and commissions from both the IDPs and the humanitarian organizations for his services, especially security—both for humanitarian operations and to discipline IDPs in the camp. Many NGOs came to despise these people, as they were seen as profiteering from the misery of others and were connected to faction leaders.[46] But their access to international resources and different Somali lineages provided them with a solid platform to grow over the coming years, branching out into new services such as security for international organizations.[47]

The expectation that a State would be rebuilt by the international community caused more violence to occur, since politics were conducted mainly through violence—taking physical control over resources, areas or populations—and each factional leader sought to gain a prominent position to secure a place at the conference table where the future of Somalia would be decided.[48] Factional leaders, even Aidid and Mahdi, had nearly no control over their militias: violence and looting had been decentralized from the beginning of the Civil War. For example, historic tensions between Sa'ad, Saleban and 'Ayr sub-clans of the Habar Gidir, and within each sub-clan between rival lineages, led to frequent clashes between militias belonging to the same overall faction. Moreover, every time alliances between the factions changed, some groups would fall out and establish their own alliances. Faction leaders thus spent as much time disciplining their own troops (whence the importance of booty, to reward loyalty) as fighting rival factions.

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[45] Marchal 2000:32.

[46] Marchal 2000 mentions the case of a government building that an NGO wanted to repurpose as an aid clinic. When they promised a small relocation grant to the IDPs living there, the head of that IDP community quickly mobilized more IDPs to come and live there so they would also get that grant (and he his cut); this caused the project to fail.

[47] Menkhaus noted that "*the role of the abbaan, for instance, evolved into highly lucrative protection services for international aid agencies and others operating in Somalia*". Menkhaus 2016: "Non-State Security Providers and Political Formation in Somalia"; p10.

[48] Menkhaus e.a. 2009, and Marchal 2000.

Insofar they dreamt of a new state, the new political elites took Barre's regime as a model: for lack of political imagination and because this what they expected of the international community. The Somali population had lost faith in the impartiality and the ethics of the international community in the 1980s, because of continued Western support of Siad Barre even though the corruption and violence of his regime was well-known. Somalis expected the West to set up a similar state to that of Barre, but then a bit more democratic. Until Barre's forces were routed in Gedo in July 1992, many Somalis (including Aidid) even feared the USA might bring him back to power.

Marchal wonders why Somalis who were awarded cabinet or civil service positions by Mahdi and Aidid, without even a remote possibility of exercising them, were still intent on keeping them, even picking fights with contenders. He reasons that such a position could still allow rent extraction, for example from gullible foreigners. Two, it strengthened the office holder's position within the lineage, also with its business elite. But Marchal believes that fundamentally, an official position is seen as an individual possession, which one should not give away or allow to be taken[49]—something like a horse. It is valuable symbolic capital.

There were no efforts by factional leaders to create their own state. They were waiting for the invitation by the United Nations. Indeed, if the whole point of the state in a self-governed society is to provide access to external resources, then only such access will drive local actors to engage in (externally financed) state-building.

There was also a moral dimension to the civil war that contributed to the later rise of the Sharia courts. Marchal, in a 1993 field survey among the young militiamen that ransacked Mogadishu, describes the culture of these youngsters called '*mooryaan*'. The more urbane among them, with fashionable sunglasses, jeans and t-shirts, gold ornaments (like rappers' 'bling-bling') and big guns, lived as groups in occupied houses together with young ladies (who were there voluntarily or not), and taking sophisticated imported drugs besides qat. They accepted no authority above their own and had no objective beyond a life of wealth and enjoyment. They would occasionally organize or participate in raids and spend the rest of their time watching Western movies and TV. They followed the riots in Los Angeles of spring 1992 and longed to 'join their brothers' in the USA, feeling vindicated that their life in Mogadishu was not so different from that in LA.[50] To Marchal, these *mooryaan* seemed to be living comfortably in a Mad Max Western make-believe world. Their rural cousins, less sophisticated, sought to emulate these 'gangsta rap' attitudes.

To many Somalis, the *mooryaan* were a worrying sign of moral decay, caused by both the falling apart of society (elders had little influence over the youth) and by Western culture. The early 1990s were the time when satellite TV became common, exposing people all over the world to a continuous flow of unfiltered commercial American culture (previously, they would have to go to theatres to see movies permitted by their authorities or buy VHS cassettes). Although this is not often brought into relation with the rise of political Islam, conversations I have had with Muslims in many countries suggest a direct link. Satellite dishes were installed to circumvent state-controlled media and access the better content of émigré channels and foreign broadcasters, but alongside these channels came the provocative music videos and porn that the *mooryaan* liked to watch. It was the arrival of what local societies deemed unethical content on TV screens in households throughout the Muslim world that caused people to reassess the relation between culture and religion and support the Islamization of both the private and the public realms.

[49] Marchal 2000:27.

[50] Marchal 1993a:299.

In 1995, as the United Nations wrapped up UNOSOM 2 and left the country, Somali society was still completely in flux. Many observers predicted that the retreat of the last international 'peacekeepers' would lead to a new round of civil war, but that did not happen. The more acute observers quoted above, on the other hand, thought that if left to their own devices, Somalis would soon settle many of their outstanding issues and get along. This was a more correct assessment.

7.2 Building Blocks, 1995 to 2002

From the New York point of view, Somalia had been the shoal on which the promise of a unified world order led by the UN with US support—a millenarian dream of world peace finally within reach after the end of the bipolar world order—had been shipwrecked. The United Nations Security Council disengaged politically from Somalia: there was no Security Council resolution on Somalia until 2001, when the War on Terror revived international interest in Somalia, but from the side-lines Western powers continued backing regional efforts to achieve a formal peace settlement. From the Mogadishu point of view, the foreign intervention had allowed armed faction leaders to consolidate their grip on power, delaying stabilization. The departure of the last UN troops and their vast budgets accelerated organic social processes of peace-seeking. In this section we follow both developments, the formal UN-backed search for a peace settlement, and informal local measures of self-governance. The combination of both led to what was called the 'building block' approach, which would later lead to a federal government structure.

Donor Governments Lead the Intervention

The United Nations continued playing a secondary role from its offices in Nairobi but international leadership in Somalia passed to donor governments, in particular to the European Commission (EC). This reflects the shifting emphasis towards aid. As the largest donor to Somalia, the EC/EU has exerted considerable influence on the direction of aid policy from the mid-1990s to today. In the absence of famine or large-scale conflict, the country was judged to be moving towards recovery and Somalia’s problems were redefined in developmental terms.[51]

[51] Bradbury 2010.

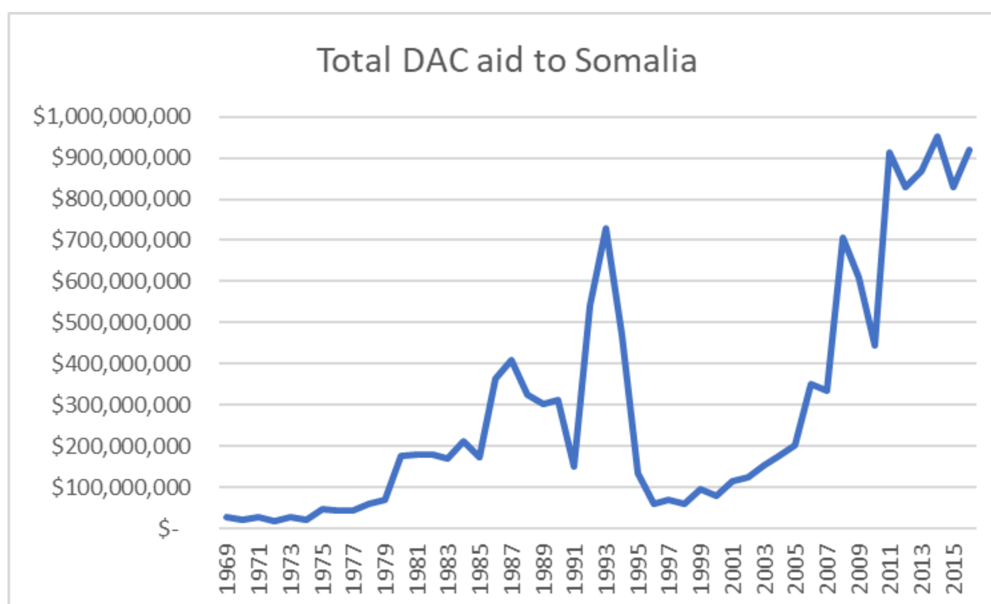

Figure 21: Net aid flows into Somalia in current US$. This graph shows that how levels of aid to Somalia plummeted between 1995 and 2000. Note: DAC stands for Development Assistance Committee of the OECD; it regroups all main Western donor nations plus Japan, South Korea the EU institutions. Source: The World Bank[52]

From 1996 to 2004, absolute funding levels were low compared to the 1980s and the post-2005 period, but they were growing yearly as Figure 21 shows. Somalia scored near the bottom (161 of 163) in the UNDP's Human Development Report of 1998, for which a separate, insightful publication was made covering Somalia.[53] Although there was relative peace in most of the country, socio-economic indicators such as life expectancy, maternal and infant mortality rates and access to education, health and clean water were still dismal. Donors worked through NGOs to continue to provide humanitarian relief where needed, and to start development work where possible. The humanitarian and development efforts are treated separately in the last section of this chapter.

In the UN 1996/97 consolidated appeal for funding, the country was divided into three zones: of *crisis* (most of South Central Somalia), of *transition* (Mogadishu, Central Somalia and parts of South Central) and of *recovery* (Puntland and Somaliland).[54] Besides, donors supported camps for Somali refugees in Kenya, Ethiopia and Yemen. But funding for Somalia was hard to get by, as Kofi Annan noted in a report to the Security Council in December 2000, mentioning "lack of media coverage and donor fatigue" as part of the problem.[55]

The Political Process

The fragmentation that characterized Somalia in the first half of the 1990s was reversed in the second half of the decade.[56] With the consolidation of Somaliland (1993-97), the formation of Puntland (1998),

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[52] The amounts of aid received by Somalia are different according to the sources. For example, the Somalia Aid Coordination Body (SACB) give as total assistance to Somalia in fiscal year 2002 $174.4 million, and for 2003 $271 million. There is no truth in this matter, just many ways of counting . This World Bank dataset has been chosen because it is respected, internally consistent and thus allows for comparisons and discerning trends.

[53] Menkhaus & Marchal for UNDP 1998 – Human Development Report Somalia.

[54] Le Sage & Majid 2002: "The Livelihoods Gap: Responding to the Economic Dynamics of Vulnerability in Somalia".

[55] Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia S/2000/1211, paragraphs 52 and 56.

[56] Marchal, Bradbury & Menkhaus in the UNDP Human Development Report Somalia 2001.

a political entity in Bay and Bakool (1999)[57] and regional administrations in other areas of Somalia, centrifugal forces were checked.

While the UN and the international community had all but disengaged from the local political front, they did back regional initiatives taken by Kenya (1996 and 2002-2004), Ethiopia (1996-97), Yemen (1997), Egypt (1997) and Djibouti (2000) to reach a political settlement in Somalia. Meles Zenawi's Ethiopia (post-1991) took a strong interest in Somalia; it sought to avoid unrest among its own Somali population,[58] to prevent the emergence in Somalia of radical Islamic groups such as Al Itihad, and to develop alternative access to the sea, reducing its reliance on Djibouti. During and after its war with Eritrea (1998-2001) Ethiopia also sought to impede an alliance between Eritrea and Somali factions while Eritrea, in the 2000s, started backing the Islamist forces Ethiopia feared. Armed faction leaders were invited as representatives of Somali populations to each of these conferences, and no workable peace deal was agreed on in any of them, with the exception of the last.

The regional and international efforts to rebuild a Somali state seemed a logical response to the analysis that most of Somalia's problems stemmed from state collapse. But in fact, such international conferences provoked conflict rather than peace. For potential participants the stakes were high: peace talks were a way to access international funding (starting with a visa, a plane ticket and a room in a luxury hotel) and gain political ascendance within one's community. Menkhaus, for example, notices that, with each successive 'national reconciliation' conference, new military factions would appear that claimed to represent a population group, but often had no such mandate.[59]

The Arta conference in Djibouti brokered by Ismail Omar Guelleh, the President of Djibouti (himself a Somali/Dir/'Iise) attempted a novel approach, inviting clan elders and civil society groups as representatives of the Somali population, to avoid relying on faction leaders. A procedure first used to determine clan representation at the Sodere, Ethiopia peace conference of 1996-97[60] was adopted: the '**4.5 formula**'. This gives one equal part of representation to each of the four major clan families: Hawiye, Darood, Rahanweyn and Dir/Isaaq, and half a part for the minorities (Bantu, Benadiris and professional minorities). This formula is still used in 2020; for example in the 275-member federal parliament there are 61 seats each for the major clan groups and 31 for the minorities.

The Arta conference was the first political reconciliation meeting not based on factional representation. There were some international observers, but Western diplomats did not play a significant role in the process, which was considered Somali-led. After months of discussions and elections (marred by reported fraud and undue intervention by the Djiboutian President)[61] representatives agreed on a Transitional National Charter and decided to establish a Transitional National Government (TNG) led by Abdiqasim Salat Hasan. This new government reflected the interests of the Mogadishu business class—which also operated in Djibouti and had supported the initiative, maybe even suggesting it to Guelleh—and its Hawiye protectors. It was immediately opposed by regional strongmen who had not participated in Arta such as Hussein Aidid (the son and successor of Mohamed Farah Aidid, who died in 1996), or who had dropped out before the end (such as Abdullahi Yussuf, the President of Puntland since 1998).

The announcement of the establishment of the new government was greeted with enthusiasm in

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[57] The Rahanweyn Resistance Army, in control of most of Bay and Bakool since 1995, only founded a regional administration ('Southwestern State of Somalia') in April 2002, in the run-up to the Eldoret peace talks in which it wanted to participate as a government, not as a faction. But the Digil-Mirifle region had been effectively self-governing since 1999 when it declared its autonomy.

[58] Ethiopia was concerned with stability in the Ogaden but also about possible radicalization of non-Somali Muslim communities (among Oromos and Afars but also among Amharas and minority groups such as the Gurage).

[59] Menkhaus 2003b: "State Collapse in Somalia: Second Thoughts"; p409.

[60] Menkhaus ea 2009:39.

[61] Anonymous (international organization official refereed by Gérard Prunier) 2002: "Government Recognition in Somalia and Regional Political Stability in the Horn of Africa".

Mogadishu and among many other Somalis, despite the opaque process. The reestablishment of a Somali state with minor participation by the faction leaders was also seen as a positive development abroad and the new government was recognized by the UN and regional forums such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the cooperation forum between the countries of the wider Horn of Africa: Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Uganda, Somalia, Eritrea and Djibouti—despite Ethiopian reticence.[62]

The TNG established itself in Mogadishu between October and December 2000; it set up the trappings of a government and appealed for foreign funding. However, donors adopted the 'wait-and-see' approach of the UN Security Council,[63] and only Saudi Arabia and Libya provided some funding. Since the TNG counted few warlords among its members and thus lacked armed forces, and most of the territory—including much of the capital—was controlled by its opponents, it soon became clear that it would not be able to govern. It did not reach out to the opposing faction leaders, or seek to improve the situation in Mogadishu, for example by reopening the harbour and airport. Instead, its members immediately engaged in conflict over the spoils of government,[64] and the initial goodwill of the Somali population plummeted.

Return of Self-Governance in Somalia

While the circus of international conferences to promote peace and reconciliation in Somalia and start a process of state-building was proceeding with questionable results, most of Somalia reverted to self-governance. When looking for confirmation of this in the specialist literature, one finds only a few sources, and mostly one has to read between the lines or understand the implications of what authors write about Somali local politics to understand this. Probably because self-governance is a default mode of society, it is informal and there is nothing spectacular about it that would draw the attention of foreign observers. As the term 'neither war nor peace' which is often applied to Somalia of the second half of the 90s implies, self-governance is a non-condition.

Menkhaus explains that the 'conflict constituencies' of the early 1990s—militia commanders trying to capture the power of the State, *mooryaan* out to loot and gain status independent of clan elders, businessmen profiting from the war economy—disappeared as the elders reinstated their traditional power after the collapse of the state, reigning in both commanders and young fighters, and as the interests of businessmen, when the aid economy dwindled, shifted toward maintaining a minimal level of law and order.[65]

Marchal gives an example of this in Afgooye. After having captured and looted Mogadishu, Habar Gidir clan militia started raiding the nearby towns of Lower Shabelle, including Afgooye. They were reined in by prominent local Habar Gidir, who had arrived in the area in the 19th century and had no 'home area' to go to, and wished not to upset the delicate social balance with Digil and Dir lineages. They imposed themselves as elders on the *mooryaan* and limited their predation of local groups.[66]

Speaking of the gradual transformation of clan militias into civilian administrators, Menkhaus noted: *"In*

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[62] The anonymous source mentioned in the previous note describes in detail how the regional acceptance process of the TNG was managed; Anonymous 2002:254-257.

[63] Although the UN was not involved in the Arta Conference, the SG did request the Security Council to implement a trust fund for Somalia and to consider a new UN assistance mission in the country, and he requested the World Bank and IMF to re-engage with Somalia. He also suggested that the UN agencies relocate from Nairobi to Mogadishu, if and when a single authority had been established in that city and the harbour and airport would re-open. S/2000/1211, final paragraphs. But none of these requests by Kofi Annan were responded to favourably.

[64] Menkhaus 2003b:418.

[65] Menkhaus 2003c: "Warlords and Landlords: Non-State Actors and Humanitarian Norms in Somalia".

[66] Marchal & Yusuf 2016: "Lower Shabeelle in the Civil War".

parts of the Lower Juba Valley, militias now 'tax' half the villagers' harvests in return for protection against other bandits. As the symbiotic relationship between gunman and villager evolves, the line between extortion and taxation, between protection racket and police force, is blurred, and a system of governance within anarchy is born".[67] This blurring of the lines between self-governance and legitimate government is interesting; why indeed would the taxation by militias be illegitimate, and that by the government legitimate? This question, reminding one of Mancur Olson's description of the state as a 'stationary bandit'[68] returns incessantly in Somalia, especially when examining Al Shabaab governance (see Chapter Ten). The answer is of course that to be considered formally legitimate a government policy must be based on the law and comply to agreed procedures. But for local people, taxation is considered legitimate if in return they receive the expected services (mainly security, in this case).

The finding that the interests of non-state actors in zones of protracted conflict can shift over time from "warlord to landlord" is not new. Charles Tilly documented this evolution in his study of state formation in Europe,[69] and ample historical evidence exists elsewhere of warlords accumulating wealth by force (plunder) until they reach a point where their interests shift towards backing collective arrangements to protect their property.[70]

Marchal points out that clan faction leaders whose power was based on the 'rule of the gun' either had to adapt to cooperating with business interests and their Islamist (cross-clan) allies, or lose their own power base; their transformation to 'landlord' was not voluntary, but a necessary adaptation caused by an initial loss of income and status. Militias and their factional leaders turned to the protection business. The faction leaders' loss of legitimacy became patent when they became involved in kidnapping in the early 2000s: this violence was criminal and it no longer mobilized clan lineages or the *xeer* principle of collective responsibility. Faction leaders involved in such criminal pursuits were on their own, and soon faced Islamic Courts whose 'law and order' forces were in principle cross-clan (see 7.4).

The modicum of law and order achieved through informal mechanisms resulted in the economic growth of cities such as Mogadishu, Kismayo, Hargeysa, Belet Weyne, Bosaso and Baidoa, including small industries and services (banking, telecommunications, construction, consumer goods) often financed by remittances from the diaspora.

Studies of social and economic processes give a glimpse of self-governance. One can take, for example, Roland Marchal's extensive study of the economy in Mogadishu (2002). The author describes how for 12 years the city has survived without a government or any type of centralized service delivery (for example water or electricity). "*the way people from all social strata and origins coped with war has confounded conventional wisdom*".[71] In 2002 there were more industrial plants operating in the capital than before the war, media were free, cheap internet and phone services were widely available, domestic and international financial services were reliable, and schools, three universities, and private hospitals and clinics had opened. There was trade through the small natural ports of Jazira and 'Eel Ma'an and regular flights to Nairobi, Djibouti and Dubai from airstrips near Mogadishu (the main port and airport still being dysfunctional and blocked by conflict). "*Last but not least, there are a number of markets in the capital city where almost anything is available, from a valid passport to the most fashionable sunglasses, as well as more basic merchandise, such as anti-aircraft artillery, ordnance, and cocaine*." He also notes that "*globalisation in Somalia was mostly superficially understood as the victory of the market or money but its other characteristics, such as political liberalism, pluralism, or the universality of certain values have*

[67] Menkhaus 1998: "Somalia: Political Order in a Stateless Society"; p222.

[68] Olson 1993: "Dictatorship, Democracy and Development".

[69] Tilly 1985: "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime".

[70] Francis Fukuyama in his book 'The Origins of Political Order' provides many examples of such regimes.

[71] Marchal 2002:"A Survey of Mogadishu's Economy"; p111.

not permeated into in the current political culture".[72]

Self-governance led by commercial forces did not bring into being an ideal 'free market', as radical liberals occasionally assume.[73] The need for security resulted in the formation of protection rackets which again made possible the formation of oligopolies (favouring established players and dissuading new entrants), and this led to cartel-formation and price-fixing. Marchal describes how new entrants to the market, for example trying to undercut prices or offer new services, would first be faced with often violent hostility by existing players, but if they survived the first attacks, they would be invited to play along with the merchant cartels.

A wholly informal market dominated by price-fixing oligopolies who maintain their privileges with violence if necessary is of course not ideal. But as Marchal points out, all goods that exist in the global market were available at short notice and prices were lower for goods and services, generally, than in neighbouring Kenya and Ethiopia, so for consumers the market seemed to work. As Peter Leeson puts it, there is a tendency when discussing the respective merits of government and 'anarchy' to compare the best form of government (perfect regulation) with the worst aspects of anarchy (law of the jungle/ chaos and mayhem)[74] and somehow assume that practices will tend towards these extreme forms (assume that governments will attempt to regulate well, while self-governance will degenerate into chaos). This is a partisan, pro-State ideological position that is not based on facts. The argument that 'free riders' will abuse communal resources for their personal benefit was made most poignantly by Garrett Hardin in his influential work 'The Tragedy of the Commons' which advocated for government regulation and private property over communal property. But this work was historically inaccurate and based more on reasoning than case studies.[75]

An example of self-governance is provided by the introduction of new banknotes. Powerful merchants could print new Somali shillings and import them at will, thus threatening the economy with collapse. But merchants were conscious of the risk of inflation and avoided it by slowly easing new money onto the market in a coordinated fashion, behaving very differently from what classical liberal economists like Gareth Harding would expect. This shows how self-governance can function even in the highly complex field of paper money management.[76] The Mogadishu market and more in general self-governance arrangements in Somalia were far from ideal, also for their own protagonists, but they conformed more to the patterns described in Chapter Three under 'the State of Nature' than to pessimistic visions of anarchy. Self-governance usually tends towards equilibrium, not chaos.

Despite the many reasons for it to collapse, not only the economy of Mogadishu, but the Somali economy in general grew steadily after the collapse of the Somali state and the worst phase of the civil war. The first to make this claim was J. A. Mubarak, a Somali economist formerly working for the World Bank, in 1997[77]. He argued that the Somali economy functioned better without the predatory state.[78] This was confirmed by other observers who concluded that although "*Somalia's 2005 standards of living are low by Western standards, they compare fairly favorably with other African nations*".[79]

Food production in the countryside also rose. Results were good enough to allow the urban commercial

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[72] Marchal 2002:112.

[73] For example Leeson 2007 & 2014.

[74] Leeson 2014: "Anarchy Unbound: Why Self-Governance Works Better Than You Think".

[75] A rebuttal is found in Ostrom 1990: "Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action".

[76] A detailed description can be found in Marchal 2002:29-36.

[77] Mubarak 1997: "The 'Hidden Hand' Behind the Resilience of the Stateless Economy of Somalia".

[78] See discussion in Hagmann & Stepputat 2016: "Corridors of Trade and Power: Economy and State Formation in Somali East Africa".

[79] Powell, Ford & Nowrasteh 2008: "Somalia After State Collapse: Chaos or Improvement?"; p662.

class to support the Arta conference and weaken the rule of the faction leaders, supporting instead a new group of 'clan entrepreneurs' that could broker between the lineages they represented, other forces in Somali society, and the international assistance community. In rural and pastoral communities these representatives could be 'traditional authorities', but among urban or diasporic communities, representatives would usually come from modern social groups. The political class of contemporary Federal Somalia was forged in this process.

To regulate relations between lineages, *xeer*, which had been in retreat from the public domain since the 1950s, made a comeback after the state collapse.[80] Cash was in short supply between 1995 and 2007, so financial agreements were instead based on undertakings by their participants ('word of honour'). The authors of the UNDP Somalia Human Development Report of 2001 note that "*Throughout much of Somalia* [in the second half of the 1990s] *titled clan elders played a crucial role in re-establishing social contracts (xeer) between clans as a transitional step towards restoring political stability and establishing public administrations*".[81]

A New Approach to State-building in Somalia

The internationally organized political processes to bring back a central state administration to Somalia and the reality of self-governance which ensured the survival of Somali society met each other half-way in what was termed the 'building block' approach, which became the basis for the federal construction of Somalia. It seemed a combination of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' political processes, building on local capacity for self-administration to create a federal state.

The first 'building block' was Somaliland, in the eyes of those who continued to see it as part of Somalia; but Somalilanders themselves did not see it that way and participated in none of the national political processes. So it was with the formation of Puntland in 1998 that the concept really took hold. Like Somaliland, Puntland had been founded by its clans in a political process based on the formation of a consensus. Through its clan homogeneity and the existence of two considerable commercial centres—the port of Bosaso and the commercial, cattle-trading and light industry hub of Galka'yo—it seemed to have at least equal chances to Somaliland of becoming a stable polity: a 'building block' for federal Somalia. Like Somaliland, it had a history of autonomy as 'Majertenia' (see 4.1 & 4.2) to refer to. Unlike Somaliland, Puntland wanted to remain part of the federation, albeit with considerable autonomy. It adopted its own constitution, established armed forces, printed Somali shillings and conducted its international relations without coordinating with Mogadishu.

In 1998, already, Ethiopia presented the 'building block approach' and a plan for a federal Somalia to its partners in IGAD. It was not a coincidence that Ethiopia was in the process of building its own federal state. Ethiopia was also reassured by the anti-Islamist and friendly neighbour, open-for-business attitude of Somaliland and Puntland. It seems Zenawi had to lobby quite hard, but IGAD and later the rest of the international community reluctantly accepted this new approach to replace the previous, centralized state-building effort.[82] It was temporarily surpassed by Djibouti's support to a new national government (the TNG) but when that failed the federal approach to Somali state-building became predominant in the international community.

The problem with the building block approach was that as soon as it was backed by external powers, local power-sharing arrangements were disrupted by the prospect of federal positions and international support. Menkhaus points out that if sub-national states are envisioned as part of a central state-in-

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[80] Puntland Development Research Centre 2003: "Somali Customary Law and Traditional Economy: Cross Sectional, Pastoral, Frankincense, and Marine Norms".

[81] Bradbury, Marchal & Menkhaus 2001 for UNDP: Somalia Human Development Report; p50. See also Lesage 2005 on xeer and its shortcomings after the civil war.

[82] Bryden 1999: "New Hope for Somalia? The Building Block Approach".

building, they are likely to elicit contests between politicians whose sole interest is in securing a position in the federal government.[83] This was clearly the case of Puntland's President Abdullahi Yusuf, whose term came to an end in 2001. Aware of the upcoming international efforts to build a federal state, he refused to step down, provoking armed conflict in Puntland from 2001 to 2003. It was only when he felt assured that he could contend for the federal presidency (with Ethiopian backing) that he allowed a compromise candidate (Musa 'Adde) to replace him as President of Puntland in 2003.

For the same reason, dominant clans will try to secure executive power in 'their' federal member state, to allow them to influence federal politics and control the flow of resources into their state. This encourages further fissuring of federal units (each strong clan wanting its own state), and to bloody feuds between lineages competing for state power. Moreover, when the regional state rulers' eyes are set on Mogadishu, they have little interest in developing the region they supposedly represent—this was clearly the case of Puntland's President Yusuf. Menkhaus argued that the trend in decreasing violence observed in Somalia after the worst part of the civil war (1991) was reversed in 2002, when it became known that the peace talks in Kenya would be based on the 'building block' approach.[84]

However, if regional polities are established independent of a central state-building program, they are much more likely to seek a balance between all population groups (for stability, peace, commerce) and to secure their legitimacy by providing services to their constituencies.[85] This was not only the experience of Somaliland and of Puntland before the federal approach was announced in 2002, but also that of countless municipal and neighbourhood councils which had emerged throughout Somalia.[86] If followed to its logical conclusion, this 'bottom-up' state-building approach would lead to a *confederation* like Switzerland, with weak federal authorities and a minimum delegation of power to a centralized government.

Another argument against the 'building block' model was given by Roland Marchal; he points out that decentralization into clan-based polities amounts to equating citizenship with indigenous lineage.[87] For example, non-Majerteen Somalis have no representation in Puntland and little access to power. But this is less pronounced when state formation is 'bottom-up', as denying full citizenship to members of non-dominant clans is obviously destabilizing, so dominant clans may be willing to share power with them in exchange for their cooperation.[88]

In conclusion, the building block model of state formation could probably have been appropriate for Somalia if the objective was to create a confederation like Switzerland. Maybe Somaliland would have been willing to join it. But as far as I know a confederation was never part of the discussion, of the 'international tool-kit'. I really don't know why, given that Switzerland is obviously a very stable, peaceful and prosperous country since it adopted this model many centuries ago. Probably most of the protagonists in the state-building process were interested in securing a maximum amount of centralized power, in the hope that they would wield that power; while members of the international community desired a state that they could influence. A confederation would have defeated those purposes.[89] Be

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[83] Menkhaus 2003b:415.

[84] Menkhaus 2003b:409.

[85] Idem. Menkhaus developed these ideas in several papers of the late 1990s and early 2000s

[86] Menkhaus 2003b:408. He notes that these local governance structures are never supported by donors.

[87] Marchal 2000:21

[88] In Somaliland the dominant Isaaq may not share enough power with non-Isaaq groups, but they do share some and have never sought to expel them. However, the situation is different because Somaliland purports to be the country of all its inhabitants, while Darood in Puntland, for example, may expect the Hawiye among them to go to Galmudug or Mogadishu if they want access to power.

[89] Another reason may simply be that since the 'Confederate States of America' lost the 1861-1865 American civil war, the name 'confederate' is disliked by US policy makers.

that as it may, it is clear that international efforts to build a federal state reignited conflict in Somalia. In the next section the reasons for the renewed international engagement in Somalia are elucidated.

7.3 The Failed State and the War on Terror, 2001 to 2006

> *"In almost every other instance of state collapse, a weak, nominal central government has managed to maintain juridical sovereignty as a "quasi-state", deemed to exist primarily because other states say so. Somalia's inability to pull together even the most minimalist fig-leaf of a central administration over the course of twelve years places the country in a class by itself among the world's failed states (...) Somalia is, in an odd way, a failure among failed states."*
>
> Ken Menkhaus, 2003[90]

Somalia has the dubious honour of having made the term 'failed state' part of mainstream international development discourse. The term started to be applied to Somalia during the failure of the UNOSOM mission. Unsurprisingly, many popular books and articles about Somalia start with the phrase "Somalia is the quintessential failed state" or a similar statement.[91] In the words of a senior official of an international organization writing in 2002, "*Somalia remained an orphan country. In terms of modern international law, it became an embarrassing political and legal void – the model case for complete state failure*".[92]

The notion of the failed state became a dominant one in international intervention practice throughout the 1990s, in tandem with the notion of good governance. After 9/11, it also became a central tenet of global (Western-led) security and fostered new forms of international governance. It is useful to take a few steps back from Somalia to analyse how this discourse emerged and why it led Western lead nations to again become involved in building a Somali state.

In this section I shall first dwell on the concept of 'failed state'. A radical, Bourdieu-type investigation of the roots and ideology of the concept may reveal keys essential to understanding the current state-building intervention in Somalia. Then I return to the narrative of Somali history, covering the entry of Somalia as a target country in the Global War on Terror and the creation of the Transitional Federal Government.

What is a Failed State?

The notion of failed state came within a cluster of related concepts–governance, human development, and global security–that were developed in Western centres of power. In this view, state failure came principally through bad governance (1980s), it had to be addressed in the name of human development, (1990s) and as it led to global insecurity it was of concern to all nations (2000s).

The terms 'state failure' and 'governance' first became common within the IMF and World Bank,[93] to

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[90] Menkhaus 2003: "State Collapse in Somalia: Second Thoughts"; p407.

[91] For example Leonard & Ramsay (eds) 2013: "Globalizing Somalia: Multilateral, International and Transnational Repercussions of Conflict"; p3: "*Somalia today is seen as the quintessential example of a failed state*".

[92] Anonymous 2002:252.

[93] *Governance* existed in the English language but was rarely used either by experts or in public.

justify structural adjustment programs. It was in terms of financial and economic *governance* that states were considered at risk of 'failing' by defaulting on their debts. The solution to the risk of state failure was structural adjustment: the adoption of economic policies that would enable the country to maintain its place in the global economy and potentially prosper (and from a banking perspective, to take new loans and pay the interest on existing ones).

How to avoid state failure through better governance became an urgent question in the late 1980s because the former East Bloc countries had to be prevented from failing as they transitioned out of the Soviet Bloc and its command economy to the 'free market'. Financial and economic experts were sent to transform the countries' systems to conform to the global standards advocated by the West. Simultaneously, as seen previously, by 1990 the World Bank had signed 180 structural adjustment programmes in 60 countries. The success of the integration of foreign countries' economic systems into the global one brought not only great prosperity to those who engineered it,[94] but also confidence in governance experts. How societies could improve their own governance became the subject of 'transitology', which examined how Latin American and Eastern European (and hopefully soon also African, Asian and Middle Eastern) autocratic or communist states made the transition to liberal democracy.

Olivier Nay describes how besides the World Bank, the OECD was foundational to the 'failed state' discourse; a 2004 joint task force of both organizations added the category of 'fragile states'. The discourse was accompanied by "*a knowledge-based agenda set out by Western aid donors to justify international assistance to poor and conflict-ridden countries*".[95] The drive to measure aid efficiency was prompted by private sector management practices applied to national governments' budgets: how effective was aid? The response required a functionalist, quantitative approach based on data and expert analysis. By the year 2000 no organization seemed to have as much data and in-house expertise as the World Bank, which had moved from mainly funding large infrastructure projects to social sector-led programs such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy (launched with the IMF in 1999).

The technical 'knowledge-based' approach also provided juridical protection and it became a risk management tool, shielding donor agencies from possible blame. It was the supposedly scientific base of the structural adjustment programs that allowed the World Bank to deflect the blame for their unfavourable economic outcomes.[96] Since the programmes and their conditionalities were based on comprehensive datasets and the latest insights of economic science, negative results could only be ascribed to local political factors. Crucially, states are sovereign, so if they fail it is their own fault.[97] Susan Woodward notes that the notion of 'state failure' was first used to deflect the blame of international policies onto host states.[98]

The UNDP and like-minded actors in the field of human development also started using the term governance, inspired by World Bank usage. Governance was extended from the economy to the entire society and became a synonym of development. The assumption is that the main function of a state is to bring peace and development to society. Another assumption was that foreign organizations and their

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[94] It was argued in 6.3 that the effects on 'client' countries, at least in Africa, were overall negative.

[95] Nay 2014: "International Organisations and the Production of Hegemonic Knowledge"; p210.

[96] Until the last year of James Wolfensohn's presidency of the World Bank (1995-2005) the Bank was unwilling to accept any responsibility for making 'bad loans'. It was under Wolfensohn that the Bank moved from being a relatively tough creditor to social programmes and more openness toward debt forgiveness.

[97] When interviewing the World Bank country director Hugh Riddell in Nairobi, 27 March 2018, and the Head of the EU Delegation to Somalia Nicolás Berlanga in Mogadishu, 5 October 2020, they both reacted very strongly to the suggestion that their organizations influence Somali government policy. The World Bank and the EU are only providing advice and support on the request of the host government, they told me: conditions for loans and support are never imposed, only negotiated with the sovereign government. See 9.1 for a further elaboration.

[98] Woodward 2017: "The Ideology of Failed States. Why Intervention Fails"; chapter 1.

experts knew better than local governments and actors how to improve governance. The difference with government is that governance draws the emphasis away from political and ethical concerns towards the technical and administration.[99]

A new degree of global consensus was reached with the signing in September 2000 of The United Nations Millennium Declaration. It committed world leaders to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women. The Millennium Development Goals "*galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest*" according to the UN.[100] The IMF and World Bank had set themselves similar objectives with their Poverty Reduction Strategy the previous year. Good governance, both economic and political, was essential to all of these achievements.

Governance was conceived of as a technical domain which was inherently universal. The ultimate ideal was to usher in a better governed globe. Key elements of governance were accountability, rule of law, representative democratic systems and human rights. The objective of intervention was to coax local forces into adopting the set of policies based on these elements that would lead to better governance. The requirement to understand the local context was diminished because the desired end result was clear.

Domestic society had to generate a demand for good governance by pressurizing its rulers to implement sound economic and social policies. It was often recognized that to achieve this, a process of socio-cultural change had to take place first. The modern forces of society–*civil society*—had to be strengthened. Donors made available vast sums for local civil society organizations to bring about this change, focusing for example on gender relations, the Rule of Law, the empowerment of minorities, free media, elections monitoring and civil society advocacy. International NGOs received funding to oversee these programs; they thus became implementing partners for donors, whereas previously they had defended their independence from governments (as *non*-governmental organizations). Programmes supporting 'the leaders of tomorrow' inculcated Western values in the most promising young people from developing countries, inviting them to prestigious Western centres of learning and policymaking. These 'young leaders' understood that external powers would support them to become the future elites of their countries if they upheld the attractive values of democracy, human rights and economic freedom.[101] In the meanwhile, intervening forces such as humanitarian organizations, donors and development actors had to either encourage local authorities to adopt better governance standards or provide it themselves.

Thus academic experts, international organizations, national donor agencies and the aid industry became involved in the business to prevent states from failing, or by rebuilding them if they were beyond repair, by improving their governance. As the formal sovereignty of recipient states was upheld, they always cast themselves as advisers and facilitators.[102]

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[99] Governance was also linked to Foucault's term of *governmentality*, which provides a wider scope to the idea of government than the mere exercise of power through formal institutions. Factoring in the mental aspects of what makes people accept social order, and how it can be generated by society rather than (only) by the state, Foucault's governmentality can be reconciled with both the concept of the rhizome as developed in Chapter Three and Gramsci's concepts of hegemony, consensus and consent.

[100] (https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/).

[101] Involved in Afghanistan between 2000 and 2021, I personally helped some brilliant young Afghans avail themselves of these opportunities and witnessed how they were transformed by the experience, and often gained high positions in the administration afterwards. They all had to flee when the Taliban took over in August 2021.

[102] A joke among Afghans in the early 2000s, when Western leaders would always insist that 'Afghans are in the driving seat', was to reply 'but it's a taxi and you're sitting in the back seat telling us where to go'.

The Failed State in the War on Terror

The 'failed state' discourse used by donors and development agencies became mainstream after the attack on New York's World Trade Center on September 11th 2001. A global consensus emerged immediately after the attacks that they had been planned because of the opportunities provided in 'failed state' Afghanistan. Without training grounds and operational freedom in the ungoverned spaces of Afghanistan, the reasoning went, those attacks would not have happened.[103] As President Bush's National Security Strategy of 2002 put it: *"The United States today is threatened less by conquering states than we are by weak and failing ones".* This consensus was adapted in all major Western states, prompting interventions in failed states such as Afghanistan and Somalia. The incapacity of the state to establish law and order throughout its territory became a liability for the entire international order; state failure was now judged by its *international* impact, not, as before, by its domestic impact.

This time, *international* governance was seen as a solution to state failure. This meant better cooperation and coordination between Western intelligence and security agencies and between civilian and military forces. The 'peace dividend' was reversed and world military expenditure rose rapidly after 2001, notably in the USA. Western security institutions agreed that preventive action had to be taken to avoid other failed or rogue states serving as haven for terrorists (who could wield, it was often surmised, 'weapons of mass destruction' against the West). Part of that solution was restoring state governance to 'ungoverned territories'. This set the stage for renewed intervention in Somalia.

The OECD and the World Bank initially avoided US security-centred definitions of the failed state because security is outside the remit of both organisations and its members did not want to be dragged along into financing US military adventures.[104] They continued to define state failure in terms of governance, institutional capacity and policy efficiency. For a few years there was a double focus on the 'failed state', one in the field of development, the other in the field of security, mobilizing different agencies, resources and worldviews: the liberal, multilateral world of humanitarian and development agencies, led by the United Nations; and the realist and largely bilateral realm of Western (and allied) security agencies, which protected national security interests through military support to local allies, 'surgical' strikes and covert action in weak or failed foreign states.

But after 2005 liberal and realist motivations for intervention converged and security and conflict started to be factored into state performance indicators. The 2009 OECD Development Assistance Committee list and the World Bank 2011 'World Development Report' took full account of security-related issues affecting 'failed states' and cemented the role of both organizations in placing the *development-security nexus* central. The World Bank was now willing to contribute to reducing conflict, fragility and violence in recipient countries, giving it a vastly more political mandate than it had ever had before. It set up a 'FCV' (Fragility, Conflict and Violence) department to deal with this new domain.

The 'development-security' nexus

The 'development-security nexus' is an old concept. It was part of the 1947 Truman doctrine[105] and arguably the idea that the development of a state's subjects provides security to its rulers and thus to the ruler's allies has its roots in the dawn of history.[106] This concept made a comeback after the end of

[103] "*The September 11 attacks highlighted a different sort of problem. The failed state of Afghanistan was so weak that it could in effect be hijacked by a non-state actor, the terrorist organization al-Qaida, and serve as a base of global terrorist operations*". Fukuyama 2004:93.

[104] Grimm, Lemay-Hébert & Nay 2014: "'Fragile States': Introducing a Political Concept"; p198.

[105] Aid was provided to both Greece and Turkey in 1947 to stabilize both countries, contribute to regional security and 'contain' communism.

[106] For example Persian Emperors in the 5th and 4th centuries BCE were concerned about their satraps (provincial governors) abuse of local populations, fearing instability could spread to the rest of the Empire.

the Cold War, first through the concept of 'human security' developed by the authors of the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report (see 7.1). Human security was opposed to national security in that it put the human being central—not only the citizen, but also those who were deprived of their citizens' rights. The main reason for developing this concept was idealistic (it was part of human development) and there were concerted efforts by many donor countries, especially in Europe, to reduce military expenditures in developing countries[107] as it was realized that weapons were often employed by state elites against their subjects. Disarmament favoured human security.

The catch was that the only manner to guarantee human security (and to disarm) was through national governments, as the principle of sovereignty would not be thrown overboard by any state.[108] As Mark Duffield put it, "*Following the movement of the state back to the centre of development discourse, the concept of the fragile state codifies a new willingness by effective states to engage weak or failed state entities developmentally*".[109] The most straightforward way to guarantee both human security and development was by linking them both: development led to security and security to political stability, which again made possible more development, leading to a virtuous cycle as in Figure 22.

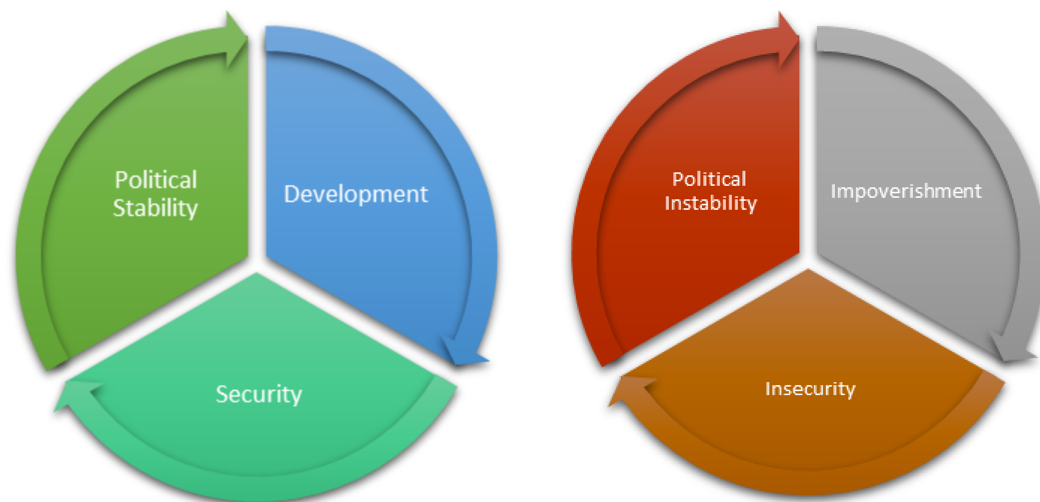

Figure 22 The virtuous cycle of the development-security nexus and the vicious cycle of insecurity

The fragile or failed state could not achieve the necessary condition of political stability and risked perpetuating the vicious circle (above right). Therefore, state-building seemed a necessary element of the development-security nexus in states considered 'fragile', 'failing' or 'failed'. Depending on the definition, many developing states were considered in one of these categories, so an entire new 'state-building' industry arose. Since traditional humanitarian and development actors (the aid industry/NGO sector) were incapable or unwilling to engage state actors (often the perpetrators of violence against the populations they were assisting) the above-mentioned experts from the World Bank and donor agencies, who had overseen structural adjustment programs or the transition of Soviet Bloc countries to

[107] See Woodward 2017:40 for examples.

[108] The 'Responsibility to Protect' doctrine adopted by the UN in 2005 after many years of discussion cautiously suggested that in extreme cases state sovereignty could be overruled, for example to protect a domestic population against genocide by its authorities or deliver humanitarian aid without a request by the host government, but for many years states refrained from using it. When it was finally evoked to chase Muammar Gaddhafi from power the insincere application of the principle and the resulting quagmire discredited the doctrine, at least in its UN version.

[109] Duffield 2013: "Liberal Interventionism & the Fragile State"; p118.

the 'free world', jumped into the gap, bringing with them their liberal governance toolkit.[110]

After the 9/11 attacks, the military and security sectors of Western nations, with characteristically much higher levels of funding than development agencies, joined the 'state-building' fray. To prevent another 9/11, countries like Afghanistan and Somalia needed development and good governance, meaning functioning state institutions (including functioning security forces) whose legitimacy could only be derived through the rule of law and electoral democracy. Good governance and development become elements of Counter-Insurgency operations, and by 2007 Counter-Insurgency doctrine[111] contained a response to fix failed states. Through infrastructural and socio-economic programs, foreign armies fighting insurgencies could win the 'hearts and minds' of local people and reconcile them with their governments, thus removing the grounds for insurgency. Besides arming and training national army and police forces, foreign armies in Afghanistan, Iraq (and post-2007 also in Somalia) started building schools, roads and convening friendly local elders to informal meetings.[112]

The emphasis had shifted from the human security of residents of conflict-torn developing nations to the security of the intervening armies, of the intervening aid industry and ultimately the human security of Western populations, who had to be shielded from terrorist attacks.[113] The more independent-minded international NGOs (like Doctors without Borders, MSF in French) fiercely resisted the militarization of aid at first, but donors (led first by USAID and DfID[114]) gradually imposed objectives that served both their national security and the Global War on Terror (easier to justify to their taxpayers) *and* the development and human security of recipient populations, such as counter-radicalization programmes. But as we shall see later, the first objective usually trumped the latter.

The consensus about the importance of succouring failing states or rebuilding failed states—a *tabula rasa* approach to build a liberal democratic state was often followed, ignoring the previous structures of state even in 'strong state' Iraq—in order to promote good governance, both for the benefit of local populations and to reduce the perceived threat of terrorism against Western nations, was now complete. Susan Woodward enunciates the core axiom of the concept of failed states as following: "*the primary threat to international peace and security since the end of the Cold War, and thus also to those in wealthy, stable countries, is the nature of the poorly functioning state in poor and conflict-plagued countries".*[115] The integrated mission, comprising a state-building, a military and a human development component, appeared as a practical as well as moral necessity, rallying both (neo-)realists and liberals.

Scholarly appraisals of the Failed State Doctrine

An enabling condition for the term 'failed state' was the 1980s discourse that 'brought the State back in' as an autonomous (even the *only* possible sovereign) actor on the international scene. If the state was 'a site for political contest' as the neo-Marxist Poulantzas held in 1978, it could not fail: a site does not fail,

[110] See e.g. Duffield 2013, Sörensen & Söderbaum 2012, Richmond 2014.

[111] Kilcullen 2009: "The Accidental Guerrilla".

[112] Adam Baczko, doing fieldwork in Kunar, Eastern Afghanistan, speaks of one such "*Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) created to fund civilian projects aimed at 'winning hearts and minds'. The highly paid consultants I met in 2010 at the Asadabad base — a Texan rancher, a crop specialist from Michigan University and a young graduate from a top US university — were all ignorant of Afghanistan, not to speak of Kunar. They had a budget of more than US$ 80 million, equivalent to between a quarter and a half of the total economy of the province, which they did not know how to spend. While the PRT would almost never leave the military base and lacked translators, those who had access to the restricted area — the entrepreneurs who fed the US Army with auxiliaries and intelligence — quickly monopolized the contracts and the distribution of money*". Baczko 2016:1421.

[113] Luckham 2015: "Whose Security? Building Inclusive and Secure Societies in an Unequal and Insecure World"; p35.

[114] Woodward 2017:40; Nay 2014:210.

[115] Woodward 2017:221.

only actors do. In 1.1 above I noted how defining the State as an actor brought irremediable confusion to the term. As we shall see, the notion of Failed State was vitiated by the assumption that a liberal democratic state structure would somehow guarantee liberal democratic governance, confusing structure and agency.

In “The Ideology of Failed States. Why Intervention Fails” (2017), Susan Woodward demonstrates that the term means nothing specific, or rather many different things. A review of failed state literature shows that either authors ascribe their own meaning, or when examining the meaning given to the concept by others, they agree with Woodward that there is no clear definition of the term.[116] Definitions are often tautological, explaining the cause (failed state) by the outcomes it produces (failure of state efforts to establish order in their country). This led Western agencies to establish lists of criteria to judge the extent of state failure and define new categories such as ‘failing’ or ‘fragile’ states. But there was never agreement between agencies about what those criteria were, exactly, and even within agencies at the forefront of the failed state discourse, such as the World Bank and the OECD, definitions kept changing.

Woodward extensively analyses data and concludes that there is no positive correlation between failed states and terrorism; terrorism tends to evolve in functioning states. Woodward was not alone in this: every scholar who analysed this relationship came to the same conclusion.[117]

What fails when one talks of 'failed states'? It seems that broadly, what fails is the state's capacity to deliver human (domestic) security or collective (external) security. But both are defined by external partners. What actually fails, what gave rise to the use of the term, is the external partner’s program.[118] When a donor fails to obtain the desired results, it tends to blame the receiving state. This is why the World Bank introduced the concept, to explain the failure of its Structural Adjustment Programs. A metaphoric parallel is that of medicine: if it fails to produce the right results, one can double the dose a few times; and if it still doesn't work, one can blame the body receiving the treatment for not adapting to it well enough, calling it a 'failed body'. But the heuristic value of such an approach is clearly doubtful. It would make more sense to stop administering the medicine and re-diagnose the problem. The medicine, in our case, are the reforms required to produce a liberal democracy in third countries.

The 'failed state' view and the governance solutions proposed did not produce positive results, either. One might think that the focus on improving governance in failing or fragile states, accompanied by huge budgets and a host of new experts, might have reversed the trend observable by the 1980s already, of states heading towards bankruptcy and internal conflict. This was clearly what the World Bank, OECD, UN and the major Western donor agencies behind this new approach expected. But successes in some countries were offset by failures in others, and altogether the proportion of human beings in the targeted developing nations suffering poverty, instability or conflict (human *in*security) has increased since 1990.

Woodward retraces the genesis of the failed state discourse from its cold war antecedents and concludes that one of its effects was to make redundant any major changes in the world order after the

[116] Brinkerhoff 2014, Call 2008, Cooke & Downey 2015, Ghani & Lockhart 2008, Gorm, Rye & Olsen 2013, Grimm 2014, Grimm, Lemay-Hébert & Nay 2014, Grindle 2005 & 2017, Hehir 2007, Cammack et al. 2006, Richmond 2014.

[117] See for example Patrick 2006: "Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?". He finds that "*Analysts and policymakers have simply presumed the existence of a blanket connection* [between weak states and global threats]". See also Hehir 2007: “The Myth of the Failed State and the War on Terror: A Challenge to the Conventional Wisdom”. Conclusive evidence also comes from George 2018: “State Failure and Transnational Terrorism: An Empirical Analysis”. He notes that “*failed states experience significantly more transnational terrorism (…) but these states do not produce terrorists who cross borders and carry out attacks in other countries, neither do they attract foreign perpetrators*” because “*conditions in failed states present major operational challenges to foreign terrorists*” (p471).

[118] Woodward 2017:223.

end of the Cold War. The 'window of opportunity' for cashing in the 'peace dividend'—reallocating Cold War defense budgets to global development efforts, and tackling the by then obvious issue of climate change and environmental destruction—was lost. Instead, the institutions that had grown powerful during the Cold War found a new purpose in a security-focused approach to failed states. The most obvious example is NATO, whose raison d'être was countering the Soviet threat in Europe. Why was it not disbanded when the Soviet Bloc collapsed? It found a new purpose with the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, whose military component soon came to be under NATO command. As Woodward notes, *"the concept [of failed states] obstructed the opportunities that transitional moments offer".*[119]

The failed state concept and related notions like good governance are often derided by political scientists and other scholars. In policy circles, whereas we have seen the 'failed state' was a nearly hegemonic idea from the early 1990s onward, the notion seems to have lost cogency since the mid 2010s, probably because of its incapacity to deliver the expected results. The nail in the coffin of the failed state discourse may well be the Afghan experience. The last Afghan president, Ashraf Ghani, held senior positions at the World Bank from 1991 to 2001[120] and co-authored several articles about global governance and intervention, and an optimistic prescriptive book called 'Fixing Failed States'.[121] When he was elected President of Afghanistan in 2014 hopes were high, among educated Afghans and foreign observers, that finally the country would be put on the right reform path. However, a year before the Taliban ousted him, Afghanistan's economy was in a ruin (with high unemployment rates, inflation and a lack of basic economic infrastructure), the country had suffered several protracted political crises and there had been a crackdown on independent civil society. Ghani's governance failures facilitated the Taliban takeover.

'Failed States' and 'Good Governance' are out of fashion, but they have not yet been replaced by an identifiable other set of policies. As William Easterly demonstrates, there is a continuous reinvention of the driving principles of aid; for example, that poverty leads to insecurity, that poverty in developing nations is thus a threat to developed nations too, that local solutions are preferable to imposed frameworks of development, that a functioning state is a prerequisite for development, that 'Africa desperately needs reform' etc. etc. [122] These discourses are periodically reinvented, typically preceded by a period of acute self-criticism (because development assistance does not seem to 'work') and large scale reorganization of involved institutions. Mark Duffield, commenting on Easterly's findings, speaks of "*an institutional 'Groundhog Day' where every decade or two similar pronouncements are repackaged by a new generation of policy-makers and presented afresh as the way forward.*"[123] Bourdieu would doubtlessly observe that there is a high rate of genesis amnesia in the aid and development sectors. If Easterly is correct, then we may soon expect a new discourse justifying intervention in 'developing' countries that recycles the concepts of 'failed state', 'good governance' and the 'development-security

[119] Woodward 2017:222.

[120] Ghani started as lead anthropologist, helped articulate the Bank's social policies, designed reform programs, reviewed conditions for loans and Structural Adjustment Programs globally. As I know from him (personal communication), he discussed and coordinated the Bank's initial Afghanistan policies with George Soros and Mark Malloch Brown, administrator of the UNDP, before he joined the Afghan government.

[121] Ghani & Lockhart 2008: "Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World". See also Ghani & Lockhart 2006: "An Agenda for Harnessing Globalization" and Ghani, Lockhart & Carnahan 2006: "An Agenda for State-Building in the Twenty-First Century. Returning Order to Postconflict Societies: State-Building, Constitution-Making, and Justice".

[122] Easterly 2002: "The Cartel of Good Intentions: The Problem of Bureaucracy in Foreign Aid". He jokingly divides post-War aid in three 'eras': the 'Stone Age' (late 40s to 70s), the 'Iron Age' (mid 70s to 90s) and the 'Silicon Age' (mid-1990s to the time he writes) and demonstrates, in a table on p17-18, how the same discourses and concepts keep getting reinvented.

[123] Duffield 2010: "The Development-Security Nexus in Historical Perspective"; p26.

nexus'. The UN's 'sustainable development goals' are still too intricately tied up with these concepts to qualify as a new discourse. But the internal reorganization of the UN since Antonio Guterres became Secretary General, and similar reorganizations of aid agencies in major donor countries, suggest that an upcoming 'Groundhog Day' may be in the make.

I will return to contemporary discourses justifying intervention, highlighting them from a different angle, in Chapters Nine and Eleven. To complete this introduction, which serves to understand the policy choices made when the international community decided to back a new and comprehensive state-building project in Somalia, I wish to make or emphasize a few last points:

Inherent in the failed state concept is the notion of the *successful* state; the failed state discourse thus strengthens the *image* of the State as a harbinger of peace, justice and development. In the dialectics developed by Migdal and Schlichte (1.4), the practice of the failed state reinforces the image of a successful state. Since the modern Western state most closely reflects this ideal, state-building becomes a process of 'catching up' with the West.

Well-meaning donors offer support to failing or fragile states to speed this catching up through *institutional* reform. Political aspects have been entirely evacuated from the state model to the benefit of a technocratic institutional approach, because the political has already been decided (liberal democracy, open markets etc) so only a correct implementation is required. Insofar politics is still acknowledged as part of state-building, it must deal with how domestic constituencies can be mobilized to demand good governance and help build the prescripted state.

As Jutta Bakonyi and Berit Bliesemann de Guevara point out, failed or fragile state analysis proceeds from an "*'absolutist' view on the state, imagining it as the sole founder and main guarantor of law and order and hence as main source of social rules, norms and values guiding the everyday life of its people*" thus ignoring the "*social processes that actually shape areas characterised by supposed state 'decay' and 'failure'.*"[124] Systems of self-governance are completely ignored. On the one hand, such analysis asserts that the State has failed or is weak; on the other, it does not admit any other type of political order, so it can only describe the situation in negatives (what is *not* present).

Finally, and most crucially, the justifications for intervention given above, from human development to good governance and global security, all tend to reach beyond the recipient state and seek to affect domestic populations directly, establishing a direct link between them and the intervening agencies and donor countries. "*In taking human life and populations as its referent, rather than states, development/security is biopolitical as much as it is geopolitical*."[125] The term **biopolitics**, made popular by Foucault in the 1970s, is here used to describe the extended reach of international organizations directly into the lives of residents of foreign countries. Biopolitics facilitate the external governance of societies.[126] A clear expression of the new global biopolitical regime was the status of 'enemy combatant' developed by the US administration shortly after 9/11, 2001, to avoid having to apply the Geneva Conventions of War in the War on Terror. Any person in the world could now be detained by the USA if considered by the US administration to be an 'enemy combatant', or summarily executed if a case could be made (if challenged in a US court, in itself very unlikely) that the assassination had been 'in self-defense'; no state protection applied to them.[127]

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[124] Bakonyi & Bliesemann De Guevara 2009: "The Mosaic of Violence—An Introduction"; p397-398.

[125] Sörensen & Söderbaum 2012: "Introduction — The End of the Development-Security Nexus?"; p7.

[126] For a comprehensive survey of the application of Foucault's concept of biopolitics to international politics, see Lemm & Vatter (eds) 2014: "The Government of Life. Foucault, Biopolitics and Neoliberalism".

[127] The implications of this regime, opposing sovereign states to human beings deprived of their citizens' rights, are philosophically developed by Giorgio Agamben in "Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life", 1998.

Somalia enters the Global War on Terror (2001 – 2006)

Immediately after 11 September 2001, Somalia was identified as a possible hotbed for Islamic terrorism as it so neatly fitted the definition of a failed state. The only known Islamist faction in Somalia, Al Itihaad Al Islamiyya ('Islamic Union') and its leader Hassan Dahir Aweys were put on the list of designated terrorist organizations by the US on September 23rd because of presumed links with Al Qaeda and with the 1998 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Of more immediate consequence for Somalis, however, the main financial remittances (*hawala*) company, Al Barakaat, was shut down by US fiscal authorities, and its $8.5 million reserves impounded. This killed many small Somali businesses and complicated the transfers that kept many Somali families afloat and allowed small investments,[128] the more so because *all* Somali remittances companies could be closed on the same grounds (that terrorists supposedly used them to transfer funds).

The decision to put Somalia on the terror watch list was based on assumption, not fact. With the reasoning that Afghanistan had provided Al Qaeda with an operational base *because* it was a failed state, Somalia automatically also became suspect, as a failed Muslim state with a known Islamic political faction.[129] But there was no hard evidence that terrorists were hiding in Somalia or that Somalis abetted international terrorism. As a scholar of Somalia noted at the time, "*to many Somalis and international observers, the spotlight that has shined on Somalia as part of the war on terrorism has come as a surprise.*"[130]

The US administration had little direct knowledge of Somalia. Since the 1993 Black Hawk Down incident, it had disengaged almost entirely from Somalia. When media (falsely) reported in October 2001 that Al Qaeda was transferring its arsenal and leadership from Afghanistan to Somalia, US intelligence and military officers scrambled to the region to establish operations. The Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HoA) was set up in 2002. "*The Task Force's first mission was to go find bad guys and whack them*", as Ambassador Lange Schermerhorn, the Political Advisor to the commanding general of CJTF-HOA from 2003 to 2004, put it. He candidly added: "*There weren't a lot around, so the desired end state became—while you are at it, stabilize the region. It was not well thought-through from the beginning. But then they got there and tried to figure it out*".[131] Although Al Qaeda had established links with small Islamist groups including Al Itihad in the early 1990s, it had left Somalia in 1995,[132] leaving local Islamist groups to their own devices.

For a while there was talk of a full-scale US military operation in Somalia.[133] This was avoided, probably by consulting Somali experts who argued that there was no sign of an Al Qaeda presence in Somalia, and

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[128] Besides Al Barakaat, Al Haramain charitable organization was also closed down under Executive Order 13224, ('to block the assets of individuals and entities that provide support, services, or assistance to, or otherwise associate with, terrorists and terrorist organizations….'). Later investigations showed that both groups could not be held responsible for the charges against them, see for example Associated Press, 'Italian prosecutor says no basis for terrorism charges in probe of alleged Somali financial link to al-Qaida' (07 Jan. 2004), but the fear it struck in all other hawala operations led many of them to discontinue their operations in Somalia and other risky countries. See Thompson 2007: "Misplaced Blame: Islam, Terrorism and the Origins of Hawala".

[129] For a typical exposé defining Somalia as a terrorist threat, see Phillips 2002: "Somalia and Al Qaeda: Implications for the War on Terrorism" in The Heritage Foundation #1526.

[130] Le Sage 2004: "Somalia and the War on Terrorism: Political Islamic Movements & US Counter-Terrorism Efforts"; p5.

[131] Bradbury & Kleinman 2010: "Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship Between Aid and Security in Kenya"; p13. They extract the quote from Barcott 2007: "Intelligence, Command, and Control of the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa" (unpublished paper). CJTF-HOA was replaced in 2008 by AFRICOM.

[132] André Le Sage (2004) discusses these early contacts of Al Qaeda. There was no evidence, he says, for contacts after 1995.

[133] See Marchal "Conclusion" in Hassner ea. 2003: "Guerre et Sociétés".

that it was highly unlikely to happen.[134] Nonetheless, CJTF-HoA, from its base at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti, started a low-intensity military counter-terrorism campaign focused on monitoring and eliminating the terrorist threat in the Horn of Africa in cooperation with Ethiopia and Kenya. It mostly used covert action, including assassinations of senior Islamic figures.[135] It built security capacities among the governments of Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya with joint military Counter-Terrorism exercises, security training, improved control at the airports and seaports, and 'enhanced interrogation' techniques.[136] The 'Extraordinary Rendition' program which allowed the US to capture 'enemy combatants' with the cooperation of local governments and transfer them, through extrajudicial means, to Guantanamo Bay or other prisons in its network, was active in the Horn of Africa. One early leader of Al Shabaab I interviewed was detained by US forces with the help of Djiboutian immigration officials while boarding a plane in Djibouti to officially attend an international conference in Asmara. (He spent several years in 'Gitmo' until he was released without charge).[137] The US also sought to directly engage potential Somali allies in the War on Terror, providing them with military support and funding in exchange for their help in capturing or killing terrorists on the US list.[138] The US therefore supported the Ethiopian government when it convened dissident faction leaders[139] in a new organization, the Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council (SRRC). The dominant figure in this alliance became Abdullahi Yusuf, who would become president of the Transitional Federal Government with Ethiopian support in 2004.

As in Afghanistan,[140] the US was often misled by local partners. Ethiopia considered that any (possibly) anti-Ethiopian group, including the Transitional National Government, Al Itihad, the Sharia courts and local warlords not aligned to Ethiopia, could be designated terrorists.[141] It provided US officials with hit lists of targets including 'terrorist training camps'. However, when the US surveyed these targets from an air base hastily established at Gode in Eastern Ethiopia, they found nothing to bomb.[142]

The main target, Al Itihad, proved particularly elusive: the organization had disbanded in 1997. US commandos searched in vain for Al Itihad training camps. As seen in 6.1, in the 1990s Al Itihad had

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[134] Ken Menkhaus, in a 2002 testimony to the US Congress Foreign Relations Committee, stressed that Al Itihad (AIAI) was not related to Al Qaeda, that the TNG was not a front for AIAI, that AIAI had no military training bases within Somalia, and that Somalia was an unlikely 'safe haven' for Osama Ben Laden, and in fact for any foreigner. Other experts (i.e. Hoehne, Bryden, Elliot & Holzer) also wrote policy papers that argued against a US anti-terror campaign in Somalia.

[135] Le Sage (2004) gives a few examples of such US covert actions, including raiding internet cafés in Mogadishu, installing underwater surveillance cameras near Ras Kamboni, and targeted killings of senior Islamist political, judiciary and intellectual leaders.

[136] The US Embassy person in Kenya in charge of the security cooperation programme with the Kenyan government once privately admitted to me in 2016 that teaching 'enhanced interrogation' was one of the ways the US helped Kenya fight terrorism, noting that existing Kenyan practices (inherited from the British during the Mau Mau rebellion) were rougher.

[137] Interview with the concerned person, 5 June 2019 in Burco, Somaliland; verified in the Wikileaks 'Gitmo Files'

[138] Maruf & Joseph 2018: "Inside Al Shabaab. The Secret History of Al Qaeda's Most Powerful Ally"; p29-33. The US was mostly focused on eliminating the perpetrators of the 1998 embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania.

[139] These included Shatigaduud (RRA faction), 'Morgan' (Majerteen in Southern Somalia), Hussein Aidid (Habar Gidir/Sacad) as well as Abgal/Warsangeli and Biimaal clan militias.

[140] See Anand Gopal on the extent to which US forces were misled by local partners in Afghanistan; in "No Good Men Among the Living. America, the Taliban and the War Through Afghan Eyes", 2014.

[141] The brothers Samatar (in Samatar, Ahmed I. & Abdi Ismail Samatar 2003: "Somali Reconciliation: Editorial Note" in *Bildhaan* #3, 1-15) describe the four-pronged strategy by Ethiopia to unseat the TNG, including diplomatic efforts to withdraw recognition from the TNG, organizing an opposition front (the SRRC), providing military supplies to SRRC warlords and 'actionable intelligence' provided to the US and international allies on supposed links between the TNG and international terrorism.

[142] Le Sage, 2004, Ch. 1.

established a local administration in Luuq and other towns of Gedo, and maintained a small military presence at Ras Kamboni in Lower Juba, Ceel Waaq in Gedo and in Puntland's Laas Qoray district. Its bastions in Gedo were among the better-governed of South Central Somalia and NGOs generally appreciated their presence.[143]

The Itihad branch in the Ogaden conducted several attacks against Ethiopian targets, even in Addis Ababa. In 1996-1997 Ethiopia invaded Gedo upon the request of the local clan faction SNM (Siyad Barre's Marehan faction) who wished to get rid of their (more popular) rivals, using the pretext of foreign jihadist connections. Ethiopia routed Al Itihad from its positions and set up a buffer zone along its border with Somalia. Al Itihad then disbanded and its members split into several successor factions, giving up territorial control and warfare as a strategy. Instead, members focused on delivering social services in areas where they had influence and used their connections to the business community and the Sharia courts to play an increasing role in security and politics in Mogadishu and the Lower Shabelle region.[144]

By 2001 three groups had emerged out of the dissolution of Al Itihad: the militant Ethiopian/Ogaden wing, which had committed most of the terrorist attacks, had moved to Ethiopia, apparently calling itself the Somali Islamic Front. Many of its members later joined the Ogaden National Liberation Front while an influential Ogadeni faction led by Hassan Al Turki established the Ras Kamboni brigade in the southern tip of Somalia. Al Itihad militants that were connected to the business communities in Somaliland, Puntland and Mogadishu formed a non-violent and politically discrete but radical Salafi movement named *Al I'tisam*; while the wing led by Aweys continued to rely on its projection of force to play a role in Mogadishu and Lower Shabelle as part of the Islamic Courts movement. The TNG included members of the second group and initially had a favourable disposition to the third.

The decisive, yet ill-informed, US action to counter a non-existent global terrorist threat in Somalia[145] by bolstering the opponents of the Islamists had adverse results. The warlords of the Somali Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Council were thoroughly unpopular in Somalia[146] and it was obvious that the USA were being misled by Somalia's historical enemy Ethiopia. On the other hand, some of the 'Islamist' leaders who were being taken out by US missiles or local contract killers employed by the Americans were rather popular among Somalis, not because they were 'terrorists' but because they attempted to bring law and order.

According to the US National Security Council's strategy of 2003,[147] "*The principal objective of our collective response [in Somalia] will be the rebuilding of a state that can look after its own people—their welfare, health, prosperity, and freedom—and control its borders*". But in fact, the US did not engage in Somali state-building during this period.

Ethiopia had invested in the 'building block strategy' (see above), had crafted good relations with Somaliland, Puntland and other fledgling regional administrations, and saw little more in the TNG than a

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[143] Le Sage 2004:100 quoting Ken Menkhaus report for UNDOS, 1998: "Study on Governance in Gedo Region".

[144] Le Sage 2004:104.

[145] In an extensive analysis in his doctoral dissertation, Le Sage concludes that, although AQ may have had some presence in Somalia, it amounted to very little, most of their operatives and activities being in Kenya. Other experts agree; more distant observers (in Western security think-tanks and the global media) painted a different picture, where Somalia was effectively penetrated by Al Qaeda, but they only give circumstantial evidence.

[146] This is also the assessment of Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed 'Farmaajo', President of Somalia 2017-2022, in his 2009 Master's thesis: "*Washington committed another foreign policy blunder. As allies, it solicited none other than the Somali warlords who had effectively feudalized and starved the country. Thus, against its policy and ideals, the United States effectively legitimized their reign of terror*"; p20.

[147] National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, 2003.

hostile Djiboutian/Gulf state creation and a Trojan horse for Islamists and Arab interests.[148] To counter them, Ethiopia, through the leadership it had acquired of IGAD, pushed for a new international conference to establish a peace settlement for Somalia. Kenya, which had its own strategic interests to defend in Somalia, agreed to host the conference.

Unlike Arta, the peace talks that were held under the auspices of IGAD in Kenya (in Eldoret, 2002-2003, and Mbagathi, 2003-2004) were supported by the entire international community. According to observers, however, Ethiopia and Kenya exerted most influence. Besides most constituents of the Arta process, the SRRC warlords and faction leaders were also invited. After nearly two years of expensive conferences a new parliament was elected along the '4.5' formula, reflecting the growing consensus among the international community that political power in Somalia had to be vested in the clans. The 275 MPs then elected Abdullahi Yusuf as President of a new Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in October 2004. This election result—the incumbent TNG president Salat Hassan was another main contender—was reportedly obtained by Ethiopia's vote-buying among MPs.[149] Ethiopia (with tacit Western backing) thus ensured that a pro-Ethiopian, anti-Islamist warlord would lead a new government based on clan balance. Importantly, this government would be federal, not national, which also clearly reflected the preference of Ethiopia.

Yusuf, instead of reaching out to his opponents from the ex-TNG, pressed his advantage by appointing a PM close to Ethiopia, who presented an 82-member cabinet. The European Union agreed to pay for the ministers and the MPs, most of whom remained in Nairobi claiming they would be unsafe in Somalia; the TNG faction returned to Mogadishu. Tensions soon rose between both groups, and Yusuf didn't manage to reach Mogadishu until 2007; instead, he settled first in Jowhar, and then in Baidoa. He attempted to convince Ethiopia to send an army to recapture the capital and the rest of South and Central Somalia from his rivals; but the international community declined to fund this venture.

The TFG's pro-Ethiopian and anti-Islamist discourse may have helped it gain acceptance in the international community, but it had an adverse effect on much of the Somali population, who expected little good from the SRRC warlords that had been handed power and their Ethiopian backers. In typical warlord fashion, President Yusuf staffed his government with loyalists and created parallel structures. For example, he personally commanded what were known as his 'Majerteen militias' although they were officially part of the TFG army.

Yusuf's government made no attempt to actually govern Somali territory (not even the towns of Jowhar and Baidoa), except through law and order operations for the immediate benefit of the power elite. The TFG would have joined the long list of failed attempts to recreate a Somali government (let alone the state), were it not for the Global War on Terror. This led all Western (and most other international) actors in the intervention to support him despite his obvious incapacity to rule the country.

Throughout South and Central Somalia, the official transfer of power from functioning but informal local self-governance mechanisms to national institutions which only existed on paper, brought confusion. It allowed contenders somehow related to President Yusuf or one of his 82 ministers or clan allies to claim local 'representation' rights; as we have seen, national political processes often revive local tensions about representation, which easily degenerate into armed clashes between lineages. Into this political turmoil stepped the Sharia courts.

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[148] Elites in landlocked Ethiopia had already been alarmed by the cession, by Djibouti, of its port to Dubai Ports World in 2000, bringing a crucial Ethiopian strategic asset under Emirati control.

[149] Menkhaus 2007b: "The Crisis in Somalia: Tragedy in Five Acts"; p361. The standard bribe paid for an MP's vote was 3000-5000 USD.

Failed State Somalia

Ken Menkhaus' words in the quote at the top of this section should be taken as partial irony, because he knew, as made obvious from this and his many other writings on Somalia, that a central administration was a contentious, conflict-generating proposition for Somalia; and that Somalis needed peace and development much more than a state.[150] He also realized that the 'failed state' discourse was imposed from the outside and served to mask political realities in Somalia rather than clarify them. This quote reflects that, as an American expert working for many different organizations intervening in Somalia, he knew that a state had to be built and would be built, but that it would be particularly difficult in Somalia; these words are a warning to external state-builders.

Indeed, he writes that "*a case can be made that attempts to revive a central state structure have actually exacerbated armed conflicts. State-building and peace-building are, in this view, two separate and in some respects mutually antagonistic enterprises in Somalia. (...) The spate of armed clashes which in 2002 rendered south-central Somalia more insecure and inaccessible than at any time in the past ten years was partially linked to political jockeying in anticipation of the IGAD peace talks*." [151]

In another paper of 2003, Menkhaus explains*: "there is perhaps no other issue on which the worldviews of external actors and Somalis are more divergent than their radically different understanding of the state. For external actors, the conventional wisdom is that a responsive and effective state is an essential prerequisite for development, a perfectly reasonable proposition enshrined in virtually every World Bank and UN strategy on development. For Somalis, the state is an instrument of accumulation and domination, enriching and empowering those who control it and exploiting and harassing the rest of the population. These different perceptions of the state often result in external and national actors talking past one another rather than with one another in discussions about the rebuilding of the central government."*[152] Furthermore, he reminds his audience that *"The extensive and costly capacity-building efforts of international aid agencies to support police and judiciaries throughout Somalia often presume they are rebuilding a set of institutions when actually they are trying to make them functional for the first time."*[153]

As Tobias Hagmann (a Swiss expert on the Horn of Africa) notes, the international community has been singularly uncreative when faced with Somali state collapse. State collapse was never seen as an opportunity—to question existing paradigms about state-society relations, to experiment with new forms of statehood, etc. *"The fact that observers have described more than a dozen years of Somali politics negatively, i.e. by what does not exist (a state apparatus) rather than by what does exist (a variety of fragmented authorities) indicates the ideological power of state-centred concepts".*[154]

Probably UN or Western diplomats would disagree with the criticism of being 'uncreative' and would point out that in Somalia, since nothing works like it should, interveners have had to be creative all the time. For example, the 4.5 system of power-sharing between clans, though not invented and much less imposed by foreign interveners, was certainly a novelty for them, especially combined with a territorial federal model which did not overlap with the 4.5 system, as clan families are dispersed throughout the Somali territory. How would that circle be squared?

Also, the fact that there was now finally a Somali government that was recognized by all major foreign parties, and which was conveniently located in Nairobi, and even on the EU payroll, facilitated the

[150] Menkhaus 2003b:411.

[151] Menkhaus 2003b:407-408.

[152] Menkhaus 2003c:19.

[153] Menkhaus 2003c:23.

[154] Hagmann 2005: “From State Collapse to Duty-Free Shop. Somalia’s Path to Modernity”; p526.

international intervention in Somalia. The manner in which interventions have become biopolitical, mentioned above, should not occult the fact that all international organizations and foreign governments still require a legal basis signed with a sovereign government. Interventions must always be requested by the host government and based on a Memorandum of Understanding or a Letter of Agreement;[155] these could now be obtained more easily. A formal requirement for state-building (a government) had been achieved.

But the international community also was exhausted by two years wrangling in Kenya's luxury hotels and the divisive and inconclusive outcomes it had led to, and was disinclined to support Abdullahi Yusuf's new government. Until 2007 the TFG was a 'government in waiting' and the Somali state it led a 'post-box state'[156] while the main action in Somalia was the War on Terror.

Several international experts on Somalia, including Ken Menkhaus and Roland Marchal, observed how with the War on Terror and the 'Failed State/Good Governance' discourse, international policies towards Somalia became even more divorced from reality than they had been. As Roland Marchal puts it: "*The security approach structures the international response to the Somali crisis to the extent that there is little perceived need for an analysis of the situation on the ground, of its numerous grey areas and the contradictions habitually indulged in by all Somali actors. In this superficial understanding, Somali politics, once characterized by factionalism, ambitious politico-military entrepreneurs and shifting alliances, has become an arena where good guys endorsed by the international community fight against bad guys supported by Eritrea and al-Qaeda*".[157]

A state-building process that is divorced from reality is likely to produce a state equally divorced from reality. In terms of the rhizome/tree duality, the Transitional Federal Government, which would form the basis for the current Somali government, could hardly be said to have its roots in Somali society. If, following our earlier analogy, the trunk is composed of the main organs of the state–the executive (administration & security services), the judiciary, the legislative–then that trunk did not grow together with the state-tree's roots, but it was established by the international community outside Somali soil, waiting to be transplanted there when the conditions were ripe. There was apparently not even a hurry to transplant the TFG-tree to Somali soil, it could survive indefinitely in exile. Could the TFG be compared to a tree grown using hydroponics, outside the soil, and kept in a nursery in Gigiri (the forested area of Nairobi where the UN offices lie)? Or was it an inverted tree (Fig. 23) with its roots in the international community, waiting to grow its branches in the Somali soil?

[155] Woodward 2017: 130-131.

[156] The expression comes from Leonard & Samantar 2011: "What Does the Somali Experience Teach Us about the Social Contract and the State?"; p576.

[157] Marchal 2009b: "Changing Paradigm in Somalia"; p2.

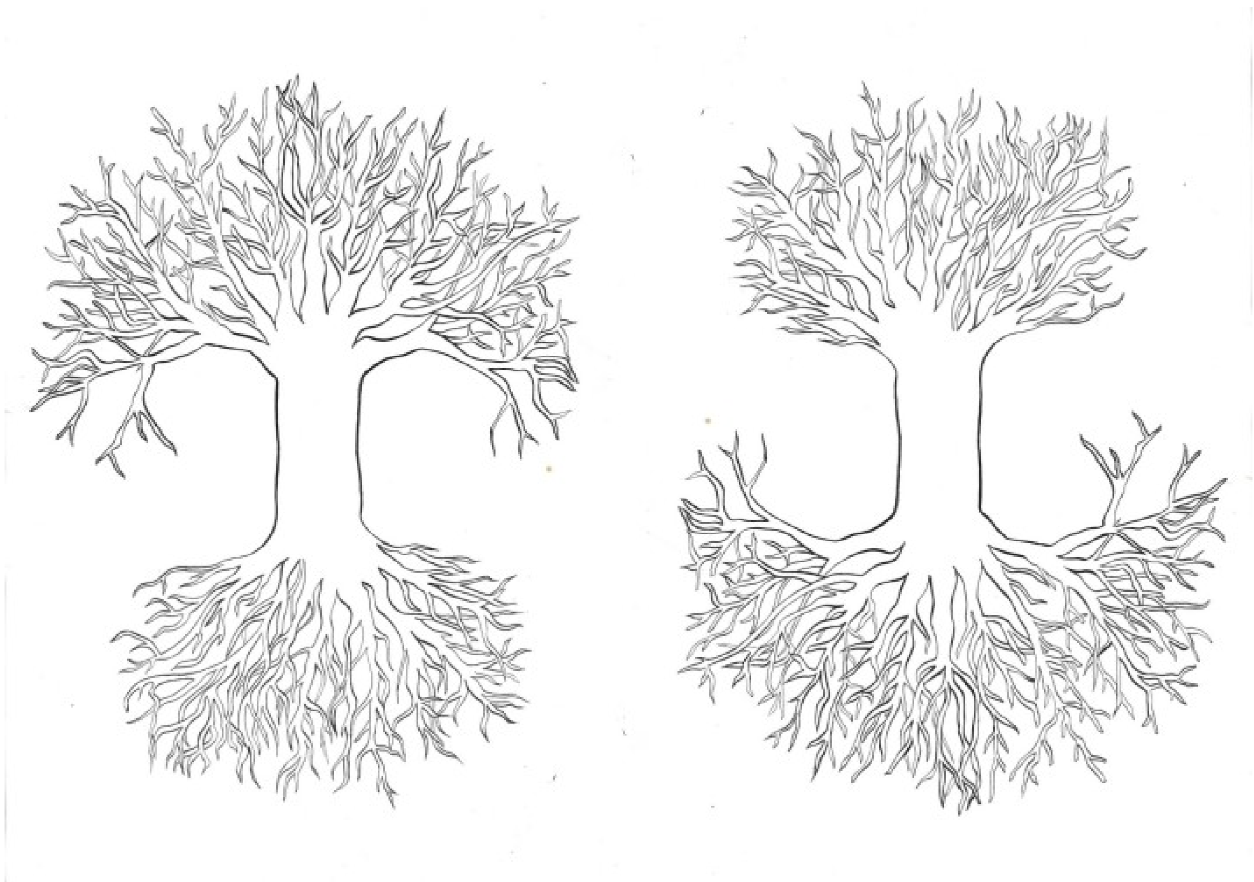

Figure 23: The abstract tree and its inverse. Drawing by Elena Rodríguez

7.4 A Tale of Two States: the ICU and the TFG, 2004 to 2012

The previous section finished with an image, side-by-side, of a schematic tree and its reverse; what I call the inverse tree. The idea of an inverse tree may seem outlandish, but given the similarity between the roots and the branches of the tree (when represented without vegetation) it may be noted that the tree itself is not inversed, but only the perspective of the viewer. The typical Somali viewer, with their feet on the Somali ground, may consider the state-tree in its usual representation, with the roots underground connected to the Somali rhizome and its branches in the air busy extracting external resources and converting them into much needed nutrients and energy, shared through the roots with the rhizome.

In contrast a foreign observer who belongs to the international community—a term that remains to be defined—may well consider that the roots of the state-tree lie in the international community, formed and initially nourished by international ideas and resources, and that its branches extend into Somalia, extracting the resources from the ground and its people and converting them into global wealth and assets which flow back to the roots (the international community). The main difference, at this point, is the direction in which energy and resources flow. Note that the trunk, in both cases, is similar, and that resources flow through it in both directions.

I am introducing this notion because 2004, the year that saw the birth of the Transitional Federal Government, was also the year in which the Islamic Courts Union started its rapid ascension, and by 2006 it controlled almost all of South and Central Somalia, as well as the entire capital. Although it was violently removed from power, part of it survived in the insurgent movement Al Shabaab. The 'tale of two states' which starts here is still ongoing at the time of writing (Summer 2022). It will be picked up in Chapters Nine and Ten.

The Rise and Fall of the Islamic Courts Union

It is true that there had been no mass movements of political Islam in Somalia, but the seeds of several had been planted. The Dervish Rebellion may have been vitiated by its clan element, but the anti-colonial and reformist *Uwaysiyyah* order (4.3) approached a modern Islamic movement. Somalia is a deeply religious country, and its scholars have always received training abroad, whence they returned with new ideas about Islam and modernity. In 1952 the *Somali Islamic League* was established with the backing of the Somali Youth League and the authorization of the Italian trusteeship authorities.[158] Its main objective was to establish Arabic education by inviting teachers from Egypt, some of whom were connected to the Muslim Brotherhood. In 1967 young Islamic intellectuals that had returned from studies abroad established *Al Nahda* (Renaissance) in Mogadishu to promote modern Islamist ideals against the deeply corrupt government of that time.[159] Siad Barre, who claimed to speak in the name of Islam, had no patience with religious scholars who thought differently. After Islamic scholars protested against the 1975 Family Law of Siad Barre, they had to flee abroad, mainly to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan and Pakistan, where they became connected to the struggles and modern Islamist currents in those countries. In Pakistan many of them became connected, from the late 1970s onward, to the Afghan jihad, while scholars returned from Egypt with Muslim Brotherhood connections, from Saudi Arabia with a Wahhabi/moderate and pro-business Salafi orientation, and from post-1985 Sudan with links to Hassan Al Turabi's social revolutionary National Islamic Front. After the fall of the Somali state, many returned to Somalia. They could now freely practice their beliefs and hoped to influence social developments to turn Somalia into a fully Islamic country.

Al Itihad was but the most combative and therefore most visible of these organizations. A powerful current, *Al Islah*, is Muslim-Brotherhood oriented. It accepts Somalia's unorthodox Sufi culture as a basis for national revival. Al Islah has carefully maintained its distances with 'terrorism', constantly putting forward its moderate and non-violent nature. This has allowed it to become part of the current Somali federal government. Other non-violent political Islamic currents that have (later) found their way into the current establishment are *Alaa Sheikh*, *Damm-ul Jadid* and *Al I'tisam*. Again others (*Jama'at al-Tabligh*, *Salafiyya Jadiida*, *al-Takfir wal-Hijra)* have focused on social work and proselytism, apparently uninterested in power.[160] Importantly, the Sharia courts that were established in Mogadishu did not belong to any of these currents, nor did they form their own. From the outset they included members of all these organizations.

The rise of the Islamic Courts Union

The first court appeared in Mogadishu in 1992.[161] It was short-lived, but courts re-emerged in 1994 in Ali Mahdi's controlled North Mogadishu, where they operated until 1997.

The courts responded to a need for dispute adjudication and justice. Mogadishu was cut up into clan-faction controlled areas. Law and order within these neighbourhoods were kept by faction leaders, but the problem was settling disputes between the areas. In the countryside, as seen previously, *xeer* reasserted itself almost unscathed after half a century outside the public realm. But in cities *xeer* did not function, since it is based on previous agreements, a long-term sharing of resources and a steady pattern of settling disputes between neighbouring clans. In cities lineages that had no *xeer*

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[158] This is based on Baadiyow 2008: "The Islah Movement: Islamic Moderation in War-torn Somalia"; p5-8.

[159] The term 'Nahda' also refers to the 'awakening' among young Arab intellectuals at the end of the 19th century.

[160] International Crisis Group 2005: "Somalia's Islamists".

[161] Hoehne & Gaas 2022: "Political Islam in Somalia. From Underground Movements to the Rise and Continued Resilience of Al Shabaab"; p416.

arrangements with each other were now neighbours, and often rivals. When *xeer* does not function, clan elders and litigants agree to take the case to court: either a sharia court or a 'constitutional'/formal law court. Since the formal judiciary did not function after the collapse of the state, sharia was the only legal option.

The sharia courts, then, provided an answer to the population's need for justice and objective rulings. Ali Mahdi supported the implantation of the sharia court to curb criminal violence.[162] It resolved family, property and contract disputes, besides criminal cases. The jurisdiction of the court extended only to his, Abgal-dominated areas, resolving issues between sub-clans and lineages on the base of sharia. As many of the disputes were of a commercial nature, local businessmen were willing to fund the court's operation and the implementation of their rulings, in case social pressure was not sufficient to make litigants abide by them. Thus the courts were integrated into the local tissue (rhizome) both socially and economically.

According to Sharia, clan identity does not matter and individuals are held responsible for their crimes, instead of clan lineages. Thus, although the court's jurisdiction was clan-based, its rulings were non-clan based,[163] and sought to apply an external principle of justice rather than negotiate an outcome that maintains or restores clan balance, like *xeer* courts do. Urban residents were accustomed to such modern principles of justice, and sharia courts in that sense fitted their expectations. The sharia courts, in contrast to those previously run by the government, were much less (or not at all) corrupt and bureaucratic, so for many urban residents they were an improvement.

Foreign-trained Somali scholars returning from exile naturally found positions within these courts. They brought with them precepts for how a modern Islamic society should be governed, and this caused court members to also become politically active. For example, the North Mogadishu sharia court became involved in efforts to develop the port of 'eel Ma'an for the business-community, deprived of the use of Mogadishu port controlled by Aidid. Since the court was now not only providing law and order better than the clan militias, but was also getting intertwined with the business community, Ali Mahdi came to see it as threatening his domination, and he closed it in 1997, to the chagrin of both the population and the business community. But by then a new sharia court had opened in South Mogadishu, and one in Belet Weyne, another town with multi-clan tensions and an active business community.

There was thus competition between clan faction leaders and sharia courts, which would grow over the years. Since the clan factions could not provide any essential services (not even security, much less electricity, foreign banking etc) to the business community, merchants gradually withdrew their support to them in the second half of the 1990s.[164] Diaspora remittances, which had initially often been channelled through factions to support their armed struggle, were increasingly directed to affected kin and invested in their businesses, bypassing the faction leaders. The other sources of funding for faction leaders—UN and NGO contracts, looting of public assets and aid—had also dried up.

The Islamic courts, in contrast, were not integrated into the local economy as predators, as the clan leaders were. In several areas of Mogadishu their first actions were to clear the rubble, restore public spaces, facilitate transport etc. They helped generate revenue rather than only tax (or plunder) it. This attitude helped them secure external funding. Gulf partners of the domestic business community found that the sharia courts were reliable channels for the provision of humanitarian aid and social support. But this external funding was not necessary for the functioning or the spread of the courts.

The gradual shift of economic and even political power from the clan leaders to the courts caused several developments. Since the courts could rarely count on faction leader support, they were created by a greater variety of social forces, thus becoming more rooted. In 2003, Menkhaus described the

[162] Marchal 2000:29.

[163] Le Sage 2004:135-142.

[164] Marchal 2000:34 and Lesage 2004:103-104.

courts as "*local polities formed by clan elders, businessmen and Muslim clergy*".[165] They recruited the same clan militia that earlier fought for the warlords but now as a cross-clan force. As seen before, Somalis have always considered that their society should not be clan-based; what the fighters lost in raw power projection, they could gain in prestige. A few Somalis who had fought in the Afghan jihad or participated in other Muslim struggles abroad joined these forces in leading positions. The court militias were mostly paid by major businessmen.

The courts also started getting more organized. As more courts emerged, each with a local jurisdiction, they gained the capacity to settle disputes *between* communities by reaching out to each other. They started experimenting with sending judges from one community to another. This proved to be a popular and confidence-building measure, especially among the business community which needed law and order mechanisms that transcended the local (e.g that could settle a contractual dispute between Mogadishu and Belet Weyne). This in turn created a demand for more sharia courts.

In 2000, several courts of Mogadishu first came together in a Council of Islamic Courts led by Hassan Dahir Aweys, who had been the leader of Al Itihad but now headed Ifka Halane, one of the biggest sharia courts of the capital. This council served to share experiences and develop standards for sharia law. It was rather a social movement rather than a political one, and the courts did not participate in the Arta conference in Djibouti, although many of their supporters did.

The Transitional National Government that came out of the Arta agreement tried to integrate the courts into its own justice sector but the attempt to impose a civilian, secular-law based oversight was a failure that convinced court leaders they should remain independent from government.[166] The US accusation, once the War on Terror had started, that the Sharia courts were radical organizations harbouring terrorist elements (based on Aweys' and other Al Itihad members current involvement in them) made them undesirable allies to the fledgling government and the TNG attempted to close them. Given the lack of the Transitional National Government's real power, most Sharia courts in Mogadishu simply continued functioning.[167]

Meanwhile, the clan faction leaders had not willingly handed over power to the courts. Some of them had joined the Islamic Courts movement, but the major factions were still in power. Many smaller factions made redundant by the courts had converted into criminal gangs. As a result, despite the presence of the courts (which still had no political power), lawlessness and insecurity increased. Criminality in Mogadishu was maybe at its worst in 2004-2005, when, according to Marchal, '*kidnapping was the best business in town*'.[168] The courts dealt increasingly with local governance, and established relations between communities with courts, but could not tackle criminals who resided in areas beyond their jurisdiction, nor could they confront the faction leaders who still held power. This should have been the remit of the Transitional National Government, but as we saw, they had no interest in governing.

The TNG-TFG fiasco which resulted from the Mbagathi agreement, creating a new federal government that the TNG and most residents and factions of Mogadishu refused to recognize, caused more chaos. A Supreme Council of Islamic Courts (later called the Union of Islamic Courts or Islamic Courts Union—I will use the latter designation, abbreviated ICU) was established in 2004, regrouping all the sharia courts in Central Somalia. It was led by Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, a Muslim Brotherhood-leaning court director from Jowhar, maybe in an attempt to convince the USA and Ethiopia that the ICU was not linked to terrorists. Although the courts' primary function remained the enforcement of the rule of Sharia law, they also came to take on the political functions of governing bodies.

[165] Menkhaus 2003b:409 .

[166] Hoehne & Gaas 2022:416-417.

[167] International Crisis Group 2005: "Somalia's Islamists"; p20-21.

[168] Marchal 2009: "A tentative assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab"; p387.

Between 2004 and 2006 Sharia courts were established in many localities throughout South-Central Somalia, still on the initiative of Islamic activists, businessmen and clan elders but now assisted by the ICU, which provided a national framework. However, it was still a 'bottom-up' process, and each court was different, depending on the local constellation of forces and the identity of court officials. Some sharia courts used the physical punishments abhorred in the West, such as cutting off hands for recidivist thieves or punishing 'adulterous women' (and more rarely the men) but it appears most did not. Others had a reputation of being corrupt, partial to certain clan lineages etc. Moreover, local courts could also make alliances of convenience with some warlords against others, which happened early 2005 when Sharia courts in Mogadishu banded together with Hawiye warlords to oppose the TFG.

Because of this variation, not all courts were equally popular, but altogether analysts agree that the Somali population welcomed them. After at least 15 years of predation, conflict and chaos, the need for justice, security and order was acute, as one might readily understand. Between March and June 2005 a popular uprising in Mogadishu, called the *kadoon*, mobilized local people (including women and local media) against the clan militia still controlling Mogadishu. The protesters dismantled some of the more than 40 roadblocks operated by rival militia in the capital.[169] This spontaneous revolt died down but sent a clear message about the exasperation of the population with militia rule, picked up by the courts.

The fall of the Islamic Courts Union

To the USA and Ethiopia, the presence of leaders of the dismantled organisation Al Itihad and fighters who had fought in Afghanistan within the ICU seemed sufficient evidence for links between the ICU and Al Qaeda. The military wing of the ICU, which called itself Al Shabaab ('the youth') included some well-known figures such as Aden Hashi Ayro, who had trained in Afghanistan. The expansion of the courts' influence concerned the US, who saw them as akin to the Taliban. Besides targeted killings of court officials and associated politicians,[170] the US encouraged the formation of a coalition of Hawiye warlords which they hoped could boot the ICU out of Mogadishu.

Thus, in February 2006 the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (ARPCT) was formed including notorious warlords.[171] They received $150,000 each per month.[172] The US may not have realized that most members of the ARPCT were Abgal and Murosade, while their opponents were mostly Habar Gidir, thus transforming this seemingly ideological 'counter-terrorism' fight into one more chapter in the struggle between Hawiye clans for supremacy in the capital.[173] Fighting started immediately as a business dispute over the makeshift port of 'Eel Ma'an. Over the next four months Al Shabaab defeated the warlords and for the first time since 1990 Mogadishu was under one single authority.

The battle to liberate Mogadishu from the ARPCT drew many young fighters to Al Shabaab, and the victory of the ICU was celebrated by many Somalis, at home and abroad, as a *national* victory.[174] "*For many, the impulse to support and join the UIC [Union of Islamic Courts] was driven as much by a sense of renewed nationalist pride as by a commitment to political Islam of any sort*", Ken Menkhaus later

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[169] Menkhaus 2007b:367.

[170] Obviously, these assassinations were never claimed by the US, but it was clear to most Somali observers at the time that anti-ICU target designation by Ethiopians and associated warlords, together with US technology, were responsible for these killings. See Menkhaus 2007b, Le Sage 2004, or Barnes & Hassan 2007: "The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts"; p3.

[171] Such as Yalahow, Qanyare, Mohamed Dheere, Musa Sudi, Qeybdiid and Bashir Raage.

[172] ICG article in Foreign Affairs: Blowing the Horn, March 1st, 2007.

[173] International Crisis Group 2006: "Can the Somali Crisis Be Contained?"; p12.

[174] The warlords of the ARPCT were seen as foreign stooges and there were rumours that US special forces were fighting on the side of ARPCT; see ICG 2006:12-13.

testified before the US House Committee on Homeland Security.[175]

Although the ICU projected itself as a cross-clan movement, it consisted mostly of Hawiye, particularly of the Habar Gidir clans. The TFG, meanwhile, was dominated by the Darood, who had secured the Presidency and key ministries such as Defense. For its opponents, the ICU was but another Hawiye formation. Thus, when Al Shabaab pressed its advantage and captured Kismayo from the Marehan who were ruling it in the name of the TFG in the summer of 2006, they encountered the opposition of the population.[176] The Ethiopian army crossed the border to protect the TFG in Baidoa. By the autumn of 2006 the TFG only controlled an area around Baidoa (protected by Ethiopian troops) and Puntland.

Later, the months from June to December 2006 would be seen as a 'golden age',[177] also by foreign aid agencies who could for the first time operate without continual predation by warlord 'administrations' and uncontrollable young militia.[178] In areas controlled by the ICU, their security forces implemented draconian security measures and Sharia-based law and order. Although in some cases (women's veil, prohibition to watch the 2006 World Cup in public) this went too far for many residents, all welcomed the improved security and governance. The ICU removed roadblocks, cleared the streets of rubble and rubbish, and reopened Mogadishu's international port and airport. For the first time since 1991, citizens could move freely and securely within Mogadishu and beyond, and goods could be imported and exported through the port.

Within the ICU, the radical Islamist elements were gradually strengthened by US/Ethiopian and TFG efforts to neutralize them. In response to targeted assassinations by the US and its allies, Al Shabaab had started its own programme of assassinations of those they identified as traitors in the service of Ethiopia or the US. Salafism was globally on the rise and Al Shabaab banked on the popular admiration for the counter-hegemonic strikes, poses and rhetoric by Al Qaeda. It established schools with a strong emphasis on doctrinal 'orientation' and combat training (more about Al Shabaab in Chapter Ten). But beyond rhetorics, links between Al Qaeda and the ICU or Al Shabaab were never averred.

In early December 2006, the UN, in Security Council Resolution 1725, authorized an international intervention in Somalia called IGASOM under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).[179] Violating the Security Council resolution, which specified (Article 4) that troops from countries neighbouring Somalia would not be deployed,[180] the Ethiopian army invaded through Belet Weyne late December and captured Mogadishu shortly afterwards. The US denied backing the Ethiopian invasion, but a later Wikileaks document provided evidence for what many at the time

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[175] Menkhaus 2009. "Violent Islamic extremism: Al-Shabaab recruitment in America." Hearing before the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, USA, March 11, 2009. Online p2-3.

[176] Barnes & Hassan 2007:5.

[177] Barnes & Hassan 2007:6.

[178] Personal discussions (2016-2018) with international NGO staff members who were in Mogadishu or other locations under ICU control at that time.

[179] Excerpts from Article 3, detailing the mandate of 'IGASOM': "*To monitor progress by the Transitional Federal Institutions and the Union of Islamic Courts in implementing agreements reached in their dialogue*" / "*To train the Transitional Federal Institutions' security forces to enable them to provide their own security and to help facilitate the re-establishment of national security forces of Somalia*". However it is article 1 that is almost comically far off the mark: "*[The SC] reiterates that the Transitional Federal Charter and Institutions offer the only route to achieving peace and stability in Somalia, emphasizes the need for continued credible dialogue between the Transitional Federal Institutions and the Union of Islamic Courts, and affirms therefore that the following provisions of the present resolution, based on the decisions of IGAD and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, aim solely at supporting peace and stability in Somalia through an inclusive political process and creating the conditions for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Somalia while at the same time deploying foreign forces*".

[180] In a report by the UN SG of 22 December 2006, mention is not even made of the presence of Ethiopian troops in Somalia; instead, it makes it appear only the TFG and the ICU are fighting together: UN doc S/PRST/2006/59

suspected, that the US did give Ethiopia the green light[181] and very probably provided logistical support. To everybody's surprise, the ICU hardly opposed any resistance—its security forces did not amount to an army that could fight the Ethiopian invasion—and disbanded instead. While the moderate elements within the ICU were allowed to escape abroad (Sheikh Sharif was detained in Kenya but soon released, under US pressure, and he joined other moderate leaders of the ICU in Yemen), most Al Shabaab elements and former warlords remained in the cities and countryside to fight the Ethiopians and the TFG which had followed on their heels.

Assessment of the Islamic Courts Union

I may be accused of painting a too rosy picture of the Islamic Courts Union. I could dwell more on their restricted clan-base, dealings with warlords, their violation of human rights and internal dissensions which impaired their efforts to govern the areas they had liberated. But it is clear that the ICU was not a branch of Al Qaeda or a foreign supported radical Islamist attempt to takeover Somalia, which was the common interpretation of the counter-terrorist community, which in the 2000s had an enormous sway over the narrative of the media and academia.[182] Instead, sharia courts were an attempt to provide justice, law and security that arose from Somali society. It was well connected to the Somali rhizome, including to the economy, but it transcended it.

If community self-governance corresponds to the 'State of Nature', then the governance attempts by the sharia courts, first locally and then nationally, are an expression of 'civil society' (3.4). Consider the relationship between *xeer* and sharia. While those practicing *xeer* are aware of its shortcomings and do not oppose formal law—be it sharia or its constitutional variant, positive law—practitioners of sharia (and positive law) frown on the use of *xeer*. But both sides (clan elders and religious scholars) consider that sharia should not contravene the principles of *xeer*; sharia is an improvement upon *xeer*, not its negation. This agrees with the organic relationship between natural and positive law (3.3). Another expected characteristic of this relationship is confirmed by the sharia courts: their jurisdiction is limited, not universal. Rural communities continued practicing *xeer* and there is no evidence, as far as I know, that the ICU opposed that. Sharia courts arose in urban settings and they dealt with modern problems, such as business disputes and the governance of multi-lineage communities.

This means that the ICU was an attempt by the Somali rhizome to generate a different kind of political order. Not the modern Western state, nor even a single, centralized state. I have not heard of any document indicating the future form of state envisioned by the ICU. It was a spontaneous manifestation, arising out of the need for order, peace and justice. Instead of a tree, a more appropriate image may be a network of shrubs, more suited to the Somali climate than the deciduous trees from Europe and North America. Though less stately than the archetypal oak tree, shrubs play a similar role vis-à-vis the rhizome. Somalis and foreign observers caught only a brief glimpse of what the ICU could have become, because it had no time to develop.

Instead, it was faced by relentless hostility. The ICU was effectively split by the Ethiopian intervention and the more moderate elements would rejoin the federal government after 2008. Meanwhile, the other part, the armed youth groups who defined themselves as Islamist and nationalist, would continue as the successful national movement, Al Shabaab. The military intervention created a lasting, and at the time of writing, fourteen years later, still expanding armed opposition against the federal government

Why did the international community support the military intervention? The arguments most commonly are:

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[181] See wikileaks.org.

[182] One had to be careful that expressing doubts about the findings of counter-terrorism experts would not be interpreted as sympathy or even understanding towards Al Qaeda, as that was tantamount to committing professional suicide.

- from a realist perspective, the main threat emanating from Somalia was the establishment of terrorist training camps. The US had to deal with the 1998 embassy bombings and Ethiopia with attacks by Al Ittihad Al Islamiyya in the late 1990s, and after 9/11 the notion that failed Muslim states were breeding grounds for terrorists became common sense. An Islamist government in Somalia had to be avoided at all costs.
- from a liberal-democratic perspective, Somali leaders could only be properly designated through a democratic electoral process ('free and fair elections'). Until that could happen, the most pragmatic approach was to work with those with real power on the ground—the armed faction leaders—to convince them to back a democratic process and help build the required institutions. This point of view seemed to prevail among international participants during the TFG formation process.

It should be observed, also, that the disconnect between international actors and local realities was deep by the early 2000s, as very few of the people who were formulating policies towards Somalia had direct experience of the country. The impact of the 2001 blockbuster movie Black Hawk Down was probably disproportionately large in shaping (narrative) perspectives on Somalia. It is quite possible that international decision-makers on Somalia did not know that the population was fed up with warlords,[183] and dismissed international experts who told them otherwise as delusive liberal utopians.

But ignorance is not a valid excuse, especially if all the real experts on Somalia (to begin with, the domestic population) agreed more or less with the account I have given above of the ICU. They knew that there were no strong links with international terrorist organizations (as Le Sage pointed out, most Al Qaeda operatives in East Africa were in Kenya) and that the ICU posed no threat to Western interests; they also knew that the Somali population was generally in favour of the ICU because it did bring some peace, order and justice, and because it was seen as a national, home-grown movement. But the experts were not heeded. Both realists and liberals could have calculated that their long-term interests (in national security and democratic liberalism) would not be served by supporting warlords of the cynically named “Somali Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Council” (2001, against the TNG) and the “Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism” (2006, against the ICU).

It may at first seem incomprehensible why human rights and democracy-minded external powers such as the European Union and the United Nations continue supporting unpopular warlords. Staff of both organizations sigh that they had to let the USA take the lead, in those years–"You're either with us or against us", President Bush had warned.[184] One had to follow the US policies of the Global War on Terror or suffer isolation. The EU and the UN, as well as the entire aid community, suspected military intervention was not the right course of action and had strong doubts about the future of the TFG.[185] But these two key institutions of the international order seemed in an irrational mood, pursuing policies that were in contradiction with their professed values and even with their strategic interests out of *sympathy* for the US government. This is a rhizomatic principle, and suggests a rhizome also exists among the international community. That will be explored in the last chapter.

Planting the TFG in Mogadishu

In the first days of 2007 the ICU disbanded and the TFG became the only government in Somalia (officially also in Somaliland, although the country had not participated at all in the creation of it). The period that followed was the bloodiest episode in Mogadishu’s history since the 1991-92 civil war. The Ethiopian army shelled neighbourhoods that were considered ‘hotbeds of resistance’, meaning they

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[183] Hoehne & Gaas 2022:413.

[184] This observation is based on years working for and socializing within the UN, World Bank and EU in the 2000s .

[185] Its 82 cabinet members and 250 MPs, who for years, on the expenses of the EU, comfortably lived in Nairobi and travelled to international conferences as representatives of the Somali government, were a painful reminder of the ridiculous result of two years of intense discussions.

targeted most of the city. An estimated 20-30% of Mogadishu's one million residents fled the city and thousands died.[186] The TFG's troops that came with the Ethiopians were mostly Darood, and they took revenge for the Darood's expulsion from Mogadishu in 1991 by looting and harassing the local population. In its first years, the TFG made no attempt to govern the city or re-establish security.[187] The Ethiopian forces decided to withdraw in December 2008, but Mogadishu remained at war until mid-2011, when Al Shabaab withdrew its troops.

Throughout Somalia, the Ethiopian presence fostered a nationalist reaction with Islamic overtones. The Eritrean government, in its proxy war with Ethiopia, tried to capture this momentum by convening Sheikh Sharif, the rest of the ICU leadership, clan leaders and the heads of factions opposed to the TFG to Asmara in September 2007, to form the 'Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia', or ARS. Hasan Dahir Aweys and the Al Shabaab networks he controlled joined this alliance initially, but the rest of Al Shabaab refused to and continued the fight on the ground, which gave it a clear resistance identity. Between 2007 and 2009 Al Shabaab asserted its control over most of South Central Somalia. It received weapons deliveries from Eritrea (in violation of the arms embargo) and on the black market.

The arms embargo was also routinely being violated by the pro-TFG camp "*It is the view of the Monitoring Group that the sheer quantities, numbers and diversity of arms, especially in central and southern Somalia, are greater than at any time since the early 1990s*." wrote the UN rapporteurs on the arms embargo in July 2007,[188] noting that the Ethiopian army had ferried in and distributed to its allies weapons and ammunition without seeking an exemption from the UN Security Council. Ethiopia maintained thousands of troops in Somalia (in April 2008 a bracket of 5,000 to 20,000 troops was given,[189]) a presence that by itself was already a violation of the UN Arms Embargo. In the second half of 2008, the Ethiopian Army started withdrawing its troops and materiel, under a plan to hand over authority to the federal state. But it was incapable of assuming that function. Ethiopia estimated that of the 17,000 Somali security forces it had trained by the end of 2008, 14,000 had deserted with their weapons and uniform.[190]

Fighting broke out in many areas that had previously been peaceful. Some regional strongmen made alliances of convenience with Al Shabaab and others joined the movement. By late 2008, the Monitoring Group estimated that 90% of the territory south of Puntland was controlled or influenced by armed opposition groups.

By the end of 2008, the Transitional Federal Government only controlled parts of Mogadishu[191]. It was kept alive by international injections of direct funding, development aid and security assistance, and by first Ethiopian, then AMISOM troops. The IGASOM intervention force requested in UNSCR 1725 started as a small contingent of Ugandan and Burundian soldiers. It was renamed AMISOM (African Union Mission in Somalia) in March 2007. It was restricted to Mogadishu and had a negligible impact, as its forces only guarded government installations and activities. They were supposed to keep a 'peace' that did not exist. The TFG's own security forces (military, intelligence, police, presidential guard) were managed along clan lines. They often clashed among each other and engaged in racketing and other

[186] Menkhaus 2007b:358. Marchal (2009) claims that 700,000 of Mogadishu's residents had fled by Nov. 2007.

[187] Marchal 2009:393 states: "Many inhabitants could have endorsed the TFG and the Ethiopian military presence in January and February 2007, had those two worked to normalize the situation, get economic activities on a new footing and secure the city. But, as mentioned above, that was not the plan of TFG officials who wanted to settle their own scores and enjoy the attributes of power without any concern for the people."

[188] Report by the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia S/2007/436, published on 18 July 2007. See also ICG 2004 "Biting the Bullet" p18.

[189] Report by the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia S/2008/274, published on 24 April 2008.

[190] Report by the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia S/2008/769, published on 10 Dec 2008 (2008/2) §22.

[191] UN Monitoring group 2008/2 §57.

criminal activities rather than reducing conflict and crime.[192]

After the Ethiopian invasion, the United States carried out several airstrikes from their bases in Ethiopia (Gode), Djibouti (Camp Lemonnier) and Kenya (Manda Bay) against presumed Al Qaeda operatives in Somalia and Al Shabaab leaders, deemed guilty by association.[193] One of the leaders assassinated was Ayro, the commander of Al Shabaab who had become a national hero for many, in May 2008; he was replaced by Godane, who was killed in a US drone strike in 2014.

Al Shabaab grew into one of the main US targets in its War on Terror. It is surprising to read how the threat of Al Shabaab was exaggerated, with usually no evidence, suggesting the group was planning to target the USA.[194] In fact, until the time of writing Al Shabaab has never committed any attack, or planned one insofar as is known, outside East Africa. The pledge of allegiance of Al Shabaab to Al Qaeda in 2009, which constituted the main if not only evidence for links between the two organizations for many counter-terrorism experts, was an expression of sympathy which banked on the local popularity of Al Qaeda among young Somalis. A truer indication of relations may be that Al Qaeda did not accept Al Shabaab as a member organization until 2012.

TFG 2.0

Faced with the chaos in Somalia, the international community and regional powers engineered a new political settlement for Somalia in 2008, to avoid what then looked like a probable Al Shabaab takeover. The ICU/ARS leader Sheikh Sharif was invited to become the next President. He had the backing of influential religious networks, part of the business sector, clan and faction leaders, and now also of the international community, shifting the emphasis away from Ethiopia and the warlords it supported. A conference was organized by IGAD with UN and EU support in Nairobi in October 2008: 200 TFG parliamentarians were invited to establish the consensus that the government of Abdullahi Yusuf had failed in all respects and needed to be replaced by new leadership. The ill health of President Yusuf was a convenient pretext for everyone to ease him out of power.

The election of Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as the new president of the TFG in January 2009 brought stability back to much of South Central Somalia. Compared to the previous president, Sheikh Sharif (Hawiye/Abgal) was a more acceptable figure to most Somalis, and certainly to the people of Mogadishu. Many followers of the ICU were now once again aligned with the government, leaving mainly Al Shabaab and Hizbul Islam in the armed opposition. Hizbul Islam had been created by Hassan Dahir Aweys after he fell out with the ARS in Asmara over its agreement to accept the invitation to take over the TFG. Given the stature of Aweys, Hizbul Islam became an influential militant organization generally aligned with Al Shabaab.

Both jihadi movements undertook an offensive in Mogadishu in May 2009 to boot out the new TFG, but they were stopped by a recently reinforced AMISOM backed by US weapons deliveries. Al Shabaab and

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[192] There were reports of AMISOM and TFG commanders selling weapons and ammunition on the Mogadishu arms markets in several UN Monitoring Group reports published during this period.

[193] See for example this article in the NYT from Feb. 2007, with examples of the US raids and their targets.

[194] A report on Al Shabaab by the American Enterprise Institute from February 2010 is typical: “The United States appears to be high on al Shabaab’s list of international targets. The group began issuing threats against the United States in 2008, and it now professes an ideology resembling al Qaeda’s. It has pledged allegiance to bin Laden and views itself as fighting the global Jihad led by al Qaeda.” The report goes on to suggest AS was planning to attack the US presidential inauguration in 2009 and repeatedly warns its intended audience of US policy-makers to take the AS threat on US homeland security very seriously. Harnisch 2010: “The Terror Threat from Somalia: The Internationalization of Al Shabaab”. Report by the Critical Threats project of the American Enterprise Institute. Although the report presents itself as expert policy input, It's an astounding piece of fear-mongering, disinformation and lobbying for the security industry.

Hizbul Islam remained in control of part of the capital city, and the urban war raged on. This made the groups unpopular with a growing part of the population who wished to give the new government a chance.

In this period the most strategic town fully controlled by insurgents was Kismayo, captured in 2008 from Ethiopian forces and the TFG by the local Ras Kamboni brigades (an offshoot of Al Itihad) who were soon joined by Al Shabaab and Hizbul Islam. Unlike Al Shabaab in 2006, the organization in 2008 recruited local forces and was thus accepted easily. The town's port is, after Mogadishu, the second source of trade revenue in South Central Somalia. Control was profitably shared between these three groups, but in 2010 fighting erupted among them. This led to the demise of Hizbul Islam, mostly integrated into Al Shabaab. By early 2011 Al Shabaab was in full control of the armed opposition. Godane was later credited with successfully reorganising the movement, increasing its ideological coherence,[195] its military prowess and overcoming clan identities.

In 2011 Al Shabaab left the capital and retreated to the countryside.[196] Full control of the capital city finally allowed the TFG to start evolving as a true government. The 2012 election of the NGO 'technocrat' Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and the writing of a draft constitution indicated a new political dynamic had taken root, to the satisfaction of the UN and other international backers of the TFG. The T of 'Transitional' was dropped and the TFG became the FGS, the Federal Government of Somalia. This evolution is the subject of Chapter Nine.

From 2012 to 2014 AMISOM, supplemented by Kenyan and Ethiopian troops not under AMISOM, remained on the offensive in South and Central Somalia, recapturing Kismayo (2012) and many other provincial and district centres. But Al Shabaab continued to rule most of the countryside and developed a discrete but strong influence in areas under federal government control, including Mogadishu. Al Shabaab continued, in many ways, the legacy of the Islamic Courts Union. Some major changes in the organization were that it acquired a tightly organized internal structure, and became a cross-clan movement involved in governance of occupied territories. This is described in more detail in Chapter Ten.

To return to the imagery of the two trees, we can first address the international perception that the ICU, and *a forteriori* its militant wing Al Shabaab, was a foreign implant. It is ironic and even a bit cynical that the same international forces that were behind the creation of the TFG accused the obviously more home-grown movement of being an external creation. It can only be seen as an argument, not rooted in fact, to provide more legitimacy to their own creation, the TFG.

We may also reflect that there is no space for two rival governance structures (Al Shabaab, like the ICU, never claimed to build a *state*, even an *Islamic Emirate*) in the same territory. It seems that both structures stunted each other's growth. The ICU and Al Shabaab could not develop national governance, and remained involved in local governance; while the TFG remained secluded to the national level and served as an interface between domestic elites and the international community, and did not even aspire to become involved in local governance. The TFG can be understood in terms of solutions to the 'failed state' as described in the previous section: it served as a useful interface for external actors intent on accomplishing their own goals and programs. Although the terms 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' may have been used and abused too often, they provide a succinct description of the dynamics between both forms of political order.

To conclude this chapter on intervention, I will examine an arena in which local governance and international governance collided: that of development aid. Another more famous area where

[195] Hoehne & Gaas 2022:419.

[196] Marchal 2016: "Leaving Mogadishu and Getting Regional. An Overview of Al Shabaab Dynamics 2012-2016".

international governance was drawn to intervene in Somalia in the years covered in this chapter was piracy. It may seem strange to readers that it is not even mentioned in these pages, but that is because it had very little to do with state-building; piracy remains a criminal activity. I discuss piracy briefly in Chapters 9 and 10, showing how local authorities in Somaliland avoided piracy, while those in Puntland first benefited from it, and later switched to the advantages of counter-piracy programmes. Both cases illustrate the convoluted relations between both levels of governance.

Clashes in aid governance

The authors of the 2001 Human Development Report for Somalia[197] mention that only 36% of overall aid went through the UN; the rest went directly through international NGOs, making them the main actor (and the identifiable face) of the international community in Somalia.

In 2010, Mark Bradbury gave the following overview of the aid sector in Somalia, which serves as a basis for the discussion on aid below:[198]

- South central Somalia has some of the world's worst social indicators, with over 43% of the population living on less than $1 per day, some of the worst rates of under-five (142/1,000) and maternal mortality (1,400 /100,000), and under-five acute malnutrition consistently above 19%.
- In the past decade, Somalia has been among the top ten recipients of humanitarian aid, with the most UN consolidated appeals.
- South central Somalia is currently the most dangerous place in the world for aid workers; two-thirds of all aid workers killed worldwide in 2008 were in Somalia.
- Humanitarian space has shrunk to the extent that since March 2010 there have been no international aid workers based in south central Somalia, and all aid operations have been managed remotely from Kenya.
- Some donor governments are belligerents in the war. The UN is aligned with the government and supportive of its military plans, which impacts on the delivery of aid and the security of aid agencies.
- The designation of individuals and organizations in Somalia as "terrorists" by the UN and donor governments, and moves to license humanitarian assistance are affecting the ability of aid agencies to deliver aid to the people who most need it.

A year later, despite the large humanitarian presence in Somalia, a quarter million Somalis died of starvation—a death toll similar to 1992. Why? Three factors stand out: misguided international aid policies, miscalculations by Al Shabaab, and the clash between international and local governance logics.

Since I have occasionally worked for NGOs and often with them, the observations below are based on my own experiences, enriched by interpretations from a relatively new branch of scholarship which might be called *anthropology of intervention*. These analyses are made from anthropological, ethnographic and sociological angles, usually by insiders with an academic background. The daily routines, beliefs and approaches of peacekeepers were analysed by, for example, Béatrice Pouligny (Ils Nous Avaient Promis La Paix, 2004) and Séverine Autesserre (Peaceland, 2014 and The Frontlines of Peace, 2021). Similar studies were made of the aid and development world by David Mosse (editor of Adventures in Aidland, 2011) and Lisa Smirl (Spaces of Aid, 2015).

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[197] Bradbury, Menkhaus & Marchal for UNDP 2001 – Human Development Report Somalia 2001.

[198] Bradbury 2010: "State-building, Counterterrorism, and Licensing Humanitarianism in Somalia"; p2.

Evolution of the Aid Sector in Somalia

Given the lack of security for aid workers in Somalia, nearly all international NGOs and even some Somali ones relocated their regional headquarters to Nairobi following the withdrawal of UNOSOM; the UN agencies, embassies covering Somalia, and most donors covering Somalia were already based there. The capitals of Somaliland and Puntland have remained safe for international staff over the past decades; in the rest of Somalia, some international NGOs and staff continued operating until 2009-2010. But over the years aid programmes in Somalia have become increasingly remotely managed. This has had several consequences[199] that continue until today:

- Most of the aid overhead for Somalia is spent in Nairobi; the peripheral benefits of expatriates renting houses, buying cars, doing their shopping and accessing local services accrue to Kenya, not Somalia. A substantial percentage of aid budgets is actually spent in Nairobi.[200]
- Decisions made in Nairobi, among staff that rarely visits the field and has no intimate knowledge of Somali sociocultural or local political realities, may have limited or adverse effects in the field. Conversely, it is difficult for Somalis to visit Nairobi, because the Kenyan authorities consider all Somalis potential terrorists. Thus the rift between decision-makers and aid recipients is deep.
- Field staff in Somalia, trying to bridge the gap between the reality they operate in and the decisions made remotely in Nairobi or Western capitals, have strong incentives to hide failures or adverse effects of the programmes they run. The disconnect with headquarters also allows field staff to rearrange budgets and steer programmes to their benefit (for example, recruiting friends and family or providing aid to their own community).
- To remedy these adverse effects of remote management, programme directors in Nairobi and their donors put in place costly 'third-party monitoring' mechanisms, further reducing the amount of funding actually spent on the programmes; while the monitors, who also lack field access, share incentives to report positively (to obtain the next contract from the same donor), so actual problems are rarely addressed.

The policy of remote management was reversed after the TFG was installed in Mogadishu in 2007. There was also a surge in humanitarian and development funding: donors expected NGOs to contribute to 'stabilization' in areas the TFG controlled or conquered with the help of AMISOM. Used in conflict settings, '**stablization**' refers to efforts to bring stable foundations to civilian life after an area has been conquered from the enemy. Humanitarian aid thus became a kind of 'peace dividend' for the population, which—donors hoped—would reconcile it with the new government in Mogadishu.

Despite the initial lack of security, aid agencies flocked to Somalia, encouraged by considerable funding opportunities. The narrative was that, having been liberated from a terrorist regime, and with the recognized government now able to return to the capital, Somalia was 'open for development'. Ethiopia and Kenya were examples of 'Africa rising', with good GDP growth, and this positive mood could be extended to Somalia. But, despite a large-scale effort by NGOs, donors and the UN, a famine could not be averted in 2011-12.

One of the problems was that donors required NGOs to work through, or with, the federal government, to increase its capacity and legitimacy. But TFG elites had no desire to help the aid community assist drought victims.[201] They argued that as a sovereign government they should receive and distribute the

[199] Menkhaus 2003a: "Somalia: A Situation Analysis and Trend Assessment", Writenet report.

[200] Menkhaus 2003a:56.

[201] "*The state-building, stabilisation agenda only held up if a key assumption—namely, that the government was at least willing, if not yet able, to assist in the delivery of emergency relief to its own citizens—was true. That assumption was utterly untenable in 2007–08*": Menkhaus 2010:335.

aid themselves: why work through NGOs? Transitional authorities mistrusted the humanitarian community, believing they were in cahoots with opposition forces;[202] after all, the same NGOs, employing the same Somali local staff, had been working with the Islamic Courts Union and under the supervision of other opponents of the TFG.

As for the NGO community, it was used to working directly with local authorities to deliver aid, and the TFG was only a hindrance. Predatory behaviour by government forces was equal to that of clan militia and worse than that by Al Shabaab.[203] Unable to take command of aid flows, the TFG resorted to imposing strict and expensive licensing regimes on NGOs, and blocked aid deliveries when it believed that they were destined to populations living in opposition-held areas.[204] As the TFG controlled only part of Mogadishu and some other areas of the country through clan alliances, that barred many Somalis from receiving aid. In the conflict between the TFG and the NGOs, the United Nations, the main source of humanitarian funding, often chose the side of its 'protégé' and told NGOs to follow government directives in a 'capacity-building' perspective. The UN would then negotiate with the government to change its policies, often supported by donor-diplomats who could strong-arm the weak TFG. But an agreement with the government was often not respected in the field, where local powerbrokers claimed their autonomy to make their own arrangements with the aid sector, extracting rent.

The other conundrum aid agencies in Somalia had to deal with, was counter-terrorism financing. The United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General to Somalia, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, noted in 2009 that the payments that NGOs were making to local authorities who were often opposed to the TFG showed that "*those who claim neutrality can also be complicit*", in other words, that 'impartiality' and 'neutrality', core values for the whole NGO sector, were already compromised by their arrangements with possible terrorists.[205] For a few years, counter-terrorism financing rules were not applied to humanitarian operators in Somalia, but that changed in 2009.

That year, over US$50 million of US humanitarian assistance programmed for Somalia through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance was suspended on the orders of the US Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, out of concern that it was at risk of benefiting Al Shabaab.[206] This measure sent a chill through the aid community, and NGO headquarters scrambled to protect themselves from association with 'funding terrorism'. But how could one prove that none of the donor money was benefiting Al Shabaab, especially if operators on the ground knew the contrary was true?

Since most of the country was controlled by Al Shabaab and Hizbul Islam until 2012, these militant organisations obviously took their cut from aid operations. Generally they were seen as less corrupt than the government, since they provided receipts and used impounded aid for their own humanitarian operations (for example, providing it to the crisis-afflicted families of their fighters), rather than selling it. They also provided efficient security to local NGOs who tacitly accepted their rule. In any case, the militant organisations targeted by Counter-Terrorism Financing regulations were certainly benefiting from Western aid. Prompted by the TFG, which was exasperated by the autonomy of NGOs, the US

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[202] Menkhaus 2010:333.

[203] Bradbury 2010: "Statebuilding, Counterterrorism, and Licensing Humanitarianism in Somalia".

[204] "*While it possessed almost no administrative capacity at all, the TFG insisted on exercising its sovereign right to control the flow and direction of international humanitarian aid. This was mainly driven by the desire to block aid delivery to populations that the TFG deemed sympathetic to the insurgency— namely, most of the Mogadishu population. In the midst of the massive exodus of Mogadishu residents from the war-torn capital in spring 2007, the TFG blocked convoys of food aid to internally displaced persons (IDPs), claiming some of the food might be old and that it had to inspect each truck to protect Somalis from the threat of expired grain. In reality, the TFG had no inspection capacity at all and merely sought to stop the aid shipments*." Menkhaus, 2010:333.

[205] Ould Abdallah for (Kenyan) Daily Nation 25 June 2009: "Why the World Should Not Let Somalia Go to the Dogs"

[206] Bradbury 2010:12.

Treasury put a halt to that.

UN humanitarian agencies and NGOs dealt with this problem by further outsourcing their programs to local partner NGOs, contracting out security hazards, the problems of dealing with the TFG and the risk of ‘funding terrorists’. By 2010, as Bradbury notes above, that transition was nearly complete. To provide a façade of compliance, they imposed impractical and administratively complex contractual agreements. For example, if a local NGO needed to buy office supplies, they not only had to provide correctly formatted quotations from three different suppliers and motivate their choice of one of them, as before, but they also had to submit background checks on each supplier to reassure donors that the selected suppliers had no link to terrorist groups. This led previously honest NGO workers to start faking documents.

Increased levels of administrative control by donors, from the bidding on tenders to the processing of final financial and narrative reports, reciprocated by higher levels of internal administration and top-down control within NGOs, have not resulted in less corruption or better targeting, although that is what these measures purport to achieve. Somalis point out that, to the contrary, increased diversion of aid and funds by local NGO staff has decreased the impact of development and humanitarian programs.[207] The real purpose of such measures of control is risk management: to shield senior levels of management within NGOs, and the donors themselves, of any liability. If all the correct procedures are in place and have been duly followed, they incur no risk.[208] As one NGO director told me, "It has all become about *look good*, not *do good*".[209]

William Easterly sees what he calls 'the bureaucratization of aid'[210] as a function of bureaucratic survival and institutional growth. This argument is difficult to ignore, because the aid sector involves many highly paid people enjoying assorted privileges (tax-free salaries, diplomatic passports, frequent travel, luxury hotels etc). Staff of local NGOs that contract work by international NGOs also 'live as kings' (an expression I often heard used for them in Somalia) compared to their supposed beneficiaries. However, this is not a sufficient reason. I met many international and local staff of NGOs frustrated by the amount of red tape that keeps them from delivering effective programs. The lack of faith of one NGO director was fairly typical when he said "*I doubt whether 30 years of humanitarianism have done any good to Somalia*", blaming "*externally-driven agendas*".[211]

The ideological consensus around the 'development-security nexus' as described in the previous section precludes alternative approaches to humanitarian and development aid. Perceptions of failure or lack of impact have resulted in constant reappraisals and new strategies, often accompanied by time- and resource-consuming reorganizations, but they all emanate from Western centres of power in a top-down approach where there is no margin of manoeuvre for people in the field. This is confusing, because development jargon is full of expressions such as 'local ownership', 'short feedback loops', 'conflict-sensitive programming' etc, but any local input is processed into universally applicable rules and principles as it moves upward back to the ultimate decision-makers. The new set of guiding principles for aid may look good on paper, but their implementation is compromised by the risk aversion of people in senior positions, for whom 'look good' always trumps 'do good'. Field staff find that '*plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*'. There is a high degree of burnout among aid workers, and the conflicting push and pull factors on aid workers have also led to high levels of distrust: *“[a]nybody who spends some time in the Western-dominated aid world cannot but be astonished by the pervasive levels of distrust between*

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[207] Admittedly, I have no data to support this statement, but this reflects a consensual perception among Somalis.

[208] I concur with Nicholas Nassim Taleb's observation that "*interventionistas don't learn because they are not the victims of their mistakes*" in "Skin in the Game: Hidden Assymetries in Daily Life", 2018.

[209] Marcos Ferreiro, 07 March 2018, Nairobi.

[210] Easterly 2002.

[211] 26 March 2018. He did not want to be quoted.

people within agencies, between agencies, [and] *between agencies and their alleged 'beneficiaries'*".[212]

It has become increasingly difficult for NGOs to separate their own development and humanitarian activities from the pervasive logic of the international 'state-building for global security' regime. The situation of the development worker is similar to that of the colonial officer, indicating a clear continuity between both eras.[213] Their role is to establish a certain type of rule (or governance) in foreign societies. But development workers seem more alienated from local reality than their colonial predecessors, by security measures and the focus on universally applicable techniques instead of local knowledge.[214] And their role has become inescapably political, but not even in a 'realist' national interest-focused way, as was the case of colonial officers, but in an ideological manner. On issues such as electoral democracy, free markets, human rights, gender rights or the most repulsive set of rights for many local populations, those guaranteeing the freedom of sexual orientation, deviance from the mainstream international discourse has become impossible.

We have seen that Somalis harboured negative views about the efficiency, impartiality and ethics of the aid community since the 1980s. Somalis understand that the publicly announced aid budgets are mostly spent on international procurement, expatriate staff and administrative overheads (funds accruing to the operation of headquarters). The much reduced amount that is spent in-country is mostly captured by networks of government officials and NGOs, and spent in a manner no different from the usual patronage networks. This justifies the widespread cynical attitude of Somalis towards the aid sector. Aid in Somalia has always been part of the rentier economy,[215] and competition for access to this 'rent' stokes conflict. Aid thus becomes part of the problem, not of the solution. To a visitor, the gap between self-perception of NGOs ('saving lives') and local perceptions (NGOs are corrupt, clan-based and overall irrelevant) can be shocking.

As noted by two experts on humanitarian action in Somalia, "*In the case of Somalia, political risk preferences, donor geopolitical concerns, and domestic political concerns appear to have completely trumped humanitarian concerns, until the declaration of famine forced a response*".[216] Unsurprisingly, no donor, counter-terrorism financing agency or NGO was held to account for the disastrous famine that struck South and Central Somalia in 2011-2012. Instead, Al Shabaab was blamed. About a half of the fatalities of the 2011-2012 drought in South Central Somalia lived in areas controlled by Al Shabaab. Although experts who wrote about this drama agree that both counter-terrorism funding rules and the policies of the TFG considerably hampered aid delivery,[217] the consensus among them is that a large part of the blame lies with Al Shabaab for worsening the crisis with inappropriate responses.

The UN and international NGOs found it difficult to operate in Al Shabaab-held areas because they were asked to pay registration fees and taxes, and abide by Al Shabaab's interpretation of Sharia law, which included a ban on women working except in health and education. Foreign agencies were already in a difficult situation, because supporting farmers and businesses in Al Shabaab-controlled areas could already violate counter-terrorism financing rules, let alone paying the militants 'taxes'. The mere presence of Al Shabaab already made humanitarian aid provision almost impossible, and the only way Al

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[212] Van Brabant 2010: "Managing Aid Agency Security in an Evolving World: The Larger Challenge"; p10.

[213] Kothari 2013: "Spatial Practices and Imaginaries: Experiences of Colonial Officers and Development Professionals" .

[214] See Autesserre, Smirl, Mosse, Easterly.

[215] Rentier state elites focus on extracting 'rent' from the international community without needing to develop the domestic economy. Although the term was first used for the oil-rich Arab states (Beblawi, Hazem 1987: "The Rentier State in the Arab World"), it now is is more generally applied to any state whose elites attempt to generate external revenue rather than domestic revenue, weakening their obligations towards domestic constituencies.

[216] Maxwell & Majid 2016: "Famine in Somalia: Competing Imperatives, Collective Failures, 2011-2012"; p119-120.

[217] Maxwell & Majid op. cit.

Shabaab could have helped the famine relief effort was by vanishing. This made them easy culprits

Al Shabaab policies towards aid delivery

Over the years preceding the famine, Al Shabaab had pursued a different strategy to humanitarian aid provision: self-sufficiency. The movement had invested in agriculture and in 2010 proudly claimed a production boom. [218] Views of Al Shabaab on foreign NGOs are mostly negative. Besides concerns about spying and imposing Western values, Al Shabaab believes foreign assistance makes people lazy and dependent. A deputy director of the movement argued: '*People reach a stage when they will not take away the dirt from their houses themselves but rather wait for someone to do it for them*'."[219] More specifically, Al Shabaab was against food aid because they said it ruined local food markets.[220] Al Shabaab accepted humanitarian aid only when local resources had been exhausted. In a 2010 interview with Al Jazeera[221] the Al Shabaab deputy governor for Bakool region explained that they first requested the UN to buy food from local farmers; when the UN refused, Al Shabaab banned the UN from operating in South Somalia. They could not understand why the UN would not buy produce from Somali farmers and use local trade networks to import additionally required food, instead of dumping Western surpluses of often unfamiliar food types, and of poor quality,[222] in expensive foreign-managed logistic operations. They could not see the humanitarian logic of this course of action and suspected other motivations. Al Shabaab could hear on the radio that assistance was meant to win over the hearts and minds of local populations for the Transitional Federal Government.

Tensions mounted between Al Shabaab and the UN because the UN, and most international NGOs, refused to comply with the rules imposed by the militants on local populations[223] and by 2011 Al Shabaab had banned all foreign assistance in areas it controlled. The death toll of the subsequent famine, which was severe in the areas they controlled, caused a major setback in the militants' popularity. They explained it themselves as a result of having lost Mogadishu, hence they no longer controlled the economy and could not deliver aid. An additional reason given for the famine by Al Shabaab was the foreign-supported policy of growing cash crops (mostly sesame, also bananas and lemons) to increase export earnings, replacing subsistence farming; there was no domestic market and there was insufficient demand on the international market so the policy failed.[224] For many victims, the inflexibility of the militants and their refusal to allow relief operations, widely commented in the media, were to blame for the disaster. But an equivalent number of starvation deaths occurred in non-Al Shabaab held areas, and in each drought-induced famine the intra-riverine area mostly controlled by the militants has had the highest number of victims. In fact, there is insufficient evidence to suggest their policies were worse than those followed by agencies in government-held areas.

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[218] Smith for Al Jazeera International 24 March 2010: "Shabaab Credit for Somali Food Boom" (link).

[219] Life and Peace Institute 2014:21.

[220] "*WFP developed a culture of timing when communities are harvesting their farms and they normally bring food at that time, and we understand that this is to demoralize/jeopardize farming*" said Abu-Mansur (Mukhtar Roobow); "Translation of Al-Shabaab Ban on Food Bearing USA Flag in the Regions they Control". Source: http://www.somaliweyn.org, 1 November 2009. See also Appendix 4.

[221] Smith op.cit.

[222] Interview with veteran Somali NGO worker who negotiated with AS in Bay & Bakool areas in 2009-2012, March 2019. See also Mwangi 2012: "State Collapse, Al-Shabaab, Islamism, and Legitimacy in Somalia"; p525-526.

[223] See Letter to UNOCHA dated 5 Nov 2009 and the AS letter warning not to work with WFP dated 22 May 2012 (Appendix 4). Conditions include taking measures to not disincentivize farmers and depress food prices, especially during harvests, and liaising with AS authorities to determine priorities in aid delivery and development work.

[224] Life and Peace Institute 2014:20.

The logic of Al Shabaab's position seems evident. Domestic food production had to be prioritized and domestic agricultural markets and food trade networks should be strengthened by using them instead of circumventing them. The success of cash-cropping for foreign markets depends too much on international prices and should not displace production for domestic consumption. This seems like basic economic common sense in a food-insecure country. Development and humanitarian aid should contribute to food production, not disincentivize it. If agencies would not comply, then they might as well shut down their operation. This also seems understandable, but here the local governance by Al Shabaab clashed with the international governance guiding the relief effort to the detriment of the local population.

Finally, the role of self-governance in survival strategies during the famine must be pointed out. Asking "*How did Somali communities and households cope with the famine of 2011 in the absence of any state-led response—and a significant delay in a major international response?*" the authors of an extensive analysis of that disaster find that the most important factor in survival was using one's *social capital*. "*The nature of reciprocity, the resources available within people's networks, and the collective risks and hazards faced within networks, all determined people's individual and household outcomes in the famine and are related to the social structures and social hierarchies within Somali society. But these networks had a distinctly negative side as well—social identity and social networks were also exploited to trap humanitarian assistance, turn displaced people into ''aid bait,'' and to a large degree, determined who benefited from aid once it started to flow.*"[225]

Self-governance, then, allowed people to survive by mobilizing their social capital within rhizomatic networks, but in the interaction with the external assistance effort, this same strategy ensured unequal (and unfair) outcomes in assistance provision.

[225] Maxwell e.a. 2016: "Facing famine: Somali experiences in the famine of 2011"; p63.

Conclusions of Part II

A constant theme since the Somali encounter with the colonial order has been the attempt by external forces to reorder Somali society. Although today the colonial period is seen mostly in terms of extraction (of resources and cheap labour), "*colonial rule was much more than domination; it was the transfer of new forms of social order*".[1] British colonial rule aimed to govern Somaliland rather than to extract its resources, while Italy was interested in making Somalia profitable, but realized from the outset that this would require considerable investments in governance: Somalis had to become modern market-oriented farmers or at least accept wage labour.

Given that colonial rule had to be economically efficient—and in such an unproductive area as Somalia therefore cheap—efforts at social transformation were light, but still significant. For although both the British and the Italians left local self-governance systems intact, they instituted an external authority above Somali society (for the first time in Somali history): the modern state. Although in practice the colonial state was weak, the image of the State as standing above society was a lasting contribution of colonialism to the Somali political order. In advance of the European powers came the integration of Somalia into the colonial economy, and the State became the privileged portal to the seemingly endless resources that circulated within it: material but also symbolic (political power, recognition). It became the key link in chains of patronage extending from the centres of empire to the remote Somali *deegaan* (pastures/environment).

For Somalis, the novelty of the State as political order was that one's power within it was not based on personal capability, but on position. Within self-governing Somali clan society, and even in the Arab-Somali sultanates, power was based on charisma, leadership, wisdom and ability, including material resources. Even if power could sometimes be inherited, to effectively wield it leaders had to demonstrate these capabilities. In the modern state, to wield power one had not only to network socially (as in all power systems) but also to capture and then hold on to a formally defined position. This required formal attributes (a certificate, other paper documents) as well as new capacities, such as speaking, reading and writing English or Italian and the adaptation to foreign ways (forms of politeness, wearing different clothes, using money and accepting the symbolic power of paper documents like contracts, titles, diplomas and deeds). Thus the Somali rhizome became connected to the State-Tree, a foreign implant which in principle could also prosper in the local soil.

But the Somalis were never as interested in the tree as in what they could obtain through it. While the rest of Somali society continued self-governing on the basis of *xeer*, a young urban elite formed around the colonial powers, consolidating around the UN trusteeship authorities, adopting the worldviews and cultural capacities that would allow them to move into the positions of state power when the foreigners left—an event that did not require a war of liberation, but that was scheduled under the supervision of the UN. The transition happened smoothly; but the intense exploitation of the state-tree by the new elites exhausted it in the first decade of independence, and when the Somali state threatened to become dysfunctional through an excess of corruption and clan-competition, the military intervened.

[1] Williams & Young 2009: "The International Politics of Social Transformation"; p105.

That Somali elites did not spend time discussing what kind of state would be most appropriate for Somali society was a pragmatic position. In the UN system that emerged during World War 2, and which was based on the vision for the post-War world order developed by the USA and the UK in the 1941 Atlantic Charter, the place and role of states within the international state system was pre-determined. They had to take their place within a world order dominated by Great Powers, who had already established its rules.

The physical, administrative and socio-economic basis of African states had been drawn up by the colonial powers, and in the case of Somalia the United Nations Organization itself. As in Somalia, domestic elites favourable to the economic and strategic interests of the departing colonial authorities had been prepped to assume power in the newly independent states. African leaders who sought to escape post-colonial tutelage were punished, often simply assassinated or deposed in coups by military friendly to the Great Powers. In contrast, ruling elites who accepted their subordinate position could count on external support to retain power, even when faced with concerted domestic opposition.

In the bipolar Cold War era, new African elites could choose between superpower patrons or occupy a third, non-aligned position, which allowed a country to benefit from both sources of patronage while keeping some margin of manoeuvre. Somalia, lacking a colonial 'master', quite naturally chose the latter option. But the only national project that could truly mobilize both the Somali masses and their elites was 'Greater Somalia', reuniting the Somali people that had been separated in the last decades of the 19th century into five different countries. The reunification of British and Italian Somaliland at independence in 1960 was but the first step in that direction. However, since the countries adversely affected by the Greater Somalia project—Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti—were all firmly in the Western camp, Somalia found that only the countries of the Soviet Bloc were willing to build up its army.

After Siad Barre came to power in the 1969 military coup, the first years were spent strengthening the Somali nation-state, with equal attention to both sides of that equation. A written form was finally established for the Somali language, the civil service was put to work under military supervision, laws were passed to reorganize Somali society in manners favourable to central rule, and ruthless security services dealt with political opposition to Barre's rule. Ties were strengthened with the Soviet Bloc and China to continue building up the army and provide an industrial and economic infrastructure, and sought with the newly oil-rich Arab states to maintain political autonomy. Siad Barre's state in the early 1970s represented the high point of the state that had been legated by Italy under UN trusteeship. The tree was foreign but it had been 'Somalized' by rhizomatic penetration. Somali society first reacted positively to the strong state because it finally brought some development, but soon came to resent the authoritarian leadership. To maintain the initiative, Siad Barre launched his country in the realization of the Greater Somalia dream, and attacked Ethiopia.

The USSR switched sides and supported the new communist regime of Ethiopia, and Somalia lost the war. To stay in power Siad Barre turned to the Western Bloc and even pretended to start some liberal democratic reforms, but he soon found that was not necessary. In the Cold War logic of containment, the USA and other Western nations were ready to support his authoritarian rule. However, to benefit from their financial support, he had to adopt the structural adjustment programs that Western international financial institutions demanded as loan conditions. Like many other African leaders and ruling elites, he found that they enhanced his power by increasing cash flows through the patronage system he commanded. Not only did Barre now seem backed by what seemed like the invincible force of global capitalism and the USA, but domestic opposition was weakened by the crisis caused by the reforms in the national economy. Siad Barre never was a puppet of external powers; he was the manipulator rather than the object of manipulation. The IMF and the World Bank, the UN, the USA, Italy, the Gulf States and the NGO community: all funded or ran large operations in 1980s Somalia. This relieved Barre of his responsibilities towards his people and convinced Somalis that the international community supported Barre regardless of human rights violations, corruption and lack of democracy.

By providing cheap loans to developing countries during the 1970s that those countries could not pay back or even service when interest rates rose sharply in the early 1980s, the USA, soon followed by other Western countries, brought many developing countries to their knees. In exchange for new loans that would allow developing countries to service their debts and thus avoid financial collapse, they had to open their markets to global capital and adopt neoliberal policies that dismantled the state's control over their domestic economies. The massive transfer of capital and resources from the developing world to the West that resulted from the structural adjustment programmes caused great prosperity in the West and effectively terminated the autonomy of the 'Third World', leaving a legacy of 'weak, failing and failed states'. In its wake the 'Second World', the Soviet Bloc, also fell.[2] In 1991 the 'First World' emerged triumphant from the Cold War, and a new world order that would protect and advance it interests was established. But by then the Somali state had collapsed.

In my analysis of the reasons of Somali state collapse, I found that the premise of an opposition between clan-based self-governance and the State that is implicit in the sub-hypothesis investigated in this part—*Efforts to build a modern state in Somalia throughout history have failed because they do not accept that Somali society is self-governed and seek to impose a foreign political order*—was mistaken. For the same reasons that the rhizome supports the tree, because trees generate the nutrients and energy it needs, self-governing society supports the state (or a state-like structure, keeping in mind that many forms of political order have existed and will doubtlessly exist besides the modern state we are familiar with). That the tree is a foreign implant is important but is not a reason for the rhizome not to connect to it, seeking mutually beneficial exchange. This is true in forestry but also of statehood in Africa. Siad Barre's attacks on the clan system and his outlawing of *xeer* did not cause Somali elders and their clans to rebel. It distanced the social rhizome from the roots of the state (social institutions) but this had no drastic impact on clan society and its customary law.

The relationship between clan self-governance and the Somali state follows the pattern of relations between the State of Nature and 'civil society' in the classic sense—to avoid confusion with the contemporary use of 'civil society' I prefer the term 'political society'. While the former generates the latter and therefore accepts the inherent duality of power, political society tends to deny the State of Nature, claiming universality and absolute rule for itself. This does not destroy clan self-governance/the State of Nature, but forces it out of sight. *Xeer* disappeared from public view, but must still have been applied, for Barre's efforts to banish it were soon abandoned. The speed of its return in areas where state authority collapsed suggests it had never quite disappeared.

The collapse of the Somali state was due to the imbalance it provoked. Barre's rule was entirely rhizomatic, based on his lineage, family connections and shifting clan alliances, but his clan-base dwindled. This was made possible because of Western support, but Somalis focus mostly on his political manipulation of the clan system to explain how he stayed in power. The state-tree was increasingly controlled by Barre's personal lineage-based networks, and alliances with other clan networks succeeded each other in an increasing tempo, creating socio-political instability. From one month to the next, one could enjoy presidential favours and attention and then suddenly fall from grace, depending on how one's clan lineage was considered by the President or his direct family. But it was only when he directed his security forces to brutally submit ever larger parts of the population that Somali society rebelled. Here the self-governed clans played an important background role, nourishing the revolt until the much weakened State collapsed. Thus, it is only when the state-tree provokes a grave imbalance in the social rhizome that the latter 'revolts' against the state and brings it down.

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[2] The monetary policies of administrations since Nixon, the prescriptions of the ascendant neoliberal Chicago School of Economics and the fact that most OPEC 'petrodollars' were recycled by Western financial institutions explain, in my view, the defeat of the Soviet Bloc better than any 'balance of military power' or supposed intrinsic weaknesses of the Soviet economy.

The legacy of imbalance caused by the Barre regime caused a murderous civil war. The violence went beyond 'settling scores' and extended to efforts to capture state power. This benefited the stronger strains in the Somali rhizome: the same 'noble' pastoral clans that have dominated Somali society for centuries. The prevalence of the strongest is indeed a characteristic of the State of Nature: 'the Law of the Jungle'. As the previous imbalance gradually subsided, and in the absence of a state, most of Somali society settled back into the State of Nature (self-governance), which is generally and quite naturally peaceful and cooperative. The formal economy had suffered greatly under Siad Barre and structural adjustment and it collapsed with the State in 1991; but an informal economy, fuelled by remittances, was already burgeoning in the 1980s. It supported Somali society through the collapse of the State and the civil war, and appears to have profited from statelessness.

The international interventions that took place after 1991 consistently disrupted this natural order by putting into perspective a new internationally supported state, for whose prospective resources and positions fighting would break out among the faction leaders that had emerged victorious from the civil war. While a hegemonic global consensus emerged that there can be no peace, development or security without the State, and that all intervention efforts had to support state-building, in Somalia it was precisely the State and state-building efforts that disrupted peace. This worsened considerably when the War on Terror started, with its doctrine that statelessness favoured terrorism and was thus not only a threat to the human security of local populations, but to global security. This justified direct military intervention by the USA and allied states such as Ethiopia, and support to clan faction leaders willing to play along with the West in the War on Terror. The international community supported the creation of a Somali government in exile—the Transitional Federal Government—that could at the very least legitimize its interventions in Somalia, and perhaps start ruling the country.

In reaction to the chaos produced by the War on Terror and its political policies, and in response to the popular need for justice and order, Somali self-governance structures generated their own form of political order through sharia courts. The Islamic alternative to the Western world order, called jihad by its opponents and sharia by its proponents, also had supporters in Somalia. Since Barre had cracked down on political Islam in the 1970s, Somali 'Islamists' in exile had developed connections to both foreign Islamic centres of power (such as those in the Gulf) and to local Islamic struggles elsewhere (such as the jihad in Afghanistan). After their return to a free Somalia, many of these Islamists became involved in militant social work, including establishing a 'rule of sharia'.

The sharia courts were a modern urban phenomenon supported by local business groups and the local population. Starting out within neighbourhood communities with limited jurisdiction, they naturally connected to each other, forming the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). Their application of sharia instead of *xeer* and their principled disregard for clan affiliation, as well as their ability to enforce their rulings through militias led by Somalis with foreign (i.e. non-clan) jihad experience, and the financial support by business interests, many of which had pro-Islamic leanings through their Gulf connections, made the courts popular among urban populations, who had been suffering from the predations of clan militias for over a decade. Some clan faction leaders joined the ICU, others were disarmed by it, while others again opposed it.

For Ethiopia and the USA, the Islamic Courts Union was a terrorist organization, and powerful 'warlords' were brought together and supported to defeat them in their home territory, Mogadishu. To the surprise of many, the ICU militia, now known as Al Shabaab, defeated the military alliance. Buoyed by this victory, they spread through South and Central Somalia, rapidly capturing almost the entire territory. Only an Ethiopian army-protected enclave around Baidoa remained, where the Transitional Federal Government had established its seat. Alarmed, the international community backed a full-scale Ethiopian military invasion to unseat the ICU and put the TFG in its place.

The Islamic Courts Union seems to have been the first attempt by the Somali rhizome to generate its own modern political order. The cases of Somaliland and Puntland, which will be examined later, are

examples of a 'state-tree' that is based on a balance of power between clans, thus—to Somalis at least—it does not seem 'modern', or only in a hybrid way. But the ICU arose out of modern urban self-governance structures. It did not even purport to form a new state, but it did seek to govern Somali society on the basis of sharia, an alternative equivalent to the (Western) rule of positive law. From a theoretical point of view, it is regrettable that the ICU was not allowed to develop. Instead, this short-lived political experiment was stunted by the relentless hostility of regional powers and the international community, so it is impossible to say what it could have become if unopposed.

The pre-colonial political order in Somalia based on clan and *xeer* (social contract), miraculously survived a century of formal repression at the behest of state formation and reasserted itself as soon as the state broke down. Somali and foreign scholars agree that clan is a social construct; in my framework, clan should not be confused with the rhizome (see figure 13). For instance, the notion of *qaaraan*, material solidarity based on blood ties, is a fully rhizomatic principle directly deriving from the state of nature. A society without such rhizomatic solidarity may be imagined (typically as science fiction)[3] but it has never really existed.

Clan and *xeer*, by contrast, are social constructs, and despite their longevity, a Somali society where both are surpassed, and replaced by other social constructs, is certainly conceivable. Barre's early nation-state-building efforts, if accompanied by a growing economy and state sector that could accommodate Somalis emancipated from their lineage identities (and if social reform had not been undermined by Barre's own reliance on clan-connections to stay in power) may have led to such an outcome, but that is historic speculation. Today, clan remains the primary form rhizomatic society in Somalia adopts. The interface between clan society and the modern state has gone through several identity shifts, from titled elders to today's clan brokers, yet the underlying principle of lineage solidarity remains the same. And wherever governance by the modern state is absent—as in most of Somali society, most of the time over the past century—clan-based self-governance naturally fills the gap.

Therefore it is critical to develop a better understanding of self-governance in Somalia today. In my account up to now, Somali self-governance was either wrapped in the fog of a distant and unrecorded history or made invisible by the State, who had driven it out of the public domain. But since the collapse of the state self-governance can be quite plainly observed; I have given examples from the urban economy of Mogadishu and rural communities. The best setting to observe self-governance, however, is Somaliland. It has been completely omitted in Chapter Seven, because its destiny split from that of Somalia and followed its own path, led by the traditional forces of self-governance: clan elders.

[3] Think of Aldous Huxley's 'Brave New World', George Orwell's '1984' or Ursula Leguin's 'The Disposessed'.

PART III

The Three States of Somalia and the International Order

*"Protection and access to resources in a political world which loosely approximates the 'anarchy' of the international system have long been secured through a combination of blood payment groups (diya), customary law (xeer), negotiation (shir), and the threat of force – mirroring in intriguing ways the practices of collective security, international 'regimes,' diplomacy, and recourse to wa**r** which are the principal tools of statecraft which modern states use to manage their own anarchic environment."* [1]

Ken Menkhaus, 2003

Somalia provides an ideal terrain for studying the international state order and its relations with domestic societies, especially considering that the characteristics of systemic orders are best revealed when they are confronted with extreme cases. In the past chapters the integration of Somalia into the modern state system was confronted with the following challenges:

1. Somalia was one of the last areas in Africa to be integrated into the modern world order. Although its society is ancient and had dealt with man-made political orders before, it had chosen to return to self-governance, and this is how colonial explorers found it.
2. Somali society is one of the most nomadic ones on earth, and this reflects in its culture (egalitarianism, lack of interest in material belongings, oral culture), notably in its complex system of clan self-governance that maintains stability within and between Somali clans.
3. Somali culture is African, but was transformed through long-lasting connections with Arab and Islamic culture, especially within its settled rural and urban communities.
4. The Somali population shows a remarkable homogeneity across the Horn of Africa, but was split between five nations at the end of the 19th century, creating a strong desire for national unification.
5. Somalia's colonial 'parents' pursued different objectives. To stay with this parental metaphor, the colonial mother (Italy) was defeated in war, and the colonial father (Great Britain) showed almost no interest in its protectorate. The United Nations stepped in as a foster mother to prepare Somalia for independence. Somalia entered its independent era as a colonial orphan.
6. In its three decades of functioning statehood, Somalia switched from non-aligned/Third World to Soviet Bloc to Western bloc, meanwhile flirting with the Arab League, deriving political and material benefits from all these relations, but no lasting relationship.
7. From the 1980s until today, Somalia has been the theatre of ongoing humanitarian, development, peacebuilding and security interventions by the international community, and the testing ground for its new approaches—all of which were seriously challenged by 'ground realities'.

[1] Menkhaus, Ken 2003c: "Warlords and Landlords"; p18. My emphasis

8. Somalia was the first test-case of a revitalized UN's Agenda for Peace and the site of the first post-Cold War military-humanitarian intervention. The unexpected and total failure of the latter had a major impact on the Western-led 'New World Order', discouraging intervention in 'failed states'. Somalia became the paradigmatic example of state failure.
9. When the well-intentioned Western intervention crowd had left in despair, Somalia retrieved much of its peace and stability, and its economy grew—without a state.
10. After the War on Terror was declared, unnecessary counter-terrorism operations helped the rise of a grassroots Islamist movement for justice, law and order, identified as 'terrorist' by the USA and chased from power in a bloody invasion by Ethiopia. The resulting mayhem pushed the international community to return, to restore order and resume the building of a modern state.

The curious intertwining of the destiny of the United Nations and Somalia was also noted, suggesting that somehow the evolution of Somali society forms a discrete counterpoint, like a harmonic note, to the juggernaut of world order as it marches through history.

The current situation in Somalia reflects the international state order in a nearly kaleidoscopic way. There are three political orders in Somalia today, each with a different type of relation to the international state system. First, Somaliland, which declared its independence from Somalia in 1991 and formed its own state. Unsupported by the international community, the self-driven state formation process offers unique insights into Somali self-governance and how it relates with both social aspirations to political order and state power. Somaliland is one of the world's functioning but officially unrecognized states. How does that affect its relations with the international state order?

Second, the Federal State of Somalia, the successor to the Transitional Federal Government whose creation was analysed in the previous chapter as being a creation of the international community. How has it fared since its implantation in Somali soil? Has it become independent, or is it still reliant on external support? Does it function as a liberal democracy, as planned by its original backers and, if not, is it headed in that direction? How do its politics work? How are the Federal State's relations with Somali society?

Third, Al Shabaab rule. The origins of the movement alongside the Islamic Courts Union, and its transition into a national resistance movement targeted in the War on Terror are described above. Over the past decade, it has governed most of south and central Somalia—almost all of its rural areas—and has political influence in the federal member states and within Mogadishu. The dual nature of the movement seems apparent: as social network and ideological movement (rhizome) and as rebel governance (tree). How does it deal with clans? What are its relations with Somali society and with the federal government? What is its project for the country? And why is the international community so hostile to it?

The last chapter examines the international order today. The birth and evolution of the international state system were described in previous chapters; how is it evolving today? To start with, *intervention* has become a tool for changing the balance of power, like war until the recent past. This phenomenon merits a definition as it will clarify the relation between intervening states and Somalia. Then the international order is analysed in its dual nature. What is the international community, this vague term both Somalis and interveners constantly refer to? Is there an agent in the world order? Who is it and how does it operate?

In this part's conclusions, the sub-hypothesis of Part III is examined in the light of the findings made: *Contemporary state-building interventions in Somalia seek to reorder domestic state-society relations in ways that facilitate global governance and maintain the hegemony of a transnational elite*.

Chapter 8: The Dual Political Order of Somaliland

Of the difference between state formation and state building. How the dual political order became a hybrid one. Of the external shadow of hierarchy. Where tradition becomes progressive and modernization conservative. Why there were no pirates in Somaliland. In which a multiparty democracy, an economy and a state tree are captured by clan rhizomes. State and society between conflict and complementarity. Of the rhizome-in-tree, and how to disentangle the hybrid political order. Where foreign powers do not recognize Somaliland but submit it to transnational governance.

We could only be accepted as a member of the world community if we move to a new stage of nationhood ... The international community does not recognize congregations of clans, each remaining independently separate"

President Egal, 2001

A functioning state was established in Somaliland during the 1990s, after the fall of the Siad Barre regime. This state formation process was exceptional, because it was neither recognized nor supported by any external power. The key to Somaliland's success, many authors concurred, was a fully 'homegrown' process that combined elements of traditional clan governance with modern state institutions. In the 2000s, Somaliland became a prime example of the success of the *hybrid political order*[1] that, authors surmised, could bridge the gap between traditional forms of governance and a Weberian legal-rational state order, or between a pre-modern society and the modern state. The co-optation of traditional governance systems into the institutions of state, it was argued, could root democratic processes in a non-Western society.[2] For some analysts, Somaliland became a hopeful example of how the Western state could be made to function in Africa and other developing countries.[3]

The adoption of a constitution, of multiparty democracy, and a series of peaceful elections where power changed hands, as well as general abidance by international liberal governance norms, gave Somaliland the appearance of a modern state. However, I will argue here that the *forms* of liberal democracy, which Somaliland adopted in a process of institutional mimesis, partly to gain international recognition and partly because they responded to aspirations of a part of the population, are in conflict with the rhizomatic *nature* of Somali self-governance. But they also complement each other. To unravel how this

[1] See Boege, Brown, Clements & Nolan 2008: "On Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States".

[2] Logan 2009: "Selected Chiefs, Elected Councillors and Hybrid Democrats: Popular Perspectives on the Co-Existence of Democracy and Traditional Authority".

[3] Kaplan 2008: "Fixing Fragile States. A New Paradigm for Development".

hybrid political order works, we should distinguish its two constitutive power principles, positing what I call a *dual political order*.

I will first explain how self-governance works within the state framework today, relating this to political theories of self-governance and the ‘shadow of hierarchy’. Then I show how the institutions of state are penetrated by the social rhizome, the result being clan politics. The assumption that self-governance is traditional and state formation an instrument of modernization is overturned. The politics of federal Somalia, examined in the next chapter, follow this same dual/hybrid pattern, but the main difference is the international factor, at the root of state-building in federal Somalia, while Somaliland’s self-formed state is still not recognized. Nevertheless, international support to Somaliland is substantial, and tipping the balance in the dual political order towards the state.

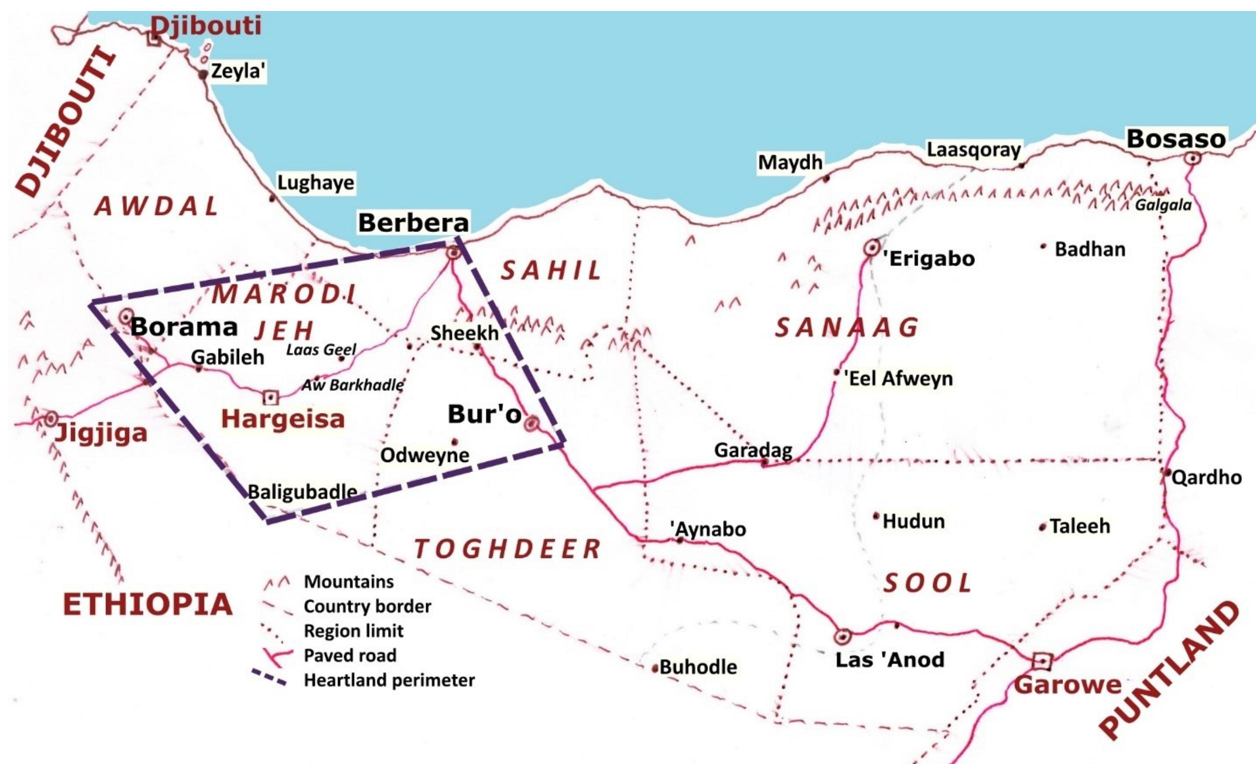

Figure 24: Map of Somaliland with an indication of its heartland (by the author).

8.1 Introduction to Somaliland

Somaliland covers about 27% of the territory of what used to be Somalia and, according to UN demographic data, it also contains about 27% of its total population[4].

[4] UNFPA/Federal Republic of Somalia: “Population Estimation Survey 2014”, October 2014. This includes the contested border areas with Puntland.

Population

Almost all political and economic activity in Somaliland takes place in a relatively small area that I have designated on Figure 24 as the 'heartland' of Somaliland, between Borama, Berbera and Bur'o with Hargeisa near its centre. This diamond-shaped area represents only 20% of the surface of Somaliland, but includes the country's major cities and over two thirds of its inhabitants.

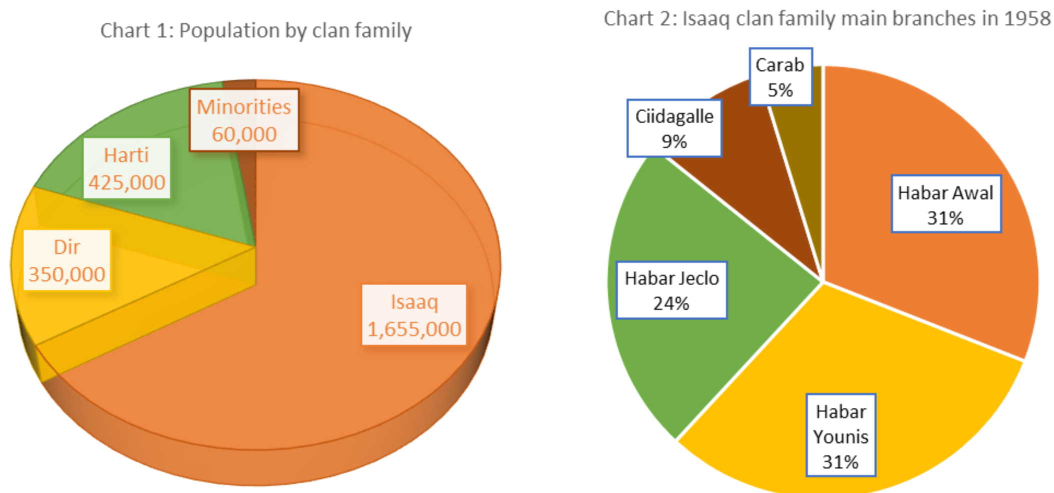

Figure 25 : Clan structure of Somaliland

A brief word is in order about the clan distribution and the clan system, as these play an important role in Somaliland politics. There are no recent, reliable, population data, and when partial population counts do take place, clan identity is not asked. I have thus used the 1958 data on clans in Somaliland collected by I.M. Lewis, assuming there have been no major changes in the clan balance in Somaliland. I base myself on a total population for Somaliland of 2.5 million (see Appendix 2) and on the following approximate distribution among clan families:

1. Members of the Isaaq clan family (about 67% of Somaliland's population) live in the heartland of Somaliland and its adjoining regions, up to 'Aynabo, 'Erigabo and Maydh. Isaaq clans spread across the border into the Ethiopian Hawd and have lineage groups in north-east Kenya. There are no settled Isaaq communities in Federal Somalia. The main Isaaq clans are the Habar Awal (split into the 'Ise Muse and the Sa'ad Muse), the Habar Younes and the Habar Je'lo. Other important ones are the 'Idagale and the 'Arap. The 'Idagale and Habar Younes are connected matrilaterally and together form the Garhaji group. There are also smaller Isaaq clans.

2. The Dhulbahante and Warsangeli (about 17% of the population)—part of the Darood/Harti clan family—live to the east of the Isaaq in areas that are contested with Puntland. The Warsangeli live in north-eastern and central Sanaag; the twice as numerous Dhulbahante live to their south, and are also present in the Ethiopian Hawd region and in north-east Kenya.

3. The Dir consists of two groups: the Gadabursi and the 'Ise (often transliterated Issa or Essa). They form about 14% of Somaliland's population. The 'Ise live along Somaliland's western border and in Djibouti and Ethiopia; their implantation in both these countries is stronger than in Somaliland. The 'Ise never participated much in Somaliland politics, the most common explanation being that they control the presidency of neighbouring Djibouti and enjoy economic power there as well as in the Ethiopian city of Dire Dawa. The Gadabursi are more numerous in Somaliland than the 'Ise; their main town is Borama. An important clan of the Dir, the Bimal, lives in south Somalia along the Lower Shabelle river in the hinterland of Merka.

4. The remaining 2-3% is composed of traditional minorities (Midgaan, Tumal, Yibir, collectively called Gabooye[5]), small lineages belonging to the Hawiye and Majerteen clan families, internally displaced people from other parts of Somalia (such as Rahanweyn in Las 'Anod), a few refugees from abroad (Yemen, even Syria) and an unaccounted for, but seemingly large, group of undocumented Oromo migrant workers from Ethiopia.

Somaliland ' s Economy

Somaliland's economy has a simple basis. Livestock (camels, sheep and goats) and aromatic gums (frankincense and myrrh) are exported; in exchange, manufactured goods and foodstuffs are imported. Some food processing and light manufacturing are found in the country as well. Part of the imported goods travel on to land-locked Ethiopia. High Ethiopian tariffs encourage smuggling, facilitated by the traditional mobility of Somali pastoralists across the long, open border. Fresh food and qat is imported from Ethiopia[6].

Fishing villages exist along the coast, but fish is only processed in Berbera. Crops are grown in the strip of land between Hargeisa and Borama, and there is some horticulture around towns and cities, including new hydroponic plants near Hargeisa. To my knowledge, the rumours about abundant hydrocarbon deposits, or of precious stones or high-value minerals have not been confirmed, but the country is remarkably under-surveyed. Efforts to prospect for or extract natural resources have consistently led to conflict with local inhabitants.[7]

The only port capable of handling international shipping is Berbera. From there, two main axes lead inland on paved roads: the first to Hargeisa, and then onward to Ethiopia (Jijiga and Harar) with a branch to Borama; the other to Bur'o, Las 'Anod, Garowe and the rest of Somalia. A new tarmac road has been built toward 'Erigabo, to provide access to this remote area. There are no other paved roads in Somaliland. Traffic density is low, even on the main road between Berbera, Hargeisa and the border. To give an indication of distances, the 160 km drive from Berbera to Hargeisa takes about 2.5 hours.

Bur'o is the main livestock market in a large region extending to the borders of Puntland and well into the Ethiopian Ogaden. There is some light industry in Bur'o, Hargeisa and Berbera, but the main source of national revenue derives from regional commercial ventures, spanning Ethiopia, Djibouti, the Gulf States and federal Somalia.

Most state revenue derives from taxing imports and exports; this gives a disproportionate importance to the Port of Berbera, the airport of Hargeisa, and border crossings into Ethiopia, Djibouti and Puntland. Another source of state revenue, especially since 2010, is international assistance.

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[5] See Chapter 3.1 and Vitturini: "The Gaboye of Somaliland"; p269-270.

[6] Qat absorbs a large part of Somaliland's foreign exchange (and, arguably, of its population's productive capacity). A recent estimate put the amount of qat imported per year at 700 million USD, three times the value of total exports (Mills, Hartley & Nwokolo in The Daily Maverick, 12 Sept. 2019: "Somaliland: New Ways of Doing Things in a Rough Neighbourhood"). Qat is mostly grown in the hills and mountains around Harar in Ethiopia.

[7] The government and foreign companies are keen to prospect, but local populations react defensively to mineral-prospecting and -extraction efforts. For an extensive description of oil-exploration related conflict see Menkhaus 2015: "Conflict Assessment 2014 Northern Kenya and Somaliland"; p66-70; and Grandjean, Bamberger & Skovsted 2016: "Concessions and Conflicts. Mapping Oil Exploration in Somalia and Ethiopia". An account of how precious-stone mineral concessions by Puntland in the contested area of the Golis Mountains led to conflict is found in Hoehne 2014: "Resource Conflict and Militant Islamism in the Golis Mountains in Northern Somalia (2006–2013)".

8.2 Formation of a Hybrid Political Order

In Chapter Six a description was given of how the conflict between the Isaaq population in Somaliland and the Barre regime started in the 1980s. Interestingly, the civil war in Somaliland was sparked by an attempt to revert to self-governance, though not by clan elders, but by the modern urban middle-class (the 'Uffo' self-help group). They were joined by exiled intellectuals, businessmen and religious scholars, and by disaffected Isaaq army officers who were persecuted after Barre's defeat in the Ogaden war. These two groups formed the Somali National Movement in 1981-82. Clan elders only joined the insurrection in 1988, by forming a standing committee, the *Guurti*, through which they could mobilize their clans to support the armed insurrection.

The story of the formation of Somaliland is narrated in detail in Appendix 3. I suggest a reader unfamiliar with Somaliland first read it. Here I provide an analysis of that process, to understand the role of self-governance, why a modern state was created, and how both came together to form a hybrid political order.

From Dual to Hybrid Order

Somaliland's state was formed as a by-product—as it were—of peacebuilding efforts. Each of the conferences that have become part of Somaliland's founding myth: Berbera (1991), Bur'o (1991), Sheekh (1992), Borama (1993) and Hargeisa (1996-97) had as main objective to reach a peace settlement. They were preceded by dozens of smaller peace conferences organized by clan elders in areas affected by conflict, which explains why they were held in different locations. Only the last conference took place in the capital, Hargeisa. A lasting peace having been achieved, the institutions of the state became the focus of attention, signalling a move from peacebuilding to state-building.

The state that emerged from the Hargeisa Conference was strong enough to preside over national politics without resorting to a national conference. The Guurti, which in the Borama conference had reconstituted itself as a permanent body (the Upper House of Parliament), and the other participants of the conference provided their legitimation, as representatives of the population, to the new state. Henceforth, elections would express the popular will. Although at first sight, democratic elections might seem like a better mechanism for providing popular legitimacy to a state than conferences between clan elders, in fact this evolution decreased participation.

Since every adult Somali male can be considered an 'elder', and those elders that participated in peace conferences only had an imperative mandate, meaning they had to obtain the approval from their communities for each decision, the entire Somali (adult male) population participated in the peace-building conferences. There are many stories, especially at Borama, of delegations from specific lineages turning up at the conference and demanding to be heard, because they had an issue with the elder representing them or felt he needed their support. That is why the conference lasted so many months. In elections, there is barely a chance to participate in political discussions. Voters can usually only mark their consent or dissent, which takes only a few minutes.

Participating elders agreed to this evolution by securing a position for themselves in the 'state-tree' that was being formed, including socio-political prestige (symbolic power) and material rewards (a permanent salary). Their seat of power was transferred, quite literally, from their clan constituency to the capital. Guurti members have never exposed themselves to elections (although they are planned for 2023) and the seats of those who have died in office have been occupied by their sons. As to the other participants in the Hargeisa Conference, they stayed on as members of the Lower House of Parliament until the first elections in 2005.

From Borama to Hargeisa, the dual political order became a hybrid one. ‘Hybrid’ suggests that two dissimilar entities have formed another one, but the resulting one is neither one nor the other, its identity being inherently confused. ‘Dual’ suggests that both principles of power remain separate; they interact continuously, but they are not supposed to fuse into a single entity.

The dual political order was epitomized by the adoption at Borama, 1993, of two different documents: the Peace Charter and the Transitional National Charter. The first charter elevated peace to the most important value of the new republic, entrenching the peace narrative that is fundamental to Somaliland’s national identity, differentiating it from the rest of Somalia. The peace was to be kept through local self-governance by clan elders. The Transitional National Charter, by contrast, was a proto-constitution describing how the new state should function (the tree-image).

Integration of the Guurti into the nascent state emasculated the autonomous, self-governance based, power of clan elders, while disempowering those elders that remained outside it. The members of the Guurti lost their capacity to make peace, as local communities no longer saw them as impartial mediators, but as representatives of the State and its interests. This is one expression of the hybrid political order.

At the same time, by integrating the State, clan representatives came to dominate it, and the State could never become an autonomous source of symbolic power. When Somalilanders deal with the state, they deal first of all with a lineage member that through his/her position is enabled by state power. If you need a new driver’s license and face a problem obtaining it, it is perfectly normal to go to another government department where your kin can help you.

The interaction between clan society and the structure of the modern state did not only result in this hybrid political order, but it also caused rapid and deep social transformation. The background of the participants that attended the founding conferences evolved because at each step, a slightly different mix of constituents was addressed by the state formation process. Initially, in Berbera, the military and political leaders of the SNM and the Isaaq clan elders who had supported them called to an end of the war against the central state. In Bur’o and Sheekh, the military and the clan leaders supporting them lost ground to other clan leaders involved in making peace between different lineages and clans. In Borama the political influence of the SNM was ended, and other ‘modern’ political factions were included, such as the ‘Ise Muse business partners of Egal and the diaspora involved in creating the new independent state. In Hargeisa the new ‘state elite’ which had formed in the preceding years, consisting of civil servants, a small middle class connected to the diaspora, clan brokers and what had become a business oligopoly were predominant.

Table 7: Main participants in Somaliland ’ s founding conferences

Conferences	**Influencers/1**	**Influencers/2**	**Influencers/3**	**Main result**
Berbera 1991	SNM military	SNM political	Isaaq clan elders	*End of civil war*
Bur’o 1991	SNM political	Clan elders	SNM military	*Independence*
Sheekh 1992	Clan elders	SNM military	Business elites	*Role of Elders in securing peace*
Borama 1993	Clan elders	Business elites & diaspora	Non-SNM politicians	*Nation and state-building*
Hargeisa 1996-7	Egal & state elites	Business elites, civil society & diaspora	Urban-based clan leaders	*Modern state elite consolidation*

A clear trend in the first four conferences was a growing inclusiveness, with ever larger portions of Somaliland's population represented by the influencers; but at Hargeisa the state-centred urban elite diminished the influence of the populations outside the Somaliland heartland and in rural areas generally. The Harti clans in the East and the 'Ise were barely represented in Hargeisa.

Somaliland's state formation process was not at first an institutional or territorial one, but social, as suggested by its roots in peacebuilding. The desire for a state came from society. This process was the reverse of the state-building processes seen in this dissertation until now. There was no international support; quite the contrary: state formation in Somaliland even faced opposition from the United Nations. Somaliland's state was not imposed or imported. But neither was it a reflection of society, as it soon came to deny the autonomy of clan elders and other rising social groups, such as political Islamists and a modern urban middle class that wanted to move beyond clan politics.

The shape of the State of Somaliland was decided almost single-handedly by Egal after he was elected President in Borama. He drew on his previous four decades of statesman's experience. His state was centralized, with a strong executive that was continuously attempting to absorb contender groups. Based on his experience as President of the Chamber of Commerce under Barre, he created an oligopolistic merchant state, where businessmen were allowed vast economic privileges in exchange for their support of the state, not necessarily by formal taxation, but often informally. This allowed him to build patronage systems that were not dependent on foreign funding. He gradually expanded the social basis of the state, including new business sectors such as telecoms, political rivals, the budding urban middle class (civil service, professionals), and less powerful lineages living in Somaliland's heartland. He did not really try to integrate the Dhulbahante, Warsangeli and 'Ise living in Somaliland's peripheries, who turned to neighbouring states (Puntland, Djibouti), or attempted to found their own autonomous states.[8] After the death of Egal in 2002, the further formation of Somaliland's state responded to the interests of the oligopolistic commercial and state elites on the one hand, and to those of foreign donors on the other.

Social Support for State Formation

Why did Somaliland's society agree to the formation of a state that disenfranchised it? There was no Hobbesian need for 'civil society', as the dangers of the 'state of nature' (war of all against all) were already neutralized by self-governance. It was clear from Egal's early days in power, especially from its economic policies, that the state was going to concentrate power in the hands of a privileged few. Patronage, nepotism and corruption were visible from then on, and indeed were familiar attributes of Egal's previous stints in government.

There was a defensive element to it: without a state, Somaliland would be claimed by Somalia, and might become the playground for neighbouring states like Ethiopia. But from the outset there was also a positive, even joyful, side to state formation, a source of pride that is still noticeable among both elites and common people today. The object of pride is not the state in itself, but the capacity to maintain peace and achieve social, cultural and economic development, and the fact that this has been achieved by a collective effort. The comparison is always made with Somalia, which has failed in both regards. This explains why Somalilanders desired a state, but not why they consented to the particular type of state Egal and his supporters built.

[8] Thus, the Warsangeli created the state of Maakhir (2007-2009) and the Dhulbahante 'Sool, Sanaag and 'Ayn' (2009-2012), which was succeeded by the Khatumo State (2012-2017). These quasi-states never established full territorial control and functioned as an additional layer of government to those of Puntland and Somaliland that both claimed control over these areas. Khatumo forces clashed frequently with those of Somaliland until a peace agreement was signed in 2017 and Khatumo disbanded.

Moreover, Somaliland's state was not a project by a hegemonic group in Somaliland's society. As we saw, the initiative for state-building passed rapidly from left-leaning and centralizing military factions via clan elders to a budding urban elite composed of clan-based brokers and middle-class interests, which were seen as most likely to bring about a modern state. Diaspora elements played an increasingly important role.

There was no effort to incorporate traditional elements of nomadic self-governance in the modern state; rather, it sought to confine the role of clan elders to rubber-stamping government decisions. Nor did the architects of Somaliland's state hark back to the Adal Sultanate, or other indigenous state traditions explored in Chapter Two. They spoke of a constitutional democratic state based on multiparty universal elections, the Rule of Law, individual rights, and a capitalist economy. Somaliland's state was meant to conform to contemporary Western ideas of the state, and society reorganized itself to achieve this goal, despite the lack of external support to Somaliland's independence. Surely, Somalilanders believed, if we build a modern state that corresponds to Western ideals, we will end up being recognized.

This leads us to a psycho-social type of explanation for Somaliland's choice for a Western liberal democratic model. It did not reflect the constellation of social forces (notably the central role of self-governance), nor pastoral nomadism, nor the differences in status between clans, lineages and minorities, etc. It also did not reflect the interests of a dominant elite. It did, however, reflect social aspirations, notably the aspiration to be recognized as equals by the international community.

A useful concept of political theory is that of the 'shadow of hierarchy'. The notion (but not the term) was developed originally by Elinor Ostrom, to explain why self-governing communities often conform to the expectations of the State, without requiring its direct intervention.[9] Because communities are aware of the presence of a strong State beyond their borders, they act in accordance with it. Confronted with the case of self-governing communities in weak or failed states that still behave according to apparently external norms, Tanja Börzel and Thomas Risse extended Ostrom's concept to the 'external shadow of hierarchy'.[10] The international community, they argued, provides an external shadow of hierarchy to which populations may adapt, cognizant of the force of external actors whose support they may need, or whose interference is unwanted.

In my theoretical approach to self-governance, I have not found Ostrom's work—considered perhaps the main theory of self-governance in contemporary political science—very useful, because it ignores the debates on humankind in the State of Nature and the Laws of Nature. It departs from a modern State perspective where self-governance is considered from a Hobbesian angle, and where self-preservation is an individual, not a collective, pursuit. Her approach uses rational-actor theory (again, the self-interested individual, an ideological construct) to arrive, after much game theory and statistical analysis, at the conclusion that "*Our findings challenge the Hobbesian conclusion that the constitution of order is only possible by creating sovereigns who then must govern by being above subjects, by monitoring them, and by imposing sanctions on all who would otherwise not comply*".[11] For a person versed in the debates about the State of Nature, this is a 'reinvention of the wheel' that is not particularly insightful. Moreover, her work and that of other researchers inspired by her 2009 Nobel prize in Economic Sciences is limited to small communities within strong states like the USA or European countries.

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[9] Ostrom 1990: "Governing the Commons. The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action". The term 'shadow of hierarchy', partially inspired by Ostrom's Nobel-prize winning work, seems to have emerged in German political science in the mid-1990s, whence it found its way to Tanja Börzel & Thomas Risse's work.

[10] Börzel & Risse 2010: "Governance Without a State: Can It Work?"; p114.

[11] Ostrom et al. 1992 "Covenants With and Without a Sword: Self-Governance is Possible".

The merit of Börzel and Risse is to have extended her reasoning to settings without (functioning) states. While the alignment of domestic elites in developing states to the international state order can be explained, as in 6.3, by their self-interest, the enthusiasm of populations for the Western state model, when it has provided them with little benefit over the past century, is harder to explain. The 'external shadow of hierarchy' provides an explanation, suggesting that the population of Somaliland (and other countries) has accepted the hegemony of the Western state and is behaving so as to obtain its approval.[12] This may be a pragmatical position, rather than the expression of conformity or even consent. Nonetheless, it suggests the idea of a social contract, passed directly between the Somali population and the international community. This is not, of course, a formal contract, but an individual and group alignment of a rhizomatic nature that bypasses the national state.

Not all Somalis accept and seek to align to the Western state model. But the vast majority do, even if they harbour some critical reservations. Beyond my limited personal experience, a systematic study I made of contemporary Somali culture confirms this.[13] This is evidence, I believe, of the integral hegemony of the modern state image.

The population of Somaliland had, then, accepted the image of the modern Western state, and entrusted Egal with building it. But, as usual, the practice of the state didn't correspond to its image.

8.3 Dual Power in Practice

The hybrid political order that resulted from state formation may look like an accomplished Western liberal democratic state, but it functions differently. In this section the interaction between state and society in Somaliland is examined through a few cases. First I discuss this relation from the rural, self-governing perspective, and then from the urban—state—point of view. I suggest a model that acknowledges both conflict and complementarity between the social rhizome and the state-tree.

Self-Governance, Conflict and Peace in Eastern Somaliland

The focus of attention now shifts away from the heartland to the eastern half of Somaliland, where state penetration is less deep and it is thus easier to see self-governance at work. State governance (*habka dawladeed*) and traditional self-governance (*habka dhaqameed*) should be seen as the opposite ends of a same spectrum.[14] Each location, but also each topic of public decision-making lies somewhere along this line. For example, in one district centre the management of public water resources may fall 20% under the state and 80% under traditional self-governance, while public education in the same locality is 70% state-managed and 30% in private hands. We are dealing with the rhizome, however, and such percentages are subject to permanent variability and instability.

[12] This strokes with my personal experience: when in a country like Somalia I am seen not as the free-thinking independent individual I prize myself to be, but as a representative of (and by extension monitor for) the international community. I inadvertently cast an 'external shadow of hierarchy', which most people seek to align to, but that some reject.

[13] Rider & Kluijver 2021: "Contemporary Culture in the Horn of Africa". The focus of this research was not political, but the alignment of respondents with the modern Western state order was evident.

[14] Hoehne 2018a: "One Country, Two Systems. Hybrid Political Orders and Legal and Political Friction in Somaliland"; p187-188.

Keeping the peace between clans

East Somaliland consists of the regions Togdheer, Sool and Sanaag. The last has been particularly prone to conflict because it has good pasture and is inhabited by different clans of equivalent strength: Habar Younis, Habar Je'lo, Warsangeli and Dhulbahante. After the civil war, through a lengthy process of localized peace conferences in 1992-93, elders from the different clans worked together with other sectors of local society to establish a secure and peaceful environment based on self-governance.[15] The new state of Somaliland was not involved in these processes, but its existence served as an encouragement to establish peace.[16]

Due to competition between pastoralist groups for scarce resources, conflict erupts frequently, sometimes resulting in theft or killing. Elders of the concerned lineages then meet to re-establish peace by agreeing on compensation and sharing of resources, to avoid a cycle of bloody clan revenge that can drag on for many years. If they do not succeed, which happens frequently, elders of neighbouring clans are usually drawn in. If state authorities consider there is a state interest at stake (for example, a road has become unsafe, mineral exploration activities are disrupted, or there is international attention to the conflict) they may also intervene, usually indirectly by hosting delegations of elders. NGOs with programmes in the affected areas, or urban civil society organizations, may also become involved.

A recent round of conflict between sub-clans of the Habar Younis and the Habar Je'lo started with quarrels over access to pasture and water in 2016. In 2018 a civil-society-led initiative[17] brought together 66 elders from all over Somaliland for a month of talks with the belligerent parties. Parallel to the talks, the convening parties organized a group of women from both sides to visit villages in the district and spread the peace message, and they held a reconciliation workshop for the youth, taking into consideration their vocational training needs. The organizers also engaged the community about long-term measures for securing not only peace, but also development. The sub-clan leaders signed a Peace Declaration that was then distributed, commented and advocated. The local community deemed the process successful.[18]

There was no government involvement, other than a congratulatory message from the Minister of Interior after the Peace Declaration. Local authorities were involved as stakeholders in the talks, but they played no leading, or even facilitating, role.[19]

The involvement of neutral clan elders from other parts of Somaliland was clearly a factor of success. The attention to development, reconciliation, and education, and the focus on women and youth seem to reflect contemporary, not 'traditional' concerns. In many ways this process showed a continuity with Sanaag's peace conferences of the early 1990s. Under the heading 'peace', those agreements also regulated all types of other affairs "*Peace conferences had to deal with issues such as freedom of movement, freedom of trade, access to common grazing grounds and water resources and return of lost*

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[15] See Farah & Lewis 1997: "Making Peace in Somaliland" for an overview.

[16] Renders 2006: "'Traditional' Leaders and Institutions in the Building of the Muslim Republic of Somaliland"; p222-234.

[17] Source for this paragraph: Interpeace, one of the convening parties with the Academy for Peace and Development.

[18] Séverine Autesserre in 'The Frontlines of Peace' (2021), whose research covers Somaliland as well as other theatres of peacebuilding throughout the world, insists on participation by local communities for achieving lasting peace (see her sources, p200-201). Although she doesn't dwell on the phenomenon of self-governance, the examples she mentions demonstrate high levels of autonomy and participatory community culture.

[19] Hoehne 2018a concludes that government involvement tends to escalate conflict rather than aid local conflict reconciliation.

or stolen property".[20] But the 2018 peace declaration's emphasis on education, women and development did reflect contemporary issues that formal politics rarely address (beyond rhetorics).[21]

One insight gained from this observation is about the 'traditional' character of self-governance. The epithet 'traditional' is misleading; it refers not to social values, but to mechanisms of governance. Self-governance, because it emerges from the social rhizome, is inherently more flexible and thus more apt at absorbing new social forces than formal politics. In the 1992 Sheekh conference, clan elders solved the conflict between the Habar Younes and the 'Ise Musa over the control of Berbera port by nationalizing *all* public assets—not the sort of measure one would associate with bearded elders meeting under a tree. Similarly, elders were behind the political innovation of a standing Guurti (1988) that dissolved itself in 1991 when independence was proclaimed—nothing to do with tradition.

In their efforts to maintain social peace, elders must deal with women, youth and other modern social forces, and provide a place for their claims. In the example above, elders did not find it difficult to work within the framework of a modern Hargeisa-based and American-funded civil society organization, nor did they object years before to being deployed by a Scandinavian church-based development organization in a similar case of local conflict resolution.[22]

Absence of Piracy and Terrorism

From 2005 to 2013, Somali piracy off the Horn of Africa frequently grabbed international news headlines. Almost all pirates operated from bases in Puntland and Galmudug. Why did Somaliland's fishers and other maritime communities not participate in this lucrative business? Security experts often arrived at a hasty judgment: they explained that Somaliland could escape the problems of piracy and terrorism because it has a functioning state and law-and-order institutions.[23] This encouraged foreign donors to support the State's monopoly on violence through the support of Somaliland's police, penitentiary and coast guard.[24] But Somaliland security forces, even after investments by international donors, are far from having the capacity to prevent such attacks.

Improved policing was not part of the government response to the threat of piracy, but improved coordination with, and buy-in of, clan elders was. Generally, Somaliland's government does not even try to extend its reach over the population through law and order, as most state-building experts would expect it to do.[25] A study of the relations between the central government, peripheral armed forces such as the Coast Guard and the Immigration Police, and the local population, shows that Somaliland's government rather relies on clan mechanisms of acquiescence and indirect control, than on direct imposition of state power.[26]

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[20] Renders 2006:223.

[21] Admittedly this may reflect the priorities of the convening civil society parties, but development and education are overall concerns shared by populations throughout Somalia.

[22] Finn Church Aid sponsored a series of reconciliation conferences in Sanaag in 2013 and 2014, facilitated by local NGO organizers, which led to lasting peace (interview with NGO/civil society activist from 'Erigabo in July 2020). See Somaliland Sun of 11 Feb 2014 "FCA Supports Strategies to Enhance Security in Sanaag Region" (link accessed Jan. 2022).

[23] E.g., Stig Jarle Hansen (2009) and Jay Bahadur (2011), quoted in Hastings & Phillips 2018 "Order Beyond the State: Explaining Somaliland's Avoidance of Maritime Piracy"; p18. Other explanations are related to factors of geography (coastline) or economy (employment), or to levels of development, but they do not resist objective scrutiny because the difference with Puntland on each of these variables is insufficient (p11-15).

[24] The EU programme EUCAP Nestor supported the renovation of Hargeisa's central prison, to host Somali pirates condemned elsewhere in the world, UNDP has been building police capacity, and the UK and USA have assisted Somaliland's intelligence agencies, special forces and coast guard.

[25] E.g., Herbst, 2000: "States and Power in Africa"; p3.

[26] Hills 2016: "Off-Road Policing: Communications Technology and Government Authority in Somaliland".

Early attempts at piracy from Laasqoray and the coast between Berbera and Maydh in the 2000s led to a concerted effort by clan elders to convince their kin that piracy was unacceptable. The religious argument—that not only such criminal acts, but also their proceeds, are *haram*—helped of course, but Hastings & Phillips, in their research on the question of how Somaliland avoided piracy, argue that it can be explained by the prevalence of the peace narrative, which, as we saw above, is a foundation of Somaliland's national identity.[27] In a nutshell, the argument is: '*Piracy is not compatible with being a civilized Somalilander and if there are pirates in our country we will never be recognized. We will not condone it.*' There were no national conferences or declarations to that effect. Informal mechanisms of social control sufficed. Elders apparently have sufficient sway over their clan members who are tempted by piracy, to stop them from engaging in it. State power is not required to back them up: in Somaliland, social power is sufficient for handling the complex transnational crime issue of piracy, but also for dealing with terrorism.

An Al Shabaab-affiliated local insurgency has been raging in the Golis Mountain area of Galgala that straddles Puntland and Somaliland. The conflict started in 2006 as a sub-clan rebellion (of the Warsangeli/Dubays) against the administration of Puntland, which had granted a mineral exploration and mining license to the Australian/US company Range Resources.[28] The rebellion soon became led by Mohamed Sa'id Atom, a local resident who had been member of Al Itihad in the early 1990s and had joined the Islamic Courts Union in 2006. Because of his own religious political inclinations and the strategic location of Galgala on the illicit arms supplies route from Eritrea and Yemen to Al Shabaab[29], the Galgala militia became a local branch of Al Shabaab. The insurgents directed their attacks against Puntland, against its security forces and its political and economic supporters in the district of Bosaso. When there were fears that Al Shabaab would spread its operations to Sanaag, Warsangeli elders resuscitated an ancient militia, the 'Garhaaye', last brought to life to fight the Dervish leader Sayyid Hassan. Its commander, Mohamed Jama Mohamud, stated that both Puntland and Somaliland had failed to clear Al Shabaab out of the Galgala mountains. The mere announcement of this militia seems to have contained the threat.[30] In fact, the state of Somaliland plays no role in containing Al Shabaab in the area, neither does it have the means to do so.

The coordinated bomb attacks by Al Shabaab in Hargeisa and Bosaso on October 29, 2008[31] shook Somalilanders and caused them to become more involved in community security. In Hargeisa, residents now report suspicious behaviour to their neighbourhood representative (*wakil*), who is appointed by the elders of each neighbourhood to deal with community issues. He reports back to the elders, who may decide to call upon the police if they are alarmed; the police, in turn, may involve state-security services. Most of these contacts do not seem to follow established reporting lines, but are based on personal networks. Say, for example, that new and suspicious residents in a neighbourhood are Ogadeni from southern Jubaland: then the elders and security officials will seek a person who has connections among that community to find out more about them.

It is frequently pointed out by security analysts working in federal Somalia that there are quite a few senior Al Shabaab leaders from the Isaaq clan family—such as Godane, AS emir from 2008 to 2014—and that through them Al Shabaab receives support from Somaliland (there are no Isaaq lineages in the areas ruled by Al Shabaab). There is no evidence for any official support and indeed it is unlikely, but

[27] Hastings & Phillips 2018.

[28] Hoehne 2014: "Resource Conflict and Militant Islamism in the Golis Mountains in Northern Somalia (2006–2013)"; p361.

[29] UN Monitoring Group on Somalia report of 20 November 2008 S/2008/769; p33 par. 151.

[30] Local news reports and direct sources, reported 22/10/2017.

[31] In Hargeisa, the presidential palace, the UNDP compound and the Ethiopian liaison office were attacked. In Bosaso, two offices of the Puntland Intelligence Service were bombed. Hoehne 2011b: "Not Born as a De Facto State"; p331.

apparently Isaaq Al Shabaab militants can freely visit their families and conduct business in Somaliland, including fundraising, international contacts, etc, as long as they are discreet about it[32]. This also shows how security is dealt with in a rhizomatic manner, not formally.

Given the lack of terrorist attacks in Somaliland since 2008[33] and low crime rates, 'neighbourhood watch' security provision on the basis of self-governance and a case-by-case rhizomatic approach to potential security threats by officials can be deemed efficient. In 2011, the Ministry of Interior declared it was working together with over 900 *'uqal* (lineage chiefs) to maintain peace in the country.[34] The result of these measures is that Somaliland is the safest area of the Horn of Africa.[35]

War and Institutional Conflict

There are issues self-governance cannot address, such as the war with Puntland over the contested borderlands in eastern Somaliland. It has flared up several times since the formation of Puntland, most recently in 2018. Conceivably, it could still be solved using clan self-governance, but at a level higher than Somaliland, and it seems a particularly thorny problem. The positions between Somaliland and Puntland are irreconcilable. Somaliland claims are territorial (based on the British borders and *ius solis*), and Puntland claims concern the population (based on their Harti clan identity and *ius sanguinis*). The Harti populations living in eastern Sanaag, Sool and southern Togdheer, who receive development assistance from neither side, often express a preference for autonomy within a national framework. A close reading of the conflict[36] shows that, in the background, mediation efforts by clan elders do play a role in containing the conflict, but they cannot solve it. This would require a national solution. Ostensibly, this conflict involves two states with their armies, and thus requires a formal solution.

In 2019, Somaliland's President Bihi, facing stalemate on the eastern Sool front, tried to solve the problem of the contested Warsangeli areas militarily. His effort to expel pro-Puntland militia with Somaliland's army led to the loss of control over areas it had previously held.[37] When Somaliland tries to function like a state wielding a 'monopoly on the legitimate use of violence', the results fall short of

[32] Confirmed by local contacts in Hargeisa concerned about a possible 'Al Shababization' of Somaliland's government, who monitor such affairs closely: which minister and what security official is related in which way to Al Shabaab; when and where do meetings take place and who attends. In a detailed reconstruction made in the report of an Al Shabaab planned attack in Addis Ababa, Hargeisa is quoted as a logistical and administrative back office for the movement; see Sahan Foundation for IGAD, March 2016: "Al Shabaab as a Transnational Security Threat"; p38. An 'Al Shabaab's women's network in Somaliland' built around a core of senior AS leaders' wives is mentioned too, p40.

[33] The monitoring of 'violent extremism' by the Somaliland authorities receives considerable support from Ethiopian and British intelligence agencies, which may contribute to the apparent lack of Al Shabaab activity in Somaliland.

[34] According to the Somaliland National Development Plan of 2011, p169. This indicates a formal arrangement rather than practical cooperation.

[35] When I lived in Hargeisa, 2016-2018, I was constantly reassured by my friends and colleagues that I was safe because of these local security arrangements. Indeed, I went on daily walks through most neighbourhoods of the city and never faced any criminality or even hostility. Returning diaspora youth, however, feels uncomfortable with this 'social policing'.

[36] For example Hoehne 2015a: "Between Somaliland and Puntland"; and Mahmood 2019: "Overlapping Claims by Somaliland and Puntland".

[37] When Warsangeli commanders of the Somaliland National Armed Forces were told to occupy Badhan with their troops in 2019, they defected to Puntland instead, as they had no desire to risk a confrontation with their clansmen. The reaction of Somaliland's Chief of Staff when he learnt of the defection of some of his senior officers and their troops to Puntland was relief: "He noted that Somaliland had simply been paying these forces not to join Puntland, but this had not truly advanced Somaliland's interests in return" relays a surprised researcher from the Institute for Security Studies. Interview of Nuh Ismail Tani, the Chief of Staff of Somaliland, quoted in Mahmood 2019:13.

those obtained by relying on self-governance. It is impossible for Somalilanders to separate the official position of the minister, commander, officer or soldier from his clan identity. Therefore, although the state, abstractly, may be seen as standing above clan, in practice each official's positions and actions can be brought back to his clan identity (sometimes unfairly).

The intertwining of position in the state-tree and rhizomatic social networks is practiced at all levels, also within the government. One example came from a senior clerk in Hargeisa, who explained: "*When the head of a department of the Ministry of Water Resources gets engaged in a conflict with a district authority over who should manage the water supply, as the legislation is not clear, clan elders of both individuals intervene to settle the dispute*".[38] Given that decisions by elders count as precedent for future decisions and that branches of government can be given in apanage to specific lineages, *xeer* thus can—bizarrely—govern relations between institutions of the state.

Justice

A final example of the intertwining of customary self-governance mechanisms with formal power structures, seen from the social rhizome perspective, lies in the field of justice. As mentioned before, there are three concurrent systems of justice in Somalia: formal justice, sharia and *xeer*. This is of course confusing for all Somalis. Clan elders in Togdheer decided in 2003 to try and harmonize the three systems.[39] Since they are the ones who adjudicate customary law, they took *xeer* as a basis. For example, they decided that a woman could inherit from her parents and marry the man of her choice (as per sharia); and that blood-money compensation would be paid directly to the victim's family by the perpetrator's family, to avoid clan involvement and emphasize personal responsibility. Murderers would be handed over to the state authorities. Elders could decide to refer any case to a sharia court or the formal court system, and work together with officials from these courts to ensure implementation of the verdicts.

A 2010 study found that these measures succeeded partially. Court capacity was insufficient, and formal law demands too much evidence collected according to due process to accept most referrals, but the systems had grown towards each other nonetheless. It was also observed that cultural change was slow, notably in accepting increased women's rights, but sped up because, instead of modern urban elites, it was the clan elders who advocated for accepting change in social values. A factor of success was that, instead of attempting a whole-scale integration of three legal systems, the elders had started by tackling the most problematic aspects of customary law: forced marriage, inheritance and blood-money.

Surveys conducted among residents of towns that are relatively well-integrated into Somaliland's state structures (Berbera, Baligudable and 'Erigabo) indicate that while most polled people consider that customary and sharia justice work better—they are more efficient and verdicts are more often enforced—they nevertheless express a preference for formal, state justice. The main reason given is more confidence in the impartiality of the formal system.[40] The drawbacks reported by citizens about the formal court system—long waiting times, lack of respect for procedure, corruption, inexperienced judges—do not affect their belief in the ideal of 'blind justice'. This is an example of what I called the

[38] Interview with Khaalid Hassan, May 2019. He pointed out that the national water law of 2011 did specify how this conflict should have been resolved; but this law, drafted by a foreign consultant, counting 83 articles and 41 pages, had not been read by anyone, even in the Ministry of Water Resources. He noted that the existence of the law was used as a pretext by government officials, who justify their decisions based on the law without having read it, assuming that nobody else has either.

[39] This and the following paragraph are based on the research by Ubink, Ahmed & IDLO Somalia 2014: "Policy Paper on the Somali Customary Justice System"; p26-27

[40] Office for Conflict and Violence Prevention (OCVP) 2015: "Erigavo District Conflict and Security Assessment Report"; OCVP 2016a: "Comparative District Conflict and Security Assessment Report for Berbera 2012/2015"; and OCVP 2016b: "Comparative District Conflict and Security Assessment Report for Baligudable 2013/2015"

'law of inverse proportionality between the image and the practice of the State' (1.4): the weaker the practice, the stronger its image. But the surveys also reflect the confidence that customary and religious justice will continue to be practiced, and perhaps a social desirability bias (to be understood in the 'external shadow of hierarchy' sense). In a recent study, Markus Hoehne concluded that *all* mechanisms of justice, including the formal court system and sharia, depend on the cooperation of elders: often for decision and always for implementation.[41]

Self-governance in Somaliland

As agreed in Borama, self-governance is mostly concerned with peacekeeping. Beyond solving conflicts, this is done pro-actively by absorbing new social forces into local community life. The efforts by the elders of Togdheer to harmonize legal systems was not aimed at providing a national framework within a UNDP Rule of Law program, but to settle conflicts of different justice systems at the local level (although if successful, such agreements can spread organically to other locations).

In theories of self-governance, the problem of scale is usually a central one. Contemporary theories consider that self-governance is only feasible within communities where each person has face-to-face contact. A ceiling of 150 people is often suggested. This is also how self-governance is usually portrayed in public opinion. Common sense seems to dictate that, beyond the community level, a state is needed to balance conflicting interests between communities.

But the whole country of Somaliland was formed by self-governance. Upon the proclamation of Somaliland's independence in Bur'o, 1991, the Guurti had dissolved itself, leaving President Tuur and the SNM to create a state, considering that it had no role to play in state formation. But when Tuur's state was at risk of floundering in the conflicts it generated, the elders stepped back in and saved it. In Sheekh, 1992, Gadabursi elders solved the deadly conflict between the Habar Younes and the 'Ise Muse that had paralysed the vital port of Berbera for months; and it were elders who convened the meeting in Borama that put the state formation back on track. In its early years, the state of Somaliland was saved several times by self-governance. There was apparently no difficulty for elders to tackle complex modern problems at a national scale.

In an article of 2016, Börzel and Risse discuss the scale issue, showing that self-governance can work beyond the community level if enough trust is generated. They suggest several strategies to increase levels of trust among strangers[42]. One of them is akin to what happened in Somaliland in the 1990s (and still happens quite frequently today), when clan elders seek to solve conflicts of unrelated lineages. This increases trust among strangers, allowing self-governance to be scaled up.

The self-governance theories that emerged after Ostrom's 'Governing the Commons' (including Börzel and Risse's) all take as starting point an atomized society, where trust only exists between directly related people and where individuals are primarily motivated by self-preservation and their own interest. This seems to be an ideological premise rooted in the modern 'homo economicus'.[43] In theories of the State of Nature, self-preservation is a collective pursuit that by itself generates trust. The view of society as a collection of self-interested individuals may not be true for any society, but it certainly is not applicable to Somalia, where self-governance both within and among communities has been continuous over the past centuries. The problem of scale in self-governance, we may conclude, is a construed problem (based on specific assumptions). However, it does point out the requirement for trust and trust-building. Trust seems to be the tissue holding the rhizome together.

[41] Hoehne 2018a op.cit.

[42] Börzel & Risse 2016: "Dysfunctional State Institutions, Trust, and Governance in Areas of Limited .Statehood".

[43] See Brown 2015: "Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution" or Graeber & Wengrow 2021: "The Dawn of Humanity". It has been pointed out that the assumption that close family members automatically trust each other is also false; terrible conflicts have often happened between direct kin.

It seems that the conditions in Somaliland were ripe in the early 1990s for self-governance at a national scale, but, for the reasons seen above, a state was created and the forces of self-governance retreated voluntarily to the community level. The elders of the institutionalized Guurti were no longer accepted as peacemakers in the conflict that opposed the Garhajis with the state from 1994 to 1996. The general trust in elders is declining because of their association with the state, and thus with corruption, business interests and ruling elites.[44] The elders that engage in peacebuilding in Sanaag, mentioned at the beginning of this section, are mostly independent elders, not closely aligned with the government. They are part of the dual system, not the hybrid political order. Such elders still command some respect, but in general, public trust levels in Somaliland are in constant decline.

The main reason usually given is that the public realm has been captured by entrenched clan interests, benefiting only the happy few. Let us turn to the electoral, multiparty system in the hybrid political order of Somaliland, to see how power came to be so concentrated.

Clan and Multi-Party Democracy

Somaliland's institutions do not work as they would be expected to. As one observer said, speaking about the political field: "*We have a multi-party system but within that there is another system at play*".[45] That can be said about the state generally. We will now try to elucidate what that other system is, and how it relates to both society and Somaliland's ongoing state formation process.

The Multi-Party System

The Hargeisa Conference established the principle of multi-party democracy with the express aim of overcoming clan-based politics. Clans are represented in the House of Elders (Guurti), while the House of Representatives, for which multi-party elections would be held, was to represent modern political forces. The dual system of political power (formal and informal) was reflected in the bicameral set-up of Parliament. This is a feature of most democratic systems: the Upper House ensures ruling elites maintain a check on power, while the Lower House reflects the diversity of the population and their aspirations through democratic elections. But in Somaliland, lineage politics rapidly also took over the Lower House.

Multi-party democracy did not come naturally. One study showed that many members of the public, especially from the periphery, had misgivings about the wisdom of a transition from consensus-based clan politics to majority rule of one party.[46] The experience of multi-party democracy in the 1960s had not been positive, and Egal had played a major part in the debacle of the parliamentary period, leading to the military coup of 1969. Other studies, however, showed that Somalilanders mistrusted efforts by traditional leaders to hang on to power and felt the government needed more authority to develop the country.[47] Elections were a way to strengthen the state *and* modernize society.

To avoid the fragmentation of the political field into clan-based parties, a system was devised in which the three biggest parties to come out of the first local council elections in 2002 would be the only ones authorized to participate in political life during the following decade.[48] To qualify as a party, a political association had to garner at least 20% of the vote in four of the six regions. After ten years, local-council election results would designate the three political parties of the next decade, and so forth.

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[44] Hoehne 2013 op. cit.

[45] Yusuf 2013: "Representation"; p16.

[46] Jimcaale 2002: "Consolidation and Democratization of Government Institutions"; p28.

[47] Academy for Peace and Development 2000: "Rebuilding Somaliland"; p35.

[48] This system was copied from the 1960 pre-independence elections and had been devised by the British. Hansen & Bradbury 2007: "Somaliland: A New Democracy in the Horn of Africa?"; p468.

The system works, but it has not reduced the role of clan in politics. Lineages of the Habar Awal and Habar Je'lo clans retain power, mostly because they also control the economy. The business oligopoly is in their hands, so they can buy candidates, fund their campaigns and determine outcomes. At a local level, candidates need the support of their lineages for either winning an election, or selling the votes of their lineage to another candidate, such as in presidential elections. This allows them to become a 'clan broker'. They can sell their votes to the highest bidder, or to the one with the biggest chance of winning. If they play this role well, they establish themselves as links in patronage networks that can benefit their lineages, themselves and their patrons.

At the national level, Somaliland's parties function more like voting coalitions—federating pro-government lineages on one side and anti-government lineages on the other—than like Western political parties. In fact, parties *avoid* taking political stances on issues as doing so might needlessly deter voters.[49] The political field is not a space for competing ideas but for competing interests.[50] The presence of diaspora returnees (approximately half of the members of parliament elected in 2005 had a diaspora background[51]) has not changed this. Among the diaspora, clan identities are often even more pronounced than among local residents, who are used to dealing with each other.

While coalitions between lineages are made to gain and share power, outside periods of electoral contest these coalitions have little traction. It is easier to obtain a favour of a sub-clan member from a different political alliance than from a non-clan-related political ally, because blood ties are stronger than political ones. But the patronage networks remain, as they serve many other purposes than winning elections.

Elections

In terms of holding elections on time, Somaliland's electoral democracy is far from perfect. The percentage of cancelled or delayed elections surpasses that of federal Somalia. Of the thirteen scheduled elections, two were on time, six were delayed for a year or two, and five were never held. Moreover, the second decade (2011-2021) was worse in terms of delayed and cancelled elections than the first (2001-2011).

A local research centre in Hargeisa noted in early 2020: "*Somaliland people elected 487 officials in public offices; all of them, except the president and his vice president, are in office beyond their elected term. Only the President and his vice president have a legitimate term. Guurti members have been in office nearly 23 years, House of Representative members have been in office nearly 15 years and Local councillors have been in office nearly 7 years.*[52]"

Nevertheless, Somaliland has often been congratulated on its electoral democracy. Unlike neighbouring Somalia, the country has had elections based on universal suffrage ('one person-one vote') since 2002. The irregularities, technical problems and fraud experienced during elections have not led to social unrest, nor do they seem to have (much) changed the final outcome of elections; and incumbent presidents have accepted their defeat, even when it was only by a small margin, and allowed a peaceful transition of power. This last point, given experiences in neighbouring countries, is often seen as the most remarkable by external observers.

The turnover of presidents in Somaliland, all four of whom have left office by regular means,[53] is commonly taken as evidence of a mature democracy. However, it rather seems to be the result of a tacit

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[49] See the remarks about the first ever presidential candidate debate on TV by Hoehne, 2018:15.

[50] Yusuf 2013:16. I have frequently heard this point of view in my interviews.

[51] Yusuf 2013:17.

[52] Centre for Policy Analysis Hargeisa (CPA Hargeisa) 2020:6.

[53] Regular means for democratic turnover include accepting one's defeat, not representing oneself when not

agreement among state elites that each main clan gets a turn in power, obeying a rhizomatic logic rather than that of free and fair elections. The fact that the Habar Younes have been denied their turn since 1993 is considered a major factor of destabilization, also among members of other clans.

The informal sphere of consensus is needed to balance the dysfunctions of the formal sphere. The 'winner takes all' aspect of elections is mitigated by the rhizomatic power arrangements that take place afterwards, with the objective of preserving peace among the clans and within the state elites. Elections are followed by intense, out-of-the-public-eye negotiations between ruling elites to provide positions of power to allies and key opposition figures. The rhizomatic corrections to formal political processes also help absorbing some contending social forces, especially when 'the size of the pie' increases.

Another rhizomatic aspect concerns the observed fraud and vote-buying during elections. Fraud in Somaliland includes direct payments or gifts to voters on the eve of elections, buying and filling unused ballot papers from station managers, paying campaigners or other groups to vote multiple times in different polling stations, and paying local organizers to deliver votes. The latter practice may approach 'normal tradition', where candidates offer feasts, qat and gifts to local authorities to secure the vote of their subjects.[54] It may even be argued that direct returns to voters or local authorities are the only way in some African societies to honour a politician's sense of obligation to his constituency;[55] this is how many voters in Somaliland see it. Elections are a moment when funds flow downward, from the top of patronage networks to the population. External observers systematically see this as detrimental to the outcome of elections, but if one accepts that patronage networks dominate politics, it is only fair that once every few years, the population is rewarded for its participation.

One could see elections as a ritual binding state and society in Somaliland together in some kind of feast: a few weeks where gifts are showered by the powerful on their constituencies and resources are unreasonably wasted. Election day is a celebration of nationhood and most positive values Somaliland has come to embody in the eyes of its population, particularly the 'peace narrative'. It is a day when everyone gets to eat well. Observers of elections in Somaliland are struck by the joyous, orderly and peaceful mood among the population, at least in the Isaaq heartland, an impression one does not get when experiencing elections in Europe.

But after elections the hangover sets in. One observer notes: "*There is no trace of the money spent by everyone, including the government, donors, candidates, parties and people. It has damaged the democratization processes and culture. It corrupted people ... Even those who do not chew qat, started chewing because it was provided freely*".[56] Elections are also criticized from within the state elites. "*Elections have not helped Somaliland. We have adopted this system to gain international recognition, but has that helped? We go from one election to the next, they are costly and destabilizing and do nothing to improve the situation in the country.*"[57] Both within and outside the state elites, one hears voices regretting the consensus-based politics of which Borama was the high point, but never suggestions to return to it. Electoral reform is seen as the only way forward.

Rhizomatic capture of institutions

The rhizomatic, lineage-based nature of Somaliland's political system combined with formal positions of power has led to an impasse. Not only elections, but the functioning of all the institutions of state are

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allowed, or dying a natural death while in office. Posner & Young 2007: "The Institutionalization of Political Power in Africa" p128, quoted in Pegg & Walls 2018: "Back on Track? Somaliland after its 2017 Presidential Election"; p328.

[54] Verjee et al. 2015: "The Economics of Elections in Somaliland"; p33-35.

[55] Vicente & Wantchekon 2009: "Clientelism and Vote Buying: Lessons from Field Experiments in African Elections".

[56] Verjee et al. 2015:37.

[57] Interview with Ibrahim Habane, ex-secretary of the Guurti, May 2019 in Hargeisa.

determined by the interests of the most powerful lineages, backed by big business, leading to the reproduction of the current ruling oligarchy. Clan brokers use the instruments of formal politics and the campaign war chests of their business sponsors to stay in power, while violating laws and regulations with impunity, allowing a handful of people to dominate the political scene over decades without scope for renewal.

Upcoming elites can be accommodated in this political system only if they play by clan rules. There is little space to absorb new social forces that emerge among the population, notably non-clan-based politics, whether based on a Western or Islamic model. Similarly, opportunities for women in politics barely exist.[58] As a result, educated young men and women that do not have the right connections seek to emigrate, also to Mogadishu. In the federal capital they have more opportunities, because there is a shortage of educated youth, and the federal government is always looking for Isaaq 'representatives' to continue pretending it rules all of Somalia, including Somaliland. (This is considered as betrayal by the authorities in Hargeisa, and Somalilanders who return to their homes after a stint in Mogadishu are sometimes arrested for treason).

One of the results of multi-party electoral democracy has been a steady decrease in representation for the Harti population of eastern Somaliland and smaller Isaaq clans and minorities in the heartland. The consensual politics of Borama and the Hargeisa national conference meant that every population group was represented, even, for example, the Gabooye and the small Hawiye Fiqishini clan. Electoral mathematics and polling considerations favour the large clans. Among Dhulbahante and Warsangeli there is hardly any electoral participation. Elections have demonstrably increased their disaffection with Somaliland politics, from the first cycle onward.[59]

One of the most common complaints about multi-party electoral democracy, combined with the oligopolistic economy that funds politics, is that it has deepened the democratic deficit and social inequality. In Borama, in 1993, through the principles of the imperative mandate and consensus, the citizens of Somaliland felt they could make their voice heard. If they were not content with the proceedings, they could simply turn up themselves in Borama and state their concerns, listen and participate in the ensuing debates. Photos of the 1993 Borama conference show that delegates wore traditional, simple garb, while nowadays a suit and tie and command of the English language are required for participating in politics. Flouting your wealth used to be frowned upon, but over the past decade it has become acceptable, and politicians are even expected to be rich, drive big cars, have flashy phones and be too busy to attend to the needs of their constituents—the typical African 'Big Man'.[60] Socio-economic inequality has become a basic feature of political life, even though Somali culture is deeply egalitarian.

Analysis

To clearly understand the nature and evolution of the State in Somaliland and its relation with self-governing clan society, it is helpful to disentangle the hybrid political order into its two components—state-tree and social rhizome—and view it as a dual political order first.

For example, relations between the State-tree and the social rhizome are both complementary and conflictive; Table 8 below resumes this dual relationship.

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[58] 'Abdirahman Ýusuf Duale 'Boobe', a well-known politician, explains: "*Women have been largely excluded from politics. One of the reasons relates to the clan system. Usually a woman is not seen as belonging to a clan. This is because in a way she belongs to two clans—she has her own clan and also the clan of her husband*". Africa Research Institute 2013:19.

[59] Hansen & Bradbury 2007:470.

[60] As described for instance in Médard 1992: "Le 'Big Man' en Afrique".

Table 8: State-Society relations in Somaliland

State-Society relations	**Conflictive**	**Complementary**
Seen from the state	State expanding through society, replacing self-governance with formal, centralized rule	Self-governance ensures local peace, state security and the social acceptance of the state
Seen from society	The state is increasingly corrupt, clannic and dysfunctional, and it stokes conflict by increasing social injustice	The state is necessary for engaging the international community and for Rule of Law-based relations with Somalis from different communities

Both views have common points: they see the sphere of state power inexorably advancing into that of society, replacing self-governance with state governance. This is generally true, not only in Somaliland[61]. Table 8 can probably be applied to many other countries.

Dual governance allows state elites to overcome blockages generated by the compenetration of formal institutions and rhizomatic politics. The state *needs* an autonomous informal political sphere to resolve the conflicts it generates, as we have seen after the results of 'winner takes all' elections are announced.

One can be critical but should not be too negative about the current constellation. The hybrid political order in Somaliland has done fairly well so far, bringing peace, stability, some development and allowing for the absorption of contender elites, albeit only if they function as clan-based networks. It may still find or negotiate its way out of the current impasse. For example, the May 2021 parliamentary elections (the first since 2005) saw the narrow defeat of the ruling Kulmiye party, which came second. Barkhad 'Batuun', a candidate from the Gabooye minority won a seat with a vote tally indicating many non-Gabooye had voted for him. He presents himself as an educated, modern, non-clan based politician.[62] Abdikarim Mooge, the son of a popular singer, was elected to Hargeisa's local council. Despite being from the opposition Waddani party, in a bid to absorb opposition forces and maintain overall stability, President Bihi surprisingly endorsed Mooge to become the new mayor of Hargeisa, a wildly popular move among Hargeisa's youth, fed up with the inactivity and corruption of the municipal authorities. These developments show that what appears as a deadlocked political system can evolve by the charisma and social power of powerful personalities such as Mooge, Bihi and Batuun. The hybrid order makes rhizomatic renewal possible within a static system.

The dual political order that emerged at Borama could have succeeded, if both centres of power had remained separate. Clan elders could have continued to rule the rhizome, the social sphere, including at the national level. The Guurti should not have become part of the State, and not take institutional trappings. And the State could have responded to the general aspiration for a modern, developmental, democratic and non-clan 'civil society' that could overcome the imbalances and problems of clan society and *xeer*, but without denying its roots in Somali society, for example taking into account the communal ownership of land, pastoralist habits, the imperative of an egalitarian and participative society, and more generally by respecting clan identities without allowing them to take over politics. To effectively address a problem (like the inequities of clan society), denial is not the best starting point.

According to the theory of the State of Nature, this state should have remained as small as possible and not pretend to wield absolute power, but only the power it derived from the social compact that had caused it to emerge (the mentioned aspirations). It probably would have taken much more time to form

[61] See for example Scott 2009 "The Art of Not Being Governed" p. 324, about self-governing tribes in the highlands of Southeast Asia and their centuries-old struggles with central States.

[62] Interview with Barkhad Batuun in October 2020 in Hargeisa.

such a state, but from the outset it could still serve the purpose of connecting to the international community. There's no point in idle historical speculation, but there was a moment of bifurcation (Borama, 1993) when conditions were present for taking the alternative path: the capacity for national self-governance was demonstrated, and the will of the citizens for a State seemed unified.

Table 9 schematizes the two poles of the dual political order, and the hybrid political order that arises out of mixing of both.

Table 9: The Dual and the Hybrid Political Order

	Dual Political Order		**Hybrid State Effect**
	1/Self-governance	**2/Modern State**	
Archetype	Rhizome	Tree	Rhizome in tree
Basic Instinct	Preservation of species	Aspiration to universal ideal	Corruption of ideals & preservation imbalanced
Formulation	Community rules	Political ideal/polis	Nepotistic political practice
Legal basis	*Xeer*	Formal Law	Confusion, no legal basis
Institutions	1993 Peace Charter	1993 TNC & 2001 Constitution	Guurti & Lower House
Leaders	Clan elders	Egal & modern urban educated elites	Clan brokers
Representation	Self-representation	Political Parties	Clan politics
Economic base	Informal solidarity networks	Rules based 'contract' economy	Oligopoly
Incidence on conflict	Sharing => conflict resolution	Competing => conflict generation	Distributing => conflict mediation
Appeal	Peace Narrative	Development narrative	Mixed narrative
Relation	Accepts Modern State	Denies Self-governance	State of Accepted Denial*

** By 'accepted denial' I mean that the self-governing side accepts that the state side denies its existence*

The hybrid political order rules especially on the state side, for the state of Somaliland is still too weak to effectively rule community life. Its penetration is feeble, not only in the distant disputed areas of eastern Somaliland, but also in neighbourhoods of the capital, which are mostly lineage-homogeneous and self-governed by local residents.[63] This indicates the balance between both forms of governance. Neighbourhood security and how it cooperates with state security, as seen above, is another example. But the self-governing sphere is also impacted by the hybrid political order. As Hoehne remarked, hybrid governance has delegitimized both the state authorities (seen as corrupt and nepotistic) and clan elders (considered as agents of this state having forsaken their autonomy).[64]

The basic problem with the hybrid political order on the state side is the compenetration of fluid rhizomatic networks with fixed positions of power. The penetration of the rhizome in the tree, what I call the 'rhizome-in-tree', is illustrated in Figure 26, below.

[63] For example, the municipality of Hargeisa has insufficient funds to pave roads and install infrastructure. If a neighbourhood decides to build roads, it must collect the money for the expenses, provide the labour for free, and pay a bribe here and there. The municipality then provides the road-building machinery and experts.

[64] Hoehne, Markus 2013: "Limits of Hybrid Political Orders: The Case of Somaliland".

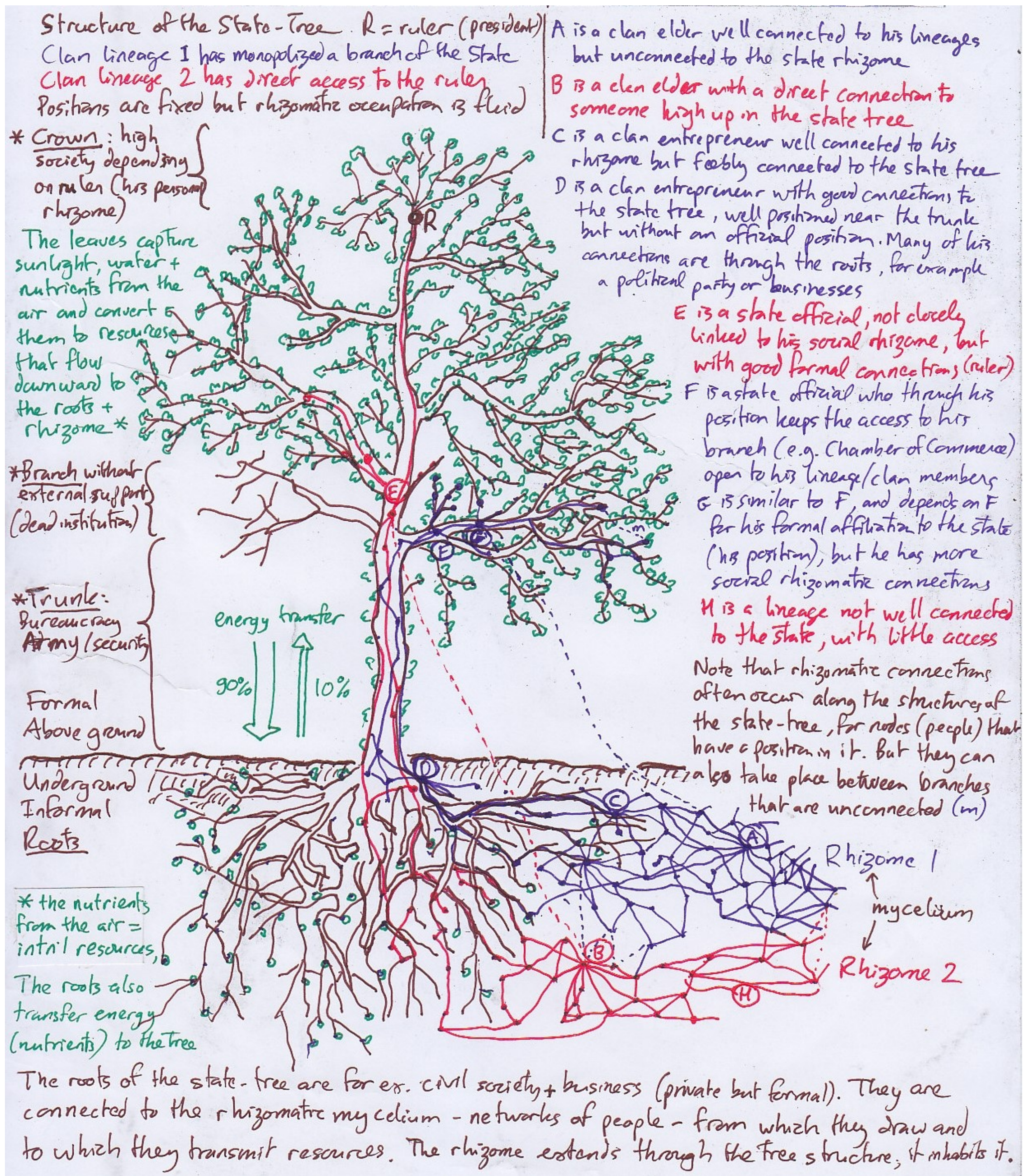

Figure 26: The Rhizome-in-Tree. Sketch by author. The handwritten text contains an intuitive analysis of the correspondences between state/clan society and the tree/rhizome, and need not be read to follow the argument.

Somaliland's state can be characterized as a formal hierarchical structure of institutions that is informally controlled by rhizomatic lineage networks. The rhizome is timeless and unites Somali society through lineage networks that are not hierarchical, but horizontal, multiple and open-ended. In addition to clan identities, friendships, professional and even casual contacts provide rhizomatic connections. The spontaneous political manifestation of a rhizome is self-governance; among Somali clans it is *xeer*. The rhizome is constrained by interaction with the state's formal structures of power, but it also

'corrupts' them, bending them, bypassing them, or establishing informal connections between formally distinct institutions. By elevating the principle of power by position (state) over that by personal capacity (self-governance), institutionalization allows state elites who 'occupy' positions of power to entrench themselves and gradually free themselves from the bonds to their constituencies, turning their evanescent social power into symbolic power.

Strengthening the structures of the state then increases the stakes in the competition between lineage networks, as well as consolidating the current state elites' hold on power. Growth becomes necessary to integrate new peripheral forces into the state elites, while maintaining the power of the existing ones. External support accelerates this process by providing additional means to the state and encouraging its continuing institutionalization.

And this brings us to section 8.4: the influence of international support on the hybrid political order.

8.4 International Support

"If all international funding were to be withdrawn tomorrow, entire sectors of Somaliland's state would collapse - most notably, health and education"

Adnan Hagoog, 2019[65]

Somaliland is not recognized as a sovereign state by the international community, yet its state has become dependent on international support. Somaliland has become *de facto* accepted as a state.

The state formation process was actively opposed by UNOSOM, 1992-1995,[66] and received no support from the international community up to and including the constitutional process. But from the late 90s onward, development aid started flowing again. By 2000, most humanitarian and development funding by the international community in Somalia was directed toward Somaliland and Puntland, as they offered more congenial operating environments.[67] In the early 2000s, the first elections convinced observers in the international community that Somaliland had achieved stability, peace and a surprisingly democratic government. This led donors to refocus on institutional support.

Already in 1999, the UNDP, frustrated by the lack of capacity on the Somali government side that impeded the UN agency from fulfilling its mandate, launched efforts to establish a national development plan for Somaliland, which would allow external donors to support government projects (instead of the government directly).[68] But Somaliland produced the necessary documents only in 2010: a Somaliland National Vision 2030 and a National Development Plan, both duly presented in a typical international organizations' format (pillars, cross-cutting themes, priorities, etc.).

Donors agreed to set up the Somaliland Development Fund (SDF) in 2012, allowing them to engage the government without recognizing it. The SDF mandate is to build the government's capacity through on-the-job training. It lets the government lead at all times and uses 'country systems'.[69] The SDF is in

[65] Hagoog is a veteran assistant of diplomats working in Somaliland, interview in Hargeysa on 8 May 2019.

[66] Kamungo, UNOSOM political affairs officer, was expelled in 1994 along with UNOSOM after he threatened Egal with an intervention by UN troops to bring Somaliland back under Somalia.

[67] Bayne 2001: "The European Union's Political and Development Response to Somalia".

[68] Bayne 2001:24.

[69] This development jargon means that aid is channelled through governments, instead of through parallel structures outside government control.

charge of hiring consultants for project management and reporting, who transfer their skills to the ministry or agency in charge of a project. Contracts run into the hundreds of pages and have complicated procurement and financial reporting rules to avoid corruption, while strengthening the government's capacity to function within the international rules-based order.[70] It is led by capable Somalilanders with a diaspora background, and only rarely hires a foreigner. In terms of donor-assisted state-capacity development, it embodies current best practice. As Susan Woodward would remark: the Somaliland Development Fund’s main task is to teach Somaliland’s authorities to work in the way preferred by donors, just like IMF and World Bank ‘staff monitoring programs’.[71]

From Somaliland's ruling elite perspective, international funding channelled through the SDF is more useful than NGO or other donor projects. SDF funds can be distributed through patronage networks by legal means, e.g. contracts, security provision, agency overheads or recruitment. This strengthens the state and the formal economy, while allowing the authorities to grow new branches on the state-tree, providing space for new rhizomatic connections.

Somaliland’s second National Development Plan (2017-2021) adopted the language of international development: ‘reduce poverty’, ‘increase resilience’, ‘economic opportunities’, ‘climate change’, ‘good governance’, etc.[72] A donor study found out that ministries were often barely aware of their objectives under this plan, that had been written by local experts in English without much consultation with either ministries or regional and local authorities.[73] The plan seems to be used mainly to encourage donors to increase their funding of government objectives.

From a popular perspective, part of SDF funding seems ill spent. In a batch of four projects approved in 2020, three seem quite unnecessary: rebuilding the best road in the country, building a new fishing pier and port in an area only servicing 2,000 inhabitants, and financing once more the water provision of Hargeisa, after several corruption scandals and unfinished projects. For the government, the strengthening of state systems and patronage networks is more important than project outcomes, while for the donors, the procedures for disbursing their funds are most important. Only the population cares about the results of the projects.

SDF funding is only a small part of the total funding Somaliland’s institutions receive. Law and order programmes receive generous foreign funding: police, prisons and judges, tax collection, central bank policies, airport security, the coastguard, national security and intelligence. Elections and democratic institutions are funded, and social protection programmes, such as fighting female genital mutilation and support to refugees or minorities. But the bulk of financial support goes toward providing public health and education to citizens, most of it through institutions, strengthening the formal sector in Somaliland and aligning it to donor objectives and facilities.

Another favourite target area for foreign donors is civil society and its manifold activities, from a free press to business start-ups, with a focus on youth. Donors consider civil society as the breeding ground for future liberal democratic elites, so supporting it amounts to investing in future relations with the country. This corresponds to a program of social transformation not very distant from the civilizing imperative of the colonial period, or later pre-independence efforts to form an administrative elite.

Civil society retains a formal independence from the state, but this does not mean that they are not rhizomatically integrated into the networks of power, especially when they are based in the capital and consist of middle-class educated people. NGOs are often set up by people from within the government to respond to tendering opportunities, usually led by one of their close relatives. These connections and

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[70] Interview in Hargeisa with the SDF secretary (7 May 2019).

[71] Woodward 2017: ‘The Ideology of Failed States’.

[72] Ministry of National Planning and Development 2017: “The National Development Plan II, 2017-2021”.

[73] Bryld et al. 2016:5.

their overall closeness to international donors and the government convince other Somalilanders that 'civil society' is an imported concept and part of the state elites.[74]

Humanitarian and development aid relieve the government of many of its responsibilities towards the population. In the past two decades, the state of Somaliland has become increasingly reliant on international support to provide the minimum services to its population.[75] Not counting aid allocated through Somalia-wide programs, external donors outspend the government in education, health, agriculture, water and sanitation and other sectors.[76] Is Somaliland becoming a rentier state? Compared to the Federal Government, Somaliland's government internally raises a higher percentage of its spending, but external funding quite probably surpasses government spending.[77] However, for full access to international funding (and rents), Somaliland needs to be recognized first. This would allow its government to borrow from the IMF and World Bank, and on international markets.[78]

An investigation into why Somaliland is not recognized as a sovereign state led to the disappointing conclusion that foreign powers simply do not care.[79] The ruling elites of Somaliland lack the transnational social power needed to obtain recognition by their peers, and this weighs more than all the arguments in favour of recognition.[80] In Chapter Three the two manners to spread hegemony were discussed: absorption (*trasformismo*) and emulation ('*passive revolution*'), and absorption was identified as the faster path to become part of the ruling elites. If a group forms a contender power or a potential counter-hegemonic force, hegemonic ruling elites have a stronger interest in absorbing it. Emulation, the path that Somaliland has chosen, puts less pressure on the international community to accommodate aspirant domestic elites.

The two new African countries recognized by the international community, Eritrea and South Sudan, were both formed after the international community intervened in lengthy civil wars and suggested independence as a solution to the conflict. The lesson Somaliland may learn from this is that, if it desires full recognition by the international community, it must either develop into a threat to the international

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[74] Interview with Dini Mohamed Dini, director of Somalia South Central Non-State Actors (SOSCENSA) in Mogadishu, 4 March 2019, confirmed by civil society contacts in Hargeisa.

[75] Interview with Adnan Hagoog: "*In education, the Somaliland government does no more than pay the teachers' salaries; all the rest—buildings & furnishings, textbooks, school lunches, teacher training, stipends—is provided by NGOs. In health it's much the same*". This has been confirmed to me by several NGO directors.

[76] This doesn't stop the government from taking harsh measures against the aid community, such as expelling the United Nations (Kluijver 2020: "Why Did Somaliland Just Suspend Cooperation with the UN?" in African Arguments, link), or slapping new taxes or obligations on humanitarian agencies. It has understood that international donors and NGOs so badly need to remain present in Somaliland that it can increase the pressure on them.

[77] The Ministry of Planning counts that more than a hundred million dollars per year of direct external aid enter the economy—amounting to nearly 50% of government revenue in 2017—but that does not include funding for Somalia spent by international agencies in Somaliland.

[78] Somtribune, 28 March 2020: "President and Opposition Leaders Urge World Bank to Deal with Somaliland and Somalia as Equal Entities"(link accessed Jan. 2022). The European Investment Fund is willing to support Somaliland, but it would need the prior approval of the federal government, which is not forthcoming.

[79] As the Dutch ambassador to Kenya told me, who would be willing to risk political capital on the issue of Somaliland's recognition? What could a country possibly gain from struggling on the international scene for the recognition of Somaliland? Interview with Frans Makken, September 2017.

[80] See Hoyle 2000: "Somaliland: Passing the Statehood Test?" in *IBRU Boundary and Security Bulletin, Autumn 2000,* pp. 80-91 and Eggers 2007: "When is a State a State? The Case for the Recognition of Somaliland" in *Boston College International and Comparative Law Review* Vol 30, 2007 pp. 211-222 for an overview of the main arguments to grant Somaliland statehood, or not. For a carefully researched legal argument, see Schoiswohl 2004: "Status and (Human Rights) Obligations of Non-Recognized De Facto Regimes in International Law: The Case of 'Somaliland'."

order—for example, by backing piracy—or engage in warfare against Somalia and then accept the international settlement. Both outcomes may make recognition more likely but further have unpredictable results, probably leading to Somaliland's current domestic elites being ousted from power by a combination of foreign and domestic forces. Another option is to wait for Mogadishu to fall to Al Shabaab; rather than pretend that Somaliland is then also ruled by the jihadi movement, the country's independence will be rapidly recognized by the international community.

In conclusion, Somaliland's state developed solid roots in society because of the initial lack of international assistance. This obliged the budding state elites to search for support among social forces in the country and gradually expand the social compact underlying the state, using scarce domestic resources. Today, however, increasing international assistance has reduced the reliance of state elites on domestic assent, gradually replacing it by a dependent relation with the international community. This allows current elites to maintain themselves in power;[81] in return, the international community obtains the compliance of Somaliland to international rules and standards at least in principle, spreading the hegemony of the international order. In short, Somaliland *is* becoming a rentier or client state, like many other African states.

There is little reason to doubt that, should the state of Somaliland fail, clan self-governance will return quite automatically and naturally. That may be an unfortunate prospect for Somalilanders who aspire to a modern, equal-opportunities, social development-oriented state that transcends clan identities. If international partners share this objective, they should stop funding only state structures and explore manners to support mechanisms of self-governance.

8.5 Concluding Remarks

The unique experience of Somaliland, without any foreign support for its independence or its early political processes, shows the fundamental difference between state formation and state-building. The former refers to a state whose roots are firmly in society. The latter is a foreign intervention, seeking to shape the evolution of domestic society through a set of imposed institutions.

One step towards generalized trust in Somaliland's state formation was the 'peace narrative', by which Somalilanders (at least those from the heartland) came to identify themselves as different from other Somalis. This narrative was developed by clan elders as they solved conflicts, one by one, during the early years of Somaliland. It demonstrably served to avoid the emergence of criminal (piracy) and extremist groups, and it still helps to solve clan conflict today. But, although clan elders play an essential part, we have seen how modern urban civil-society groups, NGOs and other sectors of modern society, such as business interests, can contribute to maintaining social peace. Self-governance is a flexible instrument that can accommodate more social sectors than those based on clan, tackling complex national issues such as crime, terrorism and national economic development.

'Traditional' mechanisms of self-governance should not be confused with efforts to maintain 'traditional' social values. Instead, clan elders are aware of the aspirations in their community, among others to overcome the negative aspects of clan identity and *xeer*, and as their mandate is to maintain social peace they can (at least sometimes) accommodate such aspirations through collective arrangements.

[81] This is argued by several authors, including Richards 2014. Bryden 2004:180 gave an early warning: "Large-scale external assistance could nudge Somaliland toward the dependency trap, sapping the government's legitimacy and undermining the fragile political consensus".

The type of clan self-governance observed in eastern Somaliland exists throughout the entire Somali-populated Horn of Africa and it has not changed much over the past century. It may be seen as the 'default' political order among Somalis. What changes is the state factor, and the balance with state governance, which in turn is heavily influenced by foreign patronage.

To observe the interaction between state and self-governance in Somaliland, the hybrid political order had to be separated into its two base components: a dual political order where social and symbolic power are both recognized. The denial of self-governance is what makes the dual system become hybrid. The State of Somaliland is progressively displacing self-governance with state governance, but the process has started only recently. In outlying areas and even in the capital, self-governance of communities is still the norm, and state-power is weak. Bizarrely, Somaliland's state security is achieved by clan self-governance, rather than by a 'monopoly of violence' by the State.

The dual political order could, conceptually, lead to a system of rule where State and self-governance exist side by side. But, maybe because of the State's pretence to absolute power, in practice it leads to a hybrid system that is rather muddled—what I call a 'Rhizome-in-Tree'. The institutions of state are co-opted by rhizomatic networks that, in Somaliland, are based purely on clan. Non-clan-based modern groups cannot function in this political system. As usual, when social power turns into symbolic power, this results in the entrenchment of ruling elites. Given that Somaliland's economy is dominated—in the same manner as its political arena—by well-connected lineages, change is unlikely to come from socio-economic developments.

Somaliland's society, reaping the benefits of peace and stability, has continued to develop in an uneven way. The increasing disparity between rich and poor, between those in the centre and those living on the edges, the lack of opportunities for youth without connections, the ostentatious corruption among ruling elites and the impunity they enjoy, all exacerbate social tensions. This increasingly leads to a sense of social injustice that erodes trust levels among the population. In east Somaliland, Harti populations have little to no interest in Somaliland. In urban areas, Somalilanders are turning toward political Islam in frustration: especially Al I'tisam is often named as a burgeoning movement.

Foreign support for Somaliland's state-building process, meanwhile, allows the State to grow—absorbing new contender groups—and increase its control over society. Such support relieves the State of many of its duties towards its population: in the fields of health and education, but also in countless other areas, from infrastructure to rural livestock management. Foreign assistance is also political, favouring those civil society groups that will form the leaders of a future liberal democratic state and of the institutions through which Somaliland's society can be modernized. A ruling elite composed largely of diaspora members captures most of this foreign support, redistributing it through patronage networks. So, although Somaliland's state was formed by the desire and efforts of the population, it has become increasingly reliant on foreign assistance, lessening its dependence on popular legitimacy.

The concept of the inverse tree was introduced in Chapter 7. The rhizome-society of Somaliland formed its own, upright, state-tree in the 1990s, and modelled its institutions on the Western state, in a mimetic effort to obtain the support of both the international community and the modern sectors of domestic society, including diaspora. Today, these institutions are increasingly being shaped by foreign donors, and, from an international perspective, it appears that the State of Somaliland is increasingly capable of functioning like an extension of the universal modern state—an inverse tree. But the upright and inverse tree are the same, only seen from different perspectives.

A more obvious case of 'inverse tree' was the Transitional Federal Government of federal Somalia. How did that evolve after the TFG was replaced by the Federal Government of Somalia?

Chapter 9: Negotiating the Somali State

In which the institutions of Somalia's federal structures are carefully crafted by international partners. Of the impact of the aid and security interventions on the local economy and social relations. Why there is such a positive mindset in the international bubble of Halane. Where Somali elites strike deals within the political marketplace to redistribute foreign rents. How a nearly perfect clan balance in the 4.5 system maintains social peace. Of the informal and the formal economies. How elections facilitate patronage politics. Why Somali citizens take no political action despite their critical attitudes. The Dual Power Theory at the individual level.

In Somalia the parliament does not perform the function of 'checks and balances'. That role has traditionally been played by the international community. They measure the executive's performance and are in a position to do something about it. [1]

Abdirahman Abdishakur, 2019

The Federal State of Somalia was established in 2012. It has been constantly supported by the international community, but how determinant has that support been? What is the role of foreign interveners in determining the structures of State, and what kind of overall impact has the foreign presence had, including its aid and counterterrorism programmes? New discourses justifying intervention, striking a postive note, have replaced the gloomy 'failed state' narrative. There appears to be a growing gap between how international agencies describe the workings of the federal state, and how Somali and foreign observers see them. How and why did these divergent realities emerge?

To understand the politics among federal elites they must be seen from inside, and the focus should be on how it works—not on how it should work, but doesn't. The Somali economy sustains the elite bargaining process, but little is known about the much larger and apparently more dynamic informal economy, except that the Islamist business bloc thrives on it. It is easier to trace how foreign rents, to which the diaspora bloc has privileged access, are distributed. While the international community is the main, but unwilling, contributor to clan-based patronage systems that seek to maintain a balance between clans, some bilateral donors in the region take advantage of the venal system to buy loyalties.

The third level of analysis in this chapter is that of Somali society, and its attitudes towards both its elites and the international community. What are their expectations of the state? What role, if any, do they accord to structures of self-governance? How do individual Somalis deal with the dual tug of citizenship and their personal rhizomes?

[1] Interview 8 March 2019 in Jazira Hotel, Mogadishu.

9.1 The Transnational State of Somalia

"Somalia has made significant progress in its efforts to enhance its state-building and peacebuilding priorities".[2]

African Union, February 2021

In 2012, the Transitional Federal Government became the Federal Government of Somalia. A draft constitution was adopted, and a new President elected: Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, a technocrat with an NGO and moderate Muslim Brotherhood background. The next year, a road map 'Vision 2016' towards democratic elections and the finalization of the constitution, and a 'Somali compact' based on principles of 'New Deal' partnerships between developing governments and international organizations were agreed upon.[3] Viewing these developments and documents as positive signs, the international community significantly increased its support to Somali state-building. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank opened offices in the Mogadishu International Airport area, and many other international agencies established a foothold in the country. The most intense period of internationally steered state-building was about to begin in Somalia.

In Somaliland, although humanitarian and development funding started flowing again in the late 1990s, and some support to state-building was initiated in the late 2000s, it was only after 2012 (adoption of the Somaliland National Development Plan) that international funding started flowing towards the institutions of the state. Since Somaliland falls under Somalia for all donors, it benefited from the renewed interest in building Somali state capacity. But, unlike Somaliland, there was barely the skeleton of a state in federal Somalia. The state-tree had been transplanted to Somali soil only with considerable difficulty. As a creation of the international community, would it be able to survive by itself, drawing its nutrients through its roots from the soil, and through its branches from the international environment?

State-Building Objectives of International Organizations

In interviews with the World Bank country director and the European Union Head of Delegation, as well as a more casual talk with the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General, all three men strongly disagreed with my suggestion that the international community was somehow responsible for the state-building process in Somalia. We're just assisting, they claimed, giving me many good reasons why a foreign organization cannot come to Somalia to tell the people what kind of state they need and how they should build it.[4]

Nonetheless, it is plainly apparent that the international community, and these three organizations most of all, are intensely involved in state-building. They do not use coercion, but they provide suggestions for institutions, fund research to see how they can be made to fit the Somali situation, train their Somali counterparts, fund a large share of government activities (including most Somali civil servants' salaries) monitor the implementation and call their counterparts to account in case there are problems. UN chief

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[2] AU quarterly report to the UN on the situation in Somalia, and AMISOM, of Feb 09 2021 (one day after Farmajo's government had finished its term without organizing elections, causing a general political crisis in Somalia).

[3] "*The New Deal Compact binds together the Federal Government's commitment to working towards stability and the unity of Somalia with the international community's commitment to provide support*" as stated in the High-Level Partnership Forum bringing together the Somali Presidency and the UN in a conference in Denmark to review the progress on the Somali compact, in November 2014.

[4] Interviews with Hugh Riddell (World Bank), Nairobi, 27 March 2018 and Nicolás Berlanga (EU), Mogadishu, 5 October 2020; and talk with Michael Keating (UN), Mogadishu, 11 March 2019.

Nicholas Kay spent much of his term in office (2013-2016) engaged in shuttle diplomacy between the federal government and leaders of the Federal Member States, to sort out their differences,[5] so they even intervene in a direct political way in the state-building process.

In Part II I argued that for Somali elites, the primary function of the State is to access international resources. Somali ruling elites never seem to have been interested in state formation, except for the 1970-1975 period (and the 1991-2001 period in Somaliland). Of course, that need not always remain so, and a real interest in state formation could emerge; but below we'll see that there is no indication for such a shift in attitude. The objective of keeping external resources flowing explains the pragmatical attitude towards the international community. If the international community insists on structural adjustment, or human rights, or democracy, or a women's quota in Parliament, Somali ruling elites go along with it, or at least pretend to do so when they know implementation will be challenging.

On the EU website for Somalia, support to state-building and peacebuilding is named as the first priority, and defined: "*to support rule of law, security, building and strengthening core state functions, democratisation and national reconciliation*"[6]. On the UNSOM page of the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, state-building is named as the second priority after peacebuilding, and defined as "*improving the security situation by supporting Somalia's security sector, reform of the justice sector, one-person one-vote elections, complete the federalism process and finalize the constitution"*.[7] State-building is thus closely linked to peacebuilding and includes the security sector, rule of law, democracy, national reconciliation, and core state institutions, such as the constitution and the federal structure. As to the World Bank, its Somalia website clarifies that "*The World Bank supports government institutions in Somalia to promote good governance, accelerate economic recovery and create jobs*"[8], so the World Bank seeks to achieve its goals through government institutions.

An examination of the total financial flows into Somalia underlines the major role of international organizations. In 2019, for example, these flows could be broken down as follows:[9]

- 1.5 to 2 billion USD remittances from abroad.
- Over 1 billion USD humanitarian funding under the UN.
- About 1 billion USD other Western development assistance.
- 350 million USD federal government budget, of which half raised through taxes and fees, and half provided through donor trust funds managed by the World Bank or the UN.[10]
- Hundreds of millions USD in combined federal member states revenue (rough estimate).
- Hundreds of millions USD of unreported aid, mostly from Gulf countries and Turkey, much of it going directly to prominent political players in Somalia.

At least half of the government budget is funded directly by donors, but this is in any case dwarfed by the amounts of humanitarian and development aid these same donors provide. This shows the balance

[5] Elmi 2015: "Decentralized Unitary System: A Possible Middle Ground Model for Somalia"; p7.

[6] EU website accessed 23 Nov. 2020 (link).

[7] "*UNSOM is currently supporting efforts by the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states to further improve the security situation, including the implementation of the transition plan from the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) to Somali security forces, as well as reform of the security and justice sectors. UNSOM also aims to further support efforts by Somalia's federal and regional leaders to conduct one-person, one-vote elections planned for 2020/1, complete the federalism process, finalize a federal constitution*" as on the UNSOM webpage accessed on 23 November 2020.

[8] World Bank Somalia page, (link).

[9] Remittances estimate by World Bank; UN humanitarian funding according to UNOCHA (response to appeal); other Western ODA is a rough estimate; government budget according to Somali Ministry of Finance; federal member states revenue and unreported bilateral aid: rough estimates based on various sources.

[10] The federal budget rose from 344 million USD in 2019 to 476 million in 2020, and to 671 million in 2021. 61% of the 2021 budget was expected to be externally funded through trust funds.

of power between the Somali government and its donors. Financially, the government is entirely dependent on foreign aid; the revenues it raises itself would be barely sufficient to pay the salaries of the civil service, let alone its security services. However, the main source of income is from remittances that mostly fuel the informal economy, which will be discussed in the next section.

Since the mid-1990s, the European Union remains the main development partner of Somalia. For the period 2014-2020, EU support amounted to over € 3.5 billion, focusing on development cooperation, humanitarian aid, and stabilization. Not included in this amount is funding to the African Peacekeeping Facility managed by the African Union, from which AMISOM troop-contributing countries are paid (costing the EU € 2 billion between 2007 and 2019).[11] Without this security funding, experts agree, the government would collapse. This funding thus benefits Somalia, but none of it transits through Somali hands or territory; they are paid out to the Defense Ministries of the troop-contributing countries.

The United Nations (UN) is engaged in Somalia through the political UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), the logistics/peacekeeping United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) and many UN agencies.[12] Each of these manages its own programmes and budgets, although most also participate in UNOCHA's yearly humanitarian appeals that raise over a billion USD. UNSOM's mandate includes providing policy advice to the Federal Government and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) on peacebuilding and state-building in the areas of governance, security sector reform and rule of law (including the demobilization of combatants), development of a federal system (including state formation), constitutional review and democratization. UNSOM also helps building the Federal Government's capacity for promoting human rights, women's empowerment, child protection, preventing conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, and strengthening justice institutions. The UN system has offices in ten locations outside Mogadishu (Baidoa, Belet Weyne, Bosaso, Dhobley, Dollow, Galka'yo, Garowe, Kismayo, Jowhar and Hargeisa).

Amounts of funding by the IMF and the World Bank group are lower, but still substantial. For example, the World Bank in 2019 provided 120 million USD budget support to the Federal Government, more than one third of the total budget, including 50% of government salaries. The World Bank also directly manages fiscal transfers to the member states as the federal government is not inclined to share its budget with member states. But the World Bank's main focus in Somalia is poverty reduction and improving the labour market. In 2019, it had earmarked funding for digital infrastructure, rural water management and 'more inclusive social services', one of which is "*30 percent of Gender-Based Violence survivors in selected communities receive case management and psychosocial support services in Puntland*".[13] That the World Bank is concerned with such a detailed issue is indicative for both its general social transformation mandate and for how it sometimes micromanages political-social affairs in Somalia.

The World Bank has a much stronger focus, however, on fiscal reform, for which 20 million USD had been earmarked in 2019. Somalia is on track, according to the IMF, toward being able to access loans from International Financial Institutions (which also opens access to global public and private capital markets). To reach this 'completion point', Somalia must pass legislation, reform its fiscal policies and start implementing its Poverty Reduction strategy. Creditors have started clearing Somalia's debt of 4.7

[11] African Peace Facility Annual Report 2019:13. Frustrated at its lack of oversight and long procurement delays, the EU has decided to provide more flexibility for itself by allowing itself to disburse funds directly, including for the acquisition of (preferably EU-manufactured) lethal weaponry. See ICG 2021: "How to Spend It" for a critique.

[12] Including the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the World Food Program (WFP), the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the UN Development Program (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Human Settlements Program (UN Habitat), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and a few more.

[13] From the World Bank 2018 Country Partnership Framework 2019-2022 p32.

billion USD that international lenders made to Siad Barre.[14] Through 'Staff Monitoring Programs', which involve IMF and World Bank staff performing on the job training and capacity building within the Somali Ministry of Finance and other government agencies, these organizations are helping the Somali state to reach this point.[15] Then Somali ruling elites will be able to access loans of hundreds of million dollars, mortgaging the future of their country in exchange for easy cash, just like ruling elites in other developing countries. This prospect is alluring, and one understands why successive Somali governments have adopted a technocratic focus to adopt the required fiscal reforms.

The World Bank prides itself on 'using country systems', which means working with the authorities and through the appropriate institutions, instead of creating parallel structures as humanitarian and development actors tend to do (for efficiency). In its documents and communications, it shows confidence in the Somali government's capacity to 'stay the course' of fiscal reform and thus create an appropriate governance framework and efficient modern labour markets. But the 'country systems' the World Bank uses do not go beyond the higher echelons of the federal government structure, which, as we have just seen, the World Bank shapes as it sees fit.

Besides direct support to the government, foreign donors help the government indirectly, by funding large-scale relief and development programmes in sectors such as health, education, and rural livelihoods.[16] This has the double effect seen above for Somaliland: it relieves the state of its duties towards the population, while providing it with some legitimacy; citizens perceive aid as a form of approval for the state. The federal government hardly funds any social or infrastructural work; most roads in the capital are still unpaved. Its ruling elites use all available resources to maintain and strengthen their position in the political marketplace (see next section).

In brief, the UN, the EU and the World Bank have an absolutely overpowering presence in Somalia in both political and economic senses. They may insist that they just support local processes, but the data suggest otherwise. Two domains where the international presence particularly impacts the domestic socio-economic balance are aid (humanitarian and development programmes) and the security sector.

The Economy of Aid

The first remark to make is that the 2 billion USD, roughly estimated, spent by the international community on Somalia every year on humanitarian and development work, is almost entirely spent abroad. The chain of contractors, the overheads of international agencies spent in their capitals and in regional hubs, such as Nairobi or Addis Ababa, international salaries, travel and conferences abroad, procurement and shipping of foodstuffs, and items such as cars, office equipment (all flown in): all this absorbs easily 50 to 75% of disbursed aid.[17] In country, a large amount is also spent on operations: local agency overheads, the partners they contract, logistics and security. The latter are often also managed by foreign companies, so this part of the aid, although disbursed in Somalia, does not necessarily enter the domestic economy.

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[14] 973 million USD to IMF/WB/AfDB; 542 million USD to Arab multilateral financial institutions; 3.183 billion USD from Paris Club creditors (including the USA, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Iraq, France, Italy, Japan, Russia, and UK). This includes interest. That Somalia's current generation has to pay for the 'bad loans' provided to Barre's criminal government may seem unfair. It is likely that many creditors will forgive the debts, and hoped that Gulf countries will settle the remaining outstanding loans (private communication by a World Bank source).

[15] In my experience, this means that foreigners do the required work, and—if they have enough time and are so inclined—they try to do some capacity-building/skill-transfer too.

[16] For example, the Somali government should pay teachers' salaries; it does so sometimes, but teachers rely on the 'incentives' (higher than their salaries) that NGOs pay them to turn up for work.

[17] Conservative estimate. I could not find any reliable data, but I have used my investigations of the aid sector and its economy in Afghanistan, and my own experiences budgeting international development programs and knowledge of the aid sector in Somalia.

The first beneficiaries of the aid provided to Somalia are thus the agencies providing it, their contractors, and the industry surrounding it (from house rents and shopping for expats in Nairobi, to private security companies and car importers), abroad. A second tier of beneficiaries consists of the same constellation of organizations, but within Somalia. Probably not more than 10% of aid budgets is spent in the Somali economy in salaries, rent, fuel and local markets.[18] Even 10% would still amount to 200 million USD, an amount comparable to that apparently generated by the formal economy in the capital.

There are many studies of aid—almost each aid programme is followed by an evaluation—but they nearly all focus on the success of the programme according to the initial objectives. If the objective was to deliver 300 tonnes of pulses, and one hundred pellets of the chemical-laced nutritional supplement Corn Soya Base++, and those quantities have been delivered, the programme is considered a success. There are few critical evaluations of the impact of aid on the domestic economy. The suggestion is that it has little impact, because it comes on top of, or alongside, local economic systems, but, given its sheer volume, it is unlikely that aid would not have a profound socio-economic impact. The criticism by Al Shabaab, that food aid ruins local agricultural markets, is not taken seriously by the aid sector. The economic impact of aid in Somalia remains guesswork. Some insights from the aid economy in South Sudan may help.

Bram Jansen demonstrates that aid, in many ways, is part of the political economy of South Sudan's state, and the suggestion that humanitarianism remains an external intervention rests upon a combination of what Smirl (2015) refers to as a 'humanitarian imaginary',[19] and an ideological and aspirational rationale of non-governmentalism that becomes increasingly difficult to uphold. Although humanitarian aid may start out as an external force, it becomes locally embedded, part of what might be termed a hybrid economic governance.[20]

Freddie Carver, a consultant specialized in South Sudan, also points out how deeply integrated the aid economy is within the domestic economy. One cannot say it is disruptive, because over the past 30 years the aid sector has formed a monetized, modern economy with opportunities for work and social advancement, where before there were only closed-circuit and often cash-less community markets. The aid economy may have been disruptive at first, but now people are used to it and identify it with the national economy, or the "new normal" as Carver called it. The aid sector also links distant rural areas to the capital, through travel and communication connections, procurement, recruitment, workshops, etc.[21]

Both analysts point out that a monetized, modern economy has emerged around the NGO sector, but also that it has become completely integrated and is no longer external. A similar observation may be made about Somalia, where the aid economy has become, in many places, *the* economy that people are used to.

The independence, neutrality and impartiality that are the aid sector's 'necessary fiction'[22] have long since disappeared, as we saw in 7.4. The NGO sector can no longer call itself 'non-governmental'; it rather seems part of a Public-Private Partnership where NGOs implement donor plans.[23]

[18] Commonly agencies consider food and non-food items distributed in Somalia as 'spent in the country' and therefore most official studies of aid consider that between 50 and 80% of aid 'reaches target countries'. Thus the costs for procuring, shipping and distributing aid, including salaries and administrative overheads abroad, are considered spent in Somalia. More exact accounting would only take into account amounts spent in Somalia (on distribution, for example) and the resale value of aid, but this is an entirely taboo subject.

[19] Smirl, Lisa 2015: "Spaces of Aid:. How Cars, Compounds and Hotels Shape Humanitarianism"

[20] Jansen, Bram 2017: "The Humanitarian Protectorate of South Sudan?"; p354.

[21] Freddie Carver, spoken to in Addis Ababa, 23 June 2019.

[22] Rieff 2011: "Afterword".

Seen from a domestic vantage point, the aid economy is the terminal of a global network that starts in donor countries and extends through many links to the rural areas of a country like Somalia. What is demanded in return for the distributed aid is a type of loyalty, as in all patronage networks, except that this loyalty is not to a specific NGO or even to the donor, but to a type of society the donor and NGOs stand for. This loyalty expresses itself through beliefs (in a non-political Islam, human rights, women's empowerment, efficacy of Western medicine, appropriateness of representative electoral democracy, accepting homosexuality) and practices (ending female genital mutilation, washing hands, vaccinating livestock, sending children—boys *and* girls—to school). In exchange, local people benefit from aid and some development opportunities. If they seek upward social mobility through the aid sector, local youth know that they need to learn English, reading and writing, accounting, Microsoft Office, etc. The aid sector is also a bridge towards the global economy, albeit a narrow one jealously guarded by local NGOs (this explains the animosity most Somalis feel towards NGOs).[24]

If we view this through the rhizome/tree image, from the international (inverse tree) perspective the aid sector draws resources from its roots (taxpayers or money creation in rich countries), transmits them through the trunk (the aid sector) to the branches that spread into the intervened society. These branches transfer the resources to the environment—like the evaporation through the tree's leaves of water sucked out of the ground. In return they expect an alignment of domestic society to hegemonic values. (This is one of the main objections Al Shabaab has against the aid sector). From the Somali side, in the upright tree perspective, these resources are sucked out of the foreign atmosphere and transmitted through the roots of their society (NGOs and other civil society groups) from where they are distributed into the social rhizome, with a different logic (kin connections, local values) to that intended by the donors. The million-dollar question is, of course, whether local societies do progressively align with the hegemonic values or only pretend to do so.

At the end of section 8.2, I mentioned that the agreement between local Somali populations and the international community about the liberal democratic nature of the State can be seen as a type of social contract, of a political nature. Here an additional, economic justification for such an attitude is provided. I will further pursue this below, when examining state-society relations, but let us return to the international perspective.

Both Jansen and Carver, speaking about South Sudan, as well as many seasoned NGO field workers,[25] note that the aid sector actually has very little impact in the manner it is supposed to: relieving humanitarian stress or bringing development, or for example decreasing gender-based violence. In fact, in conflict-prone countries, researchers agree that aid creates or worsens conflict[26]. Studying the role of aid in stabilization in Afghanistan and Iraq, a researcher specializing in this question found that aid even *destabilizes*;[27] this can probably be applied to Somalia, where the rationale to use aid for stabilization is very similar. In the field of development, from 1970 to 2000 the percentage of aid relative to GDP in Sub-Saharan Africa grew from 5.5 to 17.5%; in the same period, yearly per capita GDP growth

[23] This can lead to bizarre results. In 2015, I surveyed the NGO sector in Bosaso, Puntland, and I found that of eleven local NGOs, six were running 'Gender-Based Violence' (GBV) programs; obviously, not because there was a need for six programmes, but because donors had prioritized it. It were probably the activity reports by these NGOs that prompted the World Bank in 2019 to target GBV in Puntland in its yearly budget allocations.

[24] Personal observation and discussions with many young Somalis.

[25] Interviews with aid workers in Somalia, see Appendix 1

[26] Strandow, Findley & Young 2016: "Foreign Aid and the Intensity of Violent Armed Conflict"; De Ree & Nillesen 2009: "Aiding Violence or Peace? The Impact of Foreign Aid on the Risk of Civil Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa"

[27] Zürcher 2019: "The Folly of 'Aid for Stabilisation'".

plummeted from nearly 2% to 0%.[28] Although this is not evidence of the negative impact of aid, it certainly does not support the notion that development aid supports growth.

Since most of the aid money for Somalia is spent outside Somalia, accruing to the agencies and related organizations administering the aid,[29] there is a vested interest in proclaiming crisis. Humanitarian forecasts by Western agencies on Somalia tend to verge on the catastrophic. Year after year, in the UN's humanitarian appeals one hears that a certain percentage of the population is in acute danger of starvation. This obeys to at least two logics. One is the moral imperative of avoiding a repeat of the two humanitarian disasters (1991-1993 and 2011-2012), when the international community reacted too late. But, undeniably, the declaration of crisis also serves the institutional and personal goals of the interveners. Not only is it a great fundraising tool, but when a year of programme implementation passes without a disaster, these agencies congratulate themselves on their effective prevention and apply for a next round of humanitarian funding in high spirits.[30]

The economy of aid thus moves in two separate but connected domains. One is the global economy, from donor governments to international implementing partners, where most of the aid allocations are spent, leading to considerable personal and institutional material rewards. Here, the main effect of aid is confirming and spreading the consensus around the core idea of Western benevolence,[31] rooted in discourses about good governance, democracy, failed states, human security, etc. The other is the local economic sphere, where international resources are absorbed by local rhizomes according to their own social realities and sustain a modern local economy. These two can be distinguished as a **discursive and a social reality**. They can diverge only because they are shielded from each other; field implementers of the aid economy provide the interface between both and understand this gap,[32] but there are not many observers who experience both sides of the divide; most of them remain on one side.

One of the main mechanisms to keep these domains separate and impede exchange is security. The industry to maintain the aid sector safe from harm also ensures that there is little contact between international staff and local populations, thus allowing the discursive and social realities of the aid economy to evolve separately.[33] But the security industry also has a large impact on the domestic political economy by itself.

The Economy of Security

The assistance to Somalia's security sector by the UN, the EU, the USA, Great Britain and Turkey, among others, can be summed up in one word: unsustainable. The investments made by foreign countries in

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[28] Easterly 2002: "The Cartel of Good Intentions"; p14.

[29] In truth I could not find any external sources confirming this, but I am convinced this is true based on having worked in the aid and development sector since 1997. Publicly available accounts of NGOs and donors provide no guidance. As mentioned in note 18 above, this subject is taboo. If research points out that only 10% of humanitarian and development budgets is actually spent in target countries, this could cause an enormous blow to the entire aid industry, politically profiting right-wing isolationists; this may be a reason to avoid further investigation.

[30] In 2017, such a crisis of massive proportions was declared in Somalia. As analyst working for a consortium of NGOs, I found the data indicated stress, but no crisis. Luckily, only a handful Somalis died of starvation-related causes. But my organization could not take the public risk of claiming that there was no crisis.

[31] Easterly 2002 op. cit.

[32] They should be involved more frequently in the analysis of aid impact.

[33] Duffield 2010b: "Risk-Management and the Fortified Aid Compound; Mosse (ed.) 2011: "Adventures in Aidland. The Anthropology of Professionals in International Development"; Smirl 2015: "Spaces of Aid:. How Cars, Compounds and Hotels Shape Humanitarianism; Autesserre 2021: "The Frontlines of Peace. An Insider's Guide to Changing the World"; Van Brabant 2010: "Managing Aid Agency Security in an Evolving World: The Larger Challenge".

building the capacity of the army, the police, intelligence services, the judiciary and the penitentiary system are completely beyond the federal government's capacity to maintain.[34] Thus, the transfer of power from AMISOM, now renamed ATMIS (African Union Transition Mission in Somalia) to national security forces, planned for the end of 2023, is unlikely to take place as planned. Either the Federal State's security forces will collapse, or foreign support will continue. A disintegration of federal security forces would mean a return to the armed self-governance by clans, with considerably less foreign funding. Given the strong position of Al Shabaab, these armed factions would have to strike deals with the insurgents, probably allowing them overall governance in exchange for local autonomy.

We saw above how, in 2008, the Ethiopian army, after a year and a half of presence in Somalia, estimated that of the 17,000 soldiers it had trained to hand over security to the TFG, 14,000 had deserted with their uniform and weapons. Ten years later, in 2018, the expert on the Somali security sector Paul Williams gave a similarly bleak assessment of international efforts to build up the Somali army, including high desertion rates and a near-complete lack of institutional loyalty and capacity, despite ten years of continuous investments.[35] Nonetheless, efforts to train the army by the USA,[36] the UK, Turkey and the EU have not ceased. During the Covid-19 crisis, training continued online.

On the Somali side, the façade of national security services is upheld to ensure the continued flow of foreign resources into the security sector, which suffers not only from a lack of resources, but also from the continued UN arms embargo. This means Somali armed forces depend on handouts, by the foreign armies providing training and support, to refresh their arsenals and for ammunition. In May 2017, the Farmaajo government presented a national security architecture to its international partners in a London conference, which would guide the further engagement of foreign support to Somali's security services with a full handover of security to Somali forces planned for 2021. But, despite increased funding, Somali security forces remain divided into clan groups loyal to their commanders; and these are elite players on the political marketplace rather than loyal Weberian servants of the State. Increased funding and recruitment have also led to easier infiltration by Al Shabaab.[37]

Donors and expert (epistemic) communities also carry part of the blame by focusing on policy objectives such as 'countering radicalization', 'fixing failed states' and 'winning hearts and minds', which themselves come from an ideological rather than factual reading of ground realities.[38] Academics and experts forego their autonomy, hoping for a piece of the policy cake.[39] Changing course condemns past efforts at security sector reform as 'wasted', a political liability for reformers. As mentioned before, interveners have no 'skin in the game' and would not lose a night's sleep if Somalia falls to Al Shabaab, nor could they be held accountable for failure if they followed the correct procedures.[40] But, besides these 'passive' reasons, there may also be more 'active' ones for continuing to support the Somali

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[34] Interviews with Sadiq Warfa, MP and deputy head of the Defense Commission in the Lower House of Federal Parliament, 3 March 2019, and with Hussein Sheikh Ali, director of Hiraal Institution, 26 February 2019.

[35] Williams 2019: "Building the Somali National Army: Anatomy of a failure, 2008–2018". He writes "*the SNA remains a messy amalgamation of multiple armed groups with a distinct lack of unified command and control*" (p21) and that "*the SNA lacks arguably the most basic capability an army should possess: the ability to identify its personnel and stop desertion*" (p23).

[36] Outgoing President Trump in Dec 2020 ordered the 600-700 US troops to prepare for leaving the country. US Africa command claimed in January 2021 that this had happened. By July 2021, President Biden resumed the drone war against AS. US covert operations remain active in Somalia, and several US Private Military Contractors are still active, for example training the Somali army.

[37] Interview with Hussein Sheikh Ali.

[38] Marchal & Salem 2018:6.

[39] Neumann & Kleinmann 2013: "How Rigorous is Radicalisation Research?".

[40] This was the impression Somali soldiers had when their training moved online during the Covid-19 crisis. The safety of foreign trainers (there was hardly any Coronavirus in Somalia) had priority over the training.

security sector with failing policies. Almost all budget allocations for security are disbursed in the Western military and security sector and its ancillary industries.

Compared to the aid sector, a much larger amount of security spending never reaches the intervened-in country.[41] Observing a foreign military training camp in Somalia, it appears that the only contributions to the domestic economy are incentives paid to Somali security forces to turn up for training and the sand poured into the fortifications. Even the cement used for those fortifications, the bottled water, the gasoline, and the Kenyan or Ugandan support staff at the camps, are imported. Foreign experts can expect to be paid twice as much in the security sector as in the aid sector, for similar work. The opportunities provided by this global economy that saw fast growth after 9/11/2001 (described by Naomi Klein in 'The Shock Doctrine'[42]), lead to an intensive lobby industry. There are many revolving doors between the government and the private sector.

International interventions, such as those in Somalia and Afghanistan, also affect the domestic societies of the interveners, especially in terms of fortifying what US President Eisenhower in 1961 called 'the military-industrial complex'. I will discuss the effects of this in Chapter Eleven. The hundreds of millions of dollars paid yearly to Defense ministries in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi and Djibouti for AMISOM troops also affect the local socio-economic balance in those societies.

As these ministries keep the difference between what the EU pays per soldier and what they pay their soldiers, they may develop an institutional interest in continued troop contributions.[43] Besides income, troop contributing countries derive prestige from their regional peacekeeping roles. This leads to what can be called 'the endless peacekeeping trap'.[44] Where armed conflict has no end in sight—as in Somalia—efforts to re-work political settlements may only be sustainable with an open-ended commitment to external backing.[45] When the withdrawal of troops and transfer to national security forces (known to be dysfunctional) is announced, insurgent groups such as Al Shabaab can just wait, and there is little motivation for them to lay down arms. External interveners can become 'entrapped': staying is expensive, but pulling out carries the risk of complete failure.

Returning to the Somalia aid sector, securitization has been 'mainstreamed' into its practice to offset both primary risk (staff facing danger or engaging in malpractice) and secondary risk (avoiding liability and reputational damage when things do go wrong).[46] In practice, this leads to ever more complex 'minimum operating security standards',[47] requiring trainings, signing documents, and strict and monitored compliance. Isolating field staff from local realities may not be the best solution for their security, but it decreases the liability of headquarters, and it maintains intact the discursive reality of aid (humanitarian workers risking their lives to help the needy).

Another mechanism for minimizing liability is outsourcing security provision: it is safer to contract work to a recognized security provider than to organize it oneself, as in the latter case blame for mishaps rests entirely with the organization. This has led to a burgeoning industry in Mogadishu. Private security

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[41] In the case of Afghanistan, I calculated that of nearly 1 trillion USD in Congressional appropriations for Afghanistan, 87% was spent directly in the USA on the defense industry and US armed forces, while of the remaining 13% (humanitarian and development aid, support to the Afghan government including building the National Army and police forces) at least half was spent on security-related costs, often to international Private Military and Security contractors. Only about 1% of the trillion USD actually reached Afghan hands.

[42] Klein 2007: "The Shock Doctrine. The Rise of Disaster Capitalism".

[43] Reference per country ICG report.

[44] Cheng et al. 2018:81.

[45] De Waal 2009: "Mission without end? Peacekeeping in the African political marketplace".

[46] Power 2004: "The Risk Management of Everything".

[47] United Nations Field Security Handbook, 2006. The term MOSS is frequently used in the NGO sector too.

contractors literally control the movement of international staff.[48] "*PMSCs* [Private Military and Security Companies] *in conjunction with politically connected Somali security firms assume the role of gatekeepers for the international community, and actively maintain the green zone's inside/outside dichotomy of risk and danger.*"[49] As the weak capacity and unreliability of Somali official security forces is recognized, an alternative security governance system emerges. This creates a market for security rents. In Mogadishu, foreign security contractors are positioned at the top of the local security pyramid (Turkish and Western companies jostle for that spot), but the rest of security rents goes to local actors.

This parallel system obviously undermines efforts to build the capacity and legitimacy of official security forces. Commanders of police and army units can rent out their units on the private security market, with or without their uniforms. This is not an incentive to increase their loyalty and dedication to the public cause. More generally, the privatization of the security industry is not conducive to the disarmament, demobilization and pacification of Somali society. The safety of development actors (foreign or national)—or, to be more precise, efforts by headquarters staff to minimize their liability, as in many cases the actors in the field are not even at risk[50]—thus contributes to general instability and insecurity for the Somali population.

Sums paid to private contractors protecting the aid sector are still modest compared to the rents paid by foreign military in the War on Terror, which has been largely privatized too. PMSCs such as Bancroft and Hart Nationwide obtain contracts in the tens or hundreds of millions of dollars from the US military to perform tasks in Somalia; the training of elite Somali troops is the most obvious one, but of course such contracts are private, and the companies do not need to divulge anything to the public. On their websites they seem to be NGOs.[51] But in the wake of an Al Shabaab attack on a secret US military base in Manda Bay, Kenya, in January 2020, investigative reporters tracking flight data came to the conclusion that the private military contractors operating from that base were not only collecting drone data on Al Shabaab, as the US Air Force readily admits to subcontracting, but were quite likely also 'pulling the trigger' on drone strikes, which only the US military is authorized to do. This suggests that the US Army has covertly subcontracted another liability to the private sector to avoid its own bureaucracy.[52]

Securitization reduces the capacity of foreign actors to understand the local context and the impact of their work. The daily reality of international interveners and those of the Somalis whose lives are intervened in, are growing further apart. This is a puzzling observation in the information age, when it is so easy to access the 'feeds' of all kinds of individuals through social media. But information technology also widens the reality gap between interveners (e.g., drone operators in Nevada) and intervened in (e.g., farmers in Somalia who hear drones buzzing overhead).

Divergent Realities

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[48] An ambassador, for example, must clear her/his movements beforehand with her/his head of security, and can be overruled. This reflects risk management policies of her/his Ministry, not an evaluation of the ambassador's capacity to assess threats and risks.

[49] Norman 2020: "Private Military and Security Companies and the Political Marketplace in Mogadishu"; p3.

[50] When in Mogadishu, I would take care of my own security, by ensuring through at least two different channels that Al Shabaab had no issue with my presence, and by taking security measures such as avoiding routines, changing vehicles, going to meetings half an hour in advance or by a roundabout way, etc. I took such measures to reassure people around me and a bit for the sport of it, but never felt particularly unsafe.

[51] See Hart Nationwide and Bancroft.

[52] Al Shabaab's attack successfully destroyed the base and the drones and aircraft stationed there. Zalan & Freudenthal 2020: "Private U.S. Contractors Part of the 'Kill Chain' in East Africa Anti-Terrorist Operations"; link.

This divide is noticeable in spatial configurations, explored by several authors, particularly when studying the physical presence of interventionists in unstable or insecure contexts.[53] In Somalia, the dichotomy between the reality experienced by interveners and that of the intervened is expressed most powerfully by the phenomenon of Halane, the 'Green zone' around Mogadishu airport (Fig. 27).

Figure 27: Halane, the Green Zone around Mogadishu International Airport. Satellite view with elements added by author. Note that besides the AMISOM perimeter drawn here, there is a wider Somali security perimeter (Somali travelers using the airport undergo strict controls at the beginning of airport road) as well as private security contractors guarding compounds inside: three protective layers.

Halane, the name of the neighbourhood along the beach around the airport, is shorthand in Somali for the international presence in Somalia, and also for the internationally oriented part of their state. It is an area that includes the airport and the area around it in the dunes bordering the sea. It is the base of the UN, of AMISOM, the location of all Western diplomatic representations, the CIA, military trainers, and many NGOs and Western contractors working in federal Somalia. Halane is the 'Green Zone' of Mogadishu; it is often abbreviated among foreigners as MIA (Mogadishu International Airport).

During the 1970s and 1980s, Halane was famous as the indoctrination camp for Somali youth. After finishing high school, they first had to spend six months in Halane to be instructed in the 'values of the revolution', and then did nine months of field duty. In the 1980s, corruption and nepotism prevailed here, and one could buy one's way into university or escape field work through clan connections. Halane thus has long had a political meaning among Somalis.

White foreigners rarely leave the area that is protected by a double ring of Somali security services and AMISOM. Africans and Arabs move a bit more freely. When a foreigner wants to leave the Green Zone, standard practice is to hire an armoured car and a pick-up with four armed guards to accompany it. This cost 1,200 USD/day in 2020. The cars rush through the city at maximum speed, and one can barely open the darkened armour-plated windows. It is impossible to have 'normal' encounters with Somalis, because even when visitors manage to stop the cars to stretch their legs in some set locations allowed by the escort, armed guards accompany them. When Somali officials have meetings with international staff, or need a highly secure location—such as for elections—they must alight from their cars, be frisked by African soldiers, sniffed by explosive-detecting dogs and deal with foreign mercenaries who wouldn't recognize the Somali Prime Minister, or a Somali from an Ethiopian highlander. In that sense it is also a vexation for Somali elites.

[53] See for example Smirl 2015 op. cit., Duffield 2010b op. cit. and Shoshan 2018 "UN Peacekeeping Missions in Urban Environments: The Legacy of UNMIL".

Socialization between foreigners and Somalis is thus very limited. Support staff working in Halane is imported (Somalis are not trusted, for fear of terrorist infiltration). Somali office staff can socialize with foreigners a bit during office hours, but the hassles they must endure to enter and leave Halane for work, discourage them from visiting in their free time. Foreigners socialize among themselves. They mostly live in luxury container apartments next to their offices and there are a few recreational areas where they can drink alcohol (in the rest of Somalia, alcohol is strictly forbidden). Because of the difficult living conditions, foreigners are posted to Somalia mostly for short periods, often one to two years—with frequent breaks for 'rest and recreation' in Nairobi or other countries in the region. Only some international NGO staff stays longer. NGOs often prefer the airport road area, within the Somali security perimeter, but not the AMISOM one.

It can be surprising how little some foreigners in Halane know about the country they live and work in.[54] Most of them cannot say 'Hello' or 'thank you' in Somali.[55] It may be tempting to say they live in a fictional reality, but, all considered, it is not more fictional than other realities. It is dissonant with the experience most Somalis have of their lives, but it resonates very clearly with international realities, which Somalis—in turn—are ill equipped to deal with. What can be said, though, is that these foreigners are not in Somalia, but in an in-between space belonging to the international community and hovering above Somalia, like a cloud with an airstrip. To Somalis, Halane gives a very concrete, spatial meaning to the term 'international community', comparable to gated communities elsewhere.[56] Levels of distrust between Somalis and foreigners living in Halane or Nairobi are high.[57]

The disconnect between interveners and Somali social reality also exists in Somaliland. This seems bizarre, given that Somaliland, statistically, is a very safe place.[58] Nonetheless, UN international staff in Somaliland is confined for its safety in the Ambassador Hotel and adjacent buildings near the airport, because the UN considers Somaliland part of Somalia, also in terms of security standards. Visiting diplomats mostly follow UN rules, meaning limited movements in two armoured cars with a contingent of armed security guards[59]. As to NGOs, they are forced by the Ministry of Interior to hire 'Special Protection Units' when they leave town under a deal that the UNDP struck with the Ministry, and this also limits their movements somewhat.

There is a deep division between the international reality—what I call *discursive reality*—of foreign interveners in Somalia, and what I call the *social reality* of most Somalis. Realizing this duality is the only way to make sense of the strong divergences between the discourses justifying state-building intervention among foreigners and the experiences of this intervention among Somalis. ***Discursive reality*** derives from foreign hegemonic concepts and tends to focus on formal matters, such as data, official documents and logical relations (it belongs to the tree). ***Social reality*** is more experience-based; it is personal and expresses sentiments (it pertains to the rhizome).

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[54] The points made here about Halane apply also to Nairobi, where most expatriates dealing with Somalia still live and work. Over the past decade, the Somali government has pulled—and the Kenyan government pushed—to have international agencies dealing with Somalia relocate to Mogadishu, with some success; but most UN agencies and Western diplomats continue to operate from Nairobi. Only a few countries have an embassy in Somalia.

[55] Personal observation.

[56] Duffield 2010b:465-466.

[57] Abild 2009: "Creating Humanitarian Space: A Case Study of Somalia"; p12.

[58] This is true not only for Hargeisa, but for the rest of Somaliland too, even the disputed areas in the east. When I was living in Hargeisa, I would go on daily walks of one to two hours. I visited many different neighbourhoods and never faced any trouble. Somalilanders are proud about how safe their country is.

[59] There is a financial incentive for this behaviour. The higher the danger level, the higher the extra stipend staff receives to operate in stressful environments, and the more paid leave they receive.

Somalia Rising

With the 2012 transition to a new, promising government, Somalia was heralded as a possible success of the 'New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States', signed between representatives of the G7+, the governments of 20 fragile states and donor agencies.[60] The concept of failed states was gradually replaced by a more positive approach (target countries understandably objected to being labelled as 'failed' or 'failing') which, in the case of Sub-Saharan Africa, became 'Africa Rising'. This discourse maintained the 'good governance' and 'development-security nexus' elements, and had each fragile state agree to five 'Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals'. After the election of Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, Somalia was also seen as 'rising'.[61] Since then, an upbeat tone prevails about the prospects of the Somali government and the results of the overall state-building effort.

Moses Khisa notes that the 'Africa Rising' discourse has displaced Hegelian images of a dark, hopeless continent, and allowed a focus on improvements, innovation and more agency for Africans. It has also created more space for the voices of African scholars and analysts. This group, he notes, is however generally critical of this discourse[62] because it focuses on economic growth and improving governance, based on indicators of the World Bank and similar institutions, not on perceptions by Africans. "*Wealth and income inequality has risen exponentially in countries that are flagged by the IMF and World Bank as high economic performers like Uganda, as shown by a recent study (Oxfam 2016)*."[63] As to the economic boom, it slumped after a peak in 2004. Capital investments contributed to growth of GDP, but since profits are mostly repatriated abroad, not re-invested in the domestic economy, their impact was not lasting, and led to 'jobless growth'.[64] The continent still accounts for only 1% of global manufacturing, 2% of global trade and 2.5% of global GDP. In fact, the Africa Rising narrative seems to have been a discourse mostly profitable to investors.

As the country director of the World Bank noted, a positive approach to the potential of Somalia and its government is a much better way to build a partnership with it.[65] But the paragraph above does not explain how the Africa Rising discourse applies to Somalia, as there are no indicators to go by and no outstanding economic growth to applaud. The new government that caused hopes to soar in 2012 had fallen apart by 2013.[66]

In practice, the positive discourse about Somali state-building and its government seems due to the desire of international partners to claim success. They ascribe their own successes to the government and then applaud the government for it, drawing international attention to how well the government is doing. This is the method of the World Bank, as described above. In an interview, departing SRSG Michael Keating[67] mentions how fiscal reform and better management of public finances is an example of the kind of governance Somalis have been needing, and an argument against Al Shabaab. He feels compelled to substantiate his positive view with facts, but says that since there is no data on, for example, improved school enrolment or more healthcare, he names political reforms as facts: the federal structure, elections to the upper house of parliament and the appointment of an electoral commission. Although he credits the Somali government, these were all tasks the UN had set itself.

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[60] Bruzzone 2013: "Somalie, la Renaissance Manquée".

[61] It appears to have been first used in the Somali context academically by Laura Hammond in her 2013 paper "Somalia Rising: Things Are Starting to Change for the World's Longest Failed State".

[62] Khisa 2019: "Whose Africa is Rising?".

[63] Khisa 2019:309-310.

[64] Khisa 2019 op. cit.

[65] Interview with Hugh Riddell, 23 June 2018.

[66] Bruzzone 2013.

[67] UN News: Somalia 'vulnerable but making progress', 19/09/2018 (link).

Given the impossibility for foreigners to experience Somali realities and socialize casually with Somalis, they may be forgiven for taking their achievements, most of which are on paper, for a reality that Somalis also experience. A stark example of taking paper reforms as giant steps forward is given in the first quarterly report of the AU mission to Somalia in 2021.[68] The quote at the beginning of this chapter is typical: it sounds positive, but when analysed semantically, it means almost nothing. "*Somalia has made significant progress in its efforts to enhance its state-building and peacebuilding priorities*". Progress in efforts to enhance priorities… As evidence for the prospect of smooth and peaceful elections, the African Union notes that meetings were held, a national conference organized, a declaration adopted and a workshop held, all under auspices of AMISOM. The tensions between the central government and the federal member states, which derail the elections, are barely mentioned; instead, the spectre of Al Shabaab violently disrupting the elections is brandished as the main threat, even though the AU communiqué also claims that AMISOM has 'exceeded its mission objectives', doing so well that Al Shabaab may be considered nearly defeated.

In reality since 2014, AMISOM has done little to degrade Al Shabaab. The successes the African Union claims for AMISOM can be understood in terms of its mandate, but have so little to do with reality on the ground that the official report could be considered disinformation. It reflects the international discursive reality the AU operates in, and, together with similar reports by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General to the Security Council, the World Bank to its stakeholders, and the EU to its member states, this explains why state-building in Somalia is considered a relative success by intervening organizations (steps are being made 'in the right direction'). These reports are always only *cautiously* optimistic, as their writers must be aware of the dangers of claiming outright success.

As a reality check: according to indicators developed for judging state performance by the same international organizations today claiming success, Somalia still tops the list of failing states in 2022. It has barely made progress on the state-building 'deliverables' it agreed to in 2012-2013. The Constitution has still not been adopted (in 2019 there were several drafts in circulation, and a constitutional lawyer admitted it was not even clear which of these was *the* draft[69]) and almost no progress has been made towards democratic elections. Even on paper, Somali state-building is showing rather poor results.

Two reasons converge to comfort external interveners that state-building is the right thing to do in Somalia. The first is state ideology, as explored in Chapter One, and its practical application through *good governance* and the development-security nexus, as described in 7.3. State-building is a rational, technical pursuit, and reason, experience and common sense dictate that the liberal Western democratic state is the only correct manner to organize societies. The second reason is that Somalis, as seen in this dissertation, *desire* the State, also in its liberal democratic version. Interveners do not need to ask the follow-up question: *why* do Somalis want a state? The convergence of interests is sufficient to continue the state-building process. We could consider that 'all is for the best in the best of possible worlds', if only the results of state-building, in Somalia and other countries where similar recipes have been applied, were a little better.

The disconnect with reality allows intervening agencies to apportion blame for failure to imagined adversaries. Two frequently given reasons stand out: terrorism and Somali culture. Al Shabaab, for example, is seen as the major factor threatening the holding of peaceful elections, but most Somalis and experts agree that conflicts between the federal government and member states are the main reason, together with an effort by current governing elites to hold on to power. But Somali culture is more widely faulted for the lack of success of liberal governance through a democratic state.

[68] African Union, 2021: "Communique of the 978th meeting of the PSC held on 9 February 2021; link. My emphasis.
[69] Interview with a source who prefers to remain anonymous, March 2019.

Since local reality and culture are unknown entities, this leads to assumptions about them that fit and reinforce claims to the universality of liberal governance. For example, 'the anarchist nomadic nature of Somalis makes it difficult for them to accept principles of good governance based on the common good'. This fits the anti-nomad pro-state discourse that has been hegemonic since the modern state, lays the blame on cultural traits that can be overcome by modernization, reinforces the need for 'good governance' by external actors, and generally comforts interveners in their beliefs despite the negligible or adverse results of their actions.

In this reading, Somalis are not quite ready yet for the benefits of rational-legal governance. This explains why so many intervention efforts focus on civil society and social transformation. Foreign interveners understand that they cannot impose a state on Somali society, but that the demand must come from the population. For instance, institutional accountability will come from civil society pressure, not design. "*Insufficient domestic demand for institutions or institutional reform is the single most important obstacle to institutional development in poor countries. (...) In the absence of strong domestic demand, demand for institutions must be generated externally*" explains Francis Fukuyama in his study on state-building.[70]

This last reason explains why the federal government of Somalia does not practice accountability toward the people (they do not *demand* sufficient accountability),[71] but only to the international community. The IMF and the World Bank demand government accountability for the funds they provide it with, but they are satisfied with formal accountability (on paper) even when the funds appear to have been embezzled. As formal accountability engages the responsibility of the signatory, it exerts a disciplining effect in any case. Moreover, it familiarizes the government's fiscal authorities with IFI rules.[72] The World Bank's leverage is not equalled by the UN and the EU. For example, when the UN Special Representative Nicholas Haysom suggested the government should account for the killing of 15 civilians in a demonstration in Baidoa, late 2018, he was declared *persona non grata* for having interfered with the sovereignty of Somalia and expelled. The UN did not protest and replaced him. However, when President Farmaajo tried to extend his presidential term by two years, this move was firmly opposed by the UN, the EU, the USA and other members of the international community: here, the government could apparently be held to account. International organizations do not want to appear to be interfering politically, except if they have a solid formal basis, such as a term extension that was not agreed on according to due process.

Given the widening gap between the foreign interpretation of state-building in Somalia and local experience, the federal state must now be examined from the Somali side.

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[70] Fukuyama 2004: "Statebuilding: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century"; p35.

[71] The population is generally not aware of secret negotiations between the government and international financial institutions. "*The fiscal data the FGS submits monthly to the IMF are not made available to the federal parliament, the media, interested parties, and the public in general*" remarks Dr. Mohamud M Uluso, October 14, 2019, in Hiraan Online: "IMF Flawed Approach to Somalia Masks Deep Governance Failure".

[72] Riddell, country director of the World Bank, explained in an interview in 2018 that 'benchmarking gives the Ministry of Finance leverage over the other ministries and over the federal states; they can impose the conditionalities they have negotiated with the World Bank. This ultimately strengthens the cabinet and the federal system'.

9.2 Elite Bargains in the Political Marketplace

We saw how local governance and mediation efforts orchestrated by clan elders established, and still maintain, peace and social order in Somaliland. As noted in 7.2, similar social 'bottom-up' peace agreements were achieved in most other areas of Somalia. They were more difficult to reach, and fragile, in areas where many different clans live together, as in the ports of the Benadir, or where land ownership was contested, as along the Shabelle and Juba rivers. But in the rest of the country, most settlements have been fairly stable and still hold. Somalia remains largely self-governed today. As in Somaliland, regional peace settlements followed upon the basis of these local settlements.

From Puntland to Hirshabelle

The Puntland State of Somalia was established in 1998 in a series of meetings between clan leaders organized by the Somali Salvation Democratic Front—the Majerteen militia led by Col. Abdullahi Yusuf that had taken over the region after state collapse. Older political structures, such as the Isimadda, a Guurti-like council of titled clan elders, were integrated in a constitutional system based on power sharing between clans.[73] Puntland declared itself a constituent member of the federal state of Somalia, a political entity that came into being in the Mbagathi agreement of 2004, but only started functioning in 2012. In the intervening years, Puntland self-governed as an autonomous state.

A major difference with Somaliland was that the basis for Puntland's existence was clan. In Puntland's constitution, all Harti Darood[74] clans are granted citizenship in Puntland, reflecting the *ius sanguinis* principle (citizenship by blood) instead of *ius solis* (citizenship by place of birth).[75] In comparison, in Somaliland one clan family clearly dominates the political landscape (the Isaaq) but the basis for the country's existence is territorial, so all other clans living in Somaliland are entitled to representation. By insisting on clan identity, Puntland disenfranchised non-Harti people living there, while claiming representation rights for Harti populations living elsewhere, notably the important trading community in Kismayo.[76]

Politically, the mix of faction leaders ('warlords'), clan elders and influential businessmen with cross-clan and regional connections, with a sprinkling of intellectuals and diaspora, which presided over the formation of Puntland[77] and still defines its political elites today, resembled the social group that lay at the foundation of Somaliland's state. But the evolution of old and new political elites towards a modern urban ruling elite has been slower in Puntland, because the level of state autonomy aimed for was never as high. Ambitious politicians seek power in Mogadishu.

Puntland merits a longer examination, for it presents a unique case study of autonomy within a federal system, and has been marked by both transnational crime (piracy) and 'terrorism' (with the presence of both Al Shabaab and Islamic State). However, my focus here is on the federal construction, so I refer the reader to other studies.[78]

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[73] Marchal 2010: "The Puntland State of Somalia. A Tentative Social Analysis".

[74] Besides the Majerteen, this includes the Dhulbahante, Warsangeli and smaller clans such as the Dashiishe.

[75] Barnes 2006: "U dhashay-Ku dhashay: Genealogical and Territorial Discourse in Somali History".

[76] Samantar 2009: "Puntland and Somaliland. Similarities and Differences".

[77] See Puntland Development Research Centre & Interpeace 2008: "The Puntland Experience: A Bottom-up Approach to Peace and State Building. Peace Initiatives in Puntland 1991—2007" for an elaborate narrative of the formation of Puntland written from a local perspective.

[78] Besides the reports mentioned above, I found the following useful: Puntland Development Research Centre & Interpeace 2015: "Peace in Puntland: Mapping the Progress" for a general overview of the country's development until 2015; for the analysis of Puntland's security sector in between local, regional and international demands, Albrecht 2018 in "The Interplay of Interventions and Hybridisation in Puntland's Security Sector"; for a partial study

The discussion about federalism in Somalia became exclusively focused on which clan families would ‘get’ which member states. Several Somali researchers have noted this was a missed opportunity to discuss the future of the Somali state.[79] Federalism is by no means a settled political form in international politics. The twenty-five federal states in today’s world all have different backgrounds. There is also the Swiss model of ‘confederation’, where central authorities have limited powers. Such a model would, at the very least, offer better chances for the reintegration of Somaliland into a national political structure.

But the confederal model is not part of the international intervention toolkit, as Afyare Elmi remarked.[80] The federal model for Somalia, for which an EU-mandated study had produced ‘a menu of options’ already in 1995,[81] was never really discussed among Somalis, and by default the Ethiopian model was followed. Ethiopia had adopted a ‘top-down’ federal structure, combining a strong central government with limited autonomy for centrally-defined member states. President Meles Zenawi seems to have been eager to spread the model to neighbouring Somalia, using the Ethiopian influence over the TFG formation as channel.

The provisional constitution of 2012 does not specify much about the federal construction (articles 48-54), except that at least two regions (of the thirteen remaining after Somaliland’s secession) must join to form a member state and that the Federal Parliament must approve its creation. There is no information about the administration or government of federal member states (articles 120-121). But the two regions minimum rule for the formation of member states did provide a guideline.

The remaining states were formed during Hassan Sheikh Mohamud’s presidency (2012-2017). The first was Jubaland (Fig. 28). Kenya invaded southern Somalia in 2011-2012 (Operation *Linda Nchi*: ‘Protect the Homeland’) to establish a ‘buffer state’ to protect it against Al Shabaab. Since most of the population living between the Kenyan border and the Juba River was Darood, Jubaland became a second Darood state. In 2013 Kenya and Ethiopia backed the election by clan elders and other social forces of Ahmed Madobe, of the Darood/Ogaden/Mohamed Zubeir sub-clan, as President of the new region.[82] Kenya guaranteed his authority with 4,000 troops in the region.[83] The federal government objected that the procedure had been illegal and not inclusive enough. For five months, the federal government fought with military and political means against Madobe, but under international pressure it ended up accepting his ‘interim’ presidency. Madobe is still President of Jubaland in 2022, after other electoral processes contested by Mogadishu, and he retains the backing of Kenya and Ethiopia, also militarily.

South-West State was formed a year later, in 2014, during a conference in Baidoa bringing together elders from Bay, Bakool and Lower Shabelle. This process was backed by the international community, which has always had a strong presence in the area for humanitarian reasons, and by Ethiopia that has kept thousands of troops in the region for its own security (aside from those deployed under AMISOM).

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of Bosaso’s economy and how it has been affected by the war in Yemen, Dua, Warsame & Shire 2020: “Bosaso and the Gulf of Aden”. On the theme of piracy in Puntland much has been written; an overview can be found in Shortland 2015: “Can We Stop Talking about Somali Piracy Now?”

[79] Elmi 2015: “Decentralized Unitary System: A Possible Middle Ground Model for Somalia”; Abubakar 2016: “The Patterns of State Rebuilding and Federalism in Somalia”; Heritage Institute for Policy Studies 2015: “Federal Somalia. Not If But How”.

[80] Elmi 2015:15.

[81] Lewis & Mayall 1995: “A Study of Decentralized Political Structures for Somalia: A Menu of Options”.

[82] Saferworld 2016: “Forging Jubaland”; p4 describes that five other candidates also went on to declare themselves President of the new state. The Federal Government even struck a temporary alliance with Al Shabaab for ousting Madobe in favour of their candidate, the Marehan Barre Hirale.

[83] Heritage Institute for Policy Studies 2015: 1.

Although the process and the election of Sheikh Aden was similar to that in Jubaland, and resulted in a state administration with considerable autonomy from the federal government, the latter did not protest.

From that point onward, the federal government increased its efforts to influence the outcome of the remaining member states. Following the logic of clan balance, since the Darood now 'had' two states, the Hawiye also wanted two: one to be ruled by Habar Gedir, the other by the Abgal and Hawadle. The status of the capital that is coterminous with the Benadir region, was left undecided.

Figure 28: Map with administrative divisions, according to the UN and the Federal Government.

The region of Galgaduud had united with the southern half of Mudug (the northern half being part of Puntland) during the mid-2000s to form 'Galmudug'. This state (dominated by the Habar Gidir/Sa'ad[84]) contended for territorial control with rivals Himan & Heeb (dominated by the Habar Gidir/Saleban) and Ahl-e Sunna wal Jamaa (ASWJ, dominated by the Habar Gidir/Ayr), and with Al Shabaab. In 2015, Galmudug merged with Himan & Heeb and became a federal member state (Ahl-e Sunna and Al Shabaab maintained their autonomy). Mogadishu's choice for President (Guled) was narrowly elected.

In 2016 the federal government organized the formation of the state of Hirshabelle, combining the remaining regions of Hiraan and Middle Shabelle, and sharing power between the Hawadle and Abgal clans. President Osoble was seen as Mogadishu's candidate. Galmudug and Hirshabelle were seen as the first 'successes' of the federal government in the state-formation process, and they completed the federal construction of Somalia, just in time for what Hassan Sheikh Mohamud expected to be his re-election (2016-2017). The member-state formation processes were co-engineered by the United Nations and strongly supported by the international community, and the completion of the federal construction was also seen as a success of the international state-building agenda.

As the politician Abdirahman Abdishakur remarked[85], efforts by the Federal Government to install loyal presidents in the member states are inherently unstable, as there is no federal political project that can mobilize constituencies, unlike, for instance, Meles Zenawi's federal Ethiopia that embarked on an accelerated state-led development path. In practice, Mogadishu manages its relations with the federal member states through a combination of incentives (bribes and political positions) and coercion. Federal troops have fought against member-state forces several times.

Besides the presence of Al Shabaab, tensions between the federal government and member states are today seen as the main factor of instability in Somalia. Conflicts are mostly about sharing resources: revenue generated through ports and borders, licensing and taxation, and international funding. To solve this conflict in its favour, the federal government tries to influence the outcomes of member-state elections. In 2018, Farmaajo invested political and financial capital to replace the independent-minded Sharif Aden, President of South-West State, by his ally Laftagareen.[86]

The Federal Government has little influence over Puntland, whose institutions of government are more advanced than those of the federal state. Because of the federal government's frosty relations with Kenya, it also has little power in Jubaland. In 2020, federal forces invaded Jubaland's Gedo region and put it under federal administration, but power in the province—split between the Marehan and the Darood—remains contested. Marehan lineages mostly backed Farmaajo, member of their clan, while the Ogadeni remain loyal to Madobe in Kismayo.

The jostling between federal member states and Mogadishu over the distribution of executive power, the control of resources and foreign policy has impeded progress on the constitutional process.[87] These conflicts also undermined the latest electoral process, scheduled to take place before 8 February 2021 and held on 15 May 2022. Within the political class in Mogadishu there is a widespread feeling that the country needs a unitary government, that federalism is unworkable and that it was imposed by Ethiopia,

[84] Life and Peace Institute 2014: "Alternatives for Conflict Transformation in Somalia"; p26.

[85] Interview 8 March 2019 in Mogadishu.

[86] Heritage Institute for Policy Studies 2020: "State of Somalia Report"; p5.

[87] Khayre et. al. 2018: "Review of the Somali Provisional Constitution: Appraisal of Contentious Articles and Contested Issues" provides an expert, unbiased and extensive overview of the problems in the constitutional process, notably incompatibilities with member-state constitutions.

the UN and Western countries.[88] Research shows, however, that federalism is widely supported by Somalis, even among the inhabitants of Mogadishu.[89] Afyare Elmi identifies three basic grievances that lead Somalis to prefer a federal model: a lack of trust in the federal government; the chance for more political participation; and the expectation that a federal state will share resources more equitably.[90]

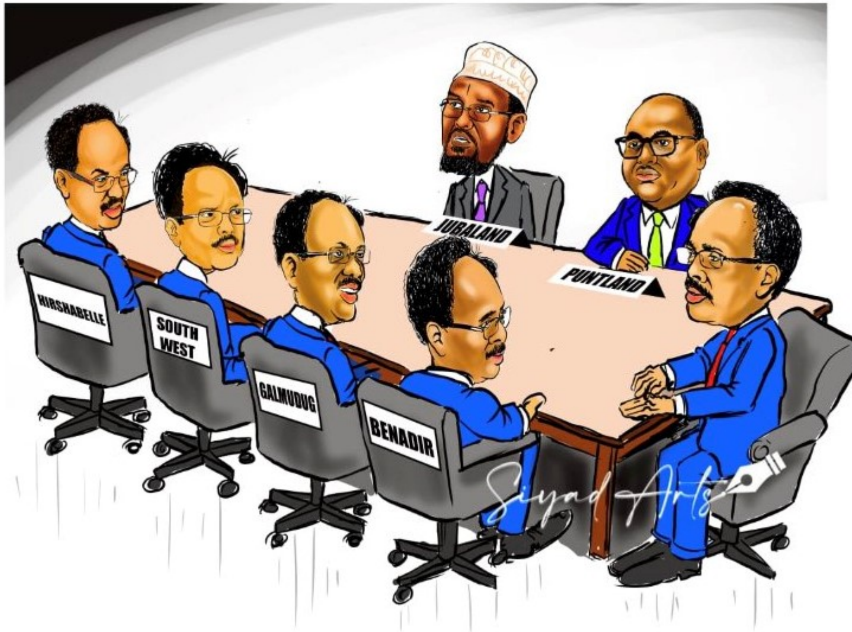

Figure 29: Political Cartoon by Siad Arts, Somali social media, Feb 2021. The presidents of Hirshabelle, South-West State, Galmudug and the administrator of Benadir are portrayed as clones of Farmaajo, faced by Presidents Madobe of Jubaland and President Deni of Puntland.

The Somali Political System

Ken Menkhaus describes federal Somalia's political system through the lens of '**elite bargains**'.[91] 'Rival political cartels' fight over control of/access to international rent, leading to frequent political paralysis and low but chronic levels of political violence. Clan elites partake in this settlement, but it has little benefit for the citizenry, where anti-elite sentiment runs deep.

He identifies the following 'rules of the game' for elite bargains:[92]

- Agreement on the 4.5 formula of sharing power among clan families,
- Territorial base of each clan family in a regional state (or 2),
- Flexibility of the system to accommodate new political groupings,
- Limited use of political violence such as assassinations and communal clashes,
- Routinisation of business practices to allow operation across clan lines,
- Commitment to maintaining a weak Rule of Law,

[88] Such views are relayed in Hammond 2013: "Somalia Rising: Things Are Starting to Change for the World's Longest Failed State". See also Skeppström & Nordlund 2014: "Security, Stabilisation and State Formation in Somalia. Challenges for Implementing the Somali Compact"; p25.

[89] Heritage Institute for Policy Studies 2015. Support is lowest among the inhabitants of Galka'yo, a city divided in two between Puntland and Galmudug. A central state would allow the city to be reunited.

[90] Elmi 2015:1.

[91] Menkhaus 2018: "Elite Bargains and Political Deals Project: Somalia Case Study". This is part of a wider research program undertaken by the UK Stabilisation Unit (falling under FCO) seeking to reduce violent conflict by elite bargains and political deals. See Cheng, Goodhand & Meehan 2018: "Synthesis Paper: Securing and Sustaining Elite Bargains that Reduce Violent Conflict".

[92] Menkhaus 2018:3-4. I have reorganized the order of his eight points to suit my development.

- Effort to maintain maximum levels of foreign rent,
- Shared access to resources among major political groups.

He names three enabling conditions that allow elite bargains to hold:

- Copious amounts of foreign aid, increasing the size of the cake,
- The common threat of the counter-elite bargains project of Al Shabaab,
- The AU-organised (and EU-paid) AMISOM intervention force providing security.

The 4.5 System

Under the 4.5 system, the Hawiye, Darood, Rahanweyn and Dir/Isaaq each have 61 seats in the House of Parliament, and the minorities 31. Fairly stable distribution keys allocate seats and positions among the major clans within each clan family. Beyond, at sub-clan level, there is intense competition for the available power slots.

The distribution of executive power is also regulated by the 4.5 system. For example, if the elected president is Darood, the prime minister should be Hawiye and vice-versa. The Speaker of the House of Parliament position is reserved for a Rahanweyn, and that of the Speaker of the Upper House for the Isaaq. The power ministries (Interior, Defence, Finance, Foreign Affairs) are similarly shared.

To avoid recalibrating this balance continuously, positions are informally given in apanage to specific clan families or clans. This reflects elite bargaining rather than social weight. For example, South-West State has two vice-presidents. If the President is Digil, one vice-president will be Mirifle, and vice-versa. The other VP will be Hawiye. Why would the Hawiye have a VP, as they form only a small percentage of the state's population? This is a legacy of recent history. Productive facilities (such as banana plantations) nationalized in Barre's socialist period were given away to his Darood cronies in the 1980s privatizations, and then captured by the Hawiye in the civil war (and never returned to their original owners). It also reflects Hawiye power in the federal government. The Dir/Bimal, who form an important part of Lower Shabelle's population, thus have to settle with an executive power position below the level of VP. However, the federal Chief Justice and the judiciary system he presides over is allocated to the Dir, and the Bimal have part of it in their apanage.[93] Thus they feel isolated from their state-level politics, but have a considerable stake in the federal system.[94]

A similar divisive dynamic applies to higher levels. One could presume the Majerteen and Ogadeni are happy with a Darood president, like them; but if he is Marehan, like Farmaajo, this means the Majerteen and Ogadeni will have little influence in the federal government; at most they can hope for a powerful ministry. From the Somali-elite bargains perspective, the fact that Puntland is ruled by a Majerteen and Jubaland by an Ogadeni provides some balance and thus leads to acceptance. But this bargaining outcome also feeds hostile relations and political conflict between the federal government, Puntland and Jubaland.

These complicated power-sharing arrangements run through the entire Somali political landscape, from the district level to all federal agencies and institutions. When it is changed at one point it must be adjusted at another, keeping Somali politicians continuously busy. Lineage identity primes over capability, even in technical positions. There is no opening for democratic popular input; allocation of political power is purely an elite occupation and, as we shall presently see, is thoroughly monetized.

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[93] Gundel, Berg & Ibrahim 2016: "Political Economy of Justice in Somalia".

[94] Interviews with a civil society activist and a Benadiri court judge (both Bimal) in Xamar Jabjab, Mogadishu, March 2019. The young activist participated in efforts to increase Bimal representation in South-West State.

The UN has tried tinkering with the 4.5 system, insisting on a 30% quota for women in the lower house of Parliament. This paralyzed Somali politics, as clan elders had to decide amongst themselves which clans would have to be represented by a woman. Because of exogamy, a woman neither fully represents her native clan, nor the one she has married into, and women traditionally do not participate in the public life of clans. A solution (besides reverting to endogamy!) would be a shift in clan culture, accepting women from other clan backgrounds as representatives, but the fact that a quota for women was imposed from outside makes this cultural shift more difficult.

The 4.5 system is unpopular among Somalis. Professor Baadiyow, a historian, politician and academic, calls the 4.5 system a "*temporary framework for reconciliation, not the definitive formula for representation"*.[95] It reduces the positions of each politician to his clan interests, frustrating those who advocate a national agenda.[96] However, it seems impossible to surpass, as it lies at the heart of the current elite compact.[97]

The 4.5 system should have been replaced by universal elections according to the 2013 road map, but it was delayed once in 2016-17 and again in 2021-22. There seems to be no movement towards general elections, so the UN and donors may find themselves trapped into supporting it.[98] Besides, universal suffrage and a multiparty representative system may provoke major conflict and leave many population groups disaffected with a destabilizing 'winner-takes-all' result. As seen in Somaliland, elections are not a panacea.

In reaction to this grip of clan over Somali politics, Islamism is becoming increasingly popular. It seems to be the only force capable of overcoming clan identities, as the reading of Somali history suggests (4.2 & 7.4). We saw before how the business community, in its role of *abbaan* (cross-clan mediator), has increasingly espoused political Islam as a useful frame for its operations, both within Somalia and regionally. As Menkhaus points out in his 'rules of the game', all political actors agree that business should not be constrained by clan identity, because that would be a blow to the Somali economy. In Somaliland, and indeed in many other developing countries, business interests are narrowly intertwined with politics. In the Federal Government, they operate by different rules.

The Informal and Formal Somali Economies

External observers generally agree that the Somali economy has benefited from statelessness, but consider it needs regulation to grow further. As described in 7.2, self-regulation based on *xeer* or other collective agreements allowed the growth of Somali business operations, despite the absence of a legal framework. From a liberal perspective, this sparked hopes that the business sector's interest in a stable environment would bring about political settlements. This did happen, but the sector supported the Transitional National Government and the sharia courts, so, from a foreign perspective, they bet on the wrong horses. Since the second Transitional Federal Government of 2009, Somali business is generally aligned with the government, but often also at loggerheads with it.

The argument that the Somali economy needs regulation generally comes from economists. The health of an economy can only be proven by its growth, which requires data. The growth of many developing economies does not reflect real growth, but the integration of the informal economy into the formal economy, so a growth in data rather than in economic activity. Integrating the informal economy often requires socio-economic change. For example, populations consuming the produce they grow

[95] Interview in Doorbin Hotel, 3 March 2019.

[96] Hussein Sheikh Ali described how, when he was in the Hassan Sheikh Mohamud government, any policy he suggested was interpreted in clan terms by other members of the government. Interview on 8 March 2019. This complaint is commonly heard.

[97] Menkhaus 2018:23.

[98] Cheng et al. 2018:82.

themselves do not contribute to economic data. When they produce for others, sell that produce and use the money they have earned to buy other foodstuffs, and these transactions are recorded, they inflate the numbers of the official economy. One of the reasons that African countries formerly self-sufficient in food production switched to cash-crop production for export is the growth rates this led to.[99] With high growth rates it is easier to attract investors, borrow on global financial markets, etc.

For many people, analysts and commoners alike, there is also something morally wrong about the informal economy: taxes are not paid, there are no formal quality controls, labour rights do not apply, etc. The informal sector, worldwide, is usually seen as consisting of small businesses, typically in urban and rural slums, or in the shadow of the formal economy. In Africa, the expert view on the informal economy seems slightly different: it is more often accepted, not as a marginal or negative phenomenon, but as an essential and often healthy part of the economy, although all experts agree that it *should* be integrated in the formal economy. In Somalia, even the largest business groups have remained partially in the informal sector.[100]

The **informal economy** belongs entirely to the rhizomatic field, thriving on the same social connections and networks as social power more generally. It is an aspect of the rhizome: wherever there is a rhizome, an informal economy exists among its nodes. The formal economy belongs to above-ground, to the domain of the tree; it operates on the basis of the Law. The informal economy operates on the basis of trust. Trust is also the required base for self-governance, we saw, especially at a large scale. We can thus infer that ***trust** is an essential element of the rhizome*.

Somali businessmen may lack direct access to global financial markets, but they can count on a diaspora in East and Southern Africa, the Gulf countries (since the 1970s), Western countries (post-1990 diaspora) and now also Turkey and China. Some Somali businesses do well on international markets; Somalia telecoms offer the cheapest call rates in the world, and money transfer and import-export companies also do well.[101] Informal business operates just like official business, but without the protection of the Law, relying instead on trust-based networks. In fact, (non-Somali) global business networks are generally rhizomatic. Leeson showed that international business operates on trust in personal networks, rather than relying on the law that is only resorted to when trust fails.[102]

Essential to trust within global Somali commercial networks is the religious factor: Somalis mostly deal with other Muslim partners, submitting to the tenets of sharia law in a self-regulatory mode. Belonging to groups such as Al I'tisam helps fostering this trust. This is why the Somali business community, though global in outreach, seems to be even more religious than the rest of the population and has often been associated with Islamist networks. One can speak of an **Islamist business bloc** within the Somali elite compact. It is difficult to obtain concrete information about the structure of Al I'tisam, which, like other Salafi organizations, seems to be rigidly organized at its centre with a tight ideological coherence, but rhizomatic in its outreach. There is a widespread perception that Al I'tisam wields a lot of behind the scenes political power in the Federal Government, Puntland and Somaliland.[103] "*Salafism, as a current, permeates much of Somali society, and Al Shabaab is but it's most prominent expression. Al I'tisam might have a greater influence on how Somalia further develops*" note Roland Marchal and Zakaria

[99] Other factors are opportunities for enrichment of state elites who strike deals with foreign investors, often with negative consequences for rural populations driven from their land. Investment-driven cash-cropping leads to much higher rates of pesticide and herbicide use to increase yields, thus leading to higher rates of soil erosion.

[100] As explained to by the founder and director of one of Mogadishu's large trading groups, Feb 2019.

[101] Leeson 2007: "Better Off Stateless: Somalia Before and After Government Collapse".

[102] Leeson 2014: "Anarchy Unbound. Why Self-Government Works Better Than You Think".

[103] E.g., Interview with Burhan Mohamed, advisor to IGAD Peace and Reconciliation Facilitation, Addis Ababa 22/04/2019. Also, interviews with Isma'il 'Araale (Bur'o), Khalid Hassan (Hargeisa) and others. See also Bryden 2021: "Fake Fight. The Quiet Jihadist Takeover of Somalia".

Sheikh.[104] The veteran analyst Rashid Abdi warns that "*Salafism is not a fringe tendency in Somalia. It is mainstream. There are many figures inside the Federal Government, in fact, who espouse this conservative form of Islam. More important, there is no contest in Somalia between Islamists and secularists, as Mogadishu wants its international partners to think. It is rather jostling between Islamist factions, principally Ala Sheikh, Damm al-Jadiid and Al-I'tisam, that lies beneath today's struggles for power*".[105] This jostling takes place mostly within the economy, but has a strong impact on politics.

The informal economy of the late 1980s, epitomized in the Bakara market, transnationalized as a result of opportunity provided by statelessness and the Somali diaspora that spread over the globe. Thanks to its position allowing it to breach the protected markets of Ethiopia and Kenya (smuggling, often with the participation of authorities in the concerned countries[106]), and to low or inexistent levels of taxation, Somali business flourished and made investments into ancillary sectors such as infrastructure (electricity, cable networks) and telecoms. The main resource for the business sector remains the hawala money-trading sector, which, at an estimated 1.5 billion USD remittances/year dwarfs the government budget (375-670 million USD), and provides a steady source of foreign cash.

Somali business may have thrived in statelessness, but all interviewees connected to the sector considered that the government should organize the national economy and facilitate access to global markets.[107] When confronted with the fact that self-governance has worked well for them up to now, they respond that they were just coping with adversity. *Xeer* can be used for settling business disputes between Somalis, but it cannot arrange for lines of credit with foreign banks.[108] Businesspeople need to be part of a rules-based economy in order to engage the global economy. At the same time, they seem convinced that they can (and should) escape those rules. They want to be part of the formal economy in order to be more successful as informal network, not because they believe in the efficiency of rules: just like the global business sector described by Peter Leeson.

This does not make Somali businessmen well disposed to the type of government regulation advised by experts. All regulation efforts in federal Somalia, from writing laws and internal regulations to implementation and monitoring plans, are proposed by the IMF and supported by the World Bank and other Western organizations. These regulations are conditions, benchmarks to be met to access, for example, new IMF loans. Consultation processes are minimal and amount to informing the business community of new regulations, taxes and processes to follow. A business leader spoke of the 'NGO-ization' of the economy, as useful and gainful investments were being endlessly blocked with regard to 'due process'.[109] Clearly, Somali businessmen mean something else by regulation than the IMF does.

An instructive example of a successful businessman with Salafi inclinations is Ahmed Nur 'ali Jim'ale. Hailing from the Hawiye Duduble clan, which although numerous had never been part of the clan power elite, he rose through Al Itihad and established Al Barakat holding in 1996. Al Barakat became the largest

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[104] Marchal & Sheikh 2015: "Salafism in Somalia: Coping with Coercion, Civil War and its Own Contradictions" in Islamic Africa 6, 135-163.

[105] Abdi 2018: "Somalia's South-West State: A New President Installed, a Crisis Inflamed".

[106] Rawlence 2015: "Black and White: Kenya's Criminal Racket in Somalia".

[107] Interviews in Mogadishu in February & March, 2019, and Garowe, October 2020. In Somaliland the situation is very similar, although the formal economy is slightly better organized.

[108] Schlee explains that xeer was never meant to replace government regulation, but is complementary to it. Schlee 2013: "Customary Law and the Joys of Statelessness: Idealised Traditions Versus Somali Realities".

[109] Interview with 'Mac' Mursal, the director of the Shabelle Group of Companies, on 3 March 2019. He had proposed an energy plant sufficient for meeting the needs of all inhabitants of Mogadishu, which would allow private distributors to continue operating their networks at fixed buying rates, calculating that energy prices in Mogadishu (then a USD/KW) could be more than halved. He was frustrated that he could not bribe the government to give him an authorization, which is why he spoke of 'NGO-ization'.

private company in Somalia through risky, innovative ventures in Telecom and money transfer (*hawala*). Jim'ale backed the Arta process and became a prominent member of the Transitional National Government. Al Barakat's assets were frozen by the US state shortly after 9/11, but Jim'ale took the loss and set up a new venture, Hormuud Telecommunications, which is now the largest mobile phone and mobile money operator in the country.[110] Jim'ale provides schooling and employment opportunities for his Duduble clan. He was known as a prominent member of the Islamic Courts Union, but was removed from the UN sanctions list (as a sponsor of terrorism) in 2014 and from the US list in 2016. He is considered one of the leaders of Al I'tisam and remains a powerful figure today. For example, he has invested in a real estate venture ('New Mogadishu', a Dubai-like urban project to the northeast of the capital on ancestral Duduble land), which benefits his clan.[111]

This example shows how private business remains organized along clan lines; but, since they seek to operate nationally, they attract members of other clans. While Hormuud's admin department may be mostly staffed with Duduble, its sales department will reflect the diversity of Somali clans, and when attending a board meeting, its employees could be forgiven for thinking their company embodies a nationalist ideal. In fact, it reflects what Menkhaus calls "routinization of business practice to allow operation across clan lines", an unwritten rule of the elite bargaining process.

The informal economy seems to be growing faster than the formal one. Officially, the GDP growth rate for Somalia has been between 2.5 and 3% for most of the period 2013 to 2021, which, considering the low point of departure and the growth rates of neighbouring Ethiopia and Kenya, is far from spectacular.[112] Moreover, as explained above, some or most of the formal economy growth comes from the transfer of informal activities into the formal economy. The impression one gets from interlocutors and casual traveling throughout the country suggests a much higher growth rate, which must come from the informal economy. It is quite certain that the informal economy is driving overall economic growth in Somalia.[113]

The IMF and the World Bank's 2020 decision that Somalia may apply for new loans when it reaches the 'Heavily Indebted Poor Countries' 'Completion Point' in 2023, if it continues following most of their prescriptions, may put Somali businesses on a collision course with the Somali state. Borrowing large sums on international markets and wielding more regulatory power will allow the Somali state to force its will on these businesses, in a partial return to the Siad Barre 1980s. As an example of regulatory power, the government, pushed by the UN and the USA, has tried (half-heartedly) to make Hormuud and other telecoms operators (used by Al Shabaab for communications and financial transfers) comply with 'counter financing of terrorism' regulations. So far they these companies have avoided most of this regulatory pressure.[114]

The resistance of Somali elites against such regulations adopted to combat Al Shabaab financial operations (more about this in Chapter Ten) seems evidence of their 'commitment to maintaining a weak Rule of Law', another of Menkhaus' elite bargaining-process rules. Quiet but steady growth in the informal economy, benefiting the Islamist business bloc most of all, mirrored by slower growth of the formal (internationally supervised) economy in a double bookkeeping mode destined to keep regulation-minded foreign patrons at bay, will most likely remain the recipe of the Somali economy.

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[110] According to World Bank data, about 155 million mobile money transactions take place each month, amounting to about US $2.7 billion in transfers.

[111] As reported by a university chancellor sympathetic to Jim'ale.

[112] The growth rate increased to around 8% in 2018 and 2019 and then fell back to 2.4 and 3% in 2020 and 2021. Source: World Bank (link). This fluctuation seems to be entirely driven by the application of new accounting standards, because there was not a sudden real economic growth in those years.

[113] Interview with 'Mac' Mursal, who is convinced the formalization of the economy is hindering economic growth. His point of view was echoed by other people met.

[114] UN Panel of Experts report 2021.

Access to Foreign Rents

Somali elites manage to capture a significant amount of rent from external funding for humanitarian, development and state-building purposes. Securing contracts for service delivery (including protection) is the formal way, aid diversion and embezzlement the informal one. Foreign rent, unlike locally raised revenue, does not 'belong to the people', and can thus be disposed of much easier. But it is not only, or even chiefly money. Foreign funding for education and health activities, services to displaced people and a small amount of basic infrastructure (bridges, wells, community buildings), frees public resources for other purposes, while elite members who manage to direct aid towards their communities receive political capital in return.

The rent is distributed throughout society by an elaborate patronage system, which is the driver and the result of the elite-bargaining process. In the logic of the patronage system, the external donors are at the top of the pyramid. From a Somali perspective, the EU, UN, World Bank, and bilateral donors thus pay to have Somali elites play by their rules. Somalis, in a voluntarily mimetic process, *pretend* to play by those rules, to secure access to external funding in what was described in 6.3 as the trickster strategy.

De Waal explains how international interveners are easily assimilated into local power politics, as traditional and upcoming leaders jockey for access to them. Interveners have only a limited understanding of local power dynamics, but they must get involved somehow, making them flexible instruments in the hands of local elites.[115] The quick rotation of staff in international organizations is designed to prevent them taking a stake in local bargaining processes; as a result they are even less aware of how they might be 'played' by their interlocutors. Although this causes a disconnect, with interveners unable to judge the impact of their relations with Somali elites, it does serve the international organizations' purpose of establishing a rules-based order and avoiding the personalization of their policies. From a Somali point of view, when dealing with rapidly changing foreign patrons, they understand they are dealing with a system, not with individual people they could approach rhizomatically (charm, corrupt, bully, befriend…). Quick rotation preserves the impersonality of office, exactly what it is designed to do.

In contrast, at the end of this section donors are described who consciously play by the rules of rhizomatic patronage, extracting as much benefit from that position as they can.

Diaspora Bloc

The most apt to deal with Western donors are, obviously, Western-educated Somalis, preferably with professional experience. In 2018, two-thirds of the Somali MPs had a foreign nationality; the president was American and his prime minister Norwegian. Strategic staff in the ministries and other institutions as well as key members of the NGO, civil society and intellectual communities also have a diaspora background. During the civil war, most educated Somalis fled the country, finding refuge in the West; the diaspora thus forms a 'brain trust' of sorts. Menkhaus calls this a "*'suspended elite', oddly disconnected from their own society*".[116] Although they may be disconnected from Somali society, they are key players in the elite bargains as they have prime access to foreign donors.

Many diaspora Somalis may be genuinely committed to the Western state-building project (*believe* in it). But they are also compelled to participate in the elite bargaining process and need to play the game by Somali rules. In the process, they have developed their own interests as a group. Although the diaspora is remarkably diverse, a power bloc seems to have formed around the state-building project under Presidents Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and Farmaajo. This diaspora bloc considers its future to lie in

[115] De Waal 2015:124-126.

[116] Menkhaus 2018:26.

increased integration with global governance systems. They wield money and power, but are fragile because of their dependency on foreign funding, having few local sources of support (and revenue), and because of their incapacity to fully adapt to the *xeer* that continues to govern Somali socio-political relations. The diaspora is widely resented in Somali society for capturing the best jobs and opportunities, and for being able to return to their other home country (where their families generally remain) whenever they want. They have less 'skin in the game' than Somalis who would have to emigrate the hard way, thus they are less liable for negative outcomes of their activities.

Al Shabaab has the most difficulty with the diaspora bloc for their introduction of Western ideas and beliefs[117] and for their unwavering support to the Western state-building project.

The Islamist business and diaspora power blocs described above may be the only non-clan structured groups within the Somali elite compact. The rest of the groups are fluctuating alliances between lineage groups. As in Somaliland, no political grouping is based on a single clan identity. For instance there are no identifiable leaders of the Hawiye or Darood in Somali Parliament, or of the Hawiye/Habar Gedir, or even of the Hawiye/Habar Gedir/Sa'ad; there are several prominent Sa'ad members in the elite, and the same is true for each clan and sub-clan. Some are in the opposition and others with the government, some in the formal, most in the informal economy. The rhizomatic field keeps recomposing itself, with lineage networks variably connected to several high-level patronage networks.

To clarify this through the dual nature of power lens, we must distinguish roots from the rhizome. Roots are part of the formal tree structure, but they are invisible, underground and connect to the rhizome. Roots are the institutions of society, what is commonly called 'civil society', such as businesses, religious groups, voluntary associations, NGOs and political parties. It was long understood that roots absorbed the nutrients the tree needs, but now we know that a healthy tree transmits more to the rhizome than vice-versa. Clan does not, in Somali, belong to civil society, to the root structure of the tree. One will never find an organization for the advancement of the Sheekhal, or a party of the Leelkase. Even when an organization consists mostly of Sheekhal and a party of Leelkase, the clan identity remains informal. Thus, clans form rhizomatic networks that can connect variably to many roots and thus access the tree.

Vote-Buying, Patronage and Representative Politics

Although the capacity to direct foreign assistance to one's constituencies is an essential part of the patronage network, cash remains essential. It appears that votes are routinely bought, not only to be elected, but also to pass legislation. The Dubai-based ports operator P&O reportedly paid members of Puntland's state assembly 30,000 USD per vote in favour of the lease of Bosaso port to the company for a 30-year period.[118] Presumably, most state-assembly members would have been in favour in any case, but they did not miss this profitable opportunity. Passing federal laws often requires payments too. For example, a bill was passed establishing the office of the Auditor General. The draft mentioned it would report to Parliament, but it was changed at the last minute to report to the President. This required payments to Members of Parliament.[119] According to a prominent Mogadishu policy centre, the Somali parliament barely considers the legality of any issue on the table, but focuses on immediate individual material gains.[120]

[117] Life and Peace Institute 2014: "Alternatives for Conflict Transformation in Somalia"; p19.

[118] Letter by the Elders and Intellectuals Committee of Old Bosaso City to DP World/P&O Ports objecting to the concession. Other sources spoke of upwards of 60,000 USD per vote, but this seems the most trustworthy source.

[119] Interview with a member of the Lower House of Parliament, March 2019.

[120] Heritage Institute for Policy Studies 2021:15.

The operation to replace Sharif Aden, the President of South-West State, by Laftagareen in 2018 reportedly cost the government about four million dollars. A rumoured three million had to be offered to Sharif Aden to convince him to step down,[121] and 20,000-30,000 USD was paid per vote in the state assembly.[122] Members of Parliament in 2017 were paid 50,000 USD per vote by Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and 30,000 USD per vote by Farmaajo's backers.[123]

The victory of Farmaajo shows that not all depends on cash. Somalis, like people elsewhere, are loathe to admit that they are motivated by money alone. In personal discussions, one always hears about different, frequently more idealistic motivations. Bribes may be refused if they go against the values or the recognized interests of the community. Although they live comfortable lives and have nice cars, phones and clothes, bribe-takers stress that the money is not for themselves, but for their communities; the requirements of their communities oblige them to 'raise funds'.[124]

Of course, bribing 'representatives' of the people for elections or to pass legislation is deemed a straightforward case of corruption in most of the world. Somalis agree and, in the 'corruption perceptions' index by Transparency International, Somalia has long scored lowest of all countries.[125] Nevertheless, within a patronage network, the corruption of its elites is only found morally reprehensible when it is used for personal ends; some self-enrichment is understood, but not at the expense of community welfare. Foreign funding destined for Somalia is supposed to be spent in Somalia. When embezzled funds or diverted aid are distributed to lower levels of society through the usual patronage networks, Somalis will only be scandalized if it was unfairly distributed. News of Somali leaders buying property abroad causes outrage and is quite rare. One of the main criticisms of the diaspora bloc is precisely that they spend money raised in Somalia on maintaining their families abroad.

One could thus develop a divergent view on vote-buying and aid-diversion corruption, seeing it as a relatively even-handed distribution of external rent through society—what Menkhaus calls 'Shared access to resources among major political groups' along with 'flexibility to accommodate new groups'. Since the ultimate aim is to legitimize the elite bargaining process, using electoral systems to redistribute rent makes sense. The inclusiveness of the 4.5 formula means that most population groups in the country have some access to this rent. Although stability in Somalia could be improved, current levels of foreign funding provoke less conflict than they did in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. In a less well-developed elite bargain, more of the external funding remains stuck at the top levels or within the same small networks, provoking more conflict.

Vote-buying at the scale practiced in Somalia makes it impossible to develop a representative democracy. An acquaintance, a young Puntlander (not diaspora) decided to run for national parliament in the scheduled 2021 elections. When I asked him how much money he had, he said he did not need any. He would convince voters that if they elected him, he would remain in their debt his whole term, serving their interests in parliament. In contrast, a candidate who paid for their votes would never represent them. Why should he? Hadn't he paid them already? This young man had reinvented the basic premise of representative democracy. Months later, I asked him how his campaign was going. He told me he had not finalized his candidacy after the candidate registration fee was fixed at 10,000 USD. When candidates are asked to pay such a registration fee, it is assumed they will use their position (if

[121] According to a close observer of politics in the South-West State, spoken to in February 2019.

[122] UN Monitoring Group report 2020:22.

[123] This is less than the more often rumoured amounts of 125,000 USD per vote for Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and 50,000 USD per vote for Farmaajo, but I consider this source (personal information) more trustworthy.

[124] Conversation with a Kenyan-Somali MP of the Kenyan National Assembly.

[125] In 2021 Somalia was considered the second-most corrupt country ex aequo with Syria, and surpassed only by South Sudan (link).

elected) to recoup their costs. This is a barrier to participation that only makes sense in a system of patronage networks, vote-buying and corruption.

Certainly, vote-buying is incompatible with representative democracy. But there is nothing representative about the Somali political system. As seen in Chapter One, Somali clan politics know no representation, as each adult male remains self-sovereign. Formal representation introduces a hierarchy with which individual Somalis do not agree. It has been imposed by the international community, relayed by the educated 'diaspora bloc', and accepted in principle by the rest of the Somali elites as they see it as essential for maintaining or increasing current levels of external rent. But it is hard to find a Somali politician or clan entrepreneur who truly submits to this hierarchy.

There is neither scope for representative politics in Somalia, nor the need for it. That the international community insists on representative, one-person one-vote elections, is a contextual factor that Somali elites must accept, but they try to somehow bend it in their favour or delay implementation. Within the diaspora bloc and educated youth there is a belief that democracy based on universal suffrage is the best way forward for their society, and this belief may spread slowly through Somali society; but there is no plan for how to manage the transition from the current 4.5 system, that—for all its drawbacks—at least has contributed to keeping social peace.[126]

A question rarely asked is whether the Somali government *needs* the domestic legitimacy that free and fair democratic elections would provide. In fact, such elections only serve to provide external legitimacy to the Somali government, validating it in the eyes of the international community and a small minority of local social forces.[127] Among foreign experts, however, there is also a perception that Western-style democratic elections may destabilize Somalia, so it is sufficient for Somali elites to show they are making steps in the right direction.

Willing Patrons: Turkey and the Gulf States

Western international organizations seem to be unwilling patrons feeding into Somali patronage networks, despite their own convictions. But other sources for cash have emerged in Somali politics, consciously seeking to influence the elite bargaining process: the most prominent among these are Turkey and the Gulf countries.

Turkey emerged as a major donor in the 2011 drought crisis. The visit of Turkish President Erdoğan to Mogadishu in August 2011 (Al Shabaab had only just evacuated the city) was a brave diplomatic move, and the first state visit received in Mogadishu.[128] Turkey supported the election victory of Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, whose 'Damm ul Jadiid' (*New Blood)* faction is closely linked to the modern wing of the Muslim Brotherhood movement supported by Qatar and Turkey. Over the following years, Turkey multiplied its investments in Mogadishu (700 million USD from 2011 to 2017), and it built the largest embassy complex Turkey has in the world (on a prime piece of downtown beachfront real estate). Turkey embarked on a successful 'soft power' campaign[129] and acquired a good reputation among Mogadishu residents for practical projects such as refurbishing the Digfer hospital (now called Erdogan hospital), roadbuilding and other infrastructure projects. Unlike NGOs and international organizations, which allow so much wastage and embezzlement to occur that ultimately, project results are

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[126] This is the conclusion of Ken Menkhaus' study for the UK's Stabilisation Unit.

[127] Richards 2014:57.

[128] Özkan 2011"Turkey's Involvement in Somalia. Assessment of a State-Building in Progress".

[129] Akpınar 2017: "From Benign Donor to Self-assured Security Provider: Turkey's Policy in Somalia". Istanbul Policy Center.

disappointing, Turkey controlled its aid as tightly as investments, making Mogadishu's residents wonder why other foreign donors don't operate in the same way.[130]

Turkey built its largest military base outside Turkey on Jazira Beach, southwest of the capital, to train the Somali Army in 2017. It supported the creation of elite units in the Army and Police that are deployed on the President's orders. In 2013, Turkish companies intricately connected to the Erdoğan regime negotiated contracts for the administration of Mogadishu's port (20-year contract) and airport (15-year contract). Although it is generally admitted that Somali facilities under Turkish control work better, this control over key and profitable Somali assets generating profits for Turkish companies has provoked the hostility of Al Shabaab and the suspicion of many other Somalis.[131]

Qatar's involvement has been even more politically significant. It has operated largely through Fahad Yasin, previously journalist for Al Jazeera and tightly connected to the Qatari security establishment. In 2012, Qatar supported the election of Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. At the time, already, Fahad Yasin lobbied for Farmaajo to become Mohamud's Prime Minister. In 2017, Qatar supported the candidacy of Farmaajo, who made Yasin his National Security Advisor and head of the National Intelligence and Security Agency, NISA. Qatar has provided copious amounts of charity to Somalia and invested in road-building and other projects.

The Gulf crisis of 2017, when Saudi Arabia, the UAE and other GCC countries broke diplomatic relations with Qatar, had a major impact on domestic relations in Somalia. Mogadishu's alignment with Qatar being clear, the UAE lobbied federal member states to support it. UAE companies secured leases for developing the port of Berbera in Somaliland, and Bosaso port in Puntland. The Emirates sought diplomatic rapprochement with Galmudug, Jubaland, South-West State and with the opposition to Farmaajo. The port deals and diplomatic rapprochements with member state governments provoked the anger of the federal government, as Somalia's external relations fall under its authority. The UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea in 2018 reported UAE attempts at political interference.[132] As a result of these incidents and developments in the federal member states, diplomatic relations between the UAE and Mogadishu were severed (until 2022).

Cash injections into the Somali elite compact by Gulf states (including Saudi Arabia) and Turkey have altered the options for Somali elites, who are now less dependent on 'walking the walk and talking the talk' of Western intervention agencies, which so often stands at odds to usual Somali political practice. It provides them with a margin for manoeuvre. The Gulf states and Turkey play along by the rules of the patronage system, seeking advantage from their position at the top of the pyramid. This may be an easier, more straightforward position for Somali elites to deal with.

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[130] Cannon 2016: "Deconstructing Turkey's Efforts in Somalia" in Bildhaan Vol. 16, 98-123; p100.

[131] For an overview of arguments why Somalis should distrust Turkey's involvement in Somalia, see Ahmed 2021: "Far from a benefactor, the Turkish government is exploiting Somalia's fragility", published online by the Middle East Institute, Washington DC, on Oct 21, 2021.

[132] "*On 8 April 2018, Federal Government security forces at Aden Adde* [Mogadishu] *International Airport seized suitcases containing approximately $9.6 million in cash from the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Somalia (…) as he arrived on a chartered aircraft from Abu Dhabi. One day prior to the cash seizure, the Monitoring Group witnessed a meeting between members of the United Arab Emirates diplomatic services and a former senior official of the National Intelligence and Security Agency at a restaurant in Nairobi. The participants discussed bringing federal member state leaders, federal Members of Parliament and Somali National Army commanders together in an effort to undermine the Federal Government, including through bribery.*" UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritea, 2018; p31.

9.3 State-Society Relations in Federal Somalia

In 2000, Roland Marchal wrote a research paper subtitled 'Dreams of the State'.[133] Twenty years later, as I experienced, both while interacting with students,[134] and during my interviews with young professionals, Somalis still dream of the State. Generally, they accept the Western blueprint—electoral democracy, rule of law, a service-oriented state—conscious that it is the only model available for facilitating the integration of Somali society into the international state system. Criticism of the political class that participates in state-building is widespread (see below), as is criticism of the international organizations supporting it, but there is no political mobilization.

In policy literature, there is a general recognition that government and public service improve under the pressure of the citizenry, when it demands better government and services. It is puzzling, even to Somali observers, that the Somali population does not demand such improvements. "C*itizens are seriously disaffected from politics, not in terms of talking about it, but in terms of demanding practical elements of good governance. In this case, political actors in Somalia neither seek consensus nor offer incentives to the public for political participation. For their part, the citizens do not demand political participation and service delivery*" remarked the authors of a 2021 survey on governance.[135]

Perhaps we should distinguish between Somalis as citizens and their identity as members of social networks, extending the Dual Power Theory to the individual level. As members of social rhizomes connected to patronage networks, they participate in a system that works well enough for them not to revolt; but as citizens they have almost no relation to their state (I pursue this line of enquiry below). "*In Somalia, the concept of citizenship is poorly understood by the political class. If the citizens have no emotional attachment to the current form of state, the practice of governance is equally detached from the suffering of the people and their day-to-day struggle*" remarks Afyare Elmi.[136]

When discussing the non-existent social services provided by the Somali state to its citizens, I asked one of my interlocutors whether this absence did not turn the population against the government. He shrugged and smiled: "*Somalis are not generally against this government. Somalis have assumed responsibility for their own lives during the anarchy that has prevailed here the past decades. They are used to that and don't have any demands on the government [in terms of social services].*"[137]

The lack of public-service provision by state governments does not provoke revolts. That can only be explained by the success of existing self-governance mechanisms, alongside low expectations of the State. In fact, in rural areas and even in urban areas, Al Shabaab provides some of the expected services, especially law and order, by the implementation of sharia, as described in Chapter Ten. But clan governance and customary law (*xeer*) still play a large role. A 2014 study found that 90 percent of disputes in Somalia are processed through *xeer*.[138] A survey conducted that year found that only 13

[133] Marchal 2000: "Mogadiscio dans la Guerre Civile: Rêves d'État".

[134] I once gave a course to students at the Somali International University of Mogadishu critically examining elections. I argued that the model had been imported and had no roots in Somali deliberative political traditions, and warned against the potential winner-takes-all destabilizing outcome. At the end, I asked students whether they were in favour of such elections or against. To my surprise they all voted in favour. Upon enquiry, I realized that this was because they saw themselves as modern, progressive, and democratic, and understood universal suffrage was the only way forward, whatever objections there may be to it.

[135] Heritage Institute for Policy Studies 2021:17.

[136] Elmi 2016: "Developing an Inclusive Citizenship in Somalia".

[137] Interview with Mohammed Mursal, 11 March 2019.

[138] Ubink, Janine, Ali Ahmed and IDLO Somalia 2014: "Policy Paper on the Somali Customary Justice System" prepared by the Traditional Dispute Resolution Unit of the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. Their findings are restricted to areas where they could perform research: federal-held areas, mostly the capital.

percent of Mogadishu's residents trusted the courts, compared to the 48 and 29 percent who trusted traditional and religious leaders, respectively.[139]

Currently education, health, electricity and water are either bought on the private market, or (for the most destitute) provided by the NGO community. What Somalis expect from their government may not be social services, but they do expect security, justice, a functioning administration and some basic infrastructure, like road maintenance. But even these most basic demands of the population are not met by the government, nor does there seem to be any movement towards supplying them. The disaffection between citizens and state also means that citizens are impatient with any demands made by the state, notably taxation, but also roadblocks and traffic jams caused by security measures for VIPs. Mogadishu residents working in the formal sector pay income tax, but they see absolutely nothing in return.[140]

In an interview with a university dean, I asked what support his university received from the government. 'None', he first said; upon reflection he added "the Ministry validates the diplomas we issue". He noted that a Higher Education Commission for regulating the accreditation and curricula of universities was being set up with EU support, and welcomed the initiative as regulation of the university sector is needed.[141] This confirms the role of the state as a 'central bank of symbolic capital', as Bourdieu called it. What other institution could validate diplomas and provide trustworthy accreditation? But Somalis know that a dysfunctional university could bribe its way into receiving accreditation, which explains why my interviewee found EU involvement important to mention.

It appears that the international community, by its close involvement with the state-building process, exercises an essential oversight function. When I asked the opposition leader Abdishakur whether parliament provided effective checks to executive power, he told me "*In Somalia the parliament does not perform the function of 'checks and balances'. That role has traditionally been played by the international community. They measure the executive's performance and are in a position to do something about it.*"[142] This statement recalls that the executive is accountable to the international community (not parliament or the population) and that this has been so 'traditionally', indicating that Somalis never had the expectation that their state would become an autonomous, self-regulating polity.

This narrative stressing the oversight role (and final responsibility) of the international community appears repeatedly, and I came to realize that there is no state/society compact in Somalia, nor is there really an effort to establish one. Somali society rather seeks a pact with the international community, and the state is not more than a portal between them. The more it conforms to the wishes of the international community, the better. The Somali state, with the partial exception of Barre's regime, has always been conceived of as such a portal.

What my interviewees most resent about their current political class is not its incapacity to provide social services to the population and 'good governance'. They are used to self-governance and do not even want the state to *govern* them. In complete opposition to the notion prevalent among foreigners that Somalis may not want a state, but that they need good governance, it appears **Somalis want an efficient state, but not government** (they rather self-govern). In the same way as described above for the Somali business community, the state is seen pragmatically, as a political and legal infrastructure that allows Somalis to engage the international community, not as an instrument for regulating domestic society. Somalis resent that their political elites seem incapable of building this practical state.

[139] Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, 2014: "Perceptions of Security and Justice in Mogadishu".

[140] Several interviews in Mogadishu, March 2019. Somaliland residents make the same complaints.

[141] Interview with Dahir Hassan, dean of the Somali Institute for Management, Administration and Development (SIMAD), 6 March 2019. There are over 30 private universities in Mogadishu, of varying quality.

[142] Interview with Abdirahman Abdishakur, 8 March 2019.

Critical Citizenry

In section 9.2 above, federal politics are described intrinsically, not in comparison to the liberal democratic ideal. I have tried to refrain from moral judgment of the elites and their politics. But Somali society generally judges its own political elites harshly. Some of the main points of critique are:

a. There is no national project. Somali society remains divided in clan networks that serve the personal power objectives of the elites. Citizens wished the elites would cooperate instead, to propel the Somali nation forward on the world stage.

b. The elites do not contribute to economic growth; they only redistribute the resources that the Somali people and the international community produce. As in the late 60s, the political elites are unproductive. Their greed may yet kill the goose that lays the golden eggs (chase away the international community).

c. The mode of social rule by the elites is authoritarian, and the spectre of a return to Siad Barre's type of rule is always present.

d. Somalis morally object to the unworthy behaviour of their elites: paying or taking bribes, lying, cheating, stealing, boasting, employing violence, etc.

e. The current elites neither reflect social change, nor social aspiration; they are of the previous generation (criticism by young people especially: 75% of the population is under thirty).

The 67% official youth unemployment rate explains part of youth discontent.[143] Given levels of foreign assistance (supply) and that the country needs to be almost entirely rebuilt (demand), the lack of jobs for young people points at a painful incapacity to distribute foreign rents intelligently. Instead of paying hundreds of thousands of dollars to buy votes, resources could generate youth employment by rebuilding local infrastructure, improve rural or environmental management, etc.

Cultural change is intense. The Somali population is increasingly urbanized. The exposure to international culture and realities in the rest of the world has increased dramatically through urbanization and internet connections. The Somali diaspora, estimated at 1.5 million people (10% of the total population) is continuously connected to Somalia when abroad, and when in Somalia, to their adopted homelands. Somalia is thus culturally globalized, but socially and economically parked in a backwater, and there are no signs it will emerge from the doldrums anytime soon given the unproductive nature and stagnant results of the elite bargaining process. Cultural globalization in a conservative clan-dominated society obviously creates tensions between generations.

Changing gender relations are another source of tension. Somali women have largely taken over the small-trade market economy in the wake of the civil war, boosting their autonomy.[144] Ingiriis and Hoehne argued that state collapse was a 'blessing in disguise' for Somali women.[145] Somali men, especially those demobilized, have had a hard time adapting to their new dependent status in a largely women-led household economy.[146] Somali women in refugee settings, for example in Kenya, have often

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[143] Heritage Institute for Policy Studies 2020: "Productive labour and employment creation for Somalia: Key challenges and strategies". Many officially unemployed youth work in the informal sector, but it is apparent that there is not enough work for young people, so many youngsters seek to emigrate (*tahriib*).

[144] Marchal 2002: A Survey of Mogadishu's Economy.

[145] Ingiriis & Hoehne 2013: "The Impact of Civil War and State Collapse on the Roles of Somali Women".

[146] See Gardner & El Bushra 2016: "The impact of war on Somali men and its effects on the family, women and children"; Gardner & El Bushra 2017: "Somalia: A state of male power, insecurity and inequality".

learnt to negotiate complicated new sociocultural systems without male intermediaries, and created self-help groups with other Somali women.[147]

Experience in the diaspora has accentuated the change in gender relations. The success of Somali women abroad such as Ilhan Omar (US Congress member), Iman Abdulmajid (model, fashion icon, widow of David Bowie), Nadifa Mohamed (UK author, shortlisted for the Booker Prize), Ayaan Hirsi Ali (Dutch politician, polemist) and Waris Dirie (model, author, actress, UN goodwill ambassador) is rarely replicated for Somali men, who tend to face integration problems in Western societies.

Somali society is thus changing rapidly, especially among the young and internationally aware, but these changes can rarely be expressed through politics. The elite bargains principle of 'flexibility to accommodate new political groupings' allows for some absorption capacity, especially for groups that come with Western backing, such as minorities, women, and civil society; but, given the intense competition between existing clan-based elites for resources, these new groups do not wield much power.

The Authoritarian but Ineffective State

Somalis also fear the return of the state because the only experience in their history of a Somali state that was not primarily a portal to global networks of power was the Barre regime. There are signs suggesting that the increased autonomy of the Somali state, encouraged by the international community, is leading to the reestablishment of authoritarian tendencies.

The clearest is in the field of media. The government is concerned about its public projection and journalists who publish critical articles can expect phone calls from government officials and attacks by an army of social-media trolls. Media access to government events has been restricted with the pretext of security, and journalists sometimes face attacks of unknown assailants. Violence of the government against the free press is rare, as the government is careful about its image among international partners. But the work of journalists has become much more difficult, and the pressure (and incentives) to toe the government line are much higher than ever before.[148]

A widely criticized 2016 media law that criminalized some journalistic activities was to be replaced by a new media law, which would also establish a public broadcasting service. With international support, the draft went through a public consultation process; but on the eve of passing through parliament, the government redrafted parts of it and bribed Members of Parliament to accept the changes.[149] The new law, adopted in 2020, "*continues to criminalize journalistic work and allows for high fines for journalists and media outlets. The bill introduces a new system of prosecutors and courts that will facilitate the prosecution of journalists on vague claims*", as the International Federation of Journalists points out.[150] As to the Public Broadcasting Service, supposedly modelled on the BBC, in the final version of the law it falls under the President's Office.

A survey I conducted in Somalia's creative sector similarly indicated high levels of distrust in the government, especially in Mogadishu.[151] Artists and producers of creative content were convinced that any government effort to 'organize' or boost the sector would result in a restriction of artistic and civic

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[147] Ritchie 2018: "Gender and Enterprise in Fragile Refugee Settings: Female Empowerment Amidst Male Emasculation—a Challenge to Local Integration?".

[148] Interview with Moalimu, head of the National Union of Somali Journalists, 11 March 2019.

[149] Interview with one of the drafters of the law, and head of an independent media association, October 2019.

[150] IFJ 2020, 26 August 2020: "Somalia: New Media Law fails to comply with international standards on press freedom".

[151] Rider & Kluijver 2021: "Culture Sector Mapping in the Horn of Africa 2020-2021". A public version of the report is available online.

liberties. The only relation the government is capable of having with the creative sector is that of turning it into a propaganda apparatus, they said. Views of the government were less hostile in Puntland and Somaliland, but still critical. Older artists mentioned how their golden age had been the Barre years;[152] the dictator lavishly supported music, theatre, movies, etc., but criticism of his regime was impossible. This is still what the creative sector expects from the state: patronage.

Mohamed Ingiriis shows that, insofar there is still something of a state culture in Somalia, it is linked to memories and despotic practices of the Siad Barre era, which of course are not popular among Somali citizens, especially the youth.[153] Memories of Siad Barre's military regime provide the only domestic model for a Somali state, and Somali elites are convinced that this is the attitude society expects of them: paternalistic authoritarianism. Both the Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and the Farmaajo governments projected an image of benevolent but firm technocrats.

The disaffection of citizens for politics explains why there is no political mobilization. Similarly, there is barely an effort to imagine alternative models for a national political order. For example, a recognition of the benefits of self-governance, and research into how it could be integrated into a democratic state. Interviewees generally agreed that current forms of self-governance are not a solution, but a stop-gap remedy for the lack of state, similar to how members of the international community consider self-governance. Critical thinking about the state-building effort seems to be restricted to a handful of intellectuals. Perhaps it is also prevalent among insurgents.

The Dual Power Theory at the Individual Level

To understand the interaction between society and state in Federal Somalia, it seems necessary to apply the dual-power lens at the individual level. As argued in 8.3 for the case of the Somaliland, the dual-power vision can provide conceptual clarity, whereas the hybrid reality that is the composite of the interaction of both principles can be confusing. The dual-power lens allows observing the inputs to decision-making at both the individual and the state level, while the hybrid composite reality is its output.

The Federal State of Somalia is itself a hybrid polity, like the state of Somaliland, born out of the interaction between Somali self-governance and the international state system. Therefore, the individual should also be examined at the crossroads of the two forms of political order: rhizomatic social self-governance and the international order, epitomized by the Law and the absolute sovereignty of the State.

It is common in political science to oppose society and state, examining the dynamics between them. But in Somalia, the state is not the autonomous polity generated by society that it is supposed to be in classical political theory, but an interface between domestic society and the international state order. The Somali state reproduces the structures of the international state tree, or what I called the inverse tree (as, from the perspective of the international community, the roots of this tree lie abroad) and its key structures and functions are imported. In the case of Somalia, opposing society to international state order provides more conceptual clarity than opposing it to the State.

In previous chapters and this one, we saw that a majority of Somali citizens desires a State, and that they agree with the contours of the liberal democratic modern state drawn by the international community. They do not seek their own type of state, one that would reflect the pre-existent political order, and are critical of their leaders for failing to construct an efficient state-as-portal to the international order. Therefore, if there were some kind of social contract, it would be directly between

[152] A classic groovy compilation of music from this period, "Mogadisco", can be listened to on bandcamp (link).

[153] Ingiriis 2020: "Predatory Politics and the Personalization of Power".

the Somali people and the international community. This confirms that we should indeed look at relations between Somalis and the international state system.

The Dual Power Theory applied to the individual leads to a useful distinction between *citizen* and *social person*. The individual as *citizen* is a member of civil society and thus implicitly connected to the roots of the political system. Even though they may not be member of a civil society organization, by the registering of their birth in the civil registry and, for example, a civilian marriage, individuals become citizens and part of the State. The individual as *social person* is considered only in its rhizomatic aspect, as member of social networks, such as family, friends, or aquaintances. No individual can be deprived of personhood. Social personhood belongs to the realm of the State of Nature, and citizenship to that of civil society. Within the individual, the social person often seems to have contradictory pulsions to the citizen. Gramsci referred to this as contradictory consciousness, I have argued (3.4) this provokes cognitive dissonance.

As social persons, Somalis need patronage networks for survival and social advancement. Patronage in Somalia is rhizomatic in character: informal, personal, affect based, internal differentiation being based on personal capacity, not on position.[154] The patronage system seems to work fairly well for the *social person*, thanks to sufficient levels of external funding and an expanding informal market (the size of the pie increases), as well as a relatively fair and efficient distribution network through the 4.5 system and associated networks where the slices are reasonably equal. Conflict levels are therefore low. Moreover, as Menkhaus points out in his elite bargains framework, there is a commitment to solving tensions through negotiation and redistribution, instead of violence, although violence is occasionally used to remain a factor of dissuasion. These agreements between elites are informal and rhizomatic, not formalized in institutions.

But as *citizens,* Somalis are deeply disaffected and full of criticism towards their elites, for the reasons given above. A state is needed for practical purposes: to validate diploma's, provide passports and a title to a piece of land that can secure a bank loan. But to part of the population, the State still embodies the universal ideal of a civil society and of the Somali *nation*. That dream coexists alongside the more pragmatic approach to the State described above.

These are the dual inputs that determine the relations between Somali society and the state, and between the self-governing impulse and the international state order. Those most affected by these—often conflicting—inputs are the Somali political elites themselves. They must reconcile their rhizomatic (charismatic) leadership with their institutional, legal-bureaucratic position. Lineage members and rural voters expect handouts of cash, airtime and government positions. Urban voters, local civil society and international partners expect a strategic vision, institutional discipline and irreproachable behaviour. In the morning they put on a suit and tie and speak English in the office; in the afternoon they don a *ma'weys*[155] and chew qat with their friends and lineage members. Perhaps this is not so different from what most other office workers experience in their daily lives, and the dual nature of power probably operates through individuals universally.

[154] Somali patronage networks only partially resemble the classical (for Europe) model of Roman patronage. In Somalia there is no *status* as patron and no formal hierarchical distinctions; the position of patron cannot be inherited. But some structural differences also exist in Somali patronage. It is still unthinkable that a Gabooye or Bantu would be patron of a different Somali clan member, and unlikely that an elder from one of the 'noble clan' lineages would be the client of a minor lineage member. However, I have also argued that clan is *not* a primordial identity, and that the clan system changes as society evolves, so the distinctions just made are not as stable as those in Roman patronage systems and may vanish in a few generations.

[155] A kind of sarong or doti: a sheet that one wraps around one's waist, covering up to the ankles, that also is worn in Yemen and, until recently, in the Saudi Arabian Hijaz. This kind of informal behaviour by government officials is common in Somaliland and Puntland, but less so in Mogadishu.

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Chapter 10: Al Shabaab - The Prussians of Somalia or a Counter-Hegemonic Movement?

Why Al Shabaab should be seen not as a criminal terrorist organization, but as a successful political movement. Of its nationalist, ethical and religious appeal. How it responds to the social need for impartial law, justice and predictability, and is pragmatic in its rebel governance. Why its violence can be considered political. Where Al Shabaab is transforming Somali society through legal-rational Weberian administration but not being rewarded for it by the international community. How it has even submitted clan self-governance to its rule, instead of denying it. Of the insurgents' efficacious dual political order and why it is rejected by Somalis. Why Al Shabaab is relentlessly attacked by Western forces.

"We build the courts and other justice institutions so that every person gets his rights. The criminal gets his rights, other people get their rights. We must follow God's orders and we will succeed together and all people will become brothers. We fight against clannism in order to unite people. Everyone gets justice. Justice is the only thing that will satisfy us."

Al Shabaab governor.[1]

In addition to the State of Somaliland and the Federal Government of Somalia, there is a third governing structure in Somalia: Al Shabaab. They do not call themselves 'state' (dawlad) or 'Emirate' (emaraat) but refer to themselves by the Somali word Wilaayaat, from the Arabic ولاية. This term, meaning 'province' but also 'rule', 'government' is mostly used by Islamic State organizations to refer to their locally ruled areas as a province of a greater Islamic State,[2] but Al Shabaab, hostile to Islamic State, obviously does not use the term in this sense. I will use 'rule' and 'government' to designate Al Shabaab governance.

Like Somaliland and the federal government, Al Shabaab, the heir to the Islamic Courts Union, based its government on the self-governance that emerged spontaneously after the collapse of the state. What are the relations between their government and self-governance mechanisms? Does it resemble a dual or a hybrid system? In the absence of international community support, what does Al Shabaab's state tree look like? In the comparison between the ICU and the TFG, the latter was characterized as an inverse tree, planted upside down with its roots in the international community and its branches in Somali soil, while the ICU was compared to a network of thorny shrubs. Has that relation evolved? Al Shabaab has evolved under constant foreign and domestic military pressure; how has that impacted the movement, and what role does violence play in their rule over Somali society?

Al Shabaab has been almost exclusively studied through the lens of terrorism, radicalization, the ideology of global jihad, and violent resistance. Almost all studies were performed by researchers who are paid by, or identify with, Western agendas seeking to eliminate the threat of Al Shabaab. In the

[1] Life and Peace Institute 2014: "Alternatives for Conflict Transformation in Somalia"; p14

[2] Remark by Luis Martinez, 25 October 2022, telephone conversation.

context of the War on Terror, it was difficult to strike another note; doing so made one liable for accusations of sympathy for the enemy. Such was the situation when I started work on my PhD. Luckily, five years later there has been a fundamental shift in thinking. The *Global* War on Terror seems largely over. US negotiations with the Taliban have made 'talking to terrorists' acceptable, even though it remains a perilous exercise—not because of the 'terrorists', but because of pro-Western intelligence and security services.[3]

In the years since 2017, research into Al Shabaab has branched out in a new direction, concerned with their governance. This has provided insights upon which I build here. But the focus on Al Shabaab finances and its military and political leadership is still influenced by the counter-terrorism agenda; in comparison, there is much less information about how local government is organized and relations with inhabitants managed (the anthropological angle). Altogether data is still scarce, compared to data on the Taliban for example. It is difficult to make general statements about Al Shabaab rule. But one thing is certain: for many years, analysts and policymakers have concluded that the movement is waning, caught in its own contradictions and hugely unpopular. They were wrong. The movement is thriving and there is a fairly good possibility that—in a development similar to Afghanistan—Al Shabaab will either end up ruling the country, or otherwise expand its presence. Keeping these points in mind, I approach Al Shabaab not as an aberration, but as a successful political movement.

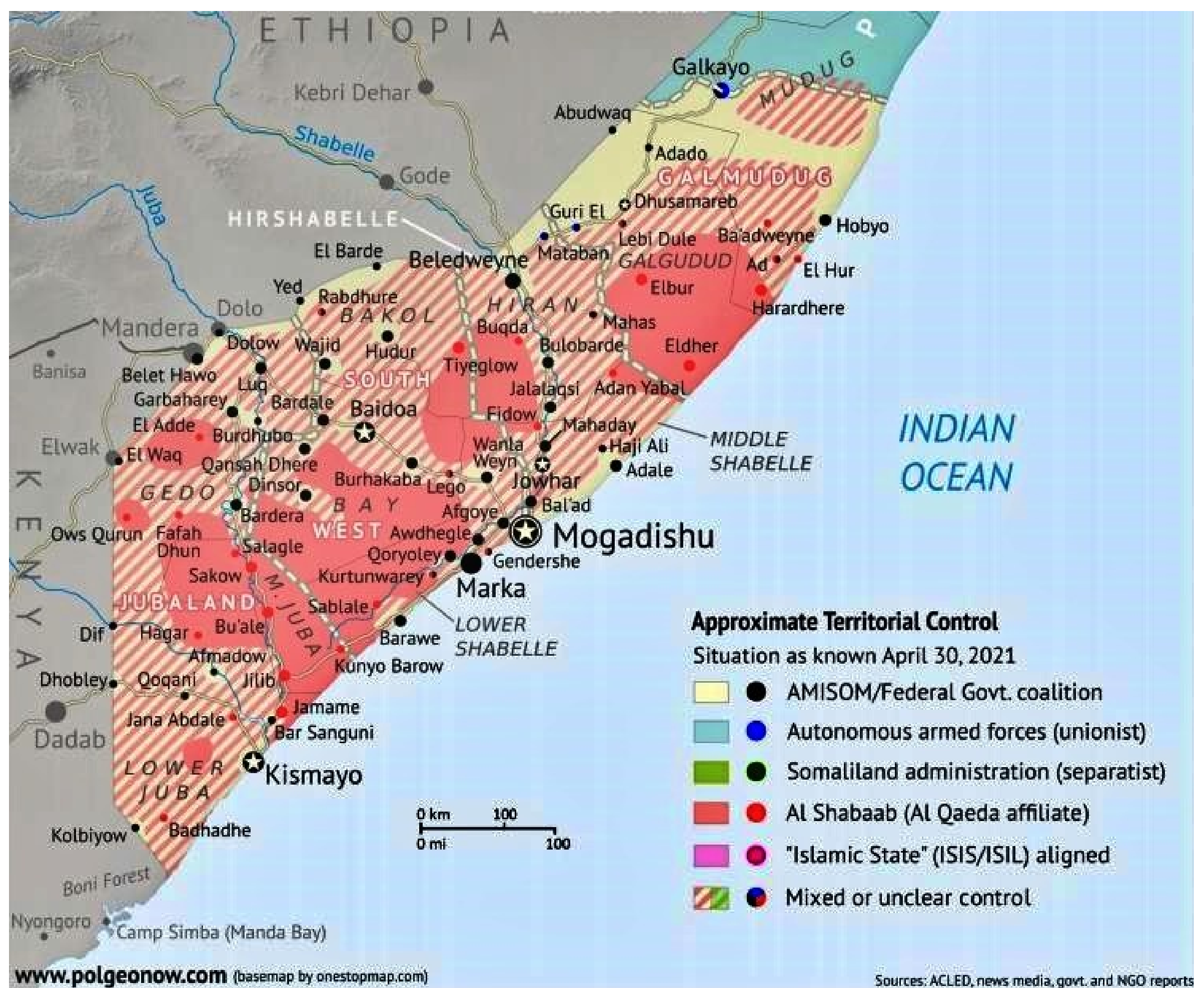

Figure 30 : Map showing areas of influence of Al Shabaab and government forces in south and central Somalia.

[3] I could not reach out directly to Al Shabaab members during my field trips to Somalia, not because they would have kidnapped me, but because I would have gotten in trouble with domestic security services. However, I interviewed a few people that deal frequently with them and received more casual feedback from Somalis.

Source as mentioned: www.polgenonow.com. This is a crop of Figure 1

In 2021, the Harakat Al Shabaab Al Mujahideen (the young Mujahideen movement, as the group is officially called, but I will stick to 'Al Shabaab' for simplicity's sake) controlled most rural areas of south and central Somalia, one of the regional capitals (Bu'aale), and 13 out of 45 district centres. As Figure 30 indicates, control by government forces is nowhere complete. Even in Puntland the area around Galgala (see Chapter 8) is controlled by Al Shabaab, while the area between Iskushuban and Qandala is controlled by Islamic State. Al Shabaab has a presence in all government-held towns, too.

Estimates about the number of fighters on Al Shabaab's payroll are low—generally below 10,000. That they manage to control such a vast territory is usually ascribed to their high mobility and their reliance on friendly clan militias. They do not engage AMISOM troops or the Somali National Army in open battle, preferring asymmetrical warfare. AMISOM operations and drone warfare have impacted, but not disrupted, Al Shabaab's influence. Government military operations against Al Shabaab have decreased strongly since 2018. Since 2014, the situation shown on Figure 30 has not changed much, with occasionally a district centre changing hands (and often changing back shortly afterwards). It is generally believed that over the past years Al Shabaab has mostly consolidated its hold in the areas where it is present, instead of trying to control new areas.

10.1 Evolution and Identity of Al Shabaab

'The Rise and Fall of the Islamic Courts Unit' in Chapter Seven describes the origins of Al Shabaab within the context of the Courts. Although it was associated with the Islamic Courts, Al Shabaab was from the outset an autonomous organization mostly dedicated to fighting, and it sometimes disagreed with the leadership of the courts, as described in detail by Roland Marchal.[4] It became fully autonomous when the Islamic Courts Union decided to disband after the Ethiopian invasion of December 2006, while Al Shabaab went on to become the main national resistance movement.

In this section, I interrogate the relations between Al Shabaab and Somali society; in the next, I will study its structures of rule. This follows my 'Dual Power Theory' approach: first I examine Al Shabaab in terms of rhizome, or social movement; and then in terms of the social construct it follows and represents. The questions in this first section are: what is the relation of Al Shabaab to Somali society, and how has that relation evolved from the beginning until today?

The Origins and Evolution of Al Shabaab

Al Shabaab, according to its own narrative and several Somali experts, formed in 2002[5] as a non-clan based militia that supported the Sharia Courts of Mogadishu. But the organization first was heard of in 2005. It formed in the training camp built around the religious school 'Ayuub' (managed by Al I'tisam) in Mogadishu, on the grounds of the Italian cemetery.[6] Its leaders (among whom Hassan Dahir Aweys, Aadan Ayro, Mukhtar Robow, Khalif 'adale, Ibrahim al Afghani, Ismail 'araale and Ahmed Aw Abdi Godane) had a background in Al Itihad, al I'tisam and/or the Afghan jihad. They were young and became hugely popular after playing a leading role in the defeat of the US-backed warlord coalition that tried to

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[4] Marchal 2011: "The Rise of a Jihadi Movement in a Country at War. Harakat al Shabaab al Mujahedden in Somalia"; p15-17. See also: Marchal 2009: "A tentative assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab".

[5] Interview with senior Al Shabaab leader Mahad Karate with Jamal Osman, Channel 4, aired on 15 June 2022 (https://youtu.be/KVSw0E9Y1RI).

[6] The Italian government unwittingly subsidized the formation of Al Shabaab by paying it a large amount of cash to retrieve the bones of the Italians buried there; Marchal 2011:15.

stop the Islamic Courts from taking over Mogadishu. They were then joined by ICU clerics, eager to rid the Courts Union of its clannist nature[7]. Marchal, in 2011, called Al Shabaab a 'military populist Jihadi organisation'.[8]

Spearheading the resistance against the Ethiopian invasion (Dec. 2006 – Jan. 2009) strongly increased Al Shabaab's popularity among Somalis. Initially, many of its fighters died confronting the vastly superior Ethiopian army; the organization than converted to guerrilla warfare and 'rebel governance', using the implantation it had gained by its alliance with the Islamic Courts in many parts of south and central Somalia.

Foreign terrorism experts became obsessed with two aspects of Al Shabaab that both seem to have been more rhetorical than real: its links to Al Qaeda, and the foreign fighters it recruited. Both raised the profile of what would otherwise have been a local insurgency to a global jihadist threat, and thus a deserving target in the Global War on Terror. The foreign fighters, in retrospect, seem to have been almost entirely Somalis from the diaspora and Muslims from other East African countries, not seasoned frontline Al Qaeda trainers as initially surmised. Al Shabaab pledged allegiance to Al Qaeda in 2008 and a liaison was reportedly established in 2009, but it was only in 2012 that Al Qaeda accepted Al Shabaab as a member organization.[9] That recognition did apparently not result in strong operational links (such as financial, arms and expertise transfers) between the organizations, so relations between the two organizations have remained mostly political/diplomatic.

The affiliation with Al Qaeda seems to have contributed to a falling out between AS leader Godane and many of the other leaders, who were killed—or retired—from the organization, including Mukhtar Roobow and Hassan Dahir Aweys. The contestation of Godane's leadership came from both diaspora and local sides. While diaspora fighters desired a more internationally-oriented, Al Qaeda-aligned jihad, local commanders such as Mukhtar Robow advocated for a better integration with the population and its needs. They were concerned about the popular backlash created by Al Shabaab's refusal of foreign aid during the 2011-2012 drought, and the draconian imposition of Sharia-based moral codes.

The 'purge', as it became known (2012-2013), led to the expulsion of these dissenting voices, including most foreign fighters, from Al Shabaab.[10] Godane did not intend Al Shabaab to become an Al Qaeda franchise, but jealously safeguarded the organization's autonomy. The purge resulted in the domination within Al Shabaab of ideologues over pragmatists.[11] Reportedly, some of the purged pragmatists were in favour of negotiating with the new Hassan Sheikh Mohamud government in Mogadishu. Godane, however, made it clear he had no interest in a dialogue with the new government. From 2011 to 2014, AMISOM recaptured territory held by Al Shabaab (2011-2014), notably Kismayo (2012), depriving it of its urban bases. The large-scale attacks by Al Shabaab on AMISOM bases and civilian/government targets in Mogadishu, and those in retaliation against AMISOM troop contributing countries Uganda (2010) and Kenya (Westgate Mall 2013, Garissa University 2015) seemed to confirm that Al Shabaab was truly a terrorist organization. First-hand information from areas governed by Al Shabaab was scarce.

In addition to focusing on Al Shabaab as a terrorist organisation, in the 2010-2012 period some observers studied the administrative aspects of Al Shabaab, showing some (reticent) admiration and admitting that the insurgents had earned some legitimacy among the population. The view by counter-terrorism experts, however, was that Al Shabaab governed through fear and repression alone.

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[7] Marchal 2009:390-391.

[8] Marchal 2011:35.

[9] Marchal 2018:90.

[10] Ken Menkhaus describes how this purge was fought over social media, discrediting the organization in the eyes of many of its supporters. Menkhaus 2014: "Al-Shabaab and Social Media: A Double-Edged Sword".

[11] Göldner-Ebenthal 2019: "Salafi Jihadi Armed Groups and Conflict (De-)Escalation. The Case of al-Shabaab in Somalia"; p20.

Most Somalis observe that Al Shabaab has become more violent, intolerant and extremist since 2011. This is often blamed on the sustained violence Al Shabaab itself has endured at the hands of government forces, AMISOM soldiers, Kenyan warplanes, and US drones. Support for the movement among ordinary Somalis fell. The October 14, 2017, truck bomb at the busy Zobe intersection in Mogadishu, killing more than 500 persons, prompted—for the first time—popular demonstrations against Al Shabaab in several towns and cities throughout Somalia. These developments led many observers to predict its imminent demise, but this did not occur.

From 2017 onward, reports about Al Shabaab governance resurfaced, showing that it had developed strongly. Most reports insisted on its mafia-like character (extortion, assassination, forced recruitment, propaganda), as they were still written from a hostile perspective; but this opened the way for other, more objective, research.

Conceptualizing Al Shabaab

Clearly, most foreign experts have misunderstood Al Shabaab. Not only did they not anticipate the rise and subsequent evolution of the movement[12], but they habitually misjudged its prospects. I believe this is due to the conceptualization of Al Shabaab as a terrorist organization belonging to the Al Qaeda family, or as a fanatic religious movement, or as a criminal (profit-seeking) gang. In each case, Al Shabaab is seen as a group extraneous to local society, seeking to impose foreign elements (global jihad, an imported ideology, transnational criminal practices) on a weakened but basically unwilling society. The premise behind these views is that Somalis would prefer the internationally backed federal government, if they had a chance to join it, but that Al Shabaab is holding them hostage.[13] However, given their poor analytical and predictive performance, these perspectives on Al Shabaab may be discarded.

In a 2018 article, Stathis Kalyvas suggested decoupling violent jihadism from both religion and terrorism, and analysing it, instead, as revolutionary insurgency—not fundamentally different from the Marxist rebel groups of the 1950s to 1970s.[14] A fundamental difference is the aspect of territoriality. While terrorism, religious fanaticism and organized crime have long been seen as essentially non-territorial (or de-territorialized) networks, an insurgency is territorial by definition, and entails establishing functional relations with the local population. Network organizations need not cultivate these, but insurgents must. Composing with local social forces entails a degree of adaptation, or better still, the capacity to offer something that the population needs.

Therefore, though the strict Salafi worldview of Al Shabaab has certainly been important in structuring its group identity, coming to control Somali territory they faced challenges and opportunities similar to other non-state armed groups engaged in a civil war, and had to be pragmatical about it.

What Somalis needed most crucially was (and is) peace, order, justice and a minimum of collective services. In development jargon this is ‘governance’, but it may also be called predictability. Michael Skjelderup mentions that “*A key finding from this growing body of literature* [on rebel governance] *is that territories governed by NSAGs* [non-state armed groups] *often establish alternative political and social orders with a relatively high level of predictability, both for the armed group itself and for the civilian population within that territory.*”[15] The counterinsurgency expert David Kilcullen notes that “*it is*

[12] Marchal (2011) observes, after discussing the organizational aspects of Al Shabaab, that no expert, himself included, would have believed such a new actor could arise in Somalia. He quotes his informants’ (erroneous) judgment that only the presence of foreign fighters within Al Shabaab could have led to such a high and tight degree of internal control, suggesting Al Shabaab would fall apart if they left.

[13] As a well-informed Nairobi- and Hargeisa-based analyst, this is also what I believed for years.

[14] Kalyvas 2018: “Jihadi Rebels in Civil War”.

[15] Skjelderup 2020: “Jihadi Governance and Traditional Authority Structures: Al-Shabaab and Clan Elders in

often the predictability inherent in the existence of rules, not the content of the rules themselves, far less the popularity of a given government, that creates the feeling of safety which allows for a normative system to function".[16] This desire for predictability and the practical acceptance of those that bring it, should not be confused with ideological alignment or acceptance. "*Absence of resistance from the civilian population is not synonymous with active support or sympathy with the non-state armed group or its ideology*".[17]

It appears that, from the outset, Al Shabaab has been proficient in bringing predictability to the areas it rules, a governance habit it had developed when it was allied with the Islamic Courts Union. The level of administration the militants brought to Jubaland, for example, was unprecedented since the civil war.[18] Similar reports come from all areas under Al Shabaab rule. When they occupy a new area, they make peace very rapidly (and harshly) and establish the rule of sharia. Reports of crimes or clan conflict from the areas they control are very rare. Al Shabaab wields an effective monopoly of violence.

One could go a step further and wonder whether Al Shabaab is not a social movement. But there seems to be an incompatibility between the idea of social movement and the coercive violence that Al Shabaab employs as rulers. Nevertheless, there may be a social movement at the base of Al Shabaab, either integrated in its structure, or—if external—one that it responds to.

The question of violence seems to obscure efforts to understand the political nature of Al Shabaab. Mahmood Mamdani argues that there are two types of violence: political and criminal. Political violence is a group effort to share power differently in society,[19] and should not be confused with criminal violence, which is an individual (or group) effort to gain a personal benefit through violence. While political violence is primarily concerned with its social effect, criminal violence is unconcerned by it. The state-based international order has successfully criminalized all types of non-state violence, almost leading to the disappearance of the very notion of political violence.[20] This approach vacates the political from political violence, making it seem either criminal or, when self-interest is not discernible, irrational. For example, Al Shabaab may have a clear political reason for assassinating a given person, or a social reason for chopping off a thief's hand. However, if one accepts that Al Shabaab governs a certain area, then their use of violence to maintain order becomes legitimate, as it is similar to what any state does.

The criminalization by authorities of violent opposition is a natural political reflex, but there's no need for neutral observers to accept it. The concept of political violence should be restored, because it has a deep history. Almost none of the changes that we cherish in our history has taken place without violence against a previous regime, and we need this concept for a productive understanding of Al Shabaab and similar movements.[21]

Southern Somalia, 2008-2012"; p1177.

[16] Kilcullen 2013: "Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla"; p137.

[17] Arjona 2017: "Civilian Cooperation and Non-Cooperation with Non-State Armed Groups"; p760.

[18] Crouch & Abdi 2019: "Community Perspectives Towards Al Shabaab. Sources of Support and the Potential for Negotiations".

[19] Mamdani, 2020: "Neither Settler nor Native. The Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities"; p331-332.

[20] Mamdani 2020:194, argues that the Nuremburg Trials, which made individual German leaders personally responsible for the crimes of the German state, and who were judged in a criminal court setting, served to absolve the German state of crimes, allowing it to restart after World War II. This was the seed of the war crimes tribunal as an institution, serving to absolve the state of crimes committed by it. Wars are waged by states, but unlike debts, for example, war crimes are attributed to individual agency.

[21] In contrast, some scholars seriously consider violence as a viable political strategy. See for example Bakonyi & Bliesemann De Guevara 2009: "The Mosaic of Violence - An Introduction". They consider that "far from being basically chaotic and errant, violent practices adhere to functional logics that appear as recurrent patterns".

Based on the above, we can affirm that Al Shabaab is an insurgent movement that rules most of south and central Somalia, by responding to a need for order and predictability among the population. It employs political violence for maintaining law and order in areas it rules, and against the Federal State of Somalia and those supporting it seeking a redistribution of power. But how popular is it? What drives people to join Al Shabaab?

Al Shabaab has forcibly recruited fighters, obliging communities to hand over a quota of children for indoctrination from a young age. This fact is often cited by Somali commentators and underlined by analysts, but only a small percentage of the members joined that way.[22] Many other analysts of radicalization insist on socio-economic factors, mainly poverty. Joining Al Shabaab would be a way out of misery and 'becoming someone' with a gun. This is certainly a pull factor, but the main motivation Ingiriis observes in his fieldwork is political and security related. Experiencing injustice at the hand of the government or foreign troops, or the clan system, pushes many people into the arms of Al Shabaab. This tallies with the finding, in an extensive UNDP study on what motivates Africans to join extremist groups, that *exposure to state violence is the principal motivation for joining violent groups,* before (the commonly assumed) socio-economic or religious and ideological factors.[23]

"*The most powerful reasons for young, dispossessed men to join Al-Shabaab are grievance-based motivations, especially [in] areas around Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab exploits the growing grievances against the government's lack of ability to distribute power and resources equally among the Somali clans. The young men joining the insurgency movement consider the Mogadishu government and other clan-based federal states in the country as externally-imposed predatory power machines based on patrimonial political cronyism (…) Many young men in Mogadishu complain about their perceived powerless position and talk about the possibility of changing the status quo through violence*."[24]

In some areas of Somalia where the conflict between pro-government forces and insurgents has been particularly intense—such as Lower Shabelle and Lower Juba—reports of abuses by government-aligned forces have led numerous people to join the insurgency.[25] The Ethiopian invasion of 2006-2009 sent many Somalis into the arms of Al Shabaab; the operations of AMISOM troops have had a similar effect.[26] One should not exaggerate the crimes committed by East African forces fighting under the AMISOM banner,[27] but their echo has resonated through Somali society, amplified of course by Al Shabaab media. Federal Government forces are also credited with fuelling grievances through the unruly conduct of war and law & order operations, and clan-based targeting. Finally, US drone strikes have greatly increased local populations' feeling of injustice, especially as they often seem to hit the wrong target.[28]

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[22] Ingiriis 2020: "The Anthropology of Al-Shabaab: The Salient Factors for the Insurgency Movement's Recruitment Project". He notes that those that joined this way are often the most fervent 'brainwashed' fighters. But many captured AS fighters falsely allege being forcibly conscripted and 'brainwashed', to escape public wrath and qualify for more mild treatment (personal discussions with deradicalization experts).

[23] UNDP 2017: "Journey to Extremism in Africa".

[24] Ingiriis 2020:365-366.

[25] Crouch 2018: "Counter-Terror and the Logic of Violence in Somalia's Civil War. Time for a new approach"; p16.

[26] Botha & Abdile 2014: "Radicalisation and al-Shabaab Recruitment in Somalia".

[27] The crimes taken most seriously by Somalis were sexual exploitation of minors and the killing of civilians (Williams 2016: "AMISOM under Review"; p45. See also Human Rights Watch 2010: "Harsh War, Harsh Peace. Abuses by al-Shabaab, the Transitional Federal Government, and AMISOM in Somalia" and Human Rights Watch, 2017: "Somalia: AU Should Release Investigation into 14 Civilian Deaths" (link). Taken together, however, AMISOM troops did not commit many crimes compared to other troops at war and there may be a bit of a racist undertone in some of the Somali and international critiques against its soldiers.

[28] Amnesty International 2019: "The Hidden US War in Somalia: Civilian Casualties from Air Strikes in Lower Shabelle".

Counterinsurgency and counter-terror operations are not only widely ineffective, but have an adverse effect.[29]

The feeling of injustice and powerlessness at addressing grievances is compounded, for many young Somalis, by the perceived inaction of their elders. In general, the youth is exasperated by the immobilism of the older generation, and by egotistical (or clan-oriented) efforts for improving their personal situation, rather than that of society as a whole.[30]

Although grievances may be the main push factor, the pull factor is important. Al Shabaab projects an image, both collectively and its leaders personally, of being in control of their lives, fighting for a noble cause (Somali independence) and guided by religion. Unlike the federal government, there is no corruption, nor double standards and dissimulation (*taqiya*). It practices what it preaches. In the context sketched in the previous chapter, this is an attractive discourse. One need only compare the glitzy and professional-looking productions of Al Shabaab's media arm 'Al Kataib'[31] to that of the government or the free press, to realize that Al Shabaab's image may appeal more to the young generation. Al Shabaab, after all, means 'the youth' in Arabic.

As a resistance movement (*muqawama*), Al Shabaab is motivated by the nationalist goal of liberating the country from the control of foreigners. The Kenyan occupation of Jubaland is a main concern in their communications and actions,[32] and their propaganda against the Ethiopian presence is similarly virulent.[33] Behind the 'visible face of the colonization' (AMISOM troops), Al Shabaab mainly blames the USA and the UK. Both countries have military bases in Somalia and are key partners of the Federal Government and AMISOM in providing intelligence on Al Shabaab. Although the insurgents rarely directly attacks Western targets in Somalia, it reasons that as soon as the foreign forces depart, the federal structure will collapse. Given that the East African countries contributing troops (except Djibouti), the main donors of the federal government and most NGOs are from Christian countries, Al Shabaab accuses them of a Christian crusade against Somalis, mobilizing Somali opposition.

Joining Al Shabaab, finally, is often not as individual a decision as the rational actor-based models of specialists in the Counter Violent Extremism industry assume. It seems that most recruits are provided by clan elders (who may be either motivated by the grievances given above, or are coerced into providing fighters or trainees).[34] Finally, the socio-economic pull factor is also substantial. Al Shabaab offers a much more comprehensive and predictable package to its recruits than the government does to its soldiers. Meals are provided, salaries are paid on time, brides or bride money are provided after a certain number of years of service, time-off is provided for establishing a home and family, promotions are merit-based and, for believers, entry to heaven is assured when killed in action, while surviving widows and children are supported by the movement.

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[29] Crouch 2018; see also Suri 2016: "Barbed Wire on Our Heads. Lessons from Counter-Terror, Stabilisation and Statebuilding in Somalia".

[30] Marchal 2018:104.

[31] Al Kataib's productions are hard to find on the internet today, as they are systematically banned as terrorist propaganda. They can be accessed after a registration on jihadology.net.

[32] See for example the interview with an Al Shabaab Sheikh in Life and Peace Institute 2014:18: "*Kismayo and the Juba regions [are] controlled by Kenyans who can do whatever they want. Ethiopians also invaded the country and captured towns without permission. All these things show that the country is getting out of hand. The country has entered into a sphere of darkness.*"

[33] The official website of Al Shabaab caasimada.net, when visited in January 2022, carried several articles in English critical of Jubaland politics; one of them reminding readers that 'the corrupt Madobe' is continuously kept in power in Jubaland to do Kenya's bidding (Sabriye, Salaax Saciid, 7Jan2022: "Rewarded MP Seat at Somalia Federal Parliament 11th by Ahmed Madoobe" (link).

[34] Marchal 2018; Ingiriis 2020.

Although Al Shabaab may not be a social movement, neither in its origins nor in its functioning, it does seem to be the result of social dynamics, and it builds on a social desire for change. The change desired is more order in, and control over, one's life. To this can be added the motivation, for some Somalis, of believing they are participating in a positive collective pursuit: the transformation of a society on the brink of collapse.

The ethical appeal of Al Shabaab is non-negligible, adding to its widespread social legitimacy. It seems most Somalis accord legitimacy to some aspects of Al Shabaab's efforts at social transformation (mainly, their effort to overcome clannism, impunity and corruption, replacing them with justice and equal treatment). Other aspects are resented: respondents in several surveys dislike the lack of freedom of speech and movement, and the unreasonable violence and harshness of Al Shabaab forces, notably their disregard for civilian life. They also resent Al Shabaab's authoritarian rule. And almost no Somali agrees with their religious views, notably their supposed superiority and right to denounce other Muslims as unbelievers (*takfir*), justifying their killing. Most sheikhs and ulama of Al Shabaab are not respected as religious scholars outside the movement.[35]

In fact, Al Shabaab's ideology is less attractive to Somalis than its practice of power. In terms of relations between image and practice of the state, Al Shabaab presents a reverse case to that of the federal state, and indeed to the liberal democratic state worldwide, whose practice always fall short of the expectations generated by the image. With Al Shabaab, the practice of the state is experienced as better than its image.

Seen as a rhizome, Al Shabaab is strongly implanted in Somalia, and it is indeed a movement (*harakat*). It has high levels of internal trust and loyalty, binding its members. It engages other sectors of society (other rhizomes) by responding to their need for order, justice, and a predictable existence. Like other rhizomes, it is self-governing, with a high level of internal organization as discussed below. Its self-identity is that of young, determined resistance fighters who live a pure Islamic and nomadic life (like the Prophet's companions) and whose objective is to save Somali society from a foreign invasion that threatens to ruin it and turn it away from religion. Their uncompromising resistance against the West and the federal government project, as well as their internal motivation to establish a different kind of governance, makes Al Shabaab a counter-hegemonic movement.

10.2 Details on Al Shabaab's Rule

"The furniture in this room, the water on the table, the chair you are sitting in, it has all been taxed by Al-Shabaab."

Mukhtar Robow, 2018[36]

Executive Structure

Al Shabaab is led by an Amir (ruler); since 2014 this is Ahmed Umar, also known as Ahmed Diriye or Abu Ubaidah. He is advised by a *Golaha Shuraada* ('Shura', translated as Council of Elders) and assisted by an Executive Council, *Golaha Fulinta*. The latter has a chairman, deputy chairman and leaders of the

[35] Crouch & Abdi 2019: "Community Perspectives Towards Al Shabaab. Sources of Support and the Potential for Negotiations" in Keating, Michael & Waldman, Matt (eds) "War and Peace in Somalia: National Grievances, Local Conflict and Al-Shabaab", Oxford University Press.

[36] Mukhtar Roobow (a 'high-level defector') to researchers from the UN Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group in a Feb 2018 interview; United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea 2018; p109 (annex 2.4.2).

departments (*maktabah*) of defence, intelligence, finance, fatwa (religious decrees), da'wa (missionary activity), humanitarian affairs, and regional governors.

Local governors (*wali*) have a fair amount of autonomy and the structure of government is more or less replicated at regional and district levels, with an advisory and an executive body. Security and defence units exist at the regional, but not district, levels. Regional and district representatives are rotated to avoid clan nepotism. At the village level, there are often only two representatives: one (*amir qariya*) for administrative affairs, and another (*amir daw'a*) for spiritual and legal issues.

Al Shabaab's executive structure used to be shrouded in mystery. Over the past years, the names and positions of many Al Shabaab officials have become known; one can find them, for example, in the UN Panel of Experts 2021 report.[37] This is partially due to a concerted intelligence gathering effort, but it is facilitated by the increasing transparency of Al Shabaab itself in its communications. This might indicate a growing self-confidence of the movement that permits it to work on the public profile of its leadership, thereby increasing its legitimacy among the population.

Fiscal Policies

The following descriptions are based on two sources, mainly: the UN Panel of Experts (called the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea until 2018),[38] and the studies of the Mogadishu-based Hiraal Institute for Policy Studies.[39]

The main focus has been on how Al Shabaab collects, transfers and spends fiscal revenue. This documentation effort is intended to support a disruption of financial flows to Al Shabaab, western agencies involved in the War on Terror being impatient at the lack of progress on the military front. It also reflects a growing perception of Al Shabaab as a mafia-like criminal gang. The Federal Government, under IMF supervision, is simultaneously trying to improve its fiscal policies, including the adoption of stricter regulations against money laundering and the financing of terrorism. It is expected that this regulatory framework will facilitate the disruption of Al Shabaab financial networks. The emphasis of the UN Panel of Experts since 2018 on these networks is evident in their reporting; they have also suggested measures to disrupt these flows.

On the collection side, Al Shabaab taxes nearly all economic activity in south and central Somalia. It has access to the cargo manifests at the Port of Mogadishu, and knows exactly which business imports what, and its value. It keeps detailed registers of all businesses and knows exactly how much to tax them, from the largest companies to the drivers of *bajaaj* (Indian motorized three-wheelers). When tax disputes arise, Al Shabaab provides the documentary evidence on which their claims are based, and they are rarely contested. In surveys, the Hiraal Institute in 2020 found that 44 out of 50 businesses in government-controlled-towns (including all those in Mogadishu) admitted paying taxes to the insurgents.[40]

Al Shabaab also requires all people in south and central Somalia to pay income tax, including senior officers of the Somali National Army. Farmers pay taxes on their harvests and their livestock, and once more when they sell the agricultural produce or livestock. Transports are also taxed, both the trucks themselves and the value of their cargo. In addition to these taxes, a different fiscal department of Al

[37] Pages 41-47 of the UN Panel of Experts on Somalia report 2021.

[38] UN Monitoring Group on Eritrea and Somalia report 2018; UN Panel of Experts reports on Somalia 2019, 2020 and 2021. These are all available on the UN Security Council website.

[39] Hiraal Institute for Policy Studies: 2018a: "The AS Finance System" and 2020: "A Losing Game: Countering Al-Shabab's Financial System".

[40] The UN Panel of Experts found that 12 out of 15 businesses surveyed in Kismayo also paid taxes to Al Shabaab.

Shabaab collects yearly zakat tax, which according to sharia should amount to 2.5% of the net wealth of an individual (above a certain threshold). Finally, a variable war tax (*infaaq*) can be levied when Al Shabaab deems it necessary.

It appears tax compliance is nearly universal. Tax disputes are settled in court, and receipts are issued upon payment. Refusal to pay tax (without a court procedure) is countered with violent collection measures. Somalis resent the tax burden, which they find exaggerated, but concede that they seem to be calculated and levied in a fair and predictable manner. When truck drivers have the option of reaching their destination over government-controlled or insurgent-controlled roads, they choose the latter. Taxes are less, fully predictable, and a receipt is provided that can be shown at subsequent checkpoints to avoid double taxation. On government-controlled roads, in contrast, each checkpoint can levy whatever 'tax' it wants, and no receipts are provided. These 'taxes' are pocketed by the checkpoint soldiers and their commanders.

Collected taxes are deposited in bank or mobile money accounts, or transferred by cash to a central location. There is only one instance known, over the past years, of an Al Shabaab tax collector fleeing with the money (a paltry 2,500 USD). The Hiraal Institute assumes that a low estimate of Al Shabaab tax collection is 15 million USD per month. Based on partial information collected by monitoring several bank accounts used by Al Shabaab in Mogadishu and evidence collected in Kismayo, UN data suggest a much higher amount. Both groups of researchers agree that Al Shabaab generates a considerable surplus.[41] Registers at roadblocks or district-level tax collectors are painstakingly hand-written, recording all transaction details. Al Shabaab's finance officers are themselves controlled by internal security.

UN Experts found out in 2019 that Al Shabaab routinely uses the commercial banking system, but efforts deployed since then to intercept these payments have not succeeded. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) supports the federal government's efforts for developing adequate policies, but within the ruling elites there are other interests against enforced reporting and monitoring. Al Shabaab uses cryptocurrencies for international transactions, and for keeping its reserves safe.[42] But most of Al Shabaab's financial transactions are by mobile money. In 2018, the World Bank reported that about 155 million mobile money transactions, worth $2.7 billion, were recorded in Somalia each month, and that mobile money had superseded the use of cash in Somalia, with over 70 per cent of adult Somalis regularly using mobile money services. For the time being, Al Shabaab does not have to worry about disruption of its financial systems. Given that it has informants everywhere, it receives sufficient advance warning of any new measures to adapt by anticipation.

Finally, regarding Al Shabaab expenditures, there is basically no data[43]. It seems Al Shabaab finances are centrally managed in a budgetary process, in which cash is provided to the departments and the regions for spending. In general, experts assume that most of its income is spent on its violent activities: war and terrorism. Salaries seem to be always paid on time, indicating that Al Shabaab's war chest has never been empty. For the rest, anecdotal evidence points in different directions. Education, small-scale development and infrastructure rehabilitation work does take place, but seems not very capital-intensive. Humanitarian aid is provided when necessary, but Al Shabaab relies on Gulf charities to supplement its zakat collections. Successful businesses in Mogadishu are compelled to sell part of their

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[41] UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Ethiopia 2018, p26 §84: "Al-Shabaab is likely generating a significant budgetary surplus; money is not a limiting factor in its ability to wage its insurgency." In 2020, the Panel of Experts came to a similar conclusion: Al Shabaab generates "a significant budgetary surplus, some of which is invested in property purchases and businesses in Mogadishu."

[42] Confidential report I co-authored

[43] The UN Panel of Experts, 2020, asserts that Al Shabaab's expenditure in 2019 was 21 million USD, of which 16.5 million was spent on military activities and 5 million on its security apparatus—leaving nothing for the rest of its departments and regions. This is in flagrant contradiction to its own assessments of income, and with common sense, so I have chosen not to take this sum into account here.

shares to Al Shabaab, which seeks profitable local investments and muscles its way into interesting deals.[44] The UN concludes that "*Al-Shabaab's domestic revenue generation apparatus is more geographically diversified and systematic than that of the Federal Government or the federal member states*"[45].

In many regards, Al Shabaab rule conforms neatly to the Weberian ideal of the legal-rational state, which, as we saw, was based on the Prussian state. The Prussians had also established military rule, including over the civil service. They were experts in taxation (Badie & Birnbaum, 1983, mention that Prussian citizens were taxed three times more than the average French citizen[46]), jealously maintained a monopoly of violence, closely watched over the moral behaviour of the subjects of the state, kept a tight administration with rigorous internal controls, and the *Rechtsstaat* (the Rule of Law) ordered the public domain, including their own government. For Al Shabaab, that is the role of sharia.

It seems a joke to compare Al Shabaab to Prussians, but their rule approaches the legal-rational ideal closer, in any case, than the Federal Government and the Government of Somaliland have ever been. If there were an open competition between the three to determine who can provide the best governance, rule of law and transparency within a capitalist competitive framework, Al Shabaab would doubtlessly win. The legal-rational state that provides good governance remains the ideal of the international community. Where Al Shabaab is found lacking, to the point of instantly disqualifying it, is in the regime of liberal rights. These, as we have seen, were also not part of Weber's definition, and were only added after World War II as part of the UN system.

Management of the Public Realm

James C. Scott coined the term 'Seeing Like a State' to describe how the collection of detailed data on the population, the economy and the terrain allows states to exercise an absolute form of power. Many of the earliest recorded documents of humankind are detailed records of taxes due and paid. Al Shabaab clearly shares this obsession. Not only do they produce and use written evidence for fiscal purposes, but they have a more general obsession with paper documents, as humanitarian organizations working in Al Shabaab-controlled areas found out in the late 2000s. They were required to produce CVs with education certificates for all of their staff. Bourdieu noted that an essential function of the state is as a 'central bank of symbolic capital'. The state guarantees the authenticity and acceptance of all kinds of paper documents, from paper money to diplomas and land ownership deeds.

It is precisely this function of the state that distinguishes taxation from extortion. "*Taxation is indistinguishable from extortion in the absence of a legal framework that justifies its imposition*", Mara Revkin notes in a case study of Islamic State taxation in Iraq and the Levant; therefore, "*the Islamic State has used its legal system to legitimize and justify economic activities that might otherwise resemble theft* (…); *courts and judges are directly involved in administering and legitimizing the tax policies*".[47] Somalis also have recourse to courts when they want to contest their taxation requests. Al Shabaab has done its best to make its taxation *legal*.

Al Shabaab's tight control over the population and the economy allows it to conduct well-informed public policies. For example, it monitors quotas of export crops, like lemons and sesame, to ensure that no individual producer exceeds his quota, but also to avoid the replacement of crops grown for the

[44] See details given by the UN Panel of Experts 2020, p12 §33. A report by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies Center on Sanctions – Fanusie & Entz 2017: "Al Shabaab: Financial Assessment" – notes that AS is "deeply embedded within Somalia's economy".

[45] UN Panel of Experts 2020.

[46] Badie & Birnbaum 1983 : "The Sociology of the State", University of Chicago Press; p116-117. They refer to the end of the 17th century.

[47] Revkin 2016: "Legal Foundations of the Islamic State"; p32.

domestic market (which they prefer) by export-oriented production.[48] This may not amount to scientific resource management (also a legacy of Prussians in Europe) but it leads in that direction.

One of their most unpopular measures is the ban on qat (often known by its Swahili term *miraa*), to which a significant percentage of adult males (and some women and children) is addicted.[49] The ban is prompted as much by public moral concerns as by macroeconomic concerns. The narcotic is grown in Kenya and Ethiopia, and a big chunk of Somalia's national income and foreign exchange is spent on it.[50] The federal government, in contrast, raises revenue by taxing qat, a measure Al Shabaab finds immoral.

Al Shabaab also banned the cutting of trees and the use of plastic bags in territories it controls, seeking to stop deforestation[51] and reduce the number of livestock (especially camels) that die from plastic bag ingestion. This produced sarcastic comments internationally, about 'eco-terrorists' that chop off hands and blow up innocent civilians, but ban plastic; however, their bans are respected and probably have a positive impact on the environment.[52]

The international perspective on Al Shabaab's humanitarian and development efforts is solely through the lens of counterterrorism and insurgency. The provision of aid by Al Shabaab is seen as a devious ploy to bind populations to Al Shabaab.[53] This cynical view of assistance in fact also guides Western donor policies. As described in Chapter Seven, the doubling of foreign assistance to Somalia from 350 to 700 million USD between 2007 and 2008 (Fig. 21) was justified by donor agencies in the framework of the War on Terror. From then onwards, donors funded Somali government agencies and NGOs to provide 'stabilization' in areas recently liberated from Al Shabaab, so that the local population could experience the benefits of government as some kind of peace dividend (7.4). But Al Shabaab seems to outperform Western donors, despite having only a fraction of their resources.[54]

The main objective of Al Shabaab in terms of humanitarian development remains to increase food production in Somalia, rather than import it.[55] They still do not accept humanitarian aid provided by Western agencies. To confront the crises provoked by drought or flash floods, they use the zakat collected among the population. This strokes with the rhizomatic principle of *qaaraan* (material solidarity, see 6.2), though it is not limited to blood ties, but implemented equally among all Somalis suffering from the crisis.

In 2017, Al Shabaab organized its own aid operation, supported by private charities from the Gulf who do not fear the long arm of Western counter-terror agencies.[56] There were almost no deaths due to the

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[48] Hiraal Institute for Policy Studies 2020:7.

[49] Odenwald et al. 2007: "The Consumption of Khat and Other Drugs in Somali Combatants".

[50] Life and Peace Institute 2014:19

[51] For years Al Shabaab earned money by taxing the charcoal trade, produced by burning trees, and sold mostly in the Gulf countries (for sheeshas). See Rawlence 2015: "Black and White: Kenya's Criminal Racket in Somalia". Profits in the sugar trade, imported through Kismayo and smuggled over the border to avoid high Kenyan tariffs, and in the charcoal trade (going in the other direction) accrued equally to the Kenyan Defence Forces, the Jubaland administration of Madobe, and Al Shabaab that held territory in between.

[52] A documentary made by Channel 4 journalist Jamal Osman in the Al Shabaab-held town of Jilib, Middle Juba, posted online on 15 June 2022, shows how Al Shabaab checkpoints enforce the ban on plastic bags.

[53] For example, this statement by the UN Panel of Experts in 2021 suggests the international body is more concerned with disrupting Al Shabaab than with the well-being of the Somali population: "*Al-Shabaab has already begun to exploit the impact of climate change by providing communities with protection from flooding, acting as a service provider to communities that receive little support from the Government*" (p4, emphasis added by me).

[54] I have not encountered any reference to public-health provision by Al Shabaab; it may well be their weakest point on the governance scoreboard. This is also the opinion of Hussein Sheikh Ali, interviewed 26 Feb 2019.

[55] As explained to an NGO worker by Al Shabaab governor for Lower Shabelle, Abu 'Abdalle, and relayed to me by the NGO worker, now working for UNSOM, in an interview in Mogadishu on 11 March 2019.

[56] Rono 22 March 2017: "Somalia food crisis: Has al-Shabab adopted new approach to food aid?" BBC news (link)

drought, and Al Shabaab performed at least as well as the UN, the Federal Government and the many NGOs working with them.

There is not much data about economic development in Al Shabaab-ruled areas, but they seem to develop at least as fast as government areas. For instance, in Jubaland, the Al Shabaab-held towns of Jilib and Saakow have grown much faster over the past decade than the government-held capital Kismayo.[57] We may safely assume that, as the towns grow, so do the opportunities in them for personal development. As to food production, there is no information to ascertain whether Al Shabaab's efforts at self-sufficiency are successful. The Horn of Africa is severely impacted by climate change (droughts, extreme hot weather and flash floods) and this may undo whatever progress was made.

An often overlooked achievement of Al Shabaab is self-sufficiency. Earlier in the dissertation, the systematic dependency of the Somali state on foreign sources of funding has been described several times. The conclusion reached was that the state, in Somalia, has never been more than a portal to access foreign patronage. It was long suspected that Al Shabaab received money from abroad, from Eritrea in the early years, and Al Qaeda. These allegations are no longer heard, and indeed, there is no evidence that Al Shabaab receives substantial amounts of funding from abroad.

Al Shabaab has managed to create a self-sufficient, monopoly-of-violence wielding, rational-bureaucratic state in Somalia. The dream of foreign interventionists since at least a century has now been realized by an indigenous insurgent organization that is considered, by those same foreigners, as the embodiment of evil; it must be replaced *at all costs* by the duplicitous, foreign-patronage based, pseudo-liberal democratic state that is described in the previous chapter. This suggests that what is important to members of the international community is not the nature of the state, but their influence on it.[58]

Justice

Somalis who pay taxes to Al Shabaab may get little in return in terms of economic development, professional opportunities and education; but the justice system and some basic social protection mechanisms do work, besides law and order (with the taxes paid to the government, Somalis do not even obtain that in return).

Even some of the Somalis working for the government are positive about Al Shabaab's justice system. The formal, government-run court system, as we have seen, is dysfunctional and (despite the presence of a few honest judges) works on the basis of bribes—whoever pays more wins the case. In contrast, the insurgents run a tight judiciary. Mogadishu residents travel to the Islamic courts in Afgooye, a district on the outskirts of the capital almost entirely controlled by Al Shabaab, to seek redress on any matter, even domestic cases. Cases are dealt with immediately and, most importantly, decisions are enforced. Women may expect fair treatment, within the parameters of sharia law as interpreted by the conservative militants.

I have characterized customary law, *xeer*, as aiming to preserve or re-establish social peace, and formal law as preoccupied with reinforcing social order. As to Sharia, it is meant to achieve both social peace and order, as it is based on a religious ethic that is shared by all. Islam means submission and the word peace is formed from the same root, (س ل م). Accepting a negative verdict of a sharia court then becomes an act of piety, through which one can reintegrate society. All Somalis are Muslims, so sharia is

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[57] One can observe this on Google Earth thanks to the timeline function, comparing the three towns.

[58] Al Shabaab makes a similar critique. See for example a documentary made by Al Kataib on the international involvement in Farmajo's years in power: (link). A fragment of a debate I participated in at the Somali International University is reproduced in it, to my surprise.

implicitly accepted. Both sharia and constitutional law reject customary law (*xeer*),[59] but *xeer* incorporates sharia, in the same manner the law of nature supports the exercise of positive law.

The formal justice system, as we have seen, has never functioned well in Somalia, nor did it have much penetration in society. Somalis may have become familiar with the idea of courts based on constitutional law and dreamt about a functioning formal legal system; but their legal experience of the state was shaped by military tribunals, and the elite seemed above the law. When society broke down, *xeer* allowed clans to establish peace and continue self-governance at a local level, but it could not provide a society-wide solution to conflict. Sharia stepped in to address this absence. Al Shabaab was born on the back of the sharia courts and the provision of justice remains their primary means to obtain legitimacy, even above law enforcement.

This represents a profound change in Somali society. As one analyst noted: "*We face a pre-modern society. Most people in Somalia have never dealt with modern laws, they haven't even felt governed. Al Shabaab in that sense is a modernising force, as they are exposing Somalis to being governed by the Rule of Law, a system which exists outside and beyond the people that populate it".*[60] Sharia and *xeer* may resemble each other a lot. After all, *xeer* is supposedly based on Islam. Sharia did not seem alien to most Somalis when the courts first appeared, but there are differences of consequence. The first is the rotation of judges who are no longer from the clan community—the clan identity of a judge is in general not revealed, and nobody should be able to guess it from his verdicts.[61] The other is individual instead of collective responsibility.

That justice is of the utmost importance to Somalis should give us pause for thought. In international intervention and state-building discourse, the term justice is conspicuously absent. Justice is usually relegated somewhere behind the Rule of Law or encapsulated in human rights discourse, or cast as a theme to be addressed by local civil society.[62] Justice, for interventionists, is the result of a process involving the building of institutions, and the focus is on building the institutions through which justice can later be served. When foreign analysts compare the federal government with Al Shabaab, law enforcement is usually emphasized as a domain in which the government should try to outperform Al Shabaab, but the focus should really be on justice if popular legitimacy is sought.

Maybe the blindness for justice among interveners stems from their exclusive focus on formal institutions, of which Law is the ideal expression and the foundation. Justice, by contrast, is a concept belonging to the rhizomatic domain: it is a feeling, it is fluid, relational and context-dependent, and cannot be codified. The relation between justice and law has been addressed by legal philosophers and goes beyond the scope of this thesis, but within the Dual Power Theory, law pertains to the formal, structured domain of the tree, and justice to that of the rhizome.

Adam Baczko demonstrates that the Taliban in Afghanistan established their power and legitimacy in Afghan society by providing justice.[63] He argues that the Law belongs to the state, but when the state collapsed the requirement for justice remained; communities must produce their own justice. The disappearance of the state framework, and the social and values upheaval caused by civil war means that justice providers cannot refer to the rule of law and must perforce deliver verdicts in a manner that

[59] "One wali [Al Shabaab governor] rejected the proverb used by some Somalis to justify pragmatic legal decisions, which says: *Xaq ma aha ee waa xal* (it is not right, but it is a solution)." (Life and Peace Institute 2014:20).

[60] Interview with Hussein Sheikh Ali in Mogadishu, February 2019.

[61] This was revealed by two interviewees; one expressed surprise (and satisfaction) that nobody in his home community in Lower Shabelle knew from which clan the AS judge was. The other made a similar statement about a judge in Bulo Burde, Hiraan.

[62] D'Souza 2018: "What is Wrong with Rights".

[63] Baczko 2021: "La Guerre par le Droit. Les Tribunaux Taliban en Afghanistan".

truly appeals to the community's own sense of justice. At this level (similar to *xeer*), justice is still beholden to the interests of the community, and it may not function between communities, especially those in conflict. The impartiality of judges is then difficult to establish. But sharia provides a solution, as it refers to the parties in conflict as part of a same community (of believers), and the impartiality of the judge need no longer be doubted. Mechanisms to 'objectify' the juridical system include certified legal education and internal surveillance; the latter maintains discipline and internal coherence. Another measure is the rotation of judges. Al Shabaab insists on legal training and performs internal surveillance of its judicial system too. Baczko's description of how the Taliban 'rule through justice' is also valid for Al Shabaab, allowing for modifications due to the different cultural context.

Revkin documents how ISIS used the provision of justice to gain local popularity in territories it conquered: "*Many Syrians and Iraqis interviewed for this paper reported that the Islamic State earned the trust of residents of their towns and cities by rapidly resolving local disputes*". This expeditive justice is also used to enforce discipline within its own ranks.[64] "*Anecdotal reports from Syria and Iraq indicate that the Islamic State punishes its own members at least as often as it punishes civilians.*" Al Shabaab similarly punishes its members with severity when they break the law or transgress rules of behaviour. This serves to reassure populations about the impartiality of justice. Al Shabaab leaders do not hold themselves to be above the law, unlike the federal government; they are not Schmitt's 'sovereign who decides on the exception'.

If Baczko, Revkin and the researchers on Al Shabaab named above are right, then one of the main sources of popular legitimacy for Al Shabaab, ISIS and the Taliban is that they provide justice and the Rule of Law based on sharia. Sharia is considered divine law by religious Muslims, in contrast to positive law that is 'man-made' and therefore inherently corruptible and favouring the powerful. This suggests sharia-based movements are *counter-hegemonic* in the Gramscian sense. It could be argued that they are even the main counter-hegemonic movement in the world today, as they reject the very premise of the international state order, its foundation in positive law (as demonstrated in 1.3 and 3.3). Although they seem far from posing a threat to what I argued is the current integral hegemony of the Western-based world order, sharia-based movements are expanding rapidly in many parts of the world.

From a non-religious, 'State of Nature' perspective sharia is also man-made law and therefore posited. Sharia, like positive law, is part of a tree-as-image representation of social order and it is not necessarily aligned with rhizomatic feelings of justice. But with its insistence on 'doing good and avoiding evil' and community (umma) preservation through both social order and peace, Muslim believers would doubtlessly consider sharia is closer to natural law.

Although Al Shabaab's main struggle is against the federal government and those who support it, and what it sees as an infidel project to take over Somalia through democracy and man-made laws, in terms of local governance it is mainly pitted against the clan-based social order. We now will examine how Al Shabaab attempts to impose its Weberian governance project on the customary clan sphere, its rivalry with Islamic State and what the Somali population thinks of the insurgents.

[64] Revkin 2016:30.

10.3 Al Shabaab and Social Transformation

Al-Shabaab defeated clannism whereas the government is defeated by clannism.[65]

Dealing with Clans

Al-Shabaab's leadership initially planned to side-line traditional clan elders and forge an egalitarian organization that would transform Somali society. Most of the original al-Shabaab leaders were strongly inspired by jihadi-Salafi ideology and had limited regard for the local clan elders.[66] But, as Al Shabaab conquered new areas and had to govern them, their attitude toward clan became more pragmatical.

Al Shabaab is the most clan-free movement in the country, but it does recruit slightly more among minority clans[67], who have historic scores to settle with the dominant clans and feel disenfranchised by the current elite bargain power sharing deals. As to the more powerful clans, some have very little representation in Al Shabaab (e.g., the Majerteen), while specific lineages of powerful clans[68] are well-represented.

Some authors insist that Al Shabaab is dominated by some clans. The Hiraal Institute asserts that the movement is dominated by Hawiye, and that this helps explain the success of the Islamic State that recruits among disaffected non-Hawiye Al Shabaab. Looking at Al Shabaab as a whole, Hiraal calculates that 43% of all top officials are Hawiye, rising to 56-57% in Al Shabaab's security forces.[69]

But, besides disregarding the fact that the Islamic State attracts recruits mostly for ideological reasons and cannot be cast as a non-Hawiye alternative to Al Shabaab, there is another flaw in this reasoning that is frequently seen in Somalia. When a non-clan based organization or group is analysed in terms of clan, it is bound to show an imbalance. Because only a clan-based approach can ensure fair representation of each clan family (and within that, of each clan). The Lower House of the Federal Parliament provides an example of a meticulously achieved balance. But, if clan doesn't matter, some imbalance is to be expected because clan was not a factor in the recruitment. It can often be explained by historical or geographic factors (Al Shabaab was largely a Hawiye movement in the beginning, because it originated in Mogadishu and Hawiye areas). Of course, with a very big imbalance, there is reason to suspect that a certain clan dominates. To verify this assertion, one should also look at the lineages, which would have to show some clustering. But this is not the case within Al Shabaab. Framing it as predominantly Hawiye-led organization is most probably an effort to discredit it, not level-headed political analysis.

Clan has been a major factor in Al Shabaab's expansion in two ways. First, Al Shabaab can use clan connections to gain a foothold in an area. When the movement feels strong enough to attempt a takeover, it brings in members from non-local clans for this effort. If the takeover fails, the 'foreign' members can retreat and a cycle of revenge killings between local clans need not take place. If the attempt succeeds, the foreign clans remain and establish a non-clan rule over the local population[70]. One could put it thus: In the first phase it follows a rhizomatic approach, relying on charisma and clan solidarity ties; in the second phase it follows a formal approach with its sharia-based ideology.

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[65] Crouch & Abdi 2019:p4/8, quoting a respondent from Gedo.

[66] Skjelderup 2020:1182.

[67] Marchal 2011 and Ingiriis 2020.

[68] Marchal mentions the Hawiye/Murosade, Hawiye/Duduble, the Hawiye/Habar Gidir/'ayr and the Isaaq/Haber Je'lo; Marchal 2011:47.

[69] Hiraal Institute for Policy Studies 2018b: "Taming the Clans: Al-Shabab's Clan Politics".

[70] This takeover strategy is described by Roland Marchal, 2011:48-49.

Al Shabaab's expansion has been facilitated by clan in another way: by settling clan conflict. Using sharia law and its experience of pacification through sharia courts, Al Shabaab sometimes has put an end to cyclical clan vendettas. It then remains in the area to verify implementation, having gained some ascendancy over the leaders of the clans in conflict and popularity among the population groups that suffered from the conflict.

Once established in a new area, the first step is to convene all the elders and make it clear that from now on, Al Shabaab rules, and *xeer* is replaced by sharia as adjudicated in Al Shabaab courts. The cooperation of the elders is requested. If they oblige, they can become members of the district or regional shura. If they refuse, they are arrested or side-lined. When they are caught working or spying for the government or foreign forces, they can be killed. Elders removed by Al Shabaab are replaced with more compliant elders appointed by Al Shabaab. This selection procedure 'from above' obviously goes against the egalitarian, personal qualities-based mechanism of elders selection 'from within'.

District and regional shuras play an important role in local government: deciding on priorities, overseeing the implementation of projects, solving conflicts, helping with education, recruitment and taxation. Thus the clan elders retain an important role, but entirely submitted to Al Shabaab.[71] The federal government, in contrast, does not request such a submission, allowing an elder more autonomy and a wider scope for representation of his community. One Jubaland elder, obliged to cooperate with Al Shabaab, said he felt like a 'chicken in a cage'.[72] Elders also run the risk of being targeted by US drones: in April 2020 the Jareerweyne clan elder Suldan Abbas Mohamed Hajji was killed by a US drone near Kansuma, Jubaland.

Elders are organized by district and region (currently Al Shabaab has divided the areas it controls in ten regions), not by clan. At each level of rule there is a head elder appointed by Al Shabaab.[73] They are supposed to settle clan conflict; to this intent Al Shabaab agrees they can use *xeer*.[74] However, if that fails or is too slow, Al Shabaab expects elders to hand over the troublemakers to their sharia courts, where they are tried as individuals, not as clan members. The militant organization has imprisoned and otherwise punished elders who refrained from handing over their kinsmen.

Al Shabaab sometimes gets involved in clan conflict. In 2008-2009, the Hawadle clan opposed Al Shabaab, not allowing them to pass through their territory. After several inconclusive armed confrontations, Al Shabaab agreed to pay blood money to the Hawadle for their losses; it seems it regretted doing so, because since then they have followed a policy of not paying blood money, though they can pay compensation to the victim's family, not to his/her clan. Most revolts against Al Shabaab are because of taxation. There was a conflict between Al Shabaab and the Saleban clan of the Habar Gedir in 2016, when the latter refused to pay zakat. Al Shabaab fought fiercely, killing over thirty people until the Saleban sued for peace and agreed to pay the yearly charity tax.

In a different kind of case, Al Shabaab found itself manipulated by the Bimal and Habar Gedir clans in Merka, 2014-2016. Both clans aligned themselves with either the federal government or Al Shabaab to take power in this Lower Shabelle district, switching sides for practical political, not ideological reasons.[75]

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[71] The 42 members of the Kismayo shura set up by AS consisted of all the clans, in balance, but represented by people they had chosen (Skjelderup 2020:1180).

[72] Skjelderup 2020:1184

[73] Hiraal Institute 2018b:3.

[74] Ingiriis 2020 and Skjelderup 2020:1186.

[75] Marchal & Yusuf, 2016: "Lower Shabeelle in the Civil War"; p52.

Once they firmly rule an area, Al Shabaab organizes religious (re-)education for clan elders. These are mandatory yearly events that it also uses for outlining its local policies. They also quickly set up their institutions (tax collection, education) and usually request newly submitted (sub-)clans to provide a certain number of fighters and weapons,[76] and children for the Islamic Institutes they run.[77] The insurgents restrict the public role of the elders and organize events and announcements themselves, such as the explanation of new rules and ordinances to the population, including their laws, the ban on smartphones and new 'hudood' rules (dressing and behaviour codes) for women. Some public events have a mandatory attendance, such as public executions. Others are not mandatory, such as marriage ceremonies between its fighters and local young women. Al Shabaab deliberately mixes up clan identities by organizing marriages between its minority-caste fighters and 'noble clan' women, something inconceivable until recently.[78] This shows that it has not given up on its overall goal of 'de-clannifying' Somali society.

Al Shabaab invests in two types of education: Islamic Institutes for exclusively religious studies (they have closed all other types of religious schools), and regular education. Clans must provide a quota of 8-15 year olds to be trained in the Islamic institutes, and apparently pay for their education too. Besides Quran studies, children are exposed to 'jihadi literature', according to a Hiraal Institute study.[79] Regular education is not mandatory and resembles normal Somali schools. The curriculum includes Somali, Arabic, Islamic Education, Maths, History and Geography—no sciences. In general, Al Shabaab does not seem to place much value on education per se, and only a few of its leaders have higher education degrees. But they are very sensitive to the socialization aspect of education, and the chance to instil their own values in children.

It seems that in most cases, after a tough and decisive start where Al Shabaab establishes that they are the new authority, relations with the local community—including with elders—improve. Low levels of flight from Al Shabaab areas to government-held areas confirm that most Somalis accept to live under Al Shabaab rule.[80] It has successfully made the transition, as Mancur Olson would put it, from roving to stationary bandits[81], creating a proto-state. To achieve this, they firmly establish themselves as an authority above the clan, instead of replacing the clan as their ideology posits. It seems to be a temporary policy inspired by pragmatism, and the objective remains to entirely overcome clannism and replace it with a Muslim Somali identity.

Al Shabaab and the Islamic State

Luis Martinez, writing about Islamist armed factions in Algeria in 1995, noted that their profound political divergences with local elites and other armed groups did not prevent the three types of actors from working together.[82] Antagonistic groups can cooperate when they identify common interests, such as dismantling old power structures, self-enrichment, or the keeping out of external armed groups. In Somalia, there are many connections between Al Shabaab, local authorities and the federal

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[76] Marchal & Yusuf 2016:50, Ingiriis 2020, Hiraal Institute 2018b.

[77] Hiraal Institute for Policy Studies 2018c: "The Fighters Factory: Inside Al-Shabab's Education System".

[78] Ingiriis 2020.

[79] Hiraal 2018c:3.

[80] It is difficult to discern the fleeing of populations to government held towns from normal rural exodus, so precise figures cannot be given. Certainly, there has been flight away from Al Shabaab areas, but it is not massive.

[81] Olson 2000: "Power and Prosperity: Outgrowing Communist and Capitalist Dictatorships"; p6–10.

[82] "L'analyse des trajectoires de ces différents acteurs, notables locaux, maquisards islamistes, groupes armés autonomes, montre qu'en dépit de divergences profondes d'appartenance politique, ils sont unis par une expérience commune." Martinez, Luis 1995: "Les Groupes Islamistes entre Guérilla et Négoce. Vers une Consolidation du Régime Algérien ?" Etudes du CERI, Paris; p2.

government; these are not institutional, of course, but rhizomatic and personal. One of the factors binding these actors together is the threat posed by the Islamic State.

Islamic State presence in Somalia has been waxing and waning since 2015. It started with a split in the Al Shabaab group of about a hundred fighters operating in Puntland (Galgala, near Bosaso); almost half of them joined the Islamic State, leading to clashes between Al Shabaab and the new IS faction. In 2016, this Islamic State group temporarily occupied a district east of Bosaso (Qandala – see Figure 1), making international headlines. But this faction was clan-based (Majerteen/Ali Saleban) and its appeal to other clans was very limited. In 2018, a new branch of the Islamic State appeared in Mogadishu; it attempted to 'tax' businesses in a similar way to Al Shabaab, establishing a protection racket. They were defeated by an Al Shabaab intelligence and police offensive. Nonetheless, in 2021 reports again surfaced of an increased Islamic State presence, again manifesting itself through taxation efforts in Mogadishu and Bosaso. In one report, the Islamic State in Somalia has become the main conduit for financial support to other IS groups in Africa.

The Islamic State appeals to a different kind of audience than Al Shabaab. It has a more modern and global-politics oriented outlook, appealing to educated Somalis in the diaspora and in Somalia, who feel disempowered and do not identify with Al Shabaab's pragmatic and nearly parochial 'jihad'.[83] Given the relative success of Islamic State groups in other African countries, it seems likely the movement will continue to attract Somali recruits, also from within Al Shabaab, whose Amniyat (security) is very concerned with defections to its rivals.

According to multiple reports, Al Shabaab has thoroughly infiltrated the federal government. As one security official mentioned, 'they don't even need to infiltrate; they can just show up. No background checks are performed'. Even in the National Intelligence and Security Agency, positions are for sale, and Al Shabaab has enough resources to buy them. Because of the elite bargaining process and its venality, and Al Shabaab's ample resources, they are in a position to influence legislation and political deals. For example, a year after he was elected, President Farmaajo stopped nearly all military operations against Al Shabaab. According to veteran analyst Matt Bryden, this was the result of a deal brokered by Farmaajo's national security advisor.[84] But it seems Al Shabaab has no plans for a takeover of the federal government from within. They use their contacts for information gathering, the release of prisoners and for other dealings with the federal ruling elites.

Public Opinion about Al Shabaab

Despite the governance brought by Al Shabaab, it seems that Somalis in general reject the movement. The modern urban class and the diaspora bloc, who share aspirations for a liberal democratic state, would leave *en masse* if faced with an Al Shabaab takeover, just like the educated Afghan urban classes left after the Taliban captured the government in August 2021. As to the rest of the population, it is hard to know their opinion about Al Shabaab, as almost no polls have been undertaken among Somalis living in areas ruled by Al Shabaab. One study published in 2019, however, provides interesting insights.[85]

[83] This judgment may seem unfair given Al Shabaab's own slick media productions and their expansion along the East African coast, all the way to Mozambique. See for example their 'glossies' for the Kenyan/Swahili market, Amka (which means 'Wake Up' in Swahili) and Gaidi Mtaani ('Urban Terrorist'). But it seems to be a common view among globally oriented jihadists that the Islamic State is more modern. This difference in appeal is also seen in Afghanistan, between the Islamic State in Khorassan that recruits among educated urban youth, and the Taliban with their rural base.

[84] Bryden 2021: "Fake Fight. The Quiet Jihadist Takeover of Somalia".

[85] Crouch & Abdi 2019: "Community Perspectives Towards Al Shabaab. Sources of Support and the Potential for Negotiations". The data is based on a small set of 71 surveys conducted in 2017 with a wide social and geographic ambit, and on more general quantitative data collected by Saferworld from 2015 to 2017. I have used the

Respondents in this study consider that Al Shabaab is not the source, but rather the symptom of conflict, the drivers of which are "*clannism, injustice, inequality, poor governance and theft of land and resources*". The appeal of Al Shabaab is enhanced by the federal government, especially its clan politics, corruption and injustice. In addition, "*interventions in Somalia by international and regional actors were widely viewed as important sources of conflict*." The ideology of Al Shabaab is seen as a response to these drivers of conflict, not in itself a driver.

While Somalis appreciate the security and stability Al Shabaab has brought, consistently reserving the highest praise for their justice system, they resent the violence used by the organization and their restriction of liberties, especially the lack of freedom of speech, of movement and of political association. Torture and assassination are the most hated aspects of Al Shabaab violence. "*All respondents disagreed with Al-Shabaab's religious ideology, and many doubted their claim to be religious*"[86], especially because 'Allah does not permit the killing of innocent civilians'. Although Somalis agree with Al Shabaab's judiciary mechanisms, one cannot infer that they find Al Shabaab itself just.

In terms of governance, Somalis appreciate that Al Shabaab spreads resources equally or according to need, and that the political influence of clans is reduced by Al Shabaab, neutralizing the inequality between clans and allowing "*people from different clans [to] trust one another*". The ban on qat is appreciated especially by women, because the drug causes domestic violence and poverty. There is also much praise for the lack of corruption within Al Shabaab. Somalis regret that Al Shabaab does not provide services such as health and development, and chases away NGOs seeking to provide them for free. Some respondents appreciate Al Shabaab's efforts at providing more education; others dislike this, seeing it as indoctrination. Finally, all Somalis resent the heavy tax burden imposed by the insurgents, especially zakat, although Al Shabaab offers something in return, unlike the government or previous faction-based administrations.[87]

All respondents say that the current military approach to Al Shabaab is ineffective and doing more harm than good. Criticism is especially directed at AMISOM. The troop-contributing countries have their own stakes in the Somali conflict, and it would be better if AMISOM leaves or changes its role. There is a sense that the government and regional actors are not wholly committed to the struggle against Al Shabaab. There is faith that a reconstituted Somali National Army could deal with the insurgents, but also a feeling that military approaches have been exhausted. Three quarters of the respondents favoured negotiations, and many were positive about Al Shabaab joining the government (not taking it over).

That so many Somalis are in favour of talks between Al Shabaab and the government is not due to an expectation of quick results, but because lengthy talks between Somalis usually result in consensus, as the Somaliland peace conferences showed. As a Somali saying goes, 'Let us talk' means 'let us solve our problems' (*Aan wada hadalno waa aan heshiino*).

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manuscript provided by one of the authors.

[86] Crouch & Abdi 2019:3/8.

[87] People living in areas controlled by the federal government face double taxation, which is of course considered very unfair.

10.4 A Counter-Hegemonic Political Order

In this chapter I have undertaken to describe Al Shabaab from within, trying to understand why it has been so successful despite the hostility of the West and the new elites who control the Federal State. This hostility has not only been expressed through military (coercive) means, but also by sustained communication campaigns and 'stabilization' efforts trying to convince the Somali population to support the federal government instead of Al Shabaab, and by well-funded defection and rehabilitation campaigns for weaning militants away from the movement. All to no avail; Al Shabaab seems to be stronger than ever today and is poised either to become part of a negotiated settlement, or to achieve a military victory once the donors' patience runs out and the funding of AMISOM's successor ATMIS is discontinued.

As the analyst Hussein Sheikh Ali put it to me, "*the secret of Al Shabaab's original strength and enduring appeal is that they could adapt the ideals to local realities. This provided them with a path to organic growth in the Somali social context, which they approached with pragmatism. Instead of trying to change social reality to fit their theory, they found in their theory an Islamic reference for everything they encountered, making it acceptable and manageable*".[88] This pragmatic attitude is inspired by the need to control a territory and its population (rebel governance), a typical problem for insurgent groups. This confirms that Al Shabaab is, first and foremost, a nationalist insurgent group. It has surfed to power on a general popular desire/social movement to live in peace and order, and above all in a state of justice. Its pragmatism is expressed in its response to that need. For example, instead of destroying clan identities according to its vision of a Muslim society, Al Shabaab has submitted clans to its rule, allowing them to self-govern on its behalf while working on the gradual demise of clannism in the public realm, to begin with inside their own ranks.

However, the ideological aspect of Al Shabaab should not be downplayed. Their core strength resides in their commitment to a Salafi program of social transformation. This vision is not shared by most of Somali society and it alienates the population, but it provides an inner coherence to the group, without which it might have fallen apart years ago. They use violence to achieve this transformation: towards the populations they control, within their own ranks, and towards their enemies, who call it terrorism. It is said that Sayyid Hassan, the Dervish leader, once proclaimed that 'you cannot govern Somalis without killing them'.

Although the Somali population resents the harsh autocratic rule of Al Shabaab, there is a general notion that Al Shabaab violence has some legitimacy, that it is *political* violence and that it helps to maintain peace and stability in Al Shabaab-governed areas. Also, the movement arose in the 2000s to put an end to *criminal* violence and seems to be achieving this objective. This contradictory consciousness can be related to the dual nature of power in individuals: as social person, they object but as citizen they justify the violence, which is the opposite of how common Somalis relate to the government: condemning it as citizens, but accepting it socially.

To justify high levels of taxation and the imposition, with ruthless violence if necessary, of its authority, Al Shabaab has developed a legal base to its rule, and this may be where it is causing the greatest social transformation. For the first time in Somali history, each citizen living under Al Shabaab rule is *effectively* and *individually* subjected to the rule of Law, and to a rules-based administration that the rulers themselves strictly adhere to.

Focusing on the rule of Al Shabaab over Somali society, it is much closer to Weber's legal-rational ideal, with its emphasis on the rule of law and an impartial bureaucratic administration, than the Federal Government of Somalia or the Government of Somaliland. This Weberian transformation of Somali society to a legal-rational basis can be discerned in how members of the movement deal with their clan

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[88] Interview in Mogadishu, 26 Feb 2019.

identity. Of course, they remain personally linked to their blood kin, but in the hours that they are 'at work', in their Al Shabaab identity, they must leave their clan identity behind. As we saw when describing the functioning of the federal state and that of Somaliland, the impartiality of the *office-bearer* is neglected in their political systems, and clan identity-related objectives are pursued through the capture of state institutions, undermining the latter while conferring an unfair advantage to lineages in power.

Al Shabaab avoids the 'rhizome-in-tree' hybrid political order familiar from the two other Somali governments, and has successfully maintained a dual political order, where the movement-as-rhizome is kept separate from public governance. As a rhizome, Al Shabaab has a high level of ideological coherence, which strengthens internal consensus and trust, attracts recruits and allows it to dispense justice. As a tree, Al Shabaab governance does not deny but incorporates local self-governance, bending it to suit its own ideal of impartial, non-clan rule. It is not dependent on the foreign resources that allow the federal and Somaliland trees to grow, but pulls them all out of the population.

Somalis, as argued in the previous chapter, remain committed to the *image of the state* as presented by the international community, even though they reject the *practice* of the state. The image of the state projected by Al Shabaab—an intolerant, autocratic state that submits citizens with violence—does *not* appeal to most Somalis. But they consent to its practice.

This may explain why Al Shabaab has not developed a political vision and even refrains from calling the polity it has created by a name, be it state, emirate, caliphate or other. There is no trace of a coherent vision of the state among Al Shabaab's leadership. The Salafi ideal of a Muslim polity living in a manner similar to the companions of Prophet Muhammad does not provide a state-image that can appeal to a population living in the twenty-first century. Salafism is a (nomadic, non-materialistic) lifestyle, a daily practice; not a narrative that can provide sense to collective experience.

If Al Shabaab crafted a vision of the future State they want to establish, this could become a liability. Such a vision, nested in an alternative narrative to the hegemonic Western one, could create dissension within the movement and become a rallying point for opponents to Al Shabaab. The envisioned state would perforce be based on the Salafi ideology of Al Shabaab, which a majority of Somalis do not agree with. How could the movement then convince millions of Somalis that the image of the Western liberal democratic state that has structured their political experience over the past century, and which usefully provides access to the international community and its resources, should be abandoned for the alternative Al Shabaab would present, which is sure to cut them off from the rest of the world? In fact, Al Shabaab is probably better off without such an explicit political vision.

It is not certain that Al Shabaab, or Somalis, need such an explicit plan for the future political order. Merely by governing (in practice) in a different way than what people have experienced of the modern state, the insurgents already provide a counter-hegemonic model that is apparently successful. Rather than getting lost in the contradictions between image and practice of the state, or trying to align the two (they tend to be inversely related polar opposites and thus difficult to reconcile), it may be a more sensible way forward to abandon the state-image and focus on the practice of government. The abandonment of the state-image and models based on ideals could also be seen as a counter-hegemonic aspect of Islamic movements proposing sharia to bring social order in areas of weak state governance.

This may provide an answer to the question: why are Western powers (and their regional allies) engaged in a relentless war against Al Shabaab? The argument that it is for Western security does not hold, as there is no indication that other countries are threatened by the Somali insurgents, especially if they would be left in peace. Al Shabaab does not pursue a global jihad, but wants to rule their own society (like the Taliban). At the time of writing, the security discourse is shifting from 'Global War on Terror' to

'Red Sea Security'; there seems to be an assumption that a Somalia ruled by Al Shabaab would threaten shipping lanes and stability in the region, but this assumption does not seem based on any evidence. The more profound reason for the fight against Al Shabaab, in Western *public opinion*, is of a moral nature. It is rejected because of its professed values: disregard for women's and other human rights, and for liberal values such as freedom of expression and of association. Al Shabaab is rejected as *barbarian*, and this is what motivates Western public opinion to support intervention.

In my opinion, this is motivation seems irrational. After all, if Somalis agree to be ruled by sharia, why should Western powers object? In terms of rational interests, how is this detrimental to these powers? There are no foreign investments to protect in Somalia, except a State that is set to remain dependent on foreign funding. Why should billions of dollars be spent to prevent Al Shabaab rule? Only because they inspire Western public opinion with disgust? But is it even possible to hear the voice of Al Shabaab, unmediated by words like 'terrorism', 'savages' and 'human rights violations'? An analyst needs access to special sites requiring registration like jihadology.net or risk navigating 'the dark web' to even hear Al Shabaab's own points ov view. The insurgents are framed as the enemies of Western civilization, and attacked as such. Al Shabaab believes that it faces a religious war and refers to democracy as a 'foreign religion'.[89] No other argument seems to make sense.

What is at stake for the current global powers in Somalia, however, is not religion, nor their *interests*, but their *hegemony*. Hegemony, as we saw, is based on a narrative that breeds consensus, and from there consent and compliance, allowing domination. The Western narrative, so focused on the modern state as the only possible structure for civil society, is failing in Somalia, as it also failed in Afghanistan. One could say it is the hegemony of the State that is challenged by Al Shabaab.

So the movement is counter-hegemonic in the following senses:

1. It is not based on Western positive law that has claimed its universality, but on religious law that it supposes is of a divine source.
2. It opposes liberal democratic values, substituting them with its interpretation of sharia in the Somali context.
3. It causes the failure of the modern state-building project.

Abstractly, it was also pointed out that instead of a hybrid political order, where political practice seems to respond only to an ideal but is in fact heavily influenced by denied rhizomatic influences—causing a permanent gap between the image and the practice of the State—Al Shabaab focuses on the practice of politics. Above some possible reasons for Al Shabaab *not* to formulate a political ideal were explored. In the Dual Power Theory framework, Al Shabaab has no state-image, but it could be argued it does have a tree-image, in the sense of an ideal that organizes 'civil society': that is the world of God. The militants do not *believe* in a man-made social structure like the State. In their eyes, their rule derives its legitimacy from God, who structures the world as He pleases. Their authority derives from Him, not from the population through a putative social contract. Although they derive a political order from their religion, it is not a State.

How can that political order best be characterized? The governance framework is derived not from a state-idea, but from the practice the Somalis are familiar with, inherited from the Barre era, including some of its early socialist ideals and its later violent autocratic practices, transformed through ideas derived from contemporary Islamic thought. This governance framework is adapted in each separate locality, and among different social networks, to current conditions.

[89] A recent reiteration of this point of view can be found in the interview with Mahad Karate, one of Al Shabaab's leaders, 15 June 2022; Jamal Osman 2022 op cit.

This makes Al Shabaab's rule rhizomatic: multi-centred, heterogeneous, adaptative, reproducing without copying itself. Previously, we saw that the main rhizomatic social expression among Somalis is clan. Al Shabaab's rule partially grafts onto it, using clan systems to further its rule. At the same time, it replaces clan in the public domain by a new national and religious identity. And it seems to be succeeding, perhaps as the first Somali social movement to do so.

Al Shabaab militants are not the Prussians of Somalia. They have instituted legal-rational governance and a monopoly of violence, but without the State idealized by Weber and other German thinkers. This makes their rule counter-hegemonic and rhizomatic. Like the Islamic Courts Union, the appropriate vegetal model for their rule is a series of thorny bushes—like those that dot the Somali landscape—that connect quite easily to the Somali rhizome but are not invaded by it. However the Somali people have also passed a tacit social contract of sorts with the international community, accepting its shadow of hierarchy. They still long for a modern state with its access to global resources and its bridges to the core of the West's symbolic power. They may accept Al Shabaab governance practice, but many remain enchanted by the alluring image of the state-tree. This contradiction remains to be resolved.

Al Shabaab in the Longue Durée

Does Al Shabaab somehow embody the part of the nomads? Islamic terrorism has been presented as a de-territorialized phenomenon whose main enemy is the Western state system; Al Qaeda, the prototypical terrorist organization, follows a rhizomatic network structure[90] and is portrayed as peopled by global nomads who move from one jihadi front to another.[91] Are they the successors of the nomads of yesteryear, the hunter-gatherers of James C. Scott, who flee the state to enjoy the freedom and better living conditions of statelessness? Are jihadi outfits like Al Shabaab examples of what Pierre Clastres and Deleuze & Guattari called 'la machine de guerre' that seeks to destroy the state to achieve freedom?

From a military perspective, what seems to make Al Shabaab unbeatable is that they are highly mobile, and that there are no 'state centres'—monumental/symbolic structures, palaces, warehouses, cities, core agricultural or industrial production areas—whose destruction or capture will cause their collapse. The decapitation of the organization by US drone strikes, that killed the first two leaders of Al Shabaab, did not disrupt Al Shabaab, as specialists had predicted, in the same way that a nomad raiding band is not paralyzed by the killing of its leader (because each raider is self-sovereign anyhow). The long War on Terror waged by the international community against jihadi groups could be seen as the final attempt to eradicate non-state people's power from the world map.

From a cultural perspective, too, Al Shabaab seems to have inherited more of the Somali pastoralist values than the urbanized pastoralists who now rule the centres of the new Somali states. Al Shabaab fiercely opposes the existing state structures in Somalia and the international model on which they are based. Their own socio-political culture is more egalitarian and less materialistic (key characteristics of nomad culture), and their Salafi socio-political ideal is the nomadic, early Muslim society of the times of the Prophet Muhammad.

Their status as 'outsiders' in the international state system is confirmed by the relentless hostility with which they're treated by all states within that system. In that respect, 'terrorist' is only a new name for 'barbarian'. In contemporary hegemonic discourse, 'terrorist' is the one who must either be brought into the fold of 'civilization' or destroyed, much like the 'barbarians' were always spoken about. Indeed, from the state perspective Al Shabaab represents the nomad, the uncontrolled element who roves

[90] Kuronen & Huhtinen 2017: "Organizing Conflict: The Rhizome of Jihad".

[91] An interesting, fieldwork-based research on this theme can be found in Li 2019: "The Universal Enemy: Jihad, Empire, and the Challenge of Solidarity". He argues that transnational jihadists are engaged in their own construction of a universal ideal, based on mutual solidarity (a rhizomatic principle).

around the edges of empire, undermining it. The unsuccessful military campaigns against an enemy that cannot be seized seem to underscore this perception.

But in their own perception, Al Shabaab offers an alternative governance model and would rather live in peace than fight the West, an aspiration it shares with most Somalis. Its members do not aspire to be pastoralists, and they create parastatal institutions (education, security forces, agricultural development, justice) in the areas they govern. Their taxation seems to be state-constitutive à la Norbert Elias.[92] They seek to control and tightly administer a maximum of territory to extract the surplus from its subjects that they use to further their objective, which is to recapture the centre of state power (Mogadishu) and thus the Somali state. Instead of destroying the state's institutions as some kind of anarchist horde—which seems to have been a feature of the 1991 destruction of the Somali state by clan factions—they plan to use the state's institutions to impose their rule over all Somalis.

The states-*vs*-nomads framework is a product of Western thought, and it may provide conceptual clarity to efforts by the Western state system to spread throughout the rest of the world. But it is not a framework in which Somalis are likely to view their political situation at this time in history. What may be more appropriate to provide an understanding of Al Shabaab in the longue durée is to recall the characteristics of the Ajuraan state (13th to 17th centuries) that I distilled in Chapter Two:

- Strict autocratic—but indirect—rule, leaving intact local governance structures (including deliberative ones such as in Baraawe), but obliging populations to provide forced labour and warriors.
- Use of force rather than diplomacy to submit dissent and enemies. Military success, especially Islamic, contributes to early legitimacy. Later they become despotic and brutal.
- Legitimacy mainly derived through sharia and piety, and effective application of sharia-based justice to settle conflicts among the population
- Itinerant centre of government, avoiding centralization in one spot, limiting the size of the court. Effective communication systems to complement the lack of a political centre.
- Economy based on pastoral and agricultural production and trade, and pragmatic relations with neighbouring sultanates and their trade communities (rather than trying to take them over).
- Elevated levels of imposition (rules and taxation), sometimes so high they lead to revolt.[93]

Considering that, even geographically, Al Shabaab covers an area similar to that of the Ajuraan state, the parallels are baffling. I do not know what to make of this, but it suggests that there is an element to the phenomenon of Al Shabaab that is deeply rooted in indigenous Somali political culture.

[92] Elias 1939: "The Civilizing Process".

[93] A methodological note: these points were made after the study of the Ajuraan state in Chapter Two, and it was only much later, while writing this chapter, that I realized the similarity with Al Shabaab's rule. I have not adapted or rewritten these points afterwards, to avoid reading into history the issues of today. My study was mostly based on Lee Cassanelli's 1982 book, which could not anticipate the civil war and Al Shabaab.

Chapter 11: Transnational State-Building

Why a theory of intervention is needed, now that intervention has replaced war. In which the agent behind intervention is sought and found in the concept of a transnational elite. How that elite forms a perpetually evolving consensus about this world through socialization, providing it with hegemony. The transnational elite as sole sovereign power. How it establishes international order through meta-governance. Where state-building initiatives are a social transformation project seeking to confirm a hegemonic narrative, and why this narrative is more important than the political effects it produces. Of the dual nature of power in the international order, and why a return to the State of Nature is needed.

In this chapter, I argue state-building interventions are a form of global governance. A comparative and even systematic approach is required. This takes us far away from our subject, Somalia, but it does help to explain the state-building intervention there. There is a pattern behind the Structural Adjustment Policies of the World Bank (Chapter Five), the War on Terror (Chapter Seven) or the official 'Africa Rising' optimism (Chapter Nine): none of these policies and narratives was designed for Somalia, and this partially explains why their effects were so adverse. These were general approaches of the Western World towards, in turn, 'developing' nations, Islamic 'failed' or 'fragile' states, and Sub-Saharan Africa. One could also call them doctrines, because they start from a conviction that is in turn based on a consensus reached among the Great Powers and shared by their allies.

The intervention in Somalia is then part of a broader effort to rearrange the world. Therefore, the motivations behind state-building interventions do not specifically apply to Somalia, but they help understanding the impact of these interventions upon Somali state/society relations. Somalia challenges most common-sense theories about why the State is necessary. This may make the country into a perfect test-case for illustrating the doctrinaire nature of the tenets of global governance, making their contrived nature more obvious.

First, however, the phenomenon of 'intervention' requires defining. One of the central themes of the discipline of International Relations used to be War. But, since the end of the Cold War, and arguably before that, war has been quietly replaced by intervention. What could still be objectively considered wars—when the troops of one country enter another to change the internal political configuration—now are mostly defined as policing operations, criminalizing domestic opposition to the intervention, and seeking to establish—or restore—an order considered legitimate by the intervening power.[1] Most citizens of Western countries consider the 'special operation' ordered by Russian President Putin in Ukraine illegitimate, but they back similar interventions in other countries by their own forces, such as those to remove the Taliban (2001), Saddam Hussein (2003) and Muammar Gadhafi (2011). Besides such military interventions to ensure regime change, interventions with a military/security component backed by the international community occur in many other countries, including Somalia. Together with 'intervention', the term 'international community' also merits close scrutiny.

[1] Holmqvist 2014: "Policing Wars : On Military Intervention in the Twenty-First Century".

11.1 Defining Intervention

International intervention may be the best studied of all International Relations fields, as it offers a perfect example of the tensions between military power, human rights, and sovereignty, three subjects that receive much attention in IR theory.[2] Other academic fields involved in studying interventions include development studies[3], anthropology[4], architecture and urban planning[5], and defence studies[6], to name just a few that come to mind.

Nevertheless, it is hard to find a standard definition of international intervention, either in the field of International Relations, or outside it. Intervention clearly comes in many shapes and tastes, and with varying levels of intensity. There are multilateral and unilateral interventions, military, humanitarian and arguably also economic and even cultural interventions, interventions sanctioned by the UN or regional bodies, and those they do not sanction; covert and open interventions, long, short, complex or light interventions. Is it possible to formulate a comprehensive definition of international intervention?

Below are three fairly typical recent definitions of intervention in IR theory, extracted from a special issue of the Review of International Studies about "Intervention and the Ordering of the Modern World" (December 2013):

- "*Intervention coercively mediates contradictions between territorial state sovereignty and transnational social forces*".[7]
- "*Intervention is here taken to refer to 'discrete acts' of 'coercive interference' in the 'domestic affairs' of other states, and which do not change the formal juridical status of the intervened party (as would, for example, annexation or colonization)".*[8]
- "*Whereas war disregards sovereignty, intervention qualifies or suspends it*".[9]

Several elements of these three definitions are recurrent. One is the factor of *coercion*, distinguished from war. Intervention always appears to have an element of coercion (or at least the threat of it). In what way is it different from war? A second constant is the dialectic relation between intervention and *state sovereignty*. Intervention violates sovereignty, but at once it confirms that sovereignty is a basic concern in the current state order, one that must be addressed.[10] Related to this, a third point is that intervention is an affair of states (or between states and 'transnational social forces'), which makes sense because states are the sole depositories of sovereignty. Implicit is also an *imbalance* between the intervener and the intervened; intervention is a one-way relationship where the stronger intervenes in the weaker state (in the first definition, the stronger party could be 'transnational social forces', not a state).

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[2] Jeangene Vilmer 2009: "Au Nom de l'Humanité? Histoire, Droit, Éthique et Politique de l'Intervention Militaire Justifiée par des Raisons Humanitaires".

[3] See books and articles by Mark Duffield, e.g. "Development, Security and Unending War".

[4] For example Robben 2010: "Iraq at a Distance: What Anthropologists Can Teach Us About the War".

[5] E.g. Shoshan 2012 "Atlas of Palestine" and 2018 "UN Peacekeeping Missions in Urban Environments".

[6] Kilcullen 2009: "The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One".

[7] Jones 2013: "Sovereignty, Intervention and Social Order in Revolutionary Times"; p1149.

[8] Macmillan 2013: "Intervention and the Ordering of the Modern World"; p1041.

[9] Lawson & Tardelli 2013: "The Past, Present and Future of Intervention"; p1236.

[10] As Edward Keene puts it, "*the practice of intervention is to accept the sovereignty of international actors, but in a qualified or restricted manner: one sovereign claims a right to use force to reorder the domestic affairs of another, while at the same time claiming to respect the other's inevitably somewhat tarnished sovereign status*" in Keene 2013: "International Hierarchy and the Origins of the Modern Practice of Intervention".

As to the motivation for intervention, a non-comprehensive list of reasons for intervention used over the past century includes: "*matters of domestic constitutional-institutional form; fear of the spread of revolution; property rights; the rights of creditors in the face of sovereign and private debt; the honour and extraterritorial rights of foreign citizens in relation to local laws; the question of slavery and the slave trade; the rights of minority communities (initially religious co-believers but latterly minorities in general); and the protection of populations against genocide or against egregious violation of their human rights*".[11] One recurrent word here is rights: the stronger intervening party intervenes to protect the rights (for example, property rights) of its own citizens, or of local citizens whose human rights have been violated. A reason for intervention that stands out in this list is to prevent revolution; here intervention aims at maintaining the status quo. We are also familiar with the concept of intervention to facilitate 'regime change', especially since 2001, from Afghanistan to Venezuela, usually motivated by one or more of the factors given above. Such change seeks to install a government aligned to the intervening country or coalition. These three motivations for intervention can be summarized as 'maintaining or spreading an international order beneficial to the intervening country'.

This brings us to the following provisional definition: ***Intervention is a one-way coercive relationship in which a stronger party violates the sovereignty of another, to introduce, spread or maintain an international order beneficial to the intervener.*** At the end of this chapter, I will refine this definition with additional insights gained.

Altruism

It would be unfair to reduce the impulse to intervene to this hegemonic discourse. The philanthropic motivation is as ancient as the desire to dominate. One intervenes in one's neighbour's affairs to help, not motivated by self-interest. The objective is often to help the neighbour confront difficulties, sometimes to restore peace. Selfless philanthropy, without desire for power, is what drives many young people to engage in humanitarian work. One could define this as a rhizomatic impulse as it is based on affect, the notion of solidarity, and trust that this help will be appreciated (and not abused): these are aspects of human relations in the 'State of Nature'. In turn, the self-interested definition of intervention given above would then correspond to the other aspect of power, the formal and hierarchical relations inherent to the tree, with their logical articulations.

Intervention thus obeys to two separate types of logic: it is a natural human impulse, as well as being a tool used by polities to extend their domination. To mobilize populations in favour of an intervention, rulers need to appeal to the shared moral value of helping fellow humans, lest their intervention appear unjust, which could delegitimize it. Although interventions must always obey a certain moral logic, they only take place when rulers see an interest to do so. Moreover, the intervening power has generally been free to construct its legitimation for intervention, as long as the moral logic is palatable to its population and its allies—it need not conform to universal values.

The debate whether intervention is motivated primarily by utilitarian national security interests or altruistic motivations that provide moral legitimacy, often echoed in the media, is thus sterile. Clearly, interventions must satisfy both requirements, both are always considered before a decision is made to intervene in another state, as Martha Finnemore demonstrated in an exhaustive study.[12] Interventions

[11] Macmillan 2013:1044.

[12] Martha Finnemore, a leading constructivist scholar, attacks the notion that self-serving interests underlie US intervention, saying that in almost all cases of forceful intervention one can construe logical motivations both for intervention and non-intervention. Taking a historical perspective, she also criticises the 'obviousness' that is often assumed, showing that what was once obvious no longer is so, such as— military intervention to retrieve unpaid debts. She suggests that separating the utilitarian and legitimacy arguments is of questionable heuristic value, as they are intertwined in practice. Finnemore 2003: "The Purposes of Intervention: Changing Beliefs About the Use of Force"; p4-16.

are rarely only military; hard power is almost always accompanied by soft power (diplomacy, propaganda, aid) to satisfy the moral imperative. In general, theorists consider that soft power (nowadays cast as 'hearts and minds') is more effective, and usually much cheaper, in obtaining victory, but the capacity for effective military action is essential to make soft power work.[13]

Core and Periphery

This brings us to another constant of intervention: it takes place by strong countries in weaker ones. In this sense, intervention is clearly differentiated from war. Intervention is a unidirectional relationship: the intervened party has no choice but to suffer the intervention, and conversely the intervener will barely experience the impact of the intervention at home. War, by contrast, is a two-way relationship that can involve two parties of equivalent status. Defending against a war of aggression is considered legitimate; resisting an intervention is considered illegitimate by intervening powers. This is because, as noted above, intervention is usually cast as an effort to restore or establish a pre-existing (and thus justified) order, but most of all because of the balance of power between intervening and intervened-in countries.

The idea of African states intervening in a Western country is so absurd, it is almost comical.[14] Why? From the perspective of international law, formal equality between sovereign states and shared international policy objectives, it should not be unthinkable. How did the current international order, so divided between the core and a periphery, come about?

In 1.3 and 6.3 we saw how the core-and-periphery world order as it exists today came into being in the 19th century, and was successfully formalized in the United Nations order, allocating a special role to the Great Powers or Security Council members. Although the colonial expansion of European powers formed its historical basis, the current core/periphery world has been reinforced by the neoliberal reordering of the world in the 1980s and 1990s. The core/periphery map fluctuates but, judging by current patterns of wealth distribution, the structural gap between the prosperous northwestern global core—together with its white-settled antipode, Australia and New Zealand—and the rest of the world (the periphery) is increasing rapidly.

The resultant bifurcation in intervention practice is obvious today; while intervention among core states is seen as illegitimate (except, perhaps, if the intention would be to 'restore order'), intervention of the core in the periphery has been a constant factor, considered generally legitimate by people in core countries (the 'civilizing mission' of yesteryear, today maintaining global security or supporting populations in danger).[15]

Within the Western bloc, the 'Great Powers' play a special role. This notion introduced in the 19th century was institutionalized in the permanent five members of the UN Security Council (and the G7) today. For the English School of international relations, the condition of being a Great Power means not only that no other power can interfere in one's internal affairs; it also entails the *responsibility* of

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[13] For a discussion of why intervention is not possible without the element of coercion, see for example Lake 2007: "Escape from the State of Nature: Authority and Hierarchy in World Polities" in *International Security* Vol. 32(1), p5: "*the 'capacity for coercion' is necessary to buttress or sustain authority in the face of incentives to flout rules designed to constrain behaviour.*"

[14] See the joke project by Africa Corp to send radiators to Norway: 'Radi-Aid' which inverses all the tropes behind Western humanitarianism (link). In 1973, the Ugandan dictator Idi Amin in all earnest proposed to set up a fund to save the UK from economic crisis (BBC link).

[15] Macmillan 2013:1054. Or as the Marxist André Tosel put it, "*Les grands pays capitalistes développent une police contradictoire du marché mondial qu'ils présentent comme une croisade humanitaire des droits de l'homme justifiant le droit permanent d'ingérence politique et économique*." Tosel 2008: "Réseau des pouvoirs et hégémonie à l'époque de la mondialisation"; p124.

maintaining and extending the international order through intervention.[16] Intervention by core countries in the periphery is seen not so much as a right, but as a duty that core countries must undertake both for practical reasons (to fight threats to their national security, defend the rights of their citizens, protect bilateral and international treaties, etc.) and for symbolic ones: to maintain their hegemony.[17] For example, the public justification for French military interventions in Africa is both to defend and extend values, such as human rights and democracy for African populations, and to protect France's national security by fighting terrorism.[18] Again, both liberal ('altruistic', hegemonic) and realist ('self-interested', dominating) arguments converge in international interventions.

Bilateral and Multilateral

The dynamics of 'great power' are also evident in the difference between bilateral and multilateral interventions. Bilateral intervention generally seeks to impose alignment with, or further the national interest of, the intervening country. Emerging countries that are not well integrated in multilateral institutions, such as—in Somalia—China, the Gulf countries and Turkey, prefer bilateral action, by which they may pursue objectives at variance with those of the international community.

Bilateral intervention provides more options to the recipient countries (who can play off one country against another). Multilateral intervention, by contrast, seeks to align the targeted country to the *international state system*. This intervention is difficult to resist by the country experiencing it, as there is only one such system and the great powers generally defend it.

Strong countries—notably the USA—can impose their national interests on other countries in a multilateral process[19], such as the 'Coalition of the Willing' that participated in the US invasion of Iraq. The advantage of multilateralism for a strong country is that it provides a broader legitimacy to intervention. Sanction of the United Nations is the supreme seal of multilateral approval.[20] Strong countries realize that bilateral intervention in another state to change the political status quo and install a subservient new regime may cost them international goodwill. Multilateralism has become the standard mode of intervention since the end of the Cold War,[21] but its drawback for great powers is that their own objectives become diluted in the process, and more difficult to pursue given the bigger group of stakeholders. A multilateral track does not preclude a parallel bilateral intervention, often more discrete, to defend the national interest. This may lead to contradictory intervention policies of one country in another, for example when warlords are supported to fight a war against insurgents in one strategy, and democratic forces that wish to get rid of those warlords in another.[22]

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[16] See Hedley Bull in "The Anarchical Society", 1977, p207: "*The Great Powers within 'international society' hold special rights and duties for the maintenance of international order through, for example, the preservation of the balance of power, the limitation or containment of war, or the management of crises or enforcement of the rules or norms of international society.*"

[17] Lawson & Tardelli 2013:1244.

[18] Borrel et al. (eds.) 2021: "L'Empire Qui Ne Veut Pas Mourir. Une Histoire de la Françafrique".

[19] Joseph Stiglitz, in a presentation given for the Groupe de Recherche sur l'Action Multilatérale (CERI, Paris) on 9 October 2019, describes several instances of how the USA has imposed its conditions on other countries with little consideration for the formal equivalence of other states or diplomatic protocol, not only in bilateral but also in multilateral processes. The 2019 unilateral annulment by President Trump's administration of the 'Iran Deal' is a good example of how bilateral power relations underlie (and can undermine) formal multilateral processes.

[20] The UN's first decisive multilateral action once the Cold War had ended, was to sanction Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait (Ruggie 1998: "Constructing the World Polity"; p104). This made it obvious that the UN was largely subservient, already, to the policy objectives and interests of the USA and its allies.

[21] For a view on how exceptional multilateralism is as an institutional format, see Ruggie 1998:102-105.

[22] For example, in 2001 the USA intervened in Afghanistan bilaterally (Operation Enduring Freedom, to eliminate Al Qaeda and its supporters) and multilaterally (as part of the Bonn process to establish a new government). These

To pursue the discussion of intervention and reach a more comprehensive definition of intervention than the one proposed above, the issue of sovereignty must also be considered. This leads us to the next topic, the transnational elite.

Sovereignty

Sovereignty is one of the most intensely discussed topics in International Relations theory. Formally, only states wield sovereign power, but since the 1980s and 1990s it has been increasingly noted that even the strongest states are not entirely autonomous,[23] suggesting a transfer of sovereignty from the State either to international or supra-national organizations (the European Union being an obvious example), or to a transnational class consisting of not only state elites, but business leaders and transnational social forces like powerful trade unions, media, academia and even NGOs.

Sovereignty was discussed in Chapter One, noting that there are two forms of sovereignty: domestic (vertical), legitimizing the sovereign in the eyes of the population; and international (horizontal), between sovereign entities. Domestic sovereignty, it was argued, rests on a 'State of Nature' concept that sovereignty naturally resides in the human being, and the 'political' concept that to create a civil society, the human being must delegate part of that sovereignty to a commonly agreed authority, a 'sovereign'—be it a king, a popular assembly, a caste of priests, or other. Although the innate self-sovereignty of the human being is a clear concept, the mechanisms of transfer to a sovereign authority were never agreed upon within political theory or practice. When the modern state banished the State of Nature, self-sovereignty also disappeared as a concept, and the consensus became that only the State can be sovereign. Without the referral to the State of Nature, most arguments to legitimize State sovereignty became tautological. The State is sovereign because it makes the Law, so in fact the Law is sovereign through the State (the Rule of Law), while some theorists argue that, fundamentally, the population retains sovereignty, at least through its representatives, and that its consent to be ruled amounts to a social contract, the terms of which are seldom specified.[24]

Horizontal sovereignty, in exchange, remained a fairly stable principle: it is based, simply, on mutual recognition between sovereigns. For Bodin and Locke, for example, the sovereign of a commonwealth found himself in the State of Nature, as no-one—besides, perhaps, God himself—could be sovereign over him. But the sovereign was not alone in this State of Nature: he found himself in the company of other sovereigns. Implicitly, then, to be considered a sovereign you must be recognized as one by other (potential) sovereigns. In the state of nature each sovereign is free and equal: there can be no formal hierarchy between sovereigns, but there was differentiation in terms of personal capacity: charisma, martial, verbal and other skills, and resources.

Historically, inter-state sovereignty has not been based on formal criteria, as suggested by the Westphalian myth (1.3), but on mutual recognition, first between European aristocracy, then between national bourgeoisies. It was only in the 20th century that a legal order based on formal criteria emerged, first the failed League of Nations, then the United Nations. This legal order enshrined the principle that only states can be sovereign, and its rules guaranteed the permanence of that sovereignty. Those rules were crafted by the 'Great Powers' of the day (the group of sovereign powers that recognize themselves and each other as having markedly more capacity than other sovereign powers) and served

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two different objectives and the institutions behind them, the US Department of Defense and Department of State, often clashed, resulting in contradictory policies. This led the USA to support warlords who could provide 'boots on the ground', at the same time as democratic processes in which those warlords were sidelined. Ultimately, national security interests prevailed.

[23] Wallerstein 1993: "Patterns and Prospectives of the Capitalist World-Economy"; p502.

[24] Wendy Brown speaks of the *"unusually amorphous, illusive, and polysemic"* qualities of state sovereignty; Brown 2008: "Sovereignty and the Return of the Repressed"; p252.

to support their hegemony within that system. In that sense, mutual recognition between the delegates of the Great Powers still primed over formal criteria for sovereignty. The legal international order was a case of hegemony transformed into domination. The contours of the current state system can be explained, in large part, “*by the cultural constitution of the Western state system as a community of mutual recognition*”.[25]

Sovereignty is thus a rhizomatic principle, and efforts to cast it in terms of formal rights have been unsuccessful. For example, in the 1933 Montevideo Convention, the Organization of American States decided on a set of principles that allowed a power to be qualified as sovereign (a territory, a permanent population, an effective government and the capacity to enter into international relations), specifying that the "*political existence of the state is independent of recognition by the other states*". In practice, however, if your country is not recognized by others, little does it matter that in fact it is self-governed and autonomous, and that it *should* be formally recognized as sovereign. This is the experience of Somaliland, Kurdish regions, Catalunya, the Mapuche and many other territories with peoples that have established functioning state structures—including many parallel governance systems in South and Southeast Asia.[26] Meanwhile, countries that do not fulfil all criteria of the Montevideo Convention (such as Somalia) remain full members of the international state system.

The intense and sometimes confused debates around sovereignty can be explained by its rhizomatic character, which is difficult to capture in the formal, logical terminology of social science. The arbitrary nature of mutual recognition is obvious when one looks at the world map today. Why are Luxemburg and Andorra independent, but not Corsica? Why a sovereign Malawi, but no Ndebeleland? Why is Bhutan recognized and not Nagalim? There *is* no formal logic, the political world map is an accident of history that has been frozen by the creation of an international state order.

Within this order, other countries can achieve independence, which means they are recognized. But independence, a formal criterion, must be distinguished from sovereignty. Decolonized countries could not choose the legal order that had led to their independence. Within the state system, they had no sovereignty. In Chapter 6.3 we saw how attempts by African leaders to create their own political regimes were defeated, and how they were made to comply with a subordinate position within the global economy and state system.

In summary, sovereignty, like leadership and hegemony, is based on social power and control of the narrative. States may have become the formal ‘holders’ of sovereignty, but the State is but a social construct, an instrument to perpetuate the domination of a ruling elite. We can then extend this notion and posit that the international state order is a social construct that serves to perpetuate the domination of a transnational ruling elite. According to the Dual Power Theory, it follows that this transnational elite must itself be organized rhizomatically, not formally.

This provides a tentative answer to a complicated issue that has preoccupied political theorists over the past decennia, which is the apparent transfer of sovereignty from the state to the inter-state level. In fact, institutions like the state and inter-state organizations have never been sovereign. National ruling elites held the sovereignty in domestic states, and through the establishment of an international state order in the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, ruling elites in core states extended their domination to the rest of the world, in the process forming a new transnational elite.

[25] Strang 1991: “Anomaly and Commonplace in European Political Expansion”; p162.

[26] Overviews of these movements can be found on the website of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), in James C. Scott’s “The Art of Not Being Governed” (2009) for Southeast Asia, and in the writings of Arundhati Roy (e.g. “Listening to Grasshoppers: Field Notes on Democracy”, 2010; and “Walking With Comrades”, 2011) for India.

Returning to the definition of intervention attempted at the beginning of this section, with the insights gained above, we may now refine it thus:

> *International intervention is a tool combining military, humanitarian and political instruments, used by states at the core of the liberal world order to align other states to that order, in what is preferably a multilateral effort.* ***Intervention is a tool of hegemony that strengthens the world order to the benefit of the transnational elite,*** *but it must also respond to perceptions of justice among peoples to not delegitimize intervening states.*

11.2 The Transnational Elite

The transnational elite has been present as a shadow throughout much of this dissertation. Every time the international community is named, who/what is referred to? The international community does not refer to a structure (like the international state-system or the United Nations Organization or international law), but to a community of people whose power has an international scope. To clarify its agency, and how it replicates the function of domestic ruling elites at the inter-state level, the term transnational elite is introduced. In the Dual Power Theory, agency is exercised rhizomatically through the structures of power. Moreover, rhizomes are structured by the laws of nature.

A reminder about the laws of nature (from my conclusion to Part I): "*These principles are more or less the same everywhere in the world. They include, for example, the respect for life, 'thou shalt not kill', nurturing one's progeny, care for the weaker members of a community, contributing positively to the collective, preserving environmental resources, respecting the fruit of another person's labour, and even the search for knowledge and wisdom. The laws of nature have a universal scope. They gain nothing from being written down because they are, so to say, encoded in the genes. In the state of nature, each adult human being is self-sovereign and responsible for applying the laws of nature, with the primary goal of the preservation of self and the community; the notion of community being open-ended.*" These principles are only enacted *within* elite rhizomes (not all of humanity): care for the weak and nurturing the environment thus refer to people and places recognized as their own; the open-ended communities to preserve are their own elite networks, which from each individual node presents itself differently.

At the end of this section, more properties of the rhizome are applied to this concept. It must be stressed that 'the transnational elite' is an externally constructed concept, not a self-assumed community identity. It is used here in the abstract sense. When referring to the plural 'transnational elites', the focus is on the self-assumed network identities, which can be, for example, 'UN staff members', 'humanitarian workers', 'international press' or 'experts on fiscal reform'. Such networks are usually only partially integrated into the transnational elite. Rhizomes remain a fluid form of organization.

From Transnational Capitalist Class to Transnational Elite

The concept of a transnational capitalist class emerged in political science in the early 1980s. The term 'transnational', as differentiated from 'international', referred to non-state actors; for example multinational corporations and international NGOs, but also tourism or migration and even criminal networks. Proponents of its use[27] argued that the academic field of international relations, focused on

[27] Early scholars to thus define 'transnational' include Arnold Wolfers (1959), John Burton (1968), James Rosenau (1969), Horst Mendershausen (1969) and Joseph Nye & Robert Keohane (1971).

state actors (political and military actors and institutions), had to take into account the growing influence of non-state actors, either directly (through lobbying or advocacy) or indirectly (by creating new situations states had to respond to). It signalled a return to the type of political analysis that was current before Carl Schmitt developed the notion of the 'bounded political'.

The theory of a transnational capitalist class first emerged among political scientists seeking to explain the influence of the corporate world over foreign policy. From the days of Karl Marx to the 1970s, the capitalist class had been considered a *national* actor, different in each country. Neo-Marxists and neo-Gramscians, wondering why the successful Keynesian (social-democrat) policies of the post-War period were being abandoned in exchange for neoliberalism, reasoned that the internationally oriented sectors of national Western capitalist classes constituted a *transnational capitalist class* bent on removing the restrictions to self-enrichment posed by national boundaries and state policies.[28] Neo-Gramscian scholars extended Gramsci's analysis of Italian politics and his key concept of hegemony to the international order.[29] While neo-Marxists focused on economic relations, in neo-Gramscian analysis the transnational class included organic intellectuals and civil society leaders who established, maintained and spread the transnational hegemony of ruling classes. The **transnational class** was defined as "*an informal global power structure*"[30] that consisted of private entrepreneurs, politicians and senior civil servants, as well as academics and members of the global media who enjoy privileged access to the circuits of international power and influence.[31] Neoliberal reforms in core countries (through monetary policies, austerity and privatization) and abroad (through IMF-imposed structural adjustments) created such wealth for capitalists operating at the multinational level that national state elites were swayed. In Europe, even left-wing governments introduced pro-market reforms in the 1980s and 1990s to share in the global financial bonanza.

Neoliberalism was against state regulation of markets and tried to 'roll back the state' out of society and the national economy. To most political scientists it was clear by the 1990s that the state had come much weakened out of the neoliberal shift. It was commonly understood that the transnational 'class' (in its structural sense) was antithetical to the state and hopes were pinned on a revival of civil society to recapture the domain of national politics from the grip of transnational capital.[32] In a political sense—as an autonomous site for political contest, or indeed as the repository of popular sovereignty—the state had indeed lost much power; but not in its administrative or coercive functions. The neoliberal paradox is that only state agencies can deregulate and roll back the state. Although it is often said that 'states reacted to market pressures', it is worthwhile to remember that neither states nor markets have agency. Private entrepreneurs made alliances with politicians and senior civil servants to privatize many of the State functions, effectively transferring public resources (the 'commonwealth') to private hands.

As a result of neoliberal hegemony and the collapse of communism, class-based theories became discredited, and after a decade of relative prominence (roughly from 1985 to 1995) neo-Gramscian and neo-Marxist approaches fell out of fashion, although they are still followed by some International Relations scholars. It was a case of 'throwing the baby out with the bathwater'. I suggest retrieving some key concepts of transnational class theory, but first the term 'class' must be rejected. It does not capture the fluid and person-based nature of the network of people who implement and benefit from neoliberal

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[28] For a neo-Marxist take on this concept, see Van der Pijl 1984 and Sklair 1995. For neo-Gramscian readings of the transnational class, see Cox 1983 and Gill 1993.

[29] For an overview of the ongoing debate between neo-Gramscians and neo-Marxists on the relative importance of material vs symbolic sources of power, see Pass 2018: "Gramsci Meets Emergentist Materialism: Towards a *Neo* Neo-Gramscian Perspective on World Order".

[30] Gill 1993: "Gramsci and Global Politics: Towards a Post-Hegemonic Research Agenda"; p7.

[31] See Gill 1991: "American Hegemony and the Trilateral Commission"; van der Pijl 1998: "Transnational Classes and international Relations"; and Sklair 2016: "The Transnational Capitalist Class, Social Movements, and Alternatives to Capitalist Globalization".

[32] Cox 1999: "Civil Society at the Turn of the Millenium: Prospects for an Alternative World Order".

policies, and I prefer the term transnational *elite* that, as noted in 3.4, stems from the word 'chooser' and denotes agency rather than structure. The qualifier 'capitalist' also seems unnecessarily restrictive, as I argue in the following pages.

The Transnational Elite as Social Network

While seeking alternatives to the term transnational elite, I found that the concept of 'the Establishment' had been coined by a British commentator in 1955. His definition focuses on social identities: "*By the 'Establishment', I do not only mean the centres of official power—though they are certainly part of it—but rather the whole matrix of official and social relations within which power is exercised. The exercise of power in Britain (more specifically, in England) cannot be understood unless it is recognised that it is exercised* socially".[33]

Social networking, indeed, is key to elite formation. It is often described as having two aspects. Christopher Ansell, in 'Network Institutionalism' notes that, "*Social networks have both a social (affectual) and instrumental (exchange) dimension*".[34] It is tempting to focus on the latter, as it is more measurable. But the former is probably more important. In fact, it is widely understood that a friendship with a powerful person is more beneficial than a contract with her/him, certainly in the long run. It may almost seem banal to underline this. Many readers may have experienced how the chats during coffee breaks of conferences allow establishing maybe lasting ties, making the formal aspects of such meetings—which is often to arrive at a consensus—appear secondary.[35]

Socialization must be understood both in its psychosocial meaning, as "*the process of learning and internalizing the norms and values of the society, social groups, or organizations inhabited. This enables norms to be inculcated and sustained, and provides guidance on what values and behaviours are appropriate or seen as 'normal'. (…) Socialization is facilitated by the human desire to belong to groups and other social units and is a powerful influence on beliefs and behaviours, and there can be sanctions for non-conformance, such as pressure, or isolation*";[36] and more casually, as '*being social and making friends*'. Socialization takes place at school, in the workplace, in public and in private life. When we speak of the socialization of transnational elites, we mean they tend to go to the same schools and universities, find jobs in the same organizations or branches of work, read the same books and press, follow the same dress codes, go to the same restaurants, receptions, conferences and other socio-professional events, visit the same holiday places, educate their children in similar ways, etc.

International organizations are one of the places socialization takes place. Robert Cox, the political theorist at the root of the neo-Gramscian school, explained: "*One mechanism through which the universal norms of a world hegemony are expressed is the international organisation. Indeed, international organisation functions as the process through which the institutions of hegemony and its ideology are developed. Among the features of international organisation which express its hegemonic role are the following: 1) they embody the rules which facilitate the expansion of hegemonic world orders; 2) they are themselves the product of the hegemonic world order; 3) they ideologically legitimate the norms of the world order; 4) they co-opt the elites from peripheral countries and 5) they absorb counter-hegemonic ideas*".[37] It may be noted that Cox worked most of his life for the International Labour Organization, so he knew the international organization from within.

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[33] Henry Fairlie: "Political Commentary", The Spectator, 23 September 1955

[34] Ansell 2006: "Network Institutionalism"; p77

[35] Robert Merton made the distinction between manifest and latent functions. In the case of an international conference, the manifest function would be to arrive at a consensus on a topic, while the latent function would be to socialize.

[36] Oxford Dictionary of Organizational Behaviour, 2019 (online), lemma under 'Socialization'.

[37] Cox 1983: "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations. An Essay in Method"; p172.

Socialization is key for consensus formation, the enabling condition for hegemony. Private clubs played an important role, especially since the beginning of the industrial era, as sites of socialization of old and new elites.[38] These clubs were mostly debating places, meaning that their intention was to facilitate a consensus. Transnational elites that emerged after the war on both sides of the North Atlantic reached a new consensus based on social democracy, class compromise in the mixed economy of Fordism, and international trade.[39] The growing availability of air travel and advances in communication technology after World War II, facilitated socialization between ruling elites of different parts of the world, and of different sectors of the society and economy.

An Example of Transnational Consensus Formation

Neo-Gramscian scholars studied these processes of ruling elite socialization and consensus formation, focusing on one forum and event that seemed to define the shift of the post-War Keynesian consensus to neoliberalism: the Trilateral Commission's 1975 'Crisis of Democracy' report.[40] This commission was established by Zbigniew Brzezinski and David Rockefeller in 1973 as a forum within which elite members of North America, Western Europe and Japan could debate important issues (and socialize, the latent function). It still exists today and for those interested in studying the transnational elite as a rhizomatic social network of power, it is instructive to read their publications and parse their membership lists, all available on their website. The Trilateral Commission is not as secretive as, for example, the Bilderberg conferences (a Dutch initiative bringing together North Atlantic elites, including the military and royalty), but neither does it seek publicity like the World Economic Forum that is held yearly at Davos and seeks to establish a wide consensus rather than a core one.

In passing, the notion of conspiracy theory should be dealt with. It is easy to see a conspiracy in these more or less discrete meetings between the most powerful players on earth. I am no specialist on conspiracy theories, but it has struck me that people who believe in them think that there is a plan and a secret agenda. They see hidden structures where there is no evidence for them.[41] At the level of the rhizome there can be no plan, as it is strictly informal, flexible and adaptative. The consensus which is required to establish a hegemonic narrative (or worldview) is of a different nature to a structured plan, which would be necessary for domination. The rhizome *can* of course generate an above-ground structure (even a hidden one) that could be characterized as a conspiracy, but the meetings of the kind held by the Trilateral Commission, documented on their website, cannot be seen as conspirational.

Nonetheless, the Trilateral Commission's response to accusations that it was setting the agenda of global politics far from the democratic space of national parliaments[42]—it retorted that their meetings are not of the decision-making type, but efforts to arrive at a shared understanding of common problems and work together toward solutions—is disingenuous. Informal networks may not take decisions, but they do set agendas by agreeing on issues and how to frame them.

For instance, the 1975 'Crisis of Democracy' report, co-authored by Samuel Huntington, Michel Crozier and Joji Watanubi, analyses how Western democracy can be saved from the crises besetting it. US

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[38] Cousin & Chauvin 2016: "Grands Cercles et Sociabilité des Élites Mondiales".

[39] Gill 1991:46.

[40] Ibidem.

[41] I should add that the label of 'conspiracy theory', as propagated by mainstream media, has become so common in the 21st century because it is liberally applied by transnational elites to any unwelcome attempt to understand tradeoffs among them, aided by a 'post-truth' attitude to fact. The term is now used for counter-narratives so daft (like QANon or the Illuminati) that it makes hegemonic narratives seem eminently sensible. More pondered reflections about hidden motives in international relations and underlying patterns are then lumped into the same 'conspiracy theories' category as the most absurd ones and summarily dismissed.

[42] Gill 1991:49.

political elites, in particular, had reason to be shaken by events of the preceding years: the US defeat in Vietnam, the anti-Vietnam war protests, student revolts and the environmental and personal liberation movements (including feminism), which could not be expressed through the existing political channels, the challenge posed by the 'developing world' with the OPEC oil price hike of 1973 and the Watergate scandal that had led to Nixon's downfall, were all fresh on the minds of the US delegation in 1975, while in Europe protest movements and the intellectual questioning of the state and other power structures were also challenging the post-War political consensus.

The authors of this report suggested that 'the belt needs to be tightened' on citizens who have become spoilt by well-being and no longer appreciate the system that has brought them material wealth, safety, education and access to knowledge. "*The incorporation of substantial elements of the population into the middle classes has escalated their expectations and aspirations, thereby causing a more intense reaction if these are not met in reality. Broadened political participation has increased the demands on government. Widespread material well-being has caused a substantial portion of the population, particularly among the young and the "intellectual" professional classes, to adopt new life-styles and new social-political values*".[43]

The authors defined the then current state of *anomic democracy* as 'consensus without purpose'. There is consensus that the democratic system is better than any alternative, but a new direction must be found. "*In a democracy, however, purpose cannot be imposed from on high by fiat; nor does it spring to life from the verbiage of party platforms, state of the union messages, or speeches from the throne. It must, instead, be the product of the* collective perception by the significant groups in society of a major challenge to their well-being *and the perception by them that this challenge threatens them all about equally*".[44]

The report reflects a search for consensus rather than a doctrine, as conspiracy theorists believe. A close reading of the document indicates disagreement between participants, many of whom seem seriously committed to democratic values and even dispute the premise of the research, that there is a 'crisis of democracy' in the first place—including the Japanese co-author. But it did signal an overall overture toward the radical market theories that were simultaneously being developed by the Chicago School of Economics led by Milton Friedman and, most important for our treatment, suggested that a major challenge was needed to cause a rhizomatic reaction of self-preservation among 'significant groups in society'. The 1975 meeting may in itself not have been a seminal event, but in that case it was a perfect illustration of the major shift occurring in those years within the hegemonic consensus that sustains the transnational elite.

Despite the monumental global socioeconomic shifts that have taken place over the past decades, the core membership of the transnational elite seems to change less than the hegemonic consensus. In most Western countries, the composition of elites over the past centuries has been marked by evolution, not revolution. In the Netherlands, for instance, one finds the same 'patrician' families in leading positions of society since the 17th Century, the Dutch 'Golden Age'.[45] True, some domestic elites in core countries (e.g. trade unions, national industrialists) were replaced by new groups more closely linked to global capital flows, but continuities stand out.[46] In fact, the hegemony of the surviving

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[43] Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki 1975: "The Crisis of Democracy. Report on the Governability of Democracies"; p158.

[44] Crozier et al 1975:160. My emphasis.

[45] Such as the Six family, studied by Geert Mak in "The Many Lives of Jan Six: A Portrait of an Amsterdam Dynasty", 2017.

[46] This is borne out by an analysis of the Trilateral Commission's membership over the past 45 years. See Appendix 5.

national elites seems to have been *reinforced* by the absorption of the counter-hegemonic transnational forces of 'free' capital that attacked the Keynesian state-capital-labour compact.

Transnational elites do not *control* world affairs. The elections of Ronald Reagan in 1980 and Donald Trump in 2016 came as an unwelcome surprise. Instead, the transnational rhizome keeps adapting to the context. The transnational elite is no longer the exclusive domain of old white men: women and people with other skin colours are gradually increasing their presence. This is not an internally engineered process, but the reaction to a changing environment. Nevertheless, the elite's core is still composed of old white men with liberal-conservative ideas. They still refer to Locke and Hobbes when discussing politics, and maybe Machiavelli but not 孔子 (*Kǒngzǐ*, Confucius) or Öcalan. The dress code of power—suit & tie etc.—has barely changed over the past century. And one must of course be fluent in English.

The transnational elite is not a superstructure that is brought into being by social relations of production—as neo-Marxists would have it, replacing the word 'bourgeoisie' by 'transnational capitalist class'. Of course, the material sources of transnational power do matter, but they cannot define the group; after all, what constitutes wealth is also a social construct. For instance, the production of industrial goods, which had always been considered the basis of the capitalist system, has been deliberately outsourced to China. Control over prime resources and basic commodities like steel, rubber and bananas is no longer as important as control over symbolic matters.

The transnational elite may be 'capitalist' but I prefer following Bourdieu in giving a central role to forms of symbolic power and seeing the power of capital as deriving from that. Money may not be the prime concern of rich people; it is rather reputation, acknowledgement and influence, what Bourdieu calls 'symbolic capital'. Wealth is but a form of social recognition or a means to attain it. Moreover, unlike the capitalists of yesteryear, who dealt in iron, oil, textiles, cars and other objects that at least produced the illusion of having material value, capital today is mostly generated in the symbolic domain, such as financial derivatives, monetary policies, brand identities and narratives, the elusive 'bitcoin' being a perfect example. The valuation of a company like Facebook seems to rely more on social consensus (symbolic capital) than that of an oil company that has access to a sizable percentage of the world's oil reserves. Within the transnational elites, the industrialists of yesteryear have been replaced by tech and social media giants; and while fossil fuel majors have maintained their power until today, that may also change in the coming decades.

Gramsci names two ways for spreading the hegemonic consensus: absorption and emulation. Counter-hegemonic forces and reticent domestic political elites are mostly absorbed. For example, the social democratic consensus that was hegemonic in the Western bloc after World War II was based on the absorption of working-class representatives into arrangements with the capitalist class under supervision of the State. In the 1980s and 1990s, non-governmental organizations were absorbed into a budding transnational hegemonic system to avoid them opposing the new consensus, as threatened to happen with the World Social Forum and subsequent movements. The integration of counter-hegemonic forces caused a transformation of the consensus. By absorbing opposing forces, hegemony may become stronger (what Nicholas Nassim Taleb calls 'anti-fragility'[47]), when hegemony is integral.

Emulation happens when domestic political classes perceive that change in other countries is beneficial, and they decide to apply similar policies domestically. England did not have to fight Europe in the 19th

[47] Taleb 2012: "Anti-Fragile: Things that Gain from Disorder". While 'resilience' indicates the capacity of an organism or community to return to its original state after a shock, anti-fragility, as Taleb defines it, implies the shock strengthens the organism; similar to Nietzsche's : 'what doesn't kill me makes me stronger'. While resilient organisms will still avoid conflict, an anti-fragile organism may actively seek it. One could even speculate that, as a result of this characteristic, an opposed hegemony is stronger than a non-opposed one.

century to have its model of industrial capitalism accepted[48], and the neoliberal bloc barely needed to absorb counter-hegemonic forces to see the spread of their policies through continental Europe in the 1980s and 90s. Somaliland emulated the West when forming its state, there was no coercion or even influencing by Western powers. By implementing reforms through emulation, domestic political classes qualify for transnational elite membership if they manage to socialize sufficiently; but absorption is a quicker way to join this elite.

If we return to the contrast between the rhizome and the tree, the distinctions made in Table 5 shed further light on the nature of the transnational elites. As a structure, it is invisible, underground. Like the uncertainty principle in physics (one cannot at the same time see the position and the movement of a particle), 'seeing' the rhizome at one point does not allow to capture its dynamics; moreover, these dynamics change as a result of the observation. For example, when hidden relations between two powerful groups are exposed, their relations are quickly rearranged, following Deleuze and Guattari's principle of 'insignificant rupture'. This invalidates the assumption that 'seeing' allows 'understanding' and makes the transnational elite, like any rhizomatic structure, an unappealing subject for academic study. The best way to approach it is as investigative journalists do, by taking hold of one part and then following the ramifications until one gets an *impression* of how the network serves its members.

Another important insight is the necessary mobility of the elite, its nomadic nature and its fluidity. This is most evident in the field of finance, as the urge of capitalists to multiply their wealth drove the neoliberal revolution, and the free movement of capital may be the primary factor sustaining the transnational elite. It is also obvious at a personal level. Both professional mobility, for example the capacity to occupy significant positions in different types of organization, public (government), semi-public (academia, media) and private (corporations) and physical mobility (air travel) have become essential features for people who belong to the transnational elite. This characteristic of power cannot be explained from a structural viewpoint, where it would make more sense to stay within one powerful organization and climb to its top. From a rhizomatic perspective, it is better to have personal connections in different networks of power.

This may explain the ambivalent relation that transnational elites have with the Law. As members of institutions, they are bound to abide by the formal law that underlies these institutions. But, as people who thank their position to their mobility within informal networks of power, they do not always feel compelled to abide by national laws. This is shown by tax evasion, or illegal and immoral activities as exposed regularly by the international press, all involving prominent elite figureheads.[49] Transnational elites not only help themselves but also each other, which is the rhizomatic good thing to do (help your family and friends) rather than abiding by national laws, whose jurisdiction at their transnational operating level seems contestable anyhow.

Like Somali political and business elites, transnational elites need the law to produce social order for a secure operating environment, but not to determine their private behaviour. This could be termed *consensus without consent*. They establish and maintain a consensus to which they do not adhere themselves, behaving like Schmitt's sovereign ('sovereign is the one who decides on the exception'). Non-elites, conversely, often consent to laws even though they do not participate in consensus formation (*consent without consensus*), as Gramsci pointed out.

Peter Leeson demonstrates that the international business community is rhizomatic—or, in his words, anarchic. It operates on trust rather than according to law, in contradiction with classical economists who assume each operator on a market is primarily self-interested, and thus cannot be trusted, but only

[48] van der Pijl 1998:83.

[49] Recently: the Pandora Papers (2021), the Paradise Papers (2017), the Panama Papers (2016) among the major leaks, or the sex and blackmail scandals around Jeffrey Epstein (2014-2015).

constrained by Law and its effective implementation.[50] Basing himself on rational choice theory, Leeson demonstrates that predictable (trustworthy) behaviour is what drives international business, not abidance by rules. International business disputes rarely end up in court, but are usually solved by mediation, which is a rhizomatic conflict-resolution mechanism (like *xeer)*.[51]

Trust, as argued in 8.3, is what holds a rhizome together, and it is what facilitates transfer between its nodes. Trust allows the transnational elite to function as a self-governed network, and it precedes the international rules-based order. Given that there is no sovereign authority to enforce compliance, members of the transnational elite must trust each other before they establish rules to govern their conduct. The international order is therefore the result of transnational self-governance, a case of hegemony transformed into domination, but it can only function insofar the trust between its members is continuously renewed through socialization and consensus formation.

In the following pages, the term transnational elite(s) is preferred to that of international community, when the focus is on the agency of these rhizomatic networks, but international community remains a more habitual term, preferable because it is familiar, despite its vagueness.[52] It should be stressed that the transnational elite is not an observable group of people, but an externally defined phenomenon to explain global politics. As Alexander Wendt put it, "*it is a well-established and perfectly legitimate scientific practice to posit unobservable entities to account for observable behavior*".[53]

11.3 State-Building as a Tool of Global Governance

"State-Building Interventions represent a new mode of governance, or a new form of political rule, that rather than merely build the capacity of the state is in actual fact transforming the very nature of statehood in both intervened and intervening countries, leading to the emergence of a transnationalising and transnationally regulated state"

Shahar Hameiri, 2010[54]

Here, the first two parts of this chapter are brought together, to examine how the transnational elite reinforces its domination of the international state order through state-building intervention.

The modern state is an instrument used by ruling elites to exercise sovereignty over a society, as described in Chapter One. Since the colonial period, state-building and state reform have also become instruments of transnational governance. While the state-tree is essential for providing a lasting quality to rule, building states is not enough. Governments must also be selected by the transnational elite—it must retain *leadership*—or else the instruments of state may be captured by people opposed to the hegemonic elites.[55] This means that the international community must not only help build the right

[50] Leeson 2014: "Anarchy Unbound. Why Self-Governance Works Better Than You Think".

[51] Leeson 2014: ch 8 calls international arbitration an example of successful self-governance in the international trading world "*[e]very research into the practice of international arbitration shows that by far the great majority of arbitration awards is fulfilled without the need for enforcement* (…) *The world's largest international arbitration association, the ICC, estimates that 90 percent of all its arbitral decisions are complied with voluntarily*".

[52] Bliesemann de Guevara & Kühn 2011: "'The International Community Needs to Act': Loose Use and Empty Signalling of a Hackneyed Concept".

[53] Wendt 1987: "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory"; p353

[54] Hameiri 2010: "Regulating Statehood. State Building and the Transformation of the Global Order"; p3-4.

[55] As happened for example in elections in Algeria (1992), Palestine (2006) and Egypt (2012).

institutions, but also ensure that they are controlled by domestic elites aligned to the transnational elite; it must maintain both hegemony and domination.

There seems to a general agreement among most critical experts of international interventions that they seek to reorder domestic societies in ways beneficial to the interveners (as the definition of intervention at the end of section 11.1, above, postulates). In most cases, Western states perform this reordering, and sometimes international organizations.[56] The focus should rather be on the people acting through these institutions: the transnational elite.

State-building literature assumes an optimistic 'Bob the Builder approach',[57] and one finds in all policy papers and many academic papers the underlying question: What can *we* do?, 'we' being the international community (transnational elite), or the rich West. The starting point is an assumption of superiority, stemming from international knowledge and expertise that is applicable to local situations. Can we fix it? *Yes we can!*

The Bright Side of State-Building

Timothy Sisk seems to give the most consensually accepted definition of state-building in his handbook 'Statebuilding' (2013). Statebuilding "*can only be successful into the twenty-first century if the state that is built is one that is able to advance human rights-based development for the poorest and most marginalized sections of society, and a state that is built on a democratic social contract that links state legitimacy to participation and accountability by the people.*" Local forces cannot be entirely trusted to pursue this goal, so international intervention remains required. "*[O]utside actors must sometimes act with resolve and fortitude to advance international norms and standards of human rights and democracy*".[58] This statement refers to an implicit alliance between the international community and local populations—especially those that suffer from the domination of local elites ('vested interests')—to build a democratic, accountable and human rights-based State.

This is a consensual definition close to current state-building policies of international organizations such as the IMF and World Bank (Poverty Reduction Strategy, good governance), the United Nations and the NGO and aid sector (peacebuilding, democratization, human rights), diplomats and global security actors (forceful intervention when necessary).

There is an element of humanitarian messianism in the West's defence of the weak and downtrodden: the 'white men saving brown women from brown men' syndrome.[59] A Somali saying recognizes this:

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[56] For example, Martha Finnemore asserts that international institutions and normative values '*may make uniform behavioural claims upon dissimilar actors. They may shape and define the preferences of actors in ways not related to internal conditions, characteristics, or functional need'* (Finnemore 1996: "National Interests in International Society"; p22). Another example: "*There is a dominant group of states that, through the international system and international institutions, creates a normative framework of acceptable statehood through which values reflecting the desires, interests and demands of those powerful actors are disseminated, enacted and reproduced"*. (Richards 2014: "Understanding Statebuilding"; p26). About the World Bank, Olivier Nay writes "*By reproducing and disseminating a policy framework that advocates state-building solutions to the problems of conflict and extreme poverty in the countries of the South, the concept reflects the interests of Western donor governments, whose international hegemony is tied to their capacity to maintain a Westphalian order based on stable and predictable transactions among central governments*" (Nay 2014: "International Organisations and the Production of Hegemonic Knowledge"; p228).

[57] Berit Bliesemann de Guevara points this out humoristically; Bliesemann de Guevara 2012: "Introduction: Statebuilding and State-formation"; p1.

[58] Sisk 2013: "Statebuilding"; p2.

[59] Spivak 1988: "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

*Ninki faralahaa frenji baa lo helay: '*the weak man is protected by the foreigner'. Indeed, the clans and minorities that Somali 'noble' clans discriminated against have been favoured by foreign intervention since colonial times. This legitimizes Western intervention in the view of domestic Western populations. Insofar Western interventions seek social transformation, seeking the alliance of the 'losers' of existing social configurations is a tactical choice, too.

About democracy, Bayart mentions "*While serving as an instrument of internal legitimation and as an international norm, it has paradoxically become a cog in the 'anti-politics machine'* "[60] The embrace by interveners of the discourse on democracy, civil society and good governance allows them to delegitimize any potential domestic opposition to their intervention. The choice for democracy is not political, but ethical and rational, for there is an international consensus (embodied in the UN and all other international organizations) that it is the 'best' political system. That the form of democracy should be representative, electoral and multi-party (and with an executive mandate for representatives) is also not submitted to political debate, as it seems a technical, consensual matter.

This brings us to the subject of social transformation, through which the intervening international community seeks to ensure that local social forces aligned to it come to control the institutions of state.

State-Building as Social Transformation

In the positive, prescriptive international relations literature, a healthy civil society is the *conditio sine qua non* of successful state-building. This makes eminent sense if—as seen in Fig. 26 above—civil society forms the roots of the state-tree; a tree should be built from the roots upward. However, civil society in post-colonial or post-conflict settings is deemed to lack the rational and civic capabilities of civil society in the West. Typically, people in such settings are seen to remain hostage to traditional social identities (like clan). The first objective of intervention is then to help civil society evolve into a modern shape. This serves not only political ends. David Chandler notes that " *The subject of civil society—the autonomous rational individual—is the foundational subject of both halves of the liberal equation of government*".[61] Thus, at the same time as the rational civic citizen, intervention crafts the *homo economicus* who is the basis for the global economy, the rational and well-informed individual whose self-interested choices lead to the best collective market outcomes.

Social transformation is achieved by establishing the right institutions, those that reward civic, rational behaviour and discourage traditional, egoistic or otherwise disruptive behaviour. "*The task of international statebuilding intervention, in this paradigm of understanding, is that of the indirect influencing of outcomes through institutional means*" argues Chandler.[62] The institutions include free and fair elections, political parties with internal democracy, a tight legal framework, public accounting through free media, professional civil society watchdogs, etc. The assumption is that, through these institutions, fractious political identification as members of ethnic, religious or criminal groups can then be replaced (or complemented) by self-identification as members of modern civil society: women or youth groups, small businesses communities, political parties, etc.

Note that this approach follows a direction opposed to what was considered normal in European state formation. Civil society was seen as a self-constituting, autonomous sphere that generates its own institutions as it gradually builds up the desired political system. Here, however, we are faced with the 'reverse engineering of institutions'.[63] As David Chandler reflects, "*The statebuilding policy framework*

[60] Bayart 2000: "Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion"; p226.

[61] Chandler 2007: "Statebuilding, Civil Society and the Privileging of Difference"; p88.

[62] Ibidem. He refers to the work of Collier & Hoeffler (2004): "Greed and Grievance in Civil War", showing how this influential World Bank expert argues for an institutional, not social focus.

[63] Cheng, Goodhand & Meehan 2018: "Synthesis Paper: Securing and Sustaining Elite Bargains that Reduce Violent Conflict"; p80.

depends on the relationship between the state and society being inversed. Rather than society being natural and the state as the product of societal relations, the state is prior, and society and social relations are seen to be the product of state-shaped institutions at both formal and informal levels".[64] So the state shapes society, rather than society the state. This inverse method of ruling through the state recalls the inverse tree, whose branches reach out into the soil of foreign countries.

By reaching out to each individual (potentially) to shape her/his political and economic incentives for behaviour, intervention becomes 'biopolitical'.[65] The 'shadow of hierarchy' that encourages Somali citizens to adopt behaviour aligned with the international community—leading me to the suggestion that a form of social contract exists between many Somalis and the international community—may be no more than a response to efforts by the international community to engage individual Somali citizens, albeit indirectly by crafting institutions. This suggests that, if Somali citizens help foreign interveners build the planned structures of rule for overcoming the opposition by vested interests through democratic means, they may become junior members of the international community.

Creating Dependent Domestic Elites

As David Williams argues, elite homogeneity is both the driver and outcome of development programmes that promote synergies between international actors and local 'partners'[66]. The homogeneity between domestic and transnational elites grows through the interaction in such programmes; these are opportunities for the international community to transfer their methods, objectives and underlying values to domestic elites, in the psychosocial meaning of socialization.

In Somalia, the more casual form of socialization between foreign and local elites is difficult, for the reasons seen above (self-imposed security barriers). However, in terms of psychosocial socialization and adopting hegemonic norms, the programmatic interaction between donors, international agencies, Somali government, NGO sector and civil society is successful. The aspiration to belong to global elites is drawing ever larger numbers of Somalis, mainly the young urban educated class (not very large, but influential), into the transnational consensus.

This dynamic can continue as long as foreign resources keep flowing, either increasing or distributed more evenly. The extraversion (or rent-seeking behaviour) of Somali elites, often noted in this dissertation, is, if not kindled, then at least reciprocated by the international community. African ruling elites are actively courted to agree with the hegemonic liberal democratic consensus and to comply with the rules of the state order. This 'courting' can take many forms, such as inviting officials for training abroad, during which they are socialized (in both senses) into hegemonic values.

Domestic elites thus critically depend on foreign support. The historic survey of Somalia has shown that, when elites have easy access to foreign rents, their roots in domestic society weaken. If Al Shabaab takes over Somalia, an exodus similar to Afghanistan can be expected of urban professionals, civil society leaders, senior government officials and civil servants. It is difficult to conceive how they could maintain themselves in Somalia without the international presence.

As we have seen in Chapters Eight and Nine, international assistance deepens the dependency of Somali and Somaliland ruling elites in several ways:

- It discharges the state of the responsibility of providing essential services to the population, while state elites still receive some credit for these services;
- It provides direct income to state elites;
- It deepens the integration of the domestic society and economy into the international order.

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[64] Chandler 2007:89.

[65] Foucault 2008: "The Birth of Biopolitics"; p298-299.

[66] Williams 2013: "Development, Intervention, and International Order"; p1216.

In Somalia, international support today is at a historically high level. This is true for Africa in general. In 2018, Klaus Schlichte observed that "*the degree of internationalization of politics in African states has (…) not diminished since colonial conquest*", specifying "*It is not only the World Bank and the IMF but also bilateral aid projects, other international organizations, and NGOs that are part of this new laboratory of international rule*".[67] The internationalization he refers to goes beyond aid and financial support, and contributes to general efforts to transform African state-society relations.

We have shown how, in Somalia, the efforts to change state-society relations through intervention have lead to conflict. This is because domestic social forces eager to participate in transnational governance for their own benefit are strengthened, while domestic opposition is side-lined, thus introducing or increasing domestic conflict. Those who oppose social reforms that are presented as technical and expertise-based, rather than political, can be dismissed as 'spoilers' or 'vested interests', and as basically irrational or even criminal, when the desired social transformation is fixed in laws.

Dealing with Domestic Opposition

Charles Tilly defines *state making* as the act of eliminating internal rival forces from within the state territory. *State-building* (in other countries) in the same way implies eliminating domestic forces antagonistic to the transnational elite.[68] This is what the West has done or tried to do in Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan and many other countries, killing tens of thousands of people on the grounds that they are 'terrorists' or supporters of terrorism, with near complete impunity.[69]

The international community deals with dissent either coercively—providing the means to the Somali government to impose a 'monopoly of violence' or directly attacking dissenters, e.g. through drone warfare—or consensually, through 'counter violent extremism' messaging campaigns and programmes to encourage and reintegrate defectors. In Somalia these are entirely funded and even largely set up by international donors.

But the international community must deal coercively only with marginal violent resistance. Overall, domestic opposition groups do not feel empowered to resist transnational forces. This kind of resistance would take place at a different scale than they are used to, at local, national or cross-border levels. How does one resist an integral transnational hegemony, when all the material and coercive forces seem to on the transnational side, and domestic elites are aligned with it? When there seems to be only one system, and no alternative? It is more reasonable to comply and try to extract some benefit (for yourself and your rhizome). This does not mean that people consent with the consensus, or harbour any belief in the intrinsic goodness of the State, the West or modernization.[70]

This explains why there are general popular revolts against 'the system' in Lebanon, Iraq, Chile, India, Sri Lanka and France, to name a few prominent cases of the past years. The reason given by protestors is often that they no longer feel in control of their collective destiny. They feel disempowered by global forces that are reshaping their lives, and they blame domestic elites for not protecting them.

In Somalia, such a general revolt will not occur because of Al Shabaab, which absorbs part of popular discontent while discouraging the manifestation of the other part: within the current climate, anti-

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[67] Schlichte 2018 : "Politics in African States"; p10.

[68] As analysed by Shahar Hameiri in the case of the Solomon Islands, where the Australian Federal Police not only trains the local police force in counterinsurgency and riot control, but engages in these activities itself; thus, domestic political opposition becomes transnational criminal opposition. Hameiri 2010:138-141 provides a fascinating account of how Australia's police has become enmeshed in regional politics.

[69] Barring a few cases where perpetrators of egregious crimes (such as the mistreatment of prisoners at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison) were disciplined. But these sanctions are rare and often quite mild.

[70] Personal observation upon socializing with younger Somalis.

government protest is too easily seen as pro-insurgent. But the frustration among the youth, both in Mogadishu and Hargeisa, is palpable. Levels of trust in the international community are low. From my personal observation, it seems most young Somalis believe in some kind of conspiracy theory.[71] The main political channels available to organize opposition against the government are Islamist parties, which do not appeal to all youngsters.

In the discussion of sovereignty and intervention above, only horizontal sovereignty was considered, the mutual recognition between states. From the perspective of vertical sovereignty—the supposed compact between the people and a sovereign of a country—contemporary intervention appears to be a mechanism to enforce the transfer of sovereignty rooted in a domestic population to the transnational elite, with coercion if necessary.[72] According to political theory and popular sentiment, a population should be sovereign in its own country, and this popular sovereignty is incarnated in a State over which it has some control. But, if the state is designed to facilitate foreign rule, it is difficult to defend that it still embodies popular sovereignty. As Lord Hailey put it: "*Everywhere the supervision exercised over them [African officials] must bring home the lesson that the sanction for their authority is no longer the goodwill of their own people, but the recognition accorded to them by the [colonial] administration.*" This quote (in Chapter Four) shows that the process of sovereignty transfer has been going on for a century at least. Most African officials were quick to comply and submit—at least in appearance—to the sovereignty of foreign powers, who sanctioned their authority in return. What now sometimes lacks is the goodwill of the people.

State-Building as Meta-Governance

How do transnational elites govern the international state order? Although I argued that only the transnational elite wields true sovereignty, in formal terms only States are sovereign and only states can pass laws. Therefore, state elites must be encouraged to pass laws that are favourable to transnational governance, and that further the international rules-based order.

Encouraging other states to pass laws favourable to the interests of Great Powers may be an old tenet of diplomacy. However, for the current neoliberal order, a more proximate cause can be found in the autonomy of the economic sphere from politics. Neoliberal ideologues argued that monetary policies had to be decided not by politicians, but by financial experts, so Central Banks became independent from political oversight. Trade and investment decisions were also best left to markets and their experts. Little by little, the public decision-making domain (by parliaments) was reduced, with the argument (also presented in the 1975 report 'Crisis of Democracy') that problems requiring an expert technical solution were best taken by expert agencies, to avoid them falling hostage to the struggle between group interests in national parliaments, or to irrational public sentiment.

This process has been ongoing since the 1980s. A vivid defence of it was made in 2013 by Ian Goldin, professor of Globalisation and Development at the University of Oxford and previously Vice-President of the World Bank. He argues that "*global problems require global policies, but that international organisations are too 'remote' to manage issues directly, while the implementation of many international agreements is held 'hostage to domestic politics'.* Consequently, Goldin advises that *'coalition[s] of the willing' instead devise global rules, then press other states to alter their domestic governance accordingly. Achieving this requires jettisoning the 'outdated concept of sovereignty'. The*

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[71] The effort by people to make sense of the gap between discourse and practice in their daily reality should not be derided, but taken as a sign of inquisitive intelligence. Who could blame Somalis, Afghans, Iraqis, Libyans, etc., for not taking the declarations and explanations of the international community at face value (fighting terrorism, human rights, democracy, environment etc), and trying to find out what *really* motivates intervention?

[72] See Jones 2013: "Sovereignty, Intervention and Social Order in Revolutionary Times".

'unitary state' must be 'disaggregated': 'transnational networks of public-sector professionals' should be networked 'with their international counterparts' to 'solve certain cross-border challenges, task by task'.[73] *Empowering technical regulators is beneficial because, unlike political leaders, they 'do not have to balance finding an effective solution against (...) competing interests'. Consequently, they can 'reach clear-headed assessments of the challenges' and 'make great headway in the harmonisation of standards'. This transnational, functional, technocratic approach aims deliberately to 'circumvent ... the most powerful interests in a sovereign state' and difficult multilateral negotiations – i.e. to bypass politics altogether*".[74]

A successful example of a 'coalition of the willing devising global rules' is provided by the International Air Travel Association, which provides most of the operational and safety rules and regulations of airlines. Its board is entirely composed of CEOs of the major international airlines.[75] Its recommendations are mostly endorsed by the International Civil Aviation Organization, a UN agency that relies heavily on IATA to develop standards. This provides a good example of transnational elite self-governance, where an industry first disciplines itself at a global scale by establishing a consensus among its members and adopting its own regulations, and then influences global and domestic policy-making.[76] It is very difficult for any airline to survive outside of this consensus.

The 'transnational networks of public sector professionals' who 'solve cross-border challenges, task by task', thus 'harmonizing standards', are sometimes referred to as *epistemic communities* in academic literature. They consist of policy experts who see a collective problem in broadly the same way—in the same mindset—and who advise their national governments accordingly.[77] One can see them as Gramsci's organic intellectuals whose essential function is to form a hegemonic consensus, and the epistemic community as a classical example of the rhizome.[78]

Hameiri uses the term 'meta-governance' for this process. It cannot be called governance, because those who form the consensus have no means of implementing it. They can suggest certain regulations, laws and processes that derive from their analysis of a problem. States retain their sovereignty, and no government can be forced to implement the expert recommendations. But since transnational governance is rhizomatic, and based on socialization, the pressure to comply is felt strongly.[79] In practice, there are few states that oppose the rapidly growing set of international regulations; not

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[73] For similar arguments see Chayes & Chayes 1995: "The New Sovereignty. Compliance with International Regulatory Agreements", Harvard University Press; Slaughter 2005: "A New World Order" Princeton University Press.

[74] Goldin 2013: "Divided Nations: Why Global Governance is Failing and What We Can Do about It", chapters 2 & 3. The excerpt above comes from Hameiri & Jones 2016:797-798.

[75] See the IATA website Membership of the Board of Governors accessed on 7 December 2020.

[76] E.g. this news report: IATA calls European Countries to Lift Border Restrictions, 02/09/2020.

[77] Pierson 2011: "The Modern State" p150. The term 'epistemic community' has been defined as follows by its main theorist, Peter M. Haas: "*a network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area.*" Haas 1992: "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination"; p3.

[78] Hameiri & Jones 2016, give several examples of how this meta-governance is exercised; for example, by Western law-enforcement agencies through Anti-Money Laundering measures. A more recent example was how pharmaceutical companies and private donors like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation influenced the WHO coronavirus strategy.

[79] The recent Covid-19 crisis provides an example of transnational governance. For a few months there was no consensus on how to handle it; then a consensus emerged around vaccines. This consensus was quickly adopted around the globe. Countries that did not comply, such as Tanzania under Magafuli, were singled out for criticism by international experts and the media. A more scientific approach would have been to take Tanzania as a control population to dispassionately investigate the impact of vaccination.

signing and ratifying them is punished through means of social power, wielded within the transnational elite: ignoring (withholding mutual recognition) or not favouring for a future deal. It is much easier for domestic elites to formally accept the hegemonic consensus on a subject, but delay its domestic implementation.

Meta-governance can take many forms. Anu Bradford coined the term 'Brussels Effect' to designate how the EU shapes the global market through regulatory power.[80] Non-EU global companies adopt standards designed by the EU for internal regulation, so that they can access the rich European consumer market. These companies also operate in other countries, where the comparatively more expensive products made to comply to EU standards face competition from cheaper products. The companies then have in interest in lobbying third-country governments to adopt the same EU standards—under the label of consumer protection, ethical practices, etc—to outmanoeuvre the competition. Thus, EU regulations are gradually adopted throughout the world, not coercively but through market pressure, or emulation. Here, the role of the transnational elite seems incidental, but its hegemony is strengthened nonetheless.

Seen in this light, the state-building intervention in Somalia, or even state-building interventions in general, are not a discrete area of transnational governance, but should be seen as part and parcel of a general effort to establish and consolidate a rules-based order. The pressure on a European country to release its pension funds on international capital markets, or on an Asian country to implement intellectual property legislation, is not fundamentally different from the effort to establish an electoral democracy in Somalia. This also helps explaining why some of the policies followed by the international community in Somalia seem so ill-advised, and even counterproductive. The main objective of intervention is to support *'good governance' within the international state system,* and that is evidently of more importance to hegemonic powers than the fortunes of a country like Somalia.

The Authoritarian Liberal Global Order

This brings us to the notion of an 'authoritarian liberal global order'[81], where national sovereignty, and subsequently also the right of people to self-determination, is transferred to an inter-state system of regulations, agreements and institutional objectives—a system of consensus—that is led by the transnational elite.

This system of rule is *authoritarian* because it provides almost no possibility for popular participation by casting political problems as technical issues to be solved by experts. It is *liberal* because it is based on liberal rights and values, and seeks to extend these to all societies. It is *global* in scope, penetrating all societies with the pretence of universality, and it is an *order* in the sense that it bases itself on rules and laws to maintain stable governance.

The hegemony of this global order rests on the fundamental premise that the modern state is the definitive form of rule in societies, and the pillar of stability of the contemporary state order. The splitting and fusing of states, creating new states, or the change of borders between states is increasingly unlikely.

The ability of the transnational elite to transform its hegemony into domination through the control of institutions has been described in these pages as an advantage, allowing the perpetuation of what may

[80] Bradford 2020: "The Brussels Effect: How the European Union Rules the World".

[81] This expression was coined by Shahar Hameiri in "Regulating Statehood: State Building and the Transformation of the Global Order", 2010; p6.

otherwise be ephemeral leadership. But transforming leadership into structural domination also has drawbacks. Institutions bog down leadership, they are static and designed to perpetuate themselves, while what is needed for 'good governance' sometimes is versatility and change.

An extreme example is provided by the European Union policy in Palestine. This is the EUs largest development programme in terms of funding. An August 2022 report by the Crisis Group revealed that, while the EU knows that its Palestinian program is a failure, it will nevertheless go on with it because the cost of changing it, including stopping it, is too high. There are too many stakeholders, and the chance of arriving at a new consensus to replace the 'two-state solution' is almost nil, so it is more 'efficient' to continue the current failed policies than to change course.[82] This is referred to as 'path dependency' in policy studies, but what it really points out is that the internal relations between the stakeholders in EU Palestine policies—between the members of the transnational elite involved in this issue—are more important for EU policy-makers than the effect of these policies on the ground.

This is one of the contradictions, but the main contradiction may well be that the transnational elite does not recognize its own rhizomatic reality. In its self-perception, the transnational elite consists of individuals within structures, wielding the (symbolic) power associated with their position; the structures (organizations, institutions) and the offices within them are important, not the individual 'office-bearer'. Only formal relations are recorded as important. Informal relations, based on sympathies, affect, feelings, mutual recognition and the exchanges that accompany them are recognized as real, but disregarded as unimportant. This is true especially in the public sector. The private sector seems to be less constrained by the fiction of personal neutrality. We are conditioned to believe that, when dealing with state power, social power is of no importance.

An example from my personal experience confirms this. On 8 December 2001, Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Afghanistan, arrived in Kabul from Bonn, where he had brokered a new government to replace the fallen Taliban. As the only UN political affairs officer in Kabul, I accompanied him on a round of visits to the leaders who had filled the vacuum left by the fleeing Taliban. He had the difficult job of convincing these warlords—who had not been part of the 'solution' found in Bonn, but had power and 'boots on the ground'—to back the agreement. Brahimi's advantage was that he had represented the UN in Afghanistan in 1998 too, and thus had personal connections to the people we met. These personal connections clearly made a big difference. One of the most notorious warlords had a friendly relation with Brahimi, while the previous president who had taken back the presidential seat had a frosty one. The former came to play a role in the future political set-up, the latter did not. I had to write a report about the meetings; I obviously made no mention of the personal sympathies that had, in my eyes, been decisive. To mention them would have been unprofessional.

Thus, the political world evolves in a state of cognitive dissonance, believing one thing, doing another. Why have we banished personal relations from our interpretation of socio-political reality, including the economy? Why do we ignore the rhizomatic connections that shape our social reality, through which we effectively wield social power, through which so much exchange takes place (information, resources, affects, beliefs), as soon as we start thinking about the world we live in? As Ian Shapiro puts it in his indictment of contemporary human sciences, "*the flight from reality is not without consequences* for *reality*".[83]

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[82] International Crisis Group, August 2022: "Realigning European Policy toward Palestine with Ground Realities".

[83] Shapiro 2005: "The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences"; p2. His argument, ranging from a critique of rational choice theory to the Cambridge school of intellectual history, is that a focus on method and 'pet theories' has led the human sciences away from real world issues.

What Can be Learnt from Afghanistan

Gilles Dorronsoro, in his study of what he aptly names the 'Transnational Government of Afghanistan', writes that "*in contemporary societies, the State can be defined as a network of institutions bound in cross-links of legitimation, which detains the internationally recognised monopoly of representation of a population in a territory*".[84] He defines 'transnational government' as "*an organization of power which accords a pre-eminent place to foreign operators in the elaboration and implementation of public policies in essential domains* [security, development, health, education]".[85]

He notes that the ideational dimensions of the international intervention in Afghanistan, or the thought patterns that inform the expertise and decisions of policy-making—the shared values of the epistemic community of interveners in Afghanistan—share a certain neo-positivism and neo-orientalism. Positivism reigns intellectually in economic and political sciences and is obsessed with data, quantification and measurement and permeated with a 'can-do' mentality, while Orientalism is predominant in the security approach. It is based on an *imaginary anthropology* of 'the Afghans' that is quite coherent but, as he puts it, 'radicalement fausse'.[86]

This 'imaginary anthropology' prevalent in the security sector, but also among diplomats, was denounced by experts early on. It made wrong assumptions about Afghans, their tribal identities, and by extension their relations with Taliban. Curiously, although these assumptions led to mistaken policies and the gradual gain in influence of the Taliban, and despite the criticism of foreign experts, they were maintained as 'common-sense truths' about 'the Afghan' until the fall of the Western supported regime. Somehow, holding on to a consensus about 'the Afghan' that was 'radically wrong' seemed more important than the defeat of the entire twenty-year state-building project!

In a paper of 2018, Jennifer Murtazashvili, drawing on several years of fieldwork in rural Afghanistan, defended the concept of self-governance[87]. There are no ungoverned spaces, she claims, and state-building efforts should stop assuming that wherever there is no effective state presence, there is nothing but Hobbesian conflict. Taking as an example the Afghan state's effort to provide land titles, she demonstrates that state-building that ignores informal institutions of self-governance actually *creates* conflict.[88] She suggests state-building should incorporate productive forms of self-governance through a decentralized approach. Her plea to integrate self-governance in state-building efforts, very similar to the argument made in this dissertation, is a rare one, and was not influential.

Another blind spot that caused the Western intervention to fail was its failure to recognize its own impact on Afghanistan. The fiction of interveners that they remain external could be dispelled with a simple political economy analysis, but this fiction is apparently crucial to the intervention effort and

[84] Dorronsoro 2021: "Le Gouvernement Transnational de l'Afghanistan"; p19.

[85] Ibidem, p20.

[86] In this erroneous and romantic view, the Afghans are traditionalist and desire to live within their tribes in peace, and to be left alone by both the government and other political groups such as the Taliban. They have no desire for the modern state and its rule of law, and they have no need for external relations.

[87] Murtazashvili 2018: "A Tired Cliché. Why We Should Stop Worrying about Ungoverned Spaces and Embrace Self-Governance".

[88] An example is provided by Community Driven Development programmes, which ignore community self-governance structures and replace them with government- or donor-sanctioned development committees. This top-down approach intends to guarantee inclusivity (participation of women, youth and minorities), but allows external control of the process. The National Solidarity Programme in Afghanistan, a famous example of such a community-driven development scheme—providing block grants to communities for whatever projects they had decided on, provided decision-making had followed due process as determined by the government and its donors and verified by implementing NGOs —had mixed results. Projects were often successful, but they did not contribute to the expected social transformation and alignment of communities with government, and the parallel community structures often generated local conflict. Beath, Christia & Enikolopov 2015: "The National Solidarity Programme: Assessing the Effects of Community-Driven Development in Afghanistan".

must be maintained. In my experience, interveners will readily recognize that previous interveners (for example the USSR in Afghanistan, but often also the director or head of delegation that preceded the current one) 'let themselves be drawn into local politics', but they are convinced that they will avoid this and stay 'above the fray'. As if the mandate and activities of their organization were not, from the outset, highly political and recognized by all Afghans as such. And even when they might recognize the structural impact of their presence, they will deny the rhizomatic impact their presence has or "*the influence that hubris, emotions, rivalries, and loyalties within these [intervening] organisations has on shaping interventions*".[89]

The three blind spots of the intervention in Afghanistan—'imaginary anthropology', non-understanding of self-governance and non-recognition of the interveners' own impact—are easily recognizable now that so much has been said about Somalia. They boil down to a deliberately wrong representation of both the target population (as hopelessly traditionalist, anti-modern and incapable of solving their own affairs) and of the interveners themselves (so expert that they are capable of transforming local society, economy and politics without their presence being felt). They maintain a dichotomy between 'us' and 'them' that may be psychologically recomforting for interveners, but has negative consequences for the impact of their work, even disastrous in the case of Afghanistan.

The Make-Believe World

In Chapter Nine, I noted the importance of discourse to explain international policies in Somalia, and how this discursive reality can be maintained by ignoring the social realities experienced by domestic populations. The securitization of the international presence helps to maintain the division between these two realities. As a result, local ruling elites realize that they do not really need to implement international policies such as fiscal sobriety, transparent accounting of public funds, maintaining a free media and moving towards universal democratic elections. The façade of compliance is usually sufficient, as this fits into the discursive reality.

Here, I note a puzzling tendency in current international politics: the adoption of international regulatory regimes is in itself often seen as a success, even if it does not succeed in having an impact on the domain it is supposed to regulate. The trafficking of arms and drugs, terrorism and its financing, money laundering, digital piracy and copyright infringement, and all other kinds of transnational organized crime, do not seem to have suffered much from the adoption of regulatory regimes supposedly efficient in combating them. But this is rarely taken as discrediting for those regimes. Acknowledged deficiencies always become an argument for strengthening the dysfunctional regulatory regime, instead of dismissing it.

It becomes clear that the discursive reality maintaining the hegemony of the transnational elite has a strong psychological aspect to it. Political scientists are not really equipped to deal with this, but one cannot escape the impression that human beings, also those in leading positions, are far from being rational, despite efforts to present themselves as eminently reasonable. The need for psychological validation, which encompasses the superiority and near-infallibility of state-building experts and ideologues, seems to trump the facts-based observations of the effects of their policies on a society such as Somalia (or Afghanistan, or many other intervened-in countries). The discursive reality one encounters in the cautious, but positive, reporting by the United Nations, the World Bank and NGOs about the impact of their work in Somalia seems to be growing ever more distant from the observed realities on the ground, creating a disorienting state of cognitive dissonance. One starts feeling like the little boy in Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale 'The Emperor's New Clothes', realizing that by blurting out 'he is naked!' one will be punished by ostracism and general rejection—a rhizomatic form of social

[89] Cheng et al. 2018:82. They argue this under a heading "Turning the Mirror Inwards".

punishment for breaking the consensus. To avoid this and maintain the all-important trust within elite networks, their members prefer to pretend (or, better still, *believe*) that all is going well.

This confusing state of affairs is compounded by a sense of continuous crisis, which justifies the transfer of executive power to (inter-)state expert agencies that are to tackle the crisis,[90] further reducing the space for unhurried observation and calm reflection. “The International Community Needs to Act!” is a frequently heard call to action.[91] Africa is a frequent target of these calls for action.

Core-Periphery Relations with Africa

The vast majority of international scholarship on Africa (written from white centres of power) assumes the continent is in a perilous crisis. The negativity imbuing most scholarship on Africa will come as a surprise to a casual visitor of Africa, who may be impressed by the speed of development, if one compares the current situation to how Africa was fifty years ago, instead of to Europe. Western scholarship has been quite off the mark when predicting future developments. In 2000, the renowned US scholar of Africa, Jeffrey Herbst, in his widely read book 'States and Power in Africa' predicted the collapse of the African state system and advocated recognition of new, secessionist states as well as non-state actors. Tutsi-dominated Rwanda was not a viable state in his opinion, but he pinned his hopes on South Sudan as an example of a what could be a successful new state[92]. Eighteen years later, the African state system is at least as strong as when he wrote, with Rwanda (still under the same leadership) quoted as an example of good governance while South Sudan is in a deep and lasting political and economic crisis.

Christopher Clapham, another famous Africanist, remarked on the stability of African-state borders, but likewise predicted African state collapse. Maybe the reason he and Herbst were wrong is that they focused too much on the worrying internal dynamics of African states, failing to recognize how external support, the lack of alternatives and a pragmatic disposition of African societies (adapting to existing state structures, however deficient these may be, instead of attempting to establish new ones) would keep most states afloat. Thus the ‘critical turning point’ that Clapham hopefully mentioned (“*the willingness of dissident elites to adopt political programmes that explicitly reject the bases of the post-colonial state, and the willingness of outside states to recognise and work with political units that no longer correspond to those already established”*)[93] has never been reached. Salafi alternatives may cause the first ‘willingness’ to emerge among some parts of the population, but not the second.

Achille Mbembe argues that, since colonialism was a two-way relation, a new relationship can only emerge if Western powers decolonize themselves.[94] What he means by this is that they should get rid of their superiority complex, the idea that the West always knows better, is always in advance, and that the best Africa can do is become more like the West (knowing that it will never catch up). The superiority complex is quite obvious among interveners, and generally among Western populations. The portrait of Africa made in the media and in popular culture remains insidiously racist and is still influenced by Hegel’s imagery of Africa as a dark, hopeless continent.

Instead, Western countries continuously find new reasons to intervene in Africa and *help it develop*, whether to support democracy, economic growth, avert humanitarian crises, or save wildlife, forests, etc. The division of the world between ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ may be the first concept the West should jettison if it seeks to decolonize itself. This would allow observers to consider the continuum of

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[90] Hameiri & Jones 2016 underline the role that declarations of crisis have in strengthening global governance.

[91] Bliesemann de Guevara & Kühn 2011 op. cit. explore the meaning of this cry.

[92] Herbst 2000: “States and Power in Africa”; p252-272.

[93] Clapham 2001: “Rethinking African States”; p16.

[94] Mbembe 2021: "Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization".

global governance transformation between actor and target countries, between Somali society and that of the USA, for example.

Effects on Intervening Countries

What does the intervention do to intervening countries? This is logically more important for transnational elites than what happens to Somalia and other countries they intervene in, but ignored in most research about state-building. A general ideological impact can be distinguished from socio-political transformations in intervening countries, caused by state-building intervention abroad. The general impact, as noted, includes maintaining an 'us-*versus*-them' distinction between the advanced, developed, peaceful West and the backward, conflicted developing world.

Over the past two centuries, intervention has served to transform the political order in the periphery, and to maintain it in Europe—to fight revolutions and insurgencies in neighbouring European states lest they cross the border.[95] Interventions could serve both purposes at once: Chaim Kaufmann and Robert Pape argue that the sixty-year campaign to end the slave trade, which cost Britain on average nearly two per cent of national income per year, was primarily designed to support the reordering of domestic British society, favouring liberal forces in society while defusing socialist contestation,[96] but it also served (succesfully) to create a liberal international order that Great Britain would lead. The US intervention in Vietnam not only served to protect US interests in Southeast Asia but also at disciplining, through the obligatory draft, a US society that key political forces considered was becoming ungovernable. It failed in both respects, leading to a weakening of the USA's standing abroad and a 'crisis of democracy' at home. The sword of intervention is double-edged, maintaining and/or reshaping order both in domestic societies and abroad.

As for the socio-political transformations caused in Western nations by past decades of intervention, we can observe for example the military-security sector. The evolution of military institutions in the US and other Western nations (and Russia too) over the past decades has been largely driven by their involvement in military interventions, e.g., Afghanistan, Iraq and the Sahel. Some key changes are specialization of forces away from battlefield situations to 'special ops'; increasing remote control of surveillance and surgical strikes through drones; and the privatization of the armed forces to deflect command and control responsibility over eventual casualties and other operational hazards. Training local armed forces to create 'client armies' that remain dependent for logistical and operational support, has been another development.

All of these changes require the development of new technologies, equipment and institutions, and strengthen the bonds between the military-security industry and politics. These new developments are funded from politically inflated budgets that are shielded from market competition by national security considerations. As a result, the profits of both defence industries and contractors are unreasonably high. At a personal (rhizomatic) level, military elites in Western countries enjoy expanded 'revolving door' possibilities to move between Army or Department of Defense positions, think-tanks and lobbying activities, the defence industry and Private Military Contractors. By remaining involved in distant conflicts, Western armies have been able to test weaponry and new technology, and keep up the fighting practice of their elite troops, while reducing their own casualties through 'asymmetrical warfare' that reduces exposure to the enemy.

Military intervention justifies the maintenance of a very costly institution in contemporary democracies. Of the funds spent by the US government on Afghanistan between 2001 and 2021, at least two thirds

[95] Burke's doctrine of counterrevolution as embodied in the post-Napoleon Concert of Europe

[96] Kaufmann & Pape 1999, "Explaining Costly International Moral Action: Britain's Sixty-Year Campaign Against the Atlantic Slave Trade"; p631.

went to its own military and associated industries and services.[97] We have seen in Section 1.1 how spending by the State has increased five- to six-fold over the past century, in relation to global Gross Domestic Product. Interventions, as well as other crises that the State responds to (the financial crisis of 2007-2012, the Coronavirus crisis of 2020-2022) have resulted in massive transfers of public funds to sectors selected by state elites: the military-security industry, the banking sector, and the pharmaceutical sector.

This example shows how global governance transformation through the building of a rules-based 'authoritarian liberal global order' also serves the interests, wealth and influence of specific actors and sectors in Western societies. Since the basic urge of every rhizome is its self-preservation, this effect should not be discounted as secondary or incidental, as often happens from the institutional (tree) viewpoint. What Bourdieu named the institution's drive to perpetuate itself, thus erasing from collective memory how and why it was created, must of course be ascribed to agency; an institution cannot act. People in this institution seek to perpetuate it, so that they can access material and symbolic resources through it, and through their shared interest they form a rhizomatic community.

State-building, in summary, takes place on the side of the interveners, not the intervened.

The Cycle of Transnational Governance

Within the transnational elite, some networks manage to gain ascendancy over others, and consolidate this ascendancy in the creation of new institutions that regulate the international state order through meta-governance in their favour. The following model explains how the transnational elite renews itself, as its power moves from agency through structure, and from core areas to peripheries, and back again.

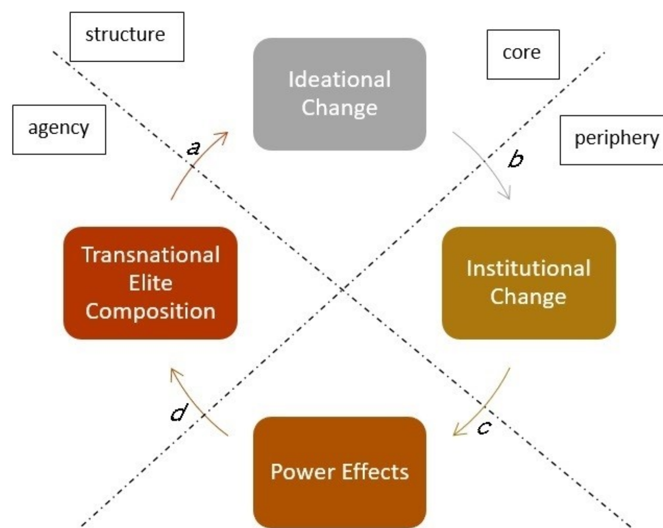

Figure 31: The Cycle of Transnational Governance

a. Starting in the core, the transnational elite forms a consensus that leads to ideational change: ***consensus formation***. Ideational change is typically embodied in a document, law or declaration.

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[97] Reports of the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction, e.g. "Quarterly Report to US Congress, October 2020"; p202-203. The total amount of US assistance to Afghanistan is difficult to verify—depending for example upon whether one factors in the military benefits and post-traumatic support to US soldiers—but falls within the 1 to 2 trillion USD range, almost all of it spent in the US: a giant redistribution of public money.

b. Remaining within the formal world of structure, the ideational change leads to institutional change throughout the world, through ***meta-governance.***

c. The institutions then implement policies, ***executive action***, that produce changes in social reality–power effects–within the lives of people everywhere.

d. The reactions caused by these power effects lead to the emergence of aligned, contender or dissident elites, which through the feedback loop of ***absorption*** affect the composition of the transnational elite. Power effects also have direct effects on the composition of core elites.

From the power effects can emerge dissident elites or counterhegemonic forces, which may set into motion their own cycles. The transnational elite hegemony is expansive when it absorbs and annuls these, and regressive when it does not, getting smaller and more concentrated, and vulnerable. This model allows for both continuity and change.

In summary, the transnational elite is an informal network of actors with privileged access to power, that spans the globe and almost all international activities. Although control over capital flows allows the transnational elites to exert dominance, their hegemony rests on a shared 'liberal democratic' consensus that is spread throughout the world by seeking the buy-in and adaptation of local elites, the neutralization of dissidents, and the elimination of counter-hegemonic forces. This hegemony ultimately rests on the active or passive consent of the population. Consensus is mostly achieved though processes of socialization, in which international organizations play a large part, creating an 'international community'. Although the State is the main instrument used by the transnational elite to solicit consent and exact compliance, mainly through socialization processes, the law and its monopoly on the use of violence, transnational hegemony is fundamentally autonomous of the State.

11.4 The Dual Power Theory in the International Order

To clarify how the international order can best be conceptualized through the Dual Nature of Power perspective, a table akin to those used in 3.4 may help.

Table 10 - International order in the 'Dual Power Theory' model

Archetype	**Forest (or Tree?)**	**Rhizome**
Mode	Formal relations	Informal networks
Incarnation	International State-System	Transnational Elite
Form of autonomy	Formal independence	Sovereignty
Origin	Law, rules and regulations	State of Nature
Base of relations between polities	Balance of power	Mutual recognition
Authority	Domination	Hegemony
Typical mode of conflict	War (bilateral)	Intervention (multilateral)
Conflict resolution	Conferences and treaties	Meta-governance

Since we are dealing with many states, the formal representation of the world order would be a forest of trees rather than one tree. The forest would be the international (United Nations) state system, the relations between the formally independent (separate) trees conducted according to laws, rules and regulations decided openly in international forums (conferences) between them, enshrined in treaties and declined in national legislation. However, in the forest not all trees are equal, and the older, stronger trees tend to win in the competition for light (energy) and resource extraction, from the air and through their roots, dominating the smaller trees. When conflict emerges between state-trees, this is usually on a bilateral basis and can lead to war, where dominant states tend to win. Conflicts are resolved by new formal relations expressed in peace treaties and new agreements.

This is a familiar representation of international relations. But, as argued above, countries that achieved their independence within the international state system may be likened to planted trees. They have not chosen their own tree-image, nor have they sprouted organically from the social rhizome they are connected to, but they have accepted the tree-image of the dominating powers, those who established the international order. The domestic authority of these states (over their piece of ground) derives not from a social contract, from civil society, but from external recognition, in what has been described above as a 'reverse engineering' process where the State shapes society. Independent but non-sovereign countries can be compared to the ministries of a government: their power is derived from outside: it is symbolic rather than social power.

This theoretical discussion focuses on the formal vision of the forest. In practice, within each independent state the social rhizome is just as alive and dynamic as elsewhere, and it produces its own power, political order and daily reality, and connects in multiple ways to the imported tree. Whence Bayart's rhizome-state. Many forms beside trees can sprout above ground from underground nodes, from blades of grass to mushrooms, flowers and shrubs. The disconnect between society and state, however, is larger in countries that have not organically developed their own civil society and regime, or where the social rhizome has had more difficulties (or less time) to connect to the imported state-tree. This affects the legitimacy and hegemony of local ruling elites—based on a largely external narrative—as well as consensus-formation, consent and dissent. It does not invalidate the vision of the forest of trees, but it explains why some state-trees are struggling and will always remain in the shadow of the great trees, and dependent on transfers from them.

The problem with this vision is that it fails to explain why all trees seem so connected, and even the old 'great power' trees are oddly similar, and resemble each other more as time goes by. What if, indeed, the apparently separate trees are all branches sprouting from one big tree? The international state system, then, is not a forest of trees—living in an international environment of anarchy, as many political science students are still taught—but one great big tree with many branches.

There are many types of tree, including the banyan (of the *ficus*/fig family) whose branches hit the ground, strike root, and grow as new trees from there; thus a single tree can have hundreds of trunks that seem separate, but are all part of the same tree, resembling a small forest that can cover more than a hectare.[98] This may be a more appropriate model for the international state system. The modern liberal democratic state has *one* source in European history, as argued in Chapter One, and, similarly, the modern state as ideal image is only *one*. Even slight differences, such as replacing representative with direct democracy, or replacing executive (time-bound) by imperative (recallable) mandates, while retaining all the other aspects of the modern state, seem to be out of the question.

The transnational elite is then the rhizome feeding both into and off the international state tree. It has formed historically around powerful interests in Western nations. With the help of organic intellectuals,

[98] The biggest banyan tree covers 1.89 hectare and has a circumference of nearly half a kilometer, near Howrah, Kolkata (link).

it has established a hegemonic liberal democratic order that imposes itself on the rest of the world, through a rules-based international order of which the UN system is the key institution. It operates mostly through consensus, aligning domestic elites into what can be seen as patronage systems, but it has the required coercive capacity for dealing with dissent and encourage compliance. This 'authoritarian liberal global order' increases the wealth and power of transnational elites, causing a quickly widening wealth gap between the core of this system (the financial districts of London, New York, Paris and their satellites in other global cities) and its periphery, not only regions like Sub-Saharan Africa, but also the poor neighbourhoods of the mentioned cities.

Why would domestic elites of developing nations consent to a system that transfers the wealth of their countries to the hands of a transnational elite? Several reasons were seen above. One, there is no alternative, and the resources and forces that the transnational elite commands seem boundless. Two, they are offered a place among the global elite, and they have also been able to enrich themselves and consolidate their power in their domestic societies. But, most importantly, the global order has managed sustained growth levels over the past decades, meaning that while the rich got much richer, many lesser elites also benefited from the bonanza, and perhaps even common populations around the world (the latter is difficult to measure objectively).

This global order is very new. A rules-based international order was only attempted for the first time a century ago, with the League of Nations, and quickly failed. The UN system devised by the USA and the UK was a more successful attempt, but it was hindered by the Cold War and the fact that two systems emerged around the two superpowers, allowing a 'third way' in between (the non-aligned movement and the Third World). It is only since the end of the Cold War, which in my opinion was precipitated by the neoliberal revolution, that the current world order could emerge. It therefore is not more than thirty years old.

A world order that brings quick growth, that attempts to guarantee liberal democratic rights for all, that seeks to maintain peace and uses violence as little as possible, and whose elites are open to anyone willing to play by their rules, regardless of that person's identity (whether female, coloured, homosexual and/or handicapped) is an attractive proposition. Even if some people benefit from it more than others, it seems a legitimate political construction. Somalis generally desire to partake in this order too. There are two problems: it does not work in a country like Somalia, and it is not what it seems to be. Connected to this, another question looms: is it stable?

Starting with the last point, one can seriously doubt the current world order's stability. Its rapid growth, providing it with legitimacy because many people could share in the wealth it generated, now seems to have been partially artificial. Informal and unaccounted for local economies were drawn into the formal sector, and accounted for, leading to GDP growth, but not real economic growth and even to a regression in living standards for the people affected by this transformation, notably sacrificing self-sufficiency. It has also proven to be extremely predatory upon the Earth's natural resources.

In this regard it is interesting to note that the neoliberal revolution, which set out to free all the Earth's resources (including human labour) for exploitation by the forces of capital, started at the same time as awareness of 'The Limits to Growth' (title of the seminal 1972 Club of Rome report). Over the past fifty years, the transnational elite has been doing exactly the contrary of what scientific insights then dictated: stop blindly using up the natural resources of the Earth and manage them more intelligently, with the long term in mind. Instead, short-term thinking dominated and a rapid and foolish rape of Nature has taken place. It now seems we must pay the consequences.

Among transnational elites the hope is now that a solution can be found that preserves growth, while limiting its harmful impact on Nature. That solution is sought in technology with almost blind faith. But another major factor of instability is the increasing disparity in wealth between the rich and the poor. In the current hegemonic consensus, it is perfectly natural for some people to be trillionnaires while the vast majority of the world population is becoming poorer. The financial crises experienced throughout

the world over the past decades indicate that our global economy is intrinsically unstable and unpredictable. Besides, the growing gap in wealth also has political effects.

The planetary environmental crisis and the madly accelerating disparity in wealth should be reason enough to search for alternatives—a different political order. But creative political thinking seems to be entirely blocked. The consensus around the State and the international state system is complete: the State is the only possible form of collective organization, and the state-system is the only way to organize global politics. The hegemony of the State is so complete that a search for alternatives is almost taboo.

The State as analysed in Chapter One is a social construct that has become the only and absolute power over the human being. It is the only sovereign entity, the only source of Law, its judgment is final, it is supposed to be omni-present and all-seeing. No other source of equivalent power can exist alongside it. The State is not only a social construct, it is an article of belief, but a belief that presents itself not as belief, but as common sense or *doxa*. The State structures our mental processes, the manner in which we see the world—like God used to do, and still does for religious people. This is why trying to think beyond the State feels like a taboo. But the State is only a time-bound social construct, it is not the alpha and omega of human political existence. It has served its time, and we humans must now come up with alternative ways of organizing our collective existence on this planet. And for that, the safest place to start is the State of Nature.

Return to the State of Nature

What I mean with a return to the State of Nature is a return to the dual nature of power. The State of Nature is, after all, a hypothetical state, an ideal type. Recent discoveries in archaeology confirm that human beings have always been social animals, and capable of complex organization, which was rarely hierarchical, but rather based on self-governance (without surrendering individual sovereignty).[99] I do not suggest that humans could voluntarily return to a pre-political past. Human beings aspire to logos, they want a narrative to make sense of their existence, they need a social construct to organize their collective existence, they desire the Law and political order, including predictability. But this does not mean they need the State. With a return to the State of Nature, what is meant is to reconsider the options for political order to establish a new basis for 'civil society', but then grounded in the State of Nature with its objective of collective self-preservation, including of Nature itself.

Certainly, this requires decolonizing our minds first; decolonizing it of the State (of our need to *believe* in it and then of its capability to 'think itself through us', producing its own reality as common sense); of the 'us-*versus*-them' core-periphery construction; of the notion of Western superiority, of man's right to rule over all other life forms, etc.. We must see discursive reality for what it is—a wishful social construct and the interpretation of reality through a discourse—and stop confusing it with reality.

But first of all, before a 'return to the State of Nature' is even possible, it must be recognized that humans everywhere already live in a dual power system. We are not governed by laws and structures, but by people. And those people behave as people do, ruled by their passions, fears and psychological needs, taking care of themselves, their kin and friends, and perpetuating the organizations, systems and narratives that provide them with symbolic power.

In the quote at the beginning of Part III, the international community is compared to Somali clans, but there is a major difference. Somali clans know that their self-governance is only one half of the political order, that there is a State ruling formally, something clans never pretend to do. The transnational elite,

[99] As argued by Graeber & Wengrow throughout "The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity" (2021).

however, is in self-denial about its own nature, and believes it is the embodiment of the state system and of formal, rational, hierarchical rule. It identifies with the positions and functions it occupies and believes in itself as the expression of universal truths (liberal democracy, free markets, humanitarian compassion etc). Given its power to shape the narrative, with the support of organic intellectuals and all those who believe they benefit from the current hegemony (or are afraid to contest it), the transnational elite imposes this discursive reality on the rest of the world. This leads many humans to a condition of cognitive dissonance. This capacity to believe in one reality and live in another is evidence that the dual nature of power exists in each human being. We are at once social animals and citizens. It is time to reconcile both.

Conclusions of Part III

The findings of the past four chapters certainly confirm that *'contemporary state-building interventions in Somalia seek to reorder domestic state-society relations in ways that facilitate global governance and maintain the hegemony of a transnational elite'*, the sub-hypothesis that guided my research in this part of the thesis. This is not the stated intention of the intervention in Somalia; even state-building is generally not the primary objective of intervention. But by positing the effective State as the key to durable solutions in all domains of intervention, and by seeking to encourage social transformation that will support the establishment and consolidation of a liberal democratic state, all types of intervention support state-building. Even humanitarian intervention, although it may seek to bypass corrupt state authorities and deliver aid directly to the needy, participates in spreading a formal, contract-based economy and other social values and practices that ultimately 'facilitate global governance and maintain the hegemony of a transnational elite', in this case cast as generous donors. The term 'transnational elite' may appear a bit contentious as there is such sensitivity today to 'conspiracy theories', but it was postulated by the Dual Power Theory to define the agent of the international order.

Hybrid and Dual Power

The international order and Somaliland are governed in the same fashion: rhizomatic networks of individuals govern through institutions they have crafted and endowed with absolute power: the state/state system. The agency wielded by the elites becomes invisible (or conceived of at a much lower level, as 'influence') to maintain the fiction that only the structures they act through and their offices have power. Thus it is 'the Ministry' that takes a decision, or 'the Minister' or 'the secretary of such-and-such a department'. But in fact there are people in those positions, taking decisions that may respond to their personal interests, beliefs and inclinations, or to those of their rhizomatic connections.

In the ideal state described by Max Weber more than a century ago, there is a strict separation between the person and the office; as civil servants, individuals leave their personal life behind and, vested with the dignity of their office, only serve the State (and the Law) until the end of the working day, when they are allowed to lapse back into their social life with its feelings, passions and desires. Weber's description prefigures the Dual Power Theory, except that he did not look into the other part of the individual's life—personal or social life—and how it has its own power principles. For example, maintaining the trust within the social networks that sustain the individual, and therefore demonstrating loyalty. If Weber would have investigated the principles of social power, the difficulty of not having it permeate and corrupt the purity of state power would have become more apparent. Further investigation would have pointed out that state power also corrupts the spontaneous force of social power, by locking power into position ('office') whereas, from the point of view of the rhizome, it should circulate freely. Thus a worthless person can impose himself on the community through his access to symbolic power: money, political authority and the Law.

Keeping separate both principles of power requires an authoritarian, perhaps even merciless state and a high degree of self-consciousness among social networks. Al Shabaab seems to succeed better than other politicial forces in this, and has established a dual political order. Its office bearers, most clearly in the domain of justice but apparently also in other domains of governance, seem capable of separating their personal, rhizomatic (clan) interests from their function, thanks to high levels of ideological

commmitment (social power trying to avoid corruption by state power) and the principle that each person, including the Amir, must obey the same rules, backed by merciless internal surveillance (state power avoiding corruption by social power). But in the Federal Government, Somaliland and the international community both principles of power are mixed, forming a hybrid political order where elites serve their rhizomatic networks through their positions of power.

Somaliland and the International State system share that they have been formed by elites who rule them (whereas the Federal State of Somalia has been built according to external plans) and that there is no external source of authority that can monitor compliance with the separation between the person and the office, the structure and the agent. They are, in the classical sense of Jean Bodin, fully sovereign. A paradox of Somaliland's non-recognition as an independent State by the international community is that it gives Somaliland's elites a higher degree of sovereign autonomy, as they cannot be pressured to follow all the rules established for recognized states.

Both Somaliland's ruling elite and the transnational elite have no official sovereign power, Somaliland because it is not recognized and the transnational elite because only states can be sovereign. But Somaliland resembles a state sufficiently for almost all external actors, with the important exception of the United Nations and other international financial organizations, to deal with it as a de facto state, gradually integrating the country into the international rules based order. Towards most of its domestic population, the sovereignty of Somaliland's state is not in question. Moreover, if the Federal Government falls to Al Shabaab (which in my opinion is just a matter of time), the international community will quickly recognize the independence of Somaliland. Then the problem of the Harti populations in Eastern Somaliland will need to be resolved, which will be tricky because Puntland will either claim the international representation of Somalia or also proclaim its independence.

The problem of the transnational elite's sovereignty is more complicated. I have argued that this elite is the only true sovereign power in the world because there is no authority above it, but this is only in the rhizomatic sense, in the same manner that Somali clans have remained sovereign throughout history even though they were officially submitted to state law. In a formal sense, the transnational elite does not even exist. But since members of this elite do wield formal power in key state institutions and within the private sector (over capital flows, notably), they enjoy an overbearing influence, and can use their positions to implement through *meta-governance* the consensus that they establish through socialization and the identification of shared interests.

The transnational elite is therefore also a 'rhizome-in-tree', and the transnational order is as hybrid as Somaliland's political order today. What distinguishes the hybrid from the dual order is that in the latter both principles of power are recognized, while the hybrid order is based on a denial of social power. Ruling elites pretend the State, and beyond it the Law, is the only source of power, and that the power they wield through the institutions of state is based only on their office. When confronted with evidence of nepotism or other forms of social power exerted through institutional means (like personal enrichment), the reaction is always denial and rejection. This denial runs through our entire formal power system and has resulted in a discursive reality so powerful it successfully displaces and shapes the social experience of reality.

The two principles of power always interact, there is never a choice for the one or the other. But in the dual vision, one can discern both principles and their effects and envision the interaction; while in the hybrid view, social power is denied, it becomes invisible and therefore is seen to act surreptitiously (as a corrupting influence) through the symbolic power of the state.

In a hybrid political order, self-governance, the natural mechanism of the rhizome to form a political order, is therefore denied as an effective system of rule. Although each State in Somalia, from the colonial times to today, has relied heavily on self-governance (through clan elders and *xeer*) to maintain social peace and provide services to the population, self-governance as the foundation of political order has usually been denied. It is portrayed as something residual and traditional that only pertains to the

micro-level of community and serves to extend state power. It permanently seems about to be overcome by modernization. But in fact, business disputes and quarrels between state institutions today are still solved by elders and customary law, as are 90% of juridical conflicts in federal Somalia. The example of Somaliland shows how important self-governance is today, also for the functioning and even for the security of the State.

Transnational Governance and State-Building in Somalia

Both following statements about state-building can be considered true :

1) Somalis want a State
2) The State is imposed as a tool of transnational governance.

This indicates an overall accord on the goal of state-building between international actors and the local population; the next question is 'what kind of state do Somalis and the international community desire?' Is there an agreement on this, too?

Several constants have emerged about Somali attitudes towards the State. Somalis do not want a State to *govern* them. Somalis as citizens may dream about the State that has become the international ideal: an effective (slightly authoritarian), democratic (participative), capitalist (wealth-generating), and impartial state that creates and maintains a modern economic infrastructure and provides essential social services to the population (education, public health, justice, security) while guaranteeing basic equality and freedom for all citizens. But not many Somalis seem to still expect such an ideal outcome, since state governance in Somalia has generally been experienced as negative. Siad Barre's state was not only liberticide, but it was downright murderous. It started out by providing a national ideal and some useful services, but both the ideal and the services soon disappeared, and the State became a predatory instrument of rule in the hands of a few lineages. Since Somalis are confident about their capacity for self-governance, they reject the idea of submitting to State authority and prefer to maintain their freedom, but accept living in the shadow of hierarchy of the international state order.

There is thus an agreement on the liberal democratic free-market developmental state model. For interveners, it may be disappointing that most Somalis do not *believe* in it, but as noted the façade of compliance is generally sufficient. The alignment to discursive reality, we have argued, is so important to the transnational elite because the consensus about the world we live in is more essential to its hegemony than what happens in the 'real world', which can anyhow be interpreted in various ways.

The main reason Somalis want a State is, apparently, to access international resources. The State of Somaliland, formed autonomously from within Somali society, is evidence that, if left alone, Somalis are capable of generating a state-tree that can productively engage the international community. But although Somalis may prefer a state formation process that corresponds to domestic social dynamics, the historic record indicates that, with the exception of movements like the Dervishes and Al Shabaab, Somalis do not oppose a state that is imported as a tool of transnational governance.

Although the Somalis were economically self-sufficient for centuries, they entered the relationship with the global economy in a dependent relation. The Dervish leader's exhortations not to accept the 'coins the infidel dispenses so freely' only appealed to a minority. Somalis did not ask for a state, but they were obliged to have one as an interface with the global political order and its economy; it was created for them by external actors (first colonial powers, then the UN). So Somalis quite naturally attempted to maintain or increase levels of external support which accrued to them through the state in return, one could say, for their dependent position in the world economy. This concerned domestic elites first of all, but through their patronage networks, the rest of Somali society was involved.

Somalis barely object against transnational governance. Their experience shows that anyhow, State governance is extremely limited and allows their self-governance to continue. Transnational governance

is not new: the aid community has structured Somali daily existence over the past decades and provided opportunities for social and economic mobility even in far-flung rural areas. Its impact in terms of social and cultural transformation—its biopolitical effects—may not always be welcome, but the discursive sphere in which transnational governance is exercised (from the donors in distant capitals to local NGOs implementing programs) is separated from the sphere of local social experience (from the local NGOs to the recipient communities), and therefore that impact is mitigated. For instance, despite decades of NGO programs against female genital mutilation, the practice has spread.

The international community, in return, has not been stingy towards Somalia. Since the 1980s aid money flows freely. My assertion that 90% of international aid money is spent outside Somalia (based on the assumption that aid bought in international markets and shipped to Somalia is not 'spent in Somalia') is contentious and it merits much closer examination and a less ideological research on aid flows. But even if only 10% of the roughly two billion USD budgeted by the international community for Somalia every year is actually spent within the Somali economy, this remains a significant amount. Quite a few Somalis have seized the opportunity for upward mobility and are now working abroad as international staff for NGOs or international organizations that recruited them in Somalia, while a few others have received grants to study at Western universities.

In conclusion, it seems that many Somalis have tacitly accepted a social contract of sorts with the international community (instead of with their own State, which they distrust). In exchange for their good behaviour as citizens, they receive access to international resources—not only material, but also symbolic: recognition, knowledge, freedom of movement and equal rights. In this sense, the social transformation (or *biopolitical*) project which seems to lie at the heart of the Western intervention seems to be successful.

In the analysis above, the problem of state-building in Somalia can be reduced to uncooperative elites that divert state-building resources for neo-patrimonial ends, a few religious fanatics that have managed to brainwash their unfortunate victims, and the lack of sufficient resources to involve *all* Somalis in this project of social transformation through institutional development. This definition of the challenges facing state-building is familiar, also from other contexts. But it does not lead to solutions. The problem with the analysis above is not that it is false, but that it is only one half of the story. It corresponds to the discursive reality produced by the hybrid political order. The repressed part of this political order—social power—provides the explanation why, despite the agreement between Somalis and the international community about the desirability, contours and functions of the State, state-building in Somalia over the past decades has turned out to be, objectively, a failure.

Starting from the individual Somali, it can be observed that besides the citizen identity which is engaged in the discourse of the paragraphs above, each individual also has a 'social identity' as member of rhizomatic networks, which in Somalia are mostly clan-based. These rhizomatic networks thrive on an informal economy that is more vigorous than the formal economy, allowing significant exchanges among the nodes of rhizome outside the purview of the State (and its international patrons). Each network has captured some of the positions of formal power, preferably entire branches, allowing it to exercise the symbolic power that gives it a stake in the state-tree. This includes, besides the State and its branches, the roots of the state, or 'civil society' – for example, NGOs, the formal economy, state-approved media and institutes of higher education. The intense negotiations among the leaders of these networks result in 'elite bargains' that manage, overall, to maintain social peace, but which are contrary to the very notion of stability and institutional development. A tree invaded by parasites whose main goal is to extract, not develop its resources, cannot become a healthy tree.

Why is the international community invested in this effort to transform Somali society through the state-building intervention? While efforts by Ethiopia, Kenya, the Gulf States and Turkey to influence government in Somalia can be seen as plain patronage, with identifiable interests such as economic

concessions, political loyalty or security at a country's borders, the state-building and social transformation efforts by the international community are different. They feed into the same local patronage networks and affect the elite bargaining process in similar ways. It is difficult to discern the specific interests served by the international community patronage,

The reason most often given for the state-building intervention in Somalia is that it serves global security. Level-headed analysis of the War on Terror in Somalia over the past twenty years, however, shows that the threat of global terrorism emanating from Somalia is low, and encouraged rather than deterred by the presence of foreign troops. The argument that is becoming prevalent in security discourse about the Horn of Africa, and perhaps replacing that of the Global War on Terror, is that an Al Shabaab takeover would threaten Red Sea Security. It is not clear why that would be so.

Some generic interests explaining intervention may be identified. The interest of interveners to maintain their lucrative jobs and increase the size of their operations should not be discounted. An analysis of cash flows confirms that state-building efforts primarily benefit interveners, as most of the budgets for humanitarian and development aid and state-building seem to be spent in the West, not on the supposed recipients (the Somali state or the aid beneficiaries) which is also a recurrent point of critique of both Somali authorities and the population. Local forces have almost no part in defining what the assistance should be and where it should be directed. State-building takes place on the side of the interveners, not the intervened. The evidence for this would be the amount of time and money that large organizations spend on internal reform, the flurry of new working groups, 'teams', projects, and institutions that are spawned by international conferences, new discourses or internal reorganization. Long-term participants in the intervention industry note that its internal orientation (justified by the need for more coordination, more accountability, the adoption of more efficient technologies, fresh management theories etc) is worsening. In the perspective developed above, it strengthens the discursive reality that supports hegemony and reminds interveners that, whatever the results may be of their activities, they are 'doing the right thing'.

Connected to this, the surprising continuities in Western intervention objectives and methods, from the colonial period through the Cold War until today, indicate that a very stable vector of core-periphery domination lies under the rapidly changing discourses justifying intervention. A (bit longish) definition of intervention was coined in Chapter Eleven: *International intervention is a tool combining military, humanitarian, and political instruments, used by states at the core of the liberal world order to align other states to that order, in what is preferably a multilateral effort. Intervention is a tool of hegemony that strengthens the world order to the benefit of the transnational elite, but it must also respond to perceptions of justice among peoples to not delegitimize intervening states.* If we go by this definition, what can explain the international intervention in Somalia today is the effort to maintain transnational elite hegemony, while the discourse surrounding it—human security, development, global security, democracy, poverty reduction—responds to perceptions of justice and thus affirms its legitimacy.

Admitting the failure of the state-building project in Somalia might provoke a crack in the hegemony of the transnational elite. It could endanger the consensus about the international state order and the tool of intervention; this, I conclude, is the reason for the continued international state-building intervention in Somalia.

General Conclusions

"Once we have recognized that there were societies before the state, we may also want to consider the possibility that there could be societies after the state".[1]

Chris Pierson, 2011

The central hypothesis of this dissertation, that the fundamental objective of state-building intervention in Somalia is to strengthen the international order, and that it fails because it ignores self-governance, has been verified by breaking it down and examining each of the sub-hypotheses it led to. By examining self-governance, the initial assumption that state-building and self-governance are opposing political orders was overturned, as I found that they are complementary instead; but this does not invalidate the sub-hypothesis that ignoring self-governance leads to the failure of state-building efforts. I will first summarize the findings of my thesis and then extract some implications for further research.

The Objective of State-Building Intervention in Somalia

From the colonial encounter to the War on Terror, Somali society has been subjected to attempts to reform its social order to conform to the interests of external powers. The principal interest of the British was domination. They needed to secure the Somaliland coast, which was difficult without hierarchical authorities to negotiate with, so they established that authority themselves. Great Britain paid clan elders to relay its authority, thus institutionalizing what previously had been fluid mechanisms of self-governance. Italy was intent on exploitation: creating a profitable colony. Italians needed Somalis to adopt different attitudes towards work, money and authority and used mostly market mechanisms to encourage them to change, with little success.

Domination, exploitation: these are well-known drivers of colonial intervention. From the colonial period to today, what drives intervention has become less easy to discern. Discourses justifying intervention are relatively clear, but the actual policies followed often do not conform to this discourse. International intervention in Somalia has lost coherence, and bizarrely, there seems to be a steady increase in this incoherence over the past century. If the USA was so concerned about human rights, why did it support a dictator responsible for massive violations of human rights? Why did the West provide steady support to warlords while speaking of democracy? And advocate 'local ownership', 'grassroots democracy' and 'bottom-up development' while backing a neighbouring country's army to crush the only national socio-political movement that incarnated these values?

Somalis can be forgiven for developing conspiracy theories to explain this divergence between proclaimed objectives, actual policies and results. However, the international community has no identifiable economic interests in Somalia, a country with scant geopolitical importance, few mineral resources to get excited about, and a small labour force that looks down on manual labour and is therefore not readily exploitable. The argument most often heard, that the international community is

[1] Pierson, Christopher 2011: "The Modern State"; p28

present in Somalia for global security, is not very persuasive. It does not explain why the international community was so involved in Somalia before the start of the War on Terror or the scourge of Somali piracy, and it ignores the experts who, since 9/11/2001, have argued that Al Shabaab is not a global jihadi organization but a Salafi nationalist insurgency. Al Shabaab has committed terrorist attacks in AMISOM troop-contributing countries as retaliation, but there is no evidence that they have ever tried to attack other countries. Since 2013, Somali pirates are no longer a credible threat. If the West is concerned about the rise of Islamic State or an eventual revival of piracy, it should recognize that the force most capable of defeating both is Al Shabaab. One can only understand policies followed in Somalia by zooming out and seeing how they fit into general approaches to Sub-Saharan Africa, 'weak states' and developing economies, and into global approaches to security, trade, human rights, migration, climate change, etc.

The intervention in Somalia is not solely focused on state-building. Very few interveners would give it as the first reason for their presence. They would say their objective is the development of Somalia, to provide humanitarian relief, to empower women and minorities, help establish democracy, build peace, prevent radicalization etc. But these activities all require a stable political order, and in our world only the State can provide that so, either directly or indirectly, the entire scala of intervention supports the state-building objective. The 'good governance'/'failed state' discourse established the consensus between all intervention sectors that state-building was essential to all their activities. Nobody found it necessary to specify what kind of state, as the consensus on that had been established previously: the liberal democratic state.

Thus we have: nearly all forms of intervention in Somalia support the objective of building a liberal democratic state, and the intervention in Somalia is part of consensus-based efforts to consolidate or alter the world order through social transformation; it can only be understood in that wider context. The multiple failures of intervention can only be justified if one assumes that it was all done in pursuit of a greater good: to build a liberal democratic state not only for the benefit of Somalis but 'to help make the world a better place'. Which is exactly the position intervening agencies in Somalia take.

State-building intervention, it follows, has become a highly ideological exercise. It is the direct descendant of Kipling's 'White Man's Burden'.[2] Parallels can be drawn with missionary activity in the past—how many crimes were not committed, and failed policies justified, in the name of Christian religion?—but there is also one major difference. Religious faith is assumed, believers are conscious that their faith is based on belief. But faith in the State is not conscious, it just seems 'plain common sense' (Bourdieu's *doxa*) that the only possible form of social order is the modern State. It is implied that political scientists need not search any further, the modern liberal democratic state with its weaknesses is the best and therefore the only acceptable political order (whence the notion of 'the End of History'). Perhaps a better term for this faith in the State is 'ideology'.

State-building interventions, not only in Somalia but in Afghanistan, Libya, Haiti, East-Timor, Cambodia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, etc. can objectively be considered failures, at least according to general criteria such as their effects on peace, development, political order and human security. The reasons most commonly given for these failures by interveners are local contextual factors such as culture or 'spoilers', and insufficient resources. But these causes don't hold up to scrutiny. If the resources poured into East Timor or Afghanistan were insufficient, then they can never be enough. As to local factors, the common denominator in all these failures is the international

[2] Kipling 1899: "The White Man's Burden" reflects some of the 'good reasons' still given for intervention today. For example, the third stanza: "*Take up the White Man's burden— / The savage wars of peace— / Fill full the mouth of Famine / And bid the sickness cease; / And when your goal is nearest / The end for others sought, / Watch Sloth and heathen Folly / Bring all your hopes to nought*." The White Man's Burden is also "*To seek another's profit, / And work another's gain*".

community itself (usually the same organizations, often even the same people), so logically that is where the cause for failure lies.

If state-building is an ideological exercise, then it need not take account of reason and logic. From an ideological point of view, the relentless effort at state-building provides the *proof of commitment* to a consensual form of world governance, based on faith in the State. By mobilizing this commitment by international and domestic elites, interventions succeed in strengthening the consensus that lies at the basis of the international order. The apparent lack of self-reflection after the failure of the intervention in Afghanistan (have people or organizations been called to account for the loss in lives and resources?) suggests that the international consensus about state-building is barely affected by its failures. Whatever critical voices emerge, especially within the core countries, can be absorbed in the cycle of transnational governance and recycled into a slightly modified consensus that will not invalidate the basic premise that the State is the only form of political order.

Summary of the Dual Power Theory

To verify the second half of the central hypothesis—that state-building fails because it ignores self-governance—it was necessary to construct a new theory of self-governance, because within political science there was none that could be applied.

In the investigation of the genealogy of the modern Western State, it became apparent that there was a solid tradition in political philosophy, harking back to ancient Greece (at least) and still vivid in the European enlightenment, that considers that a man-made political order must derive its legitimacy from the State of Nature. In this State, humankind works towards its collective survival; being a social animal, it derives from this pursuit certain principles for co-existence, for which Roman lawyers coined the term *ius gentium*, a shared customary (uncodified) law. Respect for life, for the environment, for the fruit of another person's labour, care for the young, elderly and sick: such principles were shared among all peoples. In the State of Nature all people are free and equal and all adults are self-sovereign, meaning they do not need to obey anybody else; but they need to respect the principles of community and agreements made with others (equally free and self-sovereign individuals). Humans, however, being endowed with reason, and seeking development of the self and the collective (many philosophers assumed towards *good*, a moral objective), desire to overcome the disadvantages of the State of Nature such as the right of the strongest or being subjected to the unreasonable impulses of groups. Therefore they enter into structured agreements with each other and appoint a sovereign entity to verify and exact compliance to these agreements.

The terminology used to refer to these structured agreements—*polis*, *civitas*[3]—all referred to cities, which are places where people from different communities mix and are exposed to each other, perhaps unprotected by their home community. One point frequently debated was whether it was better to transfer sovereignty to a ruler or to the Law. Most philosophers agreed the latter was the better option, as humans are too often subject to their impulses and can become tyrants, whereas through the Law mechanisms can be devised to give every person a chance to rule—e.g. through sortition or elections—thus offsetting the loss of personal sovereignty a bit. These laws drew their legitimacy from their agreement with the principles of the State of Nature. In turn humans entering this 'political society', becoming *citizens*, sacrificed part of their freedom and sovereignty. To minimize the threat of Law turning into tyranny, this transfer of sovereignty had to be as limited as possible and clearly circumscribed by the Law. Moreover, each community could make its own laws and polity, and these

[3] In Arabic, civil society is *almujtama almadani*, literally urban society; like civilization, the Arabic word for it, *madaniyat,* is derived from the word 'city', *madina.* For medieval Arabic thought on political society, that was derived from classical Greek thinking but developed it, see Al Farabi (10th century): *Al Madina Al Fadila* - The Virtuous City; or Ibn Rushd (Averroes, 12th century): On the Republic of Plato

were expected to change as the community evolved. Only the principles of the State of Nature could be considered universal. Political society could not *replace* the State of Nature; it was grafted on to it.

Bourdieu noted that "*The major effect of historical evolution is to abolish history by relegating to the past, i.e., to the unconscious, the lateral possibles that it eliminated*".[4] Debates about the State of Nature suddenly disappeared around the end of the 18th and early 19th centuries, coinciding with the industrial revolution and the rise of the modern state—spread throughout Europe under Napoleon. The modern state required absolute power, a concept that had been prepared in political philosophy by Hobbes' Leviathan. The State of Nature was ignored, and then demonized as 'anarchy'. The Law no longer derived its legitimacy from its agreement with putative 'laws of nature' but from its internal coherence. The modern state derived its symbolic power from religion, and replaced God as the entity exacting the entire submission of its citizens. The modern state thus denied the whole notion that there is another source for the Law and claimed full sovereignty. Human societies adapted, but since relations between individuals usually take place outside the purview of the State, they are still mostly based on social power and rhizomatic in nature, and only submit to State law and formal hierarchies in their limited dealings with official structures.

To make sense of how Somali society creates a political order without the State, the notion of the State of Nature and the fundamental duality of power had to be restored. The similarities between the practices of self-government developed among Somali clans based on *xeer*, their customary law, and the State of Nature as described for example by John Locke, are striking. The tension between the State and Somali self-governance could thus be understood in this framework, which was adopted for this thesis.

But returning to a debate buried two centuries ago was not sufficient. How can current society-state relations be understood, is there a representation for them? The response was provided by the studies of the African state by Jean-François Bayart, who applied Deleuze & Guattari's duality between the tree and the rhizome to African politics: the State as tree and society as rhizome. The rhizome and the tree are two opposing archetypes of structure: the tree is centred, hierarchical, homogeneous, limited and mortal; its image is in the seed, which contains the plan for the tree's growth. The rhizome is all the contrary: it has no centre, but each node is the centre of its own constellation. It is networked, so a rupture in a connection can be overcome by other connections. It can expand endlessly, adapting to the environment and thus evolving, making it heterogeneous. The rhizome has no seed and no image, but it has endless vitality. The tree-image, in contrast, structured by laws (of genetics), contains a symbolic power that appears everlasting.

The metaphor can be taken literally, considering recent breakthroughs in forestry studies about the connections between rhizomes and trees, thus connecting political science to life sciences. The tree transforms air, water and energy into biomass, producing life. The rhizome also sends nutrients to the tree (organic material and minerals) but current estimates in forestry are that the tree draws 90% of its dry material from the atmosphere, and only 10% from the ground.[5] The rhizome connects all trees with each other and to other species, transferring nutrients and energy between its nodes. These connect the rhizome to the roots of trees and of other vegetation. The rhizome and the tree are necessary to each other. But the rhizome can survive the destruction of the tree, even of an entire forest. New life will sprout from its nodes.

This provides a helpful image for the relation between humankind in the State of Nature (rhizome) and political society (the tree). They represent the dual nature of power: social power and symbolic power. One can easily expand this imagery: each node in the rhizome represents a human being, while the

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[4] Bourdieu 1994:15

[5] this explains why ground levels do not diminish while trees grow, and why so much biomass has accumulated on the Earth over the past 3-4 million years

branches of the tree correspond to the institutions of state, and its roots to civil society: all organized sectors of human activity (the economy, associations, cultural groups) that sustain the State but are not part of it.

The Dual Power Theory can be summarized as follows: the political field is structured by two principles of power: social power and symbolic power. The former is based on humankind's collective self-preservation drive in the State of Nature and is exercised through self-governance. The latter is based on laws that humans establish and has been exercised over the past two centuries increasingly by the modern State.

The archetypal model for social power is the rhizome, in which each node is equal, free (self-sovereign) and at the centre of its own network, related to other nodes on the basis of mutual recognition, by affections such as love and hate, and trust and fear. The social rhizome transmits not only energies (affections) between its nodes, but also resources (nutrients), from the mother's milk to property and knowledge. It is in permanent fluctuation and has neither set boundaries, nor an end-state, thus it has no form: it is informal in all senses of the word. The rhizome is underground and invisible. The archetype for symbolic power is the tree, which is centred, structured hierarchically (logically) and, as tree-image, has an invariable form. In its hierarchical structure it has positions (offices) which are copied from tree to tree through the seed. The tree is not only visible, but it is also awe-inspiring, as many ancient human myths confirm. Social power and symbolic power coexist. They are intertwined and feed each other, but they maintain fundamentally distinct natures.

Symbolic power is structured by reason and reason's most perfect expression: the Law. It allows social elites to transform their leadership (a rhizomatic quality) into domination (a structural quality), by designing and then occupying structures of power. Since the rise of the modern state, ruling elites have denied the State of Nature in an effort to claim full sovereignty over the political field. Social power did not disappear—it cannot—but it became invisible, at least in the formal view of the political field. As the structures of state are occupied by people, who remain part of their social networks, and thus can employ the symbolic power associated with their position to advance their rhizomatic interests (group self-preservation), the result has been a hybrid political order in which a large part of the political field is subtracted from view to uphold the fiction that humans are (and should be) governed only by the Law and reason; a fiction that serves the interests of the (now formally invisible) ruling elites, who continuously redefine the Law and the structures of rule.

In the Dual Power Theory, the two power principles are recognized and distinguished, unraveling the hybrid political order. Agency belongs only to humans, not to structures. Sovereignty is a function of agency. The State is a structure and thus cannot be sovereign. What is sovereign through the State is the ruling elite, that is a rhizomatic network based on mutual recognition and the urge for self-preservation, which it responds to by increasing its power. The social power of the ruling elite lies in its capacity to define the narrative through which reality is perceived (this includes believing in social constructs like the State, the Law, money and paper documents). It is aided in this task by 'organic intellectuals', the most prominent of whom are also part of the ruling elite. Ruling elites establish a consensus that is spread through civil society (school, media, regulations etc) to the population at large to ensure its consent. The entire process of establishing a narrative and consensus, and for the population to consent, is one based on social power and the rhizome; it is based on relations and emotions transmitted through these relations (such as trust, admiration, fear, love) rather than reason, and can be undertaken reflexively, in an instinct of self-preservation. Dissent is mostly absorbed through the cycle of consensus formation (fig. 31); otherwise it is met by coercion through structures of rule (administrative, military). Thus, Western ruling elites have stayed in power, and by designing the state and rules-based international order, have extended that power over the globe, submitting to their rule not only their own populations but others too.

Consequences for Somalia

Does state-building in Somalia fail because it ignores self-governance? Yes and no. The relation between state power and self-governance is not univocal. Table 8 shows how this relation is both conflictual and complementary. From the perspective of state power, however, self-governance is consistently denied. It is usually not even opposed, but simply ignored. And from society's perspective, this denial is accepted because self-governance is never sufficient for society. Somali society did not oppose the Somali state because it sought to replace customary with formal law, or to ban clan identities from public space. In the same way that the rhizome needs the tree to produce energy and nutrients, Somali society needs the state to access the external resources that nourish it. As long as sufficient opportunities for connection to that structure exist, the rhizome can thrive.

But when connections become too scarce, and transmit state violence rather than access to power, the rhizome ends up rejecting the state. Seen thus, Somali society-state relations confirm the fundamental drive for self-preservation in the State of Nature. Siad Barre's corrupt and dysfunctional regime was accepted for a long time by society, but when it started murdering entire communities, the rhizome revolted against it and the state-tree died.

To understand why this happened, the foreign nature of the tree must be taken into account. The modern state is an imported tree. Seen abstractly, the root system and the branches/canopy of a tree are strikingly similar (Figure 23). Depending on one's perspective, what the one sees as branches, the other may identify as roots. As a concept, from the African point of view the modern state-tree is obviously imported from Europe. Its structure and functions come predefined. In practice, however, the Somali state-tree is rooted in local society, indicating a radical opposition between image and practice of the State. The volume of external support received by Siad Barre's state after 1975, and particularly in the late 1980s, allowed the state-tree to survive on its external contacts: the branches became the roots. Siad Barre and the clique surrounding him increasingly controlled the flow of external resources into Somali society through the administrative and coercive apparatus of state (the trunk), crowding out contenders until the trunk was hollowed out and the state-tree collapsed.

These two takes on Somali state collapse are an example of using the Dual Power Theory as analytical framework: one rhizomatic, explained through social dynamics, the other structural, explained through logic. Both explanations are valid.

From a neoliberal perspective, the modern state-tree extracts local resources from domestic societies and feeds them into to the rhizome of the transnational elite. This is what I call the inverse tree, with its roots in the international order and its branches within domestic societies. Historically, the massive transfer of resources from domestic societies to the transnational elite, since the modern state spread over the globe in the late colonial period—a trend that has accelerated since neoliberal reforms reshaped domestic state-society relations, transferring domestic sovereignty to a transnational elite—seems to prove that this model of the inverse tree is correct. This explains why global elites have a collective stake in state-building, and how state-building contributes to their hegemony.

It can be objected that Somalia has contributed nothing to global wealth creation. Why did the IMF even bother devising a structural adjustment program for Somalia in 1980? That the same policies that have worked in other African countries are applied to Somalia, despite not functioning well there, can be explained by the inflexible nature of ideology. International agencies developing their strategies for Somalia will take into account its specific context, but they cannot oppose the general ideological framework—stipulating, for example, that ungoverned spaces allow terrorism, that markets should be free, community property and social services be privatized in the name of 'efficiency' and property rights protected, or that representative democracy and a liberal rights regime are the only legitimate form of government. They must operate within it. As can be seen from the study of the Federal

Government of Somalia (and of the TFG before it) the requirement to operate within this discursive framework leads foreign interveners to evolve in a reality radically distinct from that in which Somali society lives, with domestic elites as interface.

If we reverse our view again and plant our feet on Somali soil, the state-tree extracts resources from the international atmosphere and spreads these through the Somali subsoil to society. Here, the foreign, imported nature of the state-tree also has advantages, as it has better connections to global resources than a native political order would ever have. This is the experience of the State of Somaliland, that conforms more to the standards advocated by interveners than the Federal Government does, but lacks the connections of the imported state tree. Besides the material resources (money, weapons, machinery, consumer products) are the symbolic ones (recognition, participation in the international community, access to global elites), which may appear even more attractive to domestic elites. But the foreign state-tree also carries significant disadvantages. The resources it provides access to generate conflict between local groups. One of the unequivocal findings of this dissertation is that foreign aid and intervention systematically generate conflict in Somalia.

More crucially, the imported state does not reflect Somali society, its culture and its specific requirements. It remains an alien tree, not well connected to Somalia's social ecosystem, on which it can have a disruptive impact with unpredictable results. It locks the social power of local elites into structures, making change difficult and creating imbalances within domestic society. The same elites stay in power indefinitely thanks to foreign patronage. The natural fluctuation within the rhizome is stunted and true leadership becomes difficult to exercise within the narrow boundaries of the laws and procedures of the imported state. What choice do Somalis have? They may make some cosmetic changes on the imported state tree, decide on its flag and change some laws, but not sever its roots in the international community; unless, like Al Shabaab, they categorically refuse the modern (Western) State and build a different type of political order, at the risk of being endlessly bombed.

One self-generated political order has emerged in Somalia in contrast to the imported state-tree: that pioneered by the Islamic Courts Union and developed by Al Shabaab. It does not attempt to capture or create a *state*, but brings governance (justice, order, predictability) in response to a clearly voiced social demand. The structures of rebel governance are based on the rhizome (scattered and fluctuating distribution of power) rather than arborescent (centralized and hierarchical) suggesting a multitude of shrubs connected through the roots rather than one majestic state-tree. This may be a strategic imperative (given the overwhelming firepower of international forces, a centralized structure can be destroyed with more ease than a distributed one) rather than a deliberate choice. The result, however, is that like in classical theory, the political state emerges from the State of Nature and has a minimal ambit. Although Al Shabaab is connected to global issues—those concerning Islam in the contemporary world—it is not dependent on external forces, like the Somali state, but draws its nourishment from domestic resources and support.

Al Shabaab has built a dual political order, where its network identity (social power) and its governance activities (symbolic power) retain their separate influence on the political field, instead of the hybrid political order that is characteristic of the modern state. They interact of course in practice, but one is not denied for the benefit of the other. This explains why Al Shabaab rule is at once considered legitimate by Somalis—it imposes an authority above clan, enforces peace and justice and makes citizens abide by the Rule of Law—and illegitimate, because Somalis generally don't agree with its leadership and intolerant, freedom-restricting identity. Al Shabaab's social power is resolutely counter-hegemonic, as it opposes the modern state and the Western-led state order with violence if required, like other armed Salafi movements.

The case of Somaliland demonstrates that Somalis are capable of forming their own liberal democratic state-tree, based on self-governing society. But their State, built in part in response to the aspirations of Somaliland's society, and in part for international recognition—to access foreign resources—has the

same flaw as all modern states: it denies social power and thus has evolved into a hybrid political order where ruling elites capture the formal structures of power for their collective self-preservation. Given that Somaliland's state is still weak, in part because it is not recognized and therefore has partial access only to external rents, self-governance still functions to pacify society and bring some social and economic development. But as State power grows and becomes a willing instrument for transnational governance (in exchange for rents), social imbalances increase. Despite their wholly different backgrounds, the state of Somaliland and the Federal Government of Somalia are converging towards each other.

The second part of my initial premise, that state-building fails because it ignores self-governance, has been clarified and refined by the historical and contemporary political analysis of state-society relations in Somalia through the dual power lens. This demonstrates that the theory serves its purpose. The hypothesis can be reformulated as follows: **state-building fails because it disrupts the political order that arises out of self-governance without integrating it into a dual political order**.

Other findings

The Dual Power Theory appears convincing because many observable dualities seem to fit into this framework, and they gain explanatory power from the association with either the principle of the rhizome, or that of the tree, and by combining them with the other dualities thus arranged. Some have been explored in Chapter Three (Tables 1-3) and others in Chapter Eight (Table 9) and Chapter Eleven (Table 10). To these the dualities below can be added. They have been partially explored in this thesis but should be seen as areas requiring further research by people with more appropriate specializations.

Table 11: More Dualities explained by the Dual Power Theory

Archetype	**Rhizome**	**Tree**
Economy	Informal (trust-based)	Formal (contract-based)
Aid	Human solidarity	Patronage
Socialization	Friendship (trust-based)	Values (dominating)
Reality	Social (affect-based)	Discursive (reason-based)
Polity formation	State formation	State-building (external)
Energy	Electromagnetic	Gravity, matter

The rhizome has its own economy, usually called the informal economy. In pure monetary terms, it seems to be much bigger in Somalia than the formal economy. Other resources flowing through the rhizome are feelings and knowledge, and perhaps they should be integrated into the concept of the informal economy, making it even larger. David Graeber demonstrates in "Debt",[6] with his usual wealth of historical and anthropological detail, how the money-based economy grew very slowly out of a trust-based economy and how States created markets, against the orthodoxy that States and markets are fundamentally opposed. The formal, contract-based economy ignores trust-based exchange between human beings in the same way as State power ignores social power. It would be interesting to research in more detail how both interact in practice; for example, how correct is the statement I make, that the growth of the formal economy is largely based on the absorption of the informal one?

[6] Graeber 2011: "Debt. The First 5,000 Years"

The aid economy has been dealt with harshly in these pages. Clearly, a more critical approach to the motivations, mechanisms and effects of aid is necessary. But Aid also has a rhizomatic aspect, which is the expression of human solidarity. This is what motivates young people to go abroad 'to help'. In my experience, the personal relations that emerge between aid workers and members of foreign societies—through which emotions, knowledge and the occasional gift are exchanged—are precious enough to partially offset the negative impacts of aid: distorting the economy, creating dependence, supplying unearned legitimacy to state authorities, etc. Because of security rules these personal relations have become more complicated, and scandals of sexual misconduct have led to risk management strategies that further complicate relations between expatriates and local people. From a dual power perspective, a rebalancing of the aid effort towards its rhizomatic aspects is urgent.

It was observed that socialization—itself identified as a mechanism of the rhizome, leading to consensus formation and consent—also has two aspects: one is acquiring the values of the group, adapting to its structures, learning to think like other group members to increase group cohesion. The other is 'making friends' and creating rhizomatic bonds. The former seems clearly related to the tree – perhaps the 'rhizome in tree' where individual human beings learn to occupy positions relative to each other, on the basis of shared values that are provided externally (not generated internally), ensuring cohesion with wider societal values. According to the dual nature of power, social cohesion also comes from the friendship between team members, and the trust this generates. In friendship there is no hierarchy: each individual is self-sovereign. This generates a continuous tension with hierarchical management: how to make the most of such synergies? This seems to be an eminently political issue.

In Chapters Nine and Eleven the distinction is made between social and discursive reality. I write: "*Discursive reality derives from foreign hegemonic concepts and tends to focus on formal matters, such as data, official documents and logical relations (it belongs to the tree). Social reality is more experience-based; it is personal and expresses sentiments (it pertains to the rhizome).*" I am not equipped to deal with psychology, but from Table 11 above it transpires that social reality is related to the informal economy, to aid as human solidarity and to friendship. Arranging dualities according to their basic principle of organization—rhizome or tree—helps to better understand synergies and ramifications.

In terms of polity formation, the experience of Somaliland showed the difference between State formation and state-building. The story of Somaliland's formation (narrated in Appendix 3) is a truly exceptional one in today's world, because it received no external support while its society created a 'state-tree' very similar to the international model. Other non-externally supported polities exist, including Al Shabaab and the Taliban, and the fascinating experience of Rojava in north-eastern Syria, a self-governing society that also has a (light) executive state-like structure.[7] This confuses most observers but conforms neatly to the Dual Power Theory in a classical sense: the 'political society' that has emerged from the social 'state of nature' remains small, circumscribed and it must respect the 'laws of nature' of self-governing communities; but it also has autonomy from the latter and some authority: its executive orders must be obeyed.

Finally, I have added the basic duality that helped provoke the quantum revolution in physical sciences, that of light as electromagnetic wave, or as bundle of particles (photons). This duality is at the root of the Dual Power Theory, as mentioned in 3.2. The process of consensus-formation and how it generates the dual tug of consent and dissent was described, in Chapter Three, as akin to a magnetic field. It is strongest around the core members and fluctuates incessantly, in intensity but also around its edges and also in its nature (the consensus keeps shifting). The vision of matter as consisting of particles, in turn, seems to be related to the tree, with its structure, hierarchy and finiteness. A key problem faced by physical theorists today is to reconcile quantum mechanics (electromagnetic energy combined with the

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[7] I visited Rojava in November 2015, invited by the Dutch artist Jonas Staal.

strong and weak nuclear forces) with general relativity (the force of gravity) in one "Theory of Everything".[8] A dual power approach would discourage this search, and suggest instead to acknowledge them both, keep them conceptually separate and study their interactions. This may seem distant from the subject of political science; nonetheless it is exciting to think that there may be synergies to explore between political and physical science, besides the already noted parallels with life sciences.

For most topics a column could be added for the 'rhizome in tree' hybrid political order (Table 9), which is fundamentally, I noted, a 'state of accepted denial', in that the formal denies the informal and the informal accepts to be denied; this column would describe political practice. Political practice *need* not be hybrid, it can also be dual, meaning that both columns above are fully assumed as part of political reality. But the political practice of the modern state, we argued, is fundamentally hybrid because state power claims absolute and universal sovereignty. By denying the State of Nature and social power, the binary opposition involving state power is no longer between rhizome and tree, with political practice between both ideal-types, but between the ideal state (tree-image) and the practice of the state (see Figure 13). This binary opposition is between two different kind of entities (a single image and a wide range of practices) and is confusing. The Dual Power Theory helps to clear this confusion, and that of hybrid political orders generally.

Finally, I would like to draw attention to Figure 31. Beyond transnational governance, this cycle of consensus formation, that evolves between agency and structure, between core and periphery, can perhaps be applied to social power in general, as a driving mechanism of change in rhizomatic networks. Again, these are suggestions for further research, not accomplished 'conclusions'.

Requiem for the State

"Today the hegemonic language of the modern tradition, with all of its horrors and errors, with all of its colonialisms and imperialisms, is left in complete tatters. It is a matter of trying to construct a new political language, rather than continuing to deconstruct something that has already been thoroughly deconstructed".[9]

Roberto Esposito, 2019

The international order is in a state of crisis. Behind the crises that grab the attention of political elites—the war in Ukraine, rising energy and food prices, Coronavirus—there are two more massive crises that have been long in the making: climate change and global inequality. The international state order seems incapable of addressing both. If, as surmised here, the true sovereign power in the world is the transnational elite, it may be in a position to address these issues. But this elite is in self-denial. Although its functioning can be described quite precisely, through the cycle of socialization, consensus formation, meta-governance and absorbing contender elites, as long as its members do not recognize themselves as a group with agency, they cannot be burdened with a task. As it is, their only task is reflexively inspired by their rhizomatic nature: collective survival; but not as part of the larger human community, but as members of their smaller elite rhizomes. So they grow richer and more influential by the day, but do not conceive of themselves as an agent. If they were to conceive of themselves as a group with agency, they would immediately be decried as illegitimate.

It seems the only way out of this conundrum is by reinventing politics. Reforming the current world order seems beyond human capacity. But reinvention is possible. After all, not only the State, but the

[8] For a brief overview, see Wikipedia 'Theory of everything' (link)

[9] Esposito, Roberto 2019: "Post-Democracy and Biopolitics"

economy, the value of money, the nation and the Law are all social constructs. Nothing should stop humans from developing new social constructs. It is a harmless activity; it is even a beautiful pursuit.

The role of international relations scholars, political and social scientists, and 'organic intellectuals' in establishing the myths of the State and the state order was underlined in Part I. To be clear, this is not an accusation. First, the State was in many ways an admirable creation, that spurred on an incredible development among humankind. Today, the State may have outlived its usefulness, but this is not a reason to judge its proponents *a posteriori*. Second, this same set of scholars has produced all the critical insights and theories that have guided the research in this dissertation. They could perhaps also collaborate on developing new political constructs.

A search for alternatives to the State in the vast academic literature of political science delivers preciously little. There are still a few anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists that propagate self-governance. The Kurdish social revolution, inspired by its leader Abdullah Öcalan's texts[10] (he, in turn, was inspired by Murray Bookchin's theories of social ecology[11]) has resulted in a vast self-governing region in North-East Syria and discrete self-governance in Kurdish communities in Turkey. Some young scholars have engaged with these systems of self-rule, but the exceptional circumstances rooted in the long Kurdish struggle for autonomy preclude generalizations. A small but growing group of scholars researches the possible political applications of the self-sovereignty characteristic of blockchain technology.[12]

Leaving aside self-governance and self-sovereignty, a growing body of work has arisen out of the critique of representative democracy, searching for more democratic systems; such as liquid democracy[13], cryptodemocracy[14] and democracy by sortition.[15] Another field is that of 'Anthropocene studies' which suggests 'post-human' politics, including providing rights to Nature.[16] These new fields provide many interesting insights about how people can self-organize and recapture power, but there is barely a reflection about the State itself, or of the division of the world into 'sovereign' states.

If the Dual Power Theory has any validity, it could serve as a basis for new political constructs. It would mean, in the first place, recognizing social power as a political force, not only alongside, but subjacent to symbolic power. Second, understand that the roots and legitimacy of social power lie in the State of Nature, in which each human being is free, equal and sovereign. Third, the goal of humanity in the State of Nature has to be restated. In the simplest terms, this is collective survival. That starts at the family level, and extends without any clear intermediate borders to the entire human species. From a scientific perspective, all group identities, from family through clan and tribe to nation and race, are social constructs, and only the individual human being and the human race are indisputable singular entities. Beyond the urge to survive, one could posit as a goal for humanity its development, not only material, but also spiritual. Fourth, the evidence that all human communities share a few fundamental values, which may be termed the Laws of Nature, has to be recognized. These Laws of Nature, which can

[10] Öcalan 2011: "Democratic Confederalism" & 2013: "Liberating Life: Women's Revolution" & 2015: "Manifesto for a Democratic Civilization Vol 1: Civilization. The Age of Masked Gods and Disguised Kings", International Initiative Edition, New Compass Press, Norway

[11] Biehl (ed.) 1999: "The Murray Bookchin Reader"

[12] Reijers e.a. 2016: "Governance in Blockchain Technologies & Social Contract Theories"Campbell-Verduyn (ed.) 2019: "Bitcoin and Beyond: Cryptocurrencies, Blockchains, and Global Governance"; De Filippi e.a. 2020: "Blockchain as a Confidence Machine: The Problem of Trust & Challenges of Governance";

[13] This is the model for decision-making within Europe's 'Pirate Parties'. See Blum & Zuber 2016: "Liquid Democracy: Potentials, Problems, and Perspectives"

[14] Allen e.a. 2018: "Cryptodemocracy and its Institutional Possibilities"

[15] van Reybrouck, David 2016: "Against Elections: The Case for Democracy". An interesting recent experiment with sortition was made by la Convention Citoyenne du Climat (2019)

[16] Burke, Anthony e.a. 2016: "Planet Politics: A Manifesto from the End of IR"

probably be reduced to about ten principles, are then the starting point for creating political societies. None of these political societies could claim universal jurisdiction: they are limited, temporary and evolve along with the community. They cannot go against the few Laws of Nature and they must recognize that only the individual (adult) human being is ultimately sovereign. These principles could lead to new political practices. For example, all mandates of community representatives could be recallable, and decisions should in principle be consensus-based; because if a person does not consent with the decision, its self-sovereignty means it need not comply with it. On the other hand, once it has consented, it is bound to honour the agreement.

Objections that self-governance doesn't work, that it is too time-consuming, that in only works in the shadow of hierarchy of a strong state, that it only works within small communities and is not scalable, that it cannot deal with complex issues, and that generally it tends towards anarchy: all these objections have been refuted on the basis of evidence in Somalia and Somaliland. It has also been shown how these objections are ideological and serve to consolidate State power.

One of the characteristics of self-governing movements is the refusal to enter into State-led (or international community-led) representative politics.[17] This has been witnessed in recent social movements in Sudan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, France, Hong Kong and several South American countries, and Occupy and Fridays for Future. The whole notion of representative politics and sharing power is rejected out of a clear understanding that participating in the political system can lead, at best, to the absorption of contender elites by ruling elites. These movements, then, are also counter-hegemonic in the Gramscian sense, in a different manner to sharia-based movements.

Not only does self-governance work in countries in turmoil, but according to the Dual Power Theory, citizens in Western countries also self-govern. How often do people need to recall State laws and institutional rules when dealing with family, friends, professional contacts, acquaintances and even strangers? These contacts are mostly based on feelings, not formal rules or logical definitions of interests, even though they may be accompanied by large transfers of resources or other strong 'real world' effects. One of the findings of this dissertation is that the dual nature of power operates at the individual level. This author knows nothing about the domain of psychology, and this 'findíng' is likely to have been made many times before, and may even be heavily contested. But it allowed him to make sense of Somalis' ambivalent relations to their State. Each human is part of social networks (an identity that starts with the mother-baby relationship) and almost every person is also citizen of a State and shares institutional identities with others (for example as a schoolgoing child, an employee of an organization, member of a sportsclub etc.). If there is a global financial meltdown or Western states collapse, people will continue living as members of their rhizomes; many of the institutions may also survive supported by the social power of their members. Self-governance is reassuring, which is another reason to recognize it as a political reality.

Given the current state of the world, it seems urgent to put self-governance on the agenda of political science, even if the Dual Power Theory is unconvincing. Other better theoretical approaches to make it 'visible' may be found. The phenomenon deserves closer understanding, not only to devise more workable approaches to intervention in Somalia and similar countries, but for the regeneration of politics worldwide.

[17] Personal experience and in-depth discussions in North-East Syria (Rojava) and in Khartoum/Omdurman.

Appendix 1 List of Interviews

The following list is ordered by date

1. Jay Bahadur, armed groups expert at UN Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group, Nairobi, March 2017
2. Frans Makken, Ambassador of the Netherlands to Kenya, Somalia and the Seychelles, Hargeisa, September 2017
3. Dr. Hussein Bulhan, founder and director of Frantz Fanon University, Hargeisa, author and scholar, Hargeisa, 8 February 2018.
4. Marcos Ferreiro, outgoing director of International NGO Safety Organization Somalia, Nairobi, 7 March 2018
5. Hugh Riddell, Somalia country director of the World Bank, Nairobi, 27 March 2018
6. Daniela Henrike Klau-Panhans, Senior Operations Officer, Fragility, Conflict and Violence Unit, World Bank, Addis Ababa, 11 December 2018
7. 'Mac' Mursal, chairman of Shabeel Limited Liability Company, Mogadishu, 25 February 2019
8. Hussein Sheikh Ali, director Hiraal Institute, ex-deputy director NISA, Mogadishu meetings in February and March 2019 and in October 2020.
9. Osman Feytan 'Bare', diaspora entrepreneur, Mogadishu, 27 February 2019
10. Ahmed Abdihadi, secretary of Somali International University, Mogadishu, 1 March 2019
11. Isaac Maskayar, diaspora entrepreneur, Goobsoor Restaurant, Mogadishu, 3 March 2019
12. Mohamed Mursal, Shabeel Resort Manager, Mogadishu, 3 March 2019
13. Sadiq Warfa, Member of Parliament, Deputy Head of the Defense Commission, Mogadishu, 3 March 2019
14. Abdurahman Sharif, International Relations Advisor to Prime Minister Khaire, Halane, Mogadishu, 4 March 2019
15. Dr. Ali Ahmed Khayre, member of the Constitutional Review process, Mogadishu, 4 March 2019
16. Ahmed Yusuf, Deputy Secretary General of the Senate, Mogadishu, 5 March 2019
17. Abdurahman Abdillahi Baadiyow, Senior Advisor for Peace and Reconciliation to Prime Minister Khaire, prominent figure of Islah movement, scholar and writer, Mogadishu, 5 March 2019
18. Dr. Osman Ma'allin, director of Somali International University, Mogadishu, 6 March 2019
19. Dahir Hassan, Director of Somali Institute for Management and Development, 6 March 2019
20. Mohamed Moalimu, secretary general of the National Union of Somali Journalists, Mogadishu, 6 March 2019
21. Ali Ahmed Doobiye, junior lecturer in political science at Somali International University, previous humanitarian worker, Mogadishu, 06 March 2019
22. Dini Mohamed Dini, Director of Somalia South-Central Non-State Actors (SOSCENSA), Mogadishu, 7 March 2019
23. Abdirahman Abdishakur Warsame, leader of Wadajir Party, candidate to 2017 presidential elections, Mogadishu, 8 March 2019
24. Hon. Ali Mahmoud Ga'al, Judge at the Benadir Appeals Court, Mogadishu Port Area, 09 March 2019
25. Holly Ritchie, consultant in Somali women business development, Halane, Mogadishu, 11 March 2019
26. Michael Keating, UN Special Representative of the SG and Head of United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia UNSOM, Halane, Mogadishu, 11 March 2019
27. Mohamed Mursal, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reporting officer, Halane, Mogadishu, 11 March 2019
28. Abdinasir Moallin UNSOM Human Rights officer, Halane, Mogadishu, 11 March 2019

29. Omar Mahmood, researcher at the Institute for Strategic Studies (South Africa), Addis Ababa, 13 March 2019
30. ‘John’, Chinese businessman looking into investment opportunities in Puntland, Addis Ababa, 31 March 2019
31. Brian O’Sullivan, researcher at UN Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group, Addis Ababa, 3-4 April 2019
32. Burhan Mohamed Hassan Jibriil, advisor to IGAD Peace and Reconciliation Facilitation, Addis Ababa, 22 April 2019
33. Mohamed Alin ‘Mubarak’, NGO reporting officer, Hargeisa, 28 April 2019
34. Khalid Hassan, local governance and start-up development expert, Hargeisa, 30 April 2019
35. Ali Khalif Galaydh, previous federal MP, leader of the Khatumo State 2014-2017, Somaliland politician, Hargeisa, 2 May 2019
36. Sha’ban Abdillahi ‘Ilmi, secretary of the Berbera Economic Forum and founding member of Youth Volunteers for Development and Environment Conservation (Yovenco), Berbera, 4 May 2019
37. Farhan Rakad, manager of Allore Hotel Berbera, writer, director of environmental NGO programme ‘Geed Beer, Rejo Beer’ (‘plant a tree, plant hope’), Berbera, 4 May 2019
38. Abdi Hedi, sheikh of the Dandarawiiya Sufi community, Sheekh, 4 May 2019
39. Ismail ‘Araale, journalist, involved in 1992 Sheekh, 1993 Borama and 96-97 Hargeisa meetings, leading member of ICU and founding member of Al Shabaab, later involved in ARS, director of Shifa University, Bur’o, 5 May 2019
40. Mohamed Hussein, previous mayor of Bur’o (Siad Barre time and 1997-2000), rector of Bur’o University, Bur’o, 5 May 2019
41. Ibrahim Habane, Secretary of the Guurti 1993-2015, Minister of Education 2015-2017, Hargeisa, 6 May 2019
42. Mohamed Yussuf, Secretary of Somaliland Development Fund, Hargeisa, 7 May 2019
43. Ahmed Ismael Samatar, politician (candidate for federal presidency 2012 and 2017) and scholar, Hargeisa, 8 May 2019
44. Adnan Hagoog, EU liaison in Hargeisa and civil society activist, Hargeisa, 8 May 2019
45. Dahir Hamri, Political Affairs Officer with UNSOM, Hargeisa, 8 May 2019
46. Zamzam Tatu, Somali Kenyan researcher with MC Saatchi, previous DfID consultant in Puntland, Addis Ababa, 22 May 2019
47. Freddie Carver, senior development consultant in Horn of Africa, Addis Ababa, 23 June 2019
48. Mark Bradbury, director of the Rift Valley Institute, Nairobi, telephone, 1 October 2020
49. Sonya Armaghanyan, expert in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism for International Organization for Migration, Nairobi, 2 October 2020
50. Nicolás Berlanga, head of EU Delegation to Somalia, Halane, Mogadishu, 5 October 2020
51. Abdulkadir Nur, chairman of Somali Academy for Sciences and Art, Mogadishu, 6 October 2020
52. Mohamed Abdulkadir ‘Ato’, NGO program director, Mogadishu, 6 October 2020
53. Mohamed Roble, director Center for Research and Dialogue, Mogadishu, 6 October 2020
54. Ugas Hussein, traditional ruler of the Hawadle Clan, Belet Weyne, 7 October 2020
55. Karalyn Monteil, regional culture director East Africa for UNESCO, skype, 9 October 2020
56. Mohamed ‘Iise ‘Ismaan, director general Puntland Ministry of Information, Trade, Cultural Heritage and Tourism, Garowe, 12 October 2020
57. Ali Farah Ali, director of the Puntland Development Research Council, Garowe, 12 October 2020
58. Abdisalam Issa-Salwe, professor at Puntland State University, historian and scholar, Garowe, 12 October 2020
59. Guled Salah Barre, chairman of Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission, Garowe, 13 October 2020

60. Abdirizaq, chair of Somaliland Youth Development and Voluntary Organization SOYDAVO, Bur'o, 15 October 2020
61. Jama Muse Jama, director of Hargeisa Cultural Center, Hargeisa, 17 October 2020
62. Abdilaziz Musa, director of Media Ink media development agency, Hargeisa, 17 October 2020
63. Guleid Jama, member of Somaliland Human Rights Commission, Hargeisa, 17 October 2020
64. Sada Mire, archaeologist and director of Horn Heritage Foundation, telephone conversation on 19 October 2020
65. Barkhad Jama' Batuun, Gabooye activist and candidate for MP, Hargeisa, 20 October 2020
66. Mohamed Jibril, Dahabshiil Corporate Social Responsibility and events manager, Hargeisa, 20 October 2020
67. Imam Mohamed Sheikh Omar, Dir/Issa sheikh, Dire Dawa, 26 February 2021
68. Abdirahman Ahmed, Jigjiga University Somali Studies coordinator, Jigjiga, 1 March 2021
69. Omar Mahmood, researcher at International Crisis Group, Brussels, 12 May 2022
70. Mohamed Mubarak, researcher on Al Shabaab at Hiraal Institute, Skype & Whatsapp, May-June 2022

Note: written notes of the interviews could be shared on a case-by-case basis. I have not included them here because many contain sensitive information, for the interviewee at least, and some have not been transcribed from my handwritten notes (but most have).

Appendix 2 Population Estimates for Somaliland

Overall Population of Somaliland

Overall population figures are a matter of conjecture. A full census has never taken place and the presence of many nomads makes counting the population complicated. When a lineage is asked for population numbers, it will tend to inflate them to increase its weight relative to other lineages, who exaggerate for the same reasons. Modern local administrators and humanitarian agencies (who keep tallies of their own, e.g., how many children go to school) also have a rationale to inflate population numbers. The demographer then can either use the given numbers, or risk offending lineages or local authorities by revising their numbers downward.

The methodology used here is:

1. accepting a baseline population count. I have used the 2014 UN Population Fund (UNFPA) survey because it is quite recent and it provides a district level estimation broken down into urban, rural and internally displaced people (IDPs).
2. Crosscutting these figures with other official data, for example the voter registration or the counting of ballots cost. In federal Somalia this data does not exist, but other counts, for example by humanitarian organizations, could be used. Hospital data (for example, birth registries or vaccination counts) are relatively reliable.
3. Google Earth analysis. For example, one can draw the perimeter of an urban settlement, calculate its surface, and then take one tenth of that surface (a representative sample, with dense and sparse building) and count how many buildings one finds there, and then multiply by a standard household size. Google Earth also provides a reliable count of rural villages/hamlets per district.
4. Personal visits or acquaintance with localities helps, because it allows one to determine, for example, the proportion of buildings used as residence, the average number of floors/building etc, the number of seasonal migrants (for example pastoralists coming 'home' when there is no grazing for their animals—how does this population relate to that of the settlement? I have assumed that each pastoralist family does have a home somewhere, and counted 8 inhabitants per building, considering 100% of them residential to compensate for pastorlists that do not own a permanent dwelling visible on Google Earth)
5. Ask inhabitants how many people live there. Not everybody has an interest in inflating numbers.
6. Compare all these data sources. First 1 and 2, and then observation (3-5) to determine a typical exaggeration factor. Find rationales for the exaggeration factor in each district (as below the following table)

The methodology I apply here could be extended to the rest of Somalia to get a better estimate of the real population.

Region	District	Rural	Urban	IDP	UNFPA 2014	exagg factor	My 2020 estimate	2017 Voter Reg	VR rate my estim	VR rate UN estim
Awdal	Baki	92,642	4,243	-	96,885	180%	53,825			
	Borama	127,504	271,045	60	398,609	150%	265,739			
	Lughaye	86,552	6,407	7,860	100,819	180%	56,011			
	Zeylac	70,754	6,127	70	76,951	180%	42,751			
	Total	**377,452**	**287,822**	**7,990**	**673,264**		**418,325**	**147,031**	**35%**	**22%**
Maroodi Jeex	Gabiley	69,997	36,917	-	106,914	120%	89,095			
	Hargeysa	223,229	691,852	44,000	959,081	120%	799,234			
	Total	**293,226**	**728,769**	**44,000**	**1,065,995**		**888,329**	**312,634**	**35%**	**29%**
Sahil	Berbera	101,447	73,971	590	176,008	120%	146,673			
	Sheekh	40,967	34,937	-	75,904	150%	50,603			
	Total	**142,414**	**108,908**	**590**	**251,912**		**197,276**	**78,842**	**40%**	**31%**
Togdheer	Burco	58,584	376,010	25,760	460,354	120%	383,628			
	Buuhoodle	33,768	49,979	-	83,747	200%	41,874			
	Oodweyne	78,560	22,798	-	101,358	150%	67,572			
	Total	**170,912**	**448,787**	**25,760**	**645,459**		**493,074**	**178,506**	**36%**	**28%**
Sanaag	Ceel Afweyn	73,907	26,043	-	99,950	150%	66,633			
	Ceerigaabo	119,389	85,119	810	205,318	135%	152,087			
	Laasqoray	190,200	48,555	100	238,855	300%	79,618			
	Total	**383,496**	**159,717**	**910**	**544,123**		**298,339**	**85,222**	**29%**	**16%**
Sool	Caynabo	38,108	19,572	1,400	59,080	120%	49,233			
	Laas Caanood	76,520	76,498	3,420	156,438	135%	115,880			
	Taleex	59,950	13,579	-	73,529	200%	36,765			
	Xudun	27,036	11,344	-	38,380	150%	25,587			
	Total	**201,614**	**120,993**	**4,820**	**327,427**		**227,465**	**71,096**	**31%**	**22%**
Somaliland		**1,569,114**	**1,854,996**	**84,070**	**3,508,180**		**2,522,808**	**873,331**	**35%**	**25%**

The exaggeration factor is an estimate based on the following criteria:

1. Clan conflict in an area pushes constituencies to exaggerate their numbers (Ceel Afweyn, Taleex, Lughaye, Buuhoodle, Ceerigaabo etc)
2. Political conflict pushes stakeholders to exaggerate numbers (Buuhoodle, Laasqoray, Taleex, all Sool)
3. Common sense and observation, including of settlements on Google Earth.

eg Laasqoray is unlikely to have a greater population than Ceerigaabo, or Awdal more than Togdheer

eg Rural populations given for Awdal, Berbera, Oodweyne, Ceel Afweyn, Laasqoray and Taleex are improbable given the harsh environment

eg Borama cannot have nearly four times the urban population of Berbera

4. Distance from the political heartland makes exaggeration of numbers easier (Awdal, Sanaag & Sool)
5. Higher administrative capacity reduces exaggeration, as in Berbera and Sheekh and regional urban centres generally

Voter registration data was used to confirm these exaggeration factors, bringing VR to 30-38% of entire population in each region

The total tally of 2.5 million inhabitants in Somaliland corresponds to the opinion of experts such as Markus Hoehne (2018)

Table 1: Population in Somaliland by district, with author's corrections

The table above seeks to reconcile the 2014 population data for Somaliland from the UN Population Fund (UNFPA)—the internationally most often quoted source—with 2017 Voter Registration (VR) data (one of the most credible census-like activities undertaken in the past years by Somaliland's authorities), the population figure of 2.2 to 2.5 million estimated by Markus Hoehne (Hoehne 2018b:5) and personal observation (as an analyst specializing in access for the NGO community, I travelled through all districts of Somaliland between 2016 and 2019, except Zeyla', Baki, Lughaye, Odweyne and Xudun. I also spent much time on Google Earth examining roads and settlements, and I wrote area briefs about many of Somaliland's district centres).

I have applied an 'exaggeration factor' of 120 to 300% for each district, based on the criteria mentioned beneath the table. The reason I have engaged in this speculative work is to gain a better understanding of population distribution and participation. When 873,000 Somalilanders register as voters, which percentage of the eligible electorate is this?

Estimating urban populations

- 'eel Afweyn ca 360 houses on 0.83 km^2 built surface = about 3000 inhabitants counting 8 inhabitants per house (incl commercial, public and light industrial structures); add 50% semi-nomadic population (living in aqal/tents) gives about 4500 inhabitants. Compare to UN data above of 26,000 inhabitants; there are no other towns of consequence in the district. But probably many inhabitants of the district are registered in 'eel Afweyn town as inhabitants, for administrative convenience. How the UN calculates the rural population is a mystery.

=> Considering 'eel Afweyn a typical town, this provides 5000 inhabitants/km^2 of built urban area

Note: In comparison, Auxerre, a French town I know well, has 35,000 inh on 12.5 km = 2800 inh/km. This area includes public buildings, parcs etc, but also flats and areas with high population density; so 5,000 inh/km2 urban area consisting mostly of one-storey buildings seems in any case a high estimate. Population counts could be substantially lower than given below.

With this high estimate, population estimations are

- Sheekh 1.3 km2 6,500 inh
- 'Erigabo 6.5 km2 32,500 inh
- Las 'Anod 8.5 km2 42,500 inh
- Berbera 5.7 km2 28,500 inh
- Borama 12.3 km2 61,500 inh
- Bur'o 27.2 km2 136,000 inh
- Hargeisa 70.5 km2 350,000 inh

This gives for the six main towns of Somaliland (not counting Sheekh) about 650,000 inh… adding all other towns of Somaliland, less than a million inhabitants; counting 40% urban population, we again arrive at around the 2 million.

Google Earth images used to estimate population of major towns in Somaliland

On the maps below I have drawn a perimeter around all houses in the urban area (including public and commercial buildings and what are probably industrial facilities or hangars) and let Google Earth calculate the surface. The perimeters around Hargeisa, Borama and Bur'o have unfortunately disappeared in this graphic rendering.

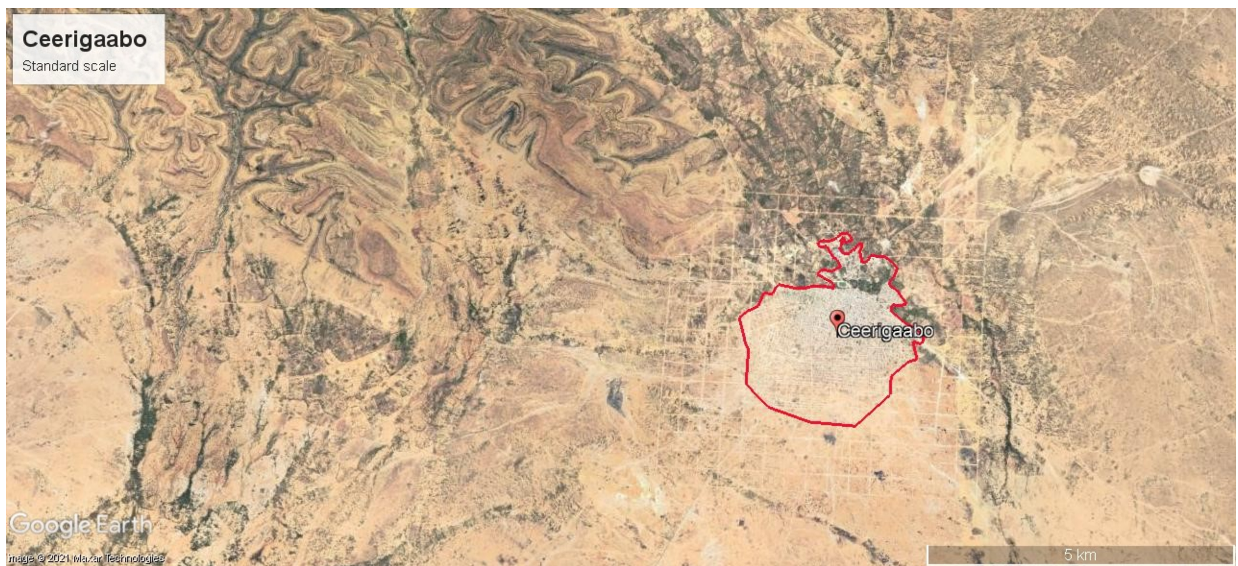
Each map is on the same scale

Hargeysa
Standard scale
Hargeysa
Google Earth
Image © 2021 CNES / Airbus
Image © 2021 Maxar Technologies
5 km

Burco
Standard scale
Burco
Google Earth
Image © 2021 Maxar Technologies
5 km

Borama
Standard scale
Borama
Google Earth
Image © 2021 Maxar Technologies
Image © 2021 CNES / Airbus
5 km

Laas Caanood
Standard scale
Laascaanood
Google Earth
5 km


Ceerigaabo
Standard scale
Ceerigaabo
Google Earth
5 km

Berbera
Standard Scale
Berbera
Google Earth
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
N
5 km

Appendix 3 Formation of the State of Somaliland

The SNM was formed in London in 1981 by exiled revolutionary Isaaq intellectuals and businessmen. From the outset the movement was almost entirely Isaaq, but it did not follow clannist policies. True, many of the exiled SNM supporters desired Somaliland's independence; the fighters operating from Ethiopian bases, in contrast, many of whom had served in Barre's army and had assimilated the secular, socialist and centralizing outlook then prevalent among the armed forces, in general wished to capture power in Mogadishu and work on a new and better power-sharing agreement. One of the SNM's first feat of arms was freeing the imprisoned elders from the high-security Mandera prison (between Berbera and Hargeisa) in 1983. This established a convergence of interest between the traditional elders and military officers, with the more distant support of the urban middle class and exiled intellectuals.

The guerrilla warfare of the SNM degenerated into a full-blown civil war when the SNM had to leave its Ethiopian bases in early 1988. This war was conducted with extreme brutality by Barre and his generals, who targeted all Isaaq civilians as possible SNM fighters or supporters, pushing the civilian population into the arms of the SNM and giving rise to a clan-based narrative of persecution and victimhood. The civil war provided the occasion for what Volkan would call 'Somaliland's chosen trauma'[1] and what the Isaaq now call the 'Isaaq genocide'.

Isaaq elders rallied to support the SNM through taxation of their lineages in recruits, weapons and resources,[2] which allowed the SNM to survive the onslaught of government forces. The lack of external support fostered mutual dependence among elites.[3] In addition, the UNHCR played an unwitting role in the establishment of the Guurti. To manage the rapidly swelling camps of refugees from Somaliland in Ethiopia, the UNHCR brought together clan elders in structures to help them administer the camps. These governance structures were then engaged by the SNM to rally civilian support. Clan elders who came together in June 1988 at Adarosh near the Ethiopian border decided to establish a standing *Guurti* (council of elders) with an executive committee that worked closely together with the military leadership of the SNM.

A permanent Guurti was a political innovation.[4] Although clan elders had occasionally come together to solve inter-clan problems, there was little precedent for a standing body of elders.[5] Clan councils did not appoint an executive committee or spawn any other institutional form. The only institution of clan power, until then, had been the title of sultan or garaad, and the principle that *diya* (or *mag*) paying groups—of which the British had counted 361 in Somaliland in 1958—were headed by an elder (*'aqil*). In I.M. Lewis' exhaustive study of Somaliland's pre-independence society,[6] the term *guurti* does not even appear. The disintegration of the state's authority and the need of the SNM, as well as of foreign

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[1] See Volkan 2001: "Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas"; p79.

[2] Through the mediation of the clan elders, each household contributed one sheep and one fighter to the movement every year, thus making looting the local population (as many other guerrilla movements do) a self-defeating prospect for the SNM, and establishing broad-based participation in the liberation struggle. See Phillips 2016: "When Less Was More: External Assistance and the Political Settlement in Somaliland"; p. 634, quoting Ahmed & Green 1999: "The heritage of war and state collapse in Somalia and Somaliland"; p120.

[3] Phillips 2016:632. She also points out that with the end of the Cold War, there was no more superpower patronage to vie for.

[4] Compagnon 1993: "Somaliland: un Ordre Politique en Gestation?"; Farah & Lewis 1993: "Somalia: The Roots of Reconciliation"; and Renders 2006: "'Traditional' Leaders and Institutions in the Building of the Muslim Republic of Somaliland".

[5] Sayyid Hassan, the Dervish leader, had established a permanent 'xusuusi', or advisory council in the early 1900s, but it did not have decision-making powers like the Guurti. Comment by Markus Hoehne.

[6] Lewis 1961: "A Pastoral Democracy".

humanitarian agencies,[7] to have a civilian interface with society prompted the establishment of the Guurti.

1991-1993 Unprepared for Independence

In the days following the flight of Barre, from January 29th to February 5th, 1991, Berbera, Hargeisa, Bur'o, Borama and 'Erigabo were captured by the SNM. The SNM politicians, military leaders and the Guurti convened in Berbera in February 1991 to declare the end of the civil war and the beginning of SNM rule in the liberated areas. This would be the first in a series of national conferences. But the SNM was not interested in self-rule; it had focused on the regime's downfall and was only outmanoeuvred in the very last phases of the 'March on Mogadishu' by United Somali Congress (USC) politicians; the SNM did not agree with the establishment of the Ali Mahdi government proclaimed by a faction of the USC in February 1991.[8] It was only at this point that the movement became receptive to the desire of its base and external supporters to proclaim Somaliland's independence, a claim taken up by the Guurti.

When the Bur'o conference of May 1991 started, few of the delegates suggested seceding from Southern Somalia, but they were swayed by popular demonstrations held in the streets of Somaliland's cities on 15 May.[9] The Guurti then imposed upon the SNM leadership to annul the 1960 union with federal Somalia. The leader of the SNM, 'Abdirahman Ahmed 'Ali 'Tuur', was offered the presidency by the elders in exchange for the support to the secession of him and his Habar Yunis clan. Somaliland's independence was proclaimed on 18 May 1991. The Guurti then voluntarily took a back seat in the state-building process, dissolving itself as a permanent body but with the involved elders maintaining their traditional role as *nabadoon* (peacemakers). Within the SNM leadership, many felt that clan leaders had no part to play in the creation of the modern state to which they aspired.

In each regional capital the dominant clan had established a *guurti* in response to the successful national Guurti. In the absence of a state, this *guurti* regulated local affairs. In 'Erigabo there were two *guurti*s, one for the Habar Yunis and another for the Warsangeli. A Dhulbahante *guurti* was established in Laas 'Anod and a Gadabursi *guurti* in Borama.[10] The 'Ise never participated much in Somaliland politics; the most common explanation given is that they control the presidency of neighbouring Djibouti and enjoy economic power there as well as in the Ethiopian town of Dire Dawa.

The clan elders' role as peacemakers was sorely needed, for there was considerable animosity among Isaaq against non-Isaaq neighbours who had taken part in Barre's violent repression of the SNM and its supporters. Some exactions took place in 1991.[11] But negotiations by clan elders successfully managed to avoid reprisals, which would have sparked new cycles of violence. The pressure to create *peace* (rather than settle old scores) was enormous. Peace became the foundation and the *raison d'être* of the

[7] Observation by Roland Marchal in a private discussion, 11 September 2020.

[8] One of the bones of contention was Mahdi's appointment of Umar Arteh to the post of prime minister. This loyal member of many Barre governments was one of the most prominent Isaaq politicians. The SNM thus forfeited its chance on an important post in the new government, as only one Isaaq would be invited to such a high post (Compagnon 1993:17). The USC faction led by Aideed was more favourable to the SNM.

[9] The popular demonstrations were sparked by an apparently fake news broadcast from Mogadishu that the SNM leadership had agreed to meet with the USC leadership for talks in Cairo. See Hoehne 2011b: "Not Born as a De Facto State: Somaliland's Complicated State Formation"; p312.

[10] Farah & Lewis 1993 describe the composition of these local guurtis in some detail. See also Farah & Lewis 1997: "Making Peace in Somaliland"; p365-368.

[11] Gadabursis were expelled from the Gabiley area, which led to an armed clash in Dila; the SNM attacked Warsangeli forces in Hadaftimo, caused Dhulbahante families to flee 'Aynabo and sought to regain control over the port of Zeyla', claimed by the 'Ise.

new country. The spectre of clan conflict in Mogadishu and other parts of Southern Somalia, relayed by the media and people who fled clan purges, served as a stark warning of what could happen to the new country should peace efforts fail. Guurti members made the decision to wipe the slate of past crimes and litigations clean and declare non-receivable all claims based on past events.[12]

One essential characteristic of Somaliland's national narrative, which certainly contributed to its survival as a state, is that the resentment of Isaaq toward non-Isaaq came to be directed at the government in Mogadishu, rather than at the Dhulbahante, Gadabursi and others within the borders of the new state, who had participated in or benefited from the regime's campaigns against the Isaaq population. In terms of Volkan's 'chosen trauma'[13] this was an important readjustment of focus engineered by clan elders, that paved the way for a peaceful coexistence of Somaliland's clans.

The SNM state was a state in name only. The few resources of the pre-war local administration had been looted by Barre's retreating government forces. The main cities, towns and infrastructure had been largely destroyed.[14] The population was cash-strapped and afflicted by the war. NGOs had mostly fled during the late 1980s and donor organizations did not support the independence of Somaliland. Ethiopia, Kenya, Saudi Arabia and other regional powers had no strategic interest in supporting the new nation. Clan networks, through their businessmen at home and abroad,[15] were the only source for the resources the new state so sorely needed, but the SNM found it hard to marshal them. Most support went directly to family members who had to rebuild their homes and livelihoods.

The new SNM leaders, who had never prepared for independence, had no plan for the new state they were to build. The SNM believed in a strong, modern, centralized state, albeit one that acknowledged the central role of sharia and clan as being at the base of social cohesion, economic activity and political stability.[16] In fact, the SNM's first communiqué "A Better Alternative"", published in Oct 1981, called for a decentralized, democratic government. Like many of the SNM's publications, it represented the views of London-based diaspora Somalis, but not that of the rank and file dominating the military wing of the movement.[17] The Guurti, as we have seen, had dissolved and did not play a political or institutional role in the first years of Somaliland's independence. There was no talk of a hybrid political order then, but the potential for democratic self-governance was recognized, at least, by Somali intellectuals in the diaspora supporting the new state.

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[12] Farah & Lewis 1997:368.

[13] See note 851 above.

[14] Mark Bradbury in "Becoming Somaliland", 2008, p83-85, describes the challenges the SNM was facing: "*A decade-long insurgency had devastated the country. Half of the population had been forcibly displaced to refugee camps in neighbouring countries, the south or further abroad. Mass graves in Hargeisa and Berbera were a testament to the criminal violence of the war. Between 70 and 90 per cent of buildings in Hargeisa and Burco had been damaged or destroyed by military bombardment and the looting of public and private buildings. In Hargeisa alone an estimated 60,000 houses were destroyed. Bryden records the trauma of a Hargeisa resident returning to the city after a decade in exile: "*Whatever anybody tells you, it's such a shock. You don't know what to do…. whether you should cry… You can't imagine that kind of destruction. There was just one street left. The rest of the city was just garbage and unexploded bombs." *Other settlements had suffered similar fates. Water supplies had been contaminated or destroyed, along with sanitation and electricity systems, and the country was littered with upwards of two million landmines and unexploded ordinance. A handful of Somali and international agencies provided limited emergency health services, but there were no functioning schools. There was neither public administration nor public employment; commercial activity was limited; agricultural production was almost non-existent; road traffic was minimal; there was no commercial air traffic; and the main form of long-distance communication was via private VHF radios.*" [The author must mean HF radios, as VHF are short-range].

[15] Bradbury 2008:95 notes that "*For historical reasons, the Isaaq had a better-established diaspora than other clans when the state collapsed*".

[16] Bradbury 2008:63.

[17] Samatar, Said 1989: "Socialist Somalia. Rhetoric and Reality"; p142.

Instead there was a reversion to what was familiar: the state of Siad Barre.[18] The new government was incapable of departing significantly from the style of politics habitual under Siad Barre, using violence, graft and extra-judiciary means to eliminate rivals and consolidate the pre-eminence of the military factions and clans in power.[19] The violence which pitted armed clan factions against each other for the control of resources in Somaliland from 1991 to 1993 was of a similar nature to that wracking the rest of Somalia, but the elders were more organized in Somaliland and thus defused many conflicts as they emerged; arguably, the less complex clan make-up also made conflict resolution easier.

Tuur's military-run state was mostly focused on security and there seems to have been little space for governance. Unpaid soldiers, who for want of resources could not be reorganized as planned into national security forces, were 'taxing' passengers and cargo at checkpoints, just as in Southern Somalia, to help themselves or to reinforce the power of their lineage.

President Tuur had never believed in the secession anyhow and when General Aideed, with whom he had always had good relations,[20] became more influential than 'Ali Mahdi in Mogadishu, Tuur revived his political alliance with him. He also sought to ingratiate himself with UNOSOM,[21], which was actively undermining Somaliland's secession. Tuur hoped to play a key role in the future national government of a reunited Somalia.

In broad lines, the conflict between 1991 and 1993 opposed the Habar Yunis, who held the presidency with 'Tuur', to the Habar Awal and the Habar Je'lo, who held the ministries of Interior and Defence until they were fired in a government reshuffle in October 1991. It also reflected a power struggle between the political wing of the SNM (Tuur and his vice-president Jama') and the military wing dominated by the *'Alan 'As* ('Red Flag') hard-line nationalists, to which the Ministers of Interior and Defence belonged. At a deeper level, it reflected the tension between the two main sources of wealth in Somaliland: the livestock-trading centre of Bur'o, traditionally controlled by the Habar Yunis but contested by the Habar Je'lo, against the port of Berbera, historically in the hands of the 'Ise Muse, but where a considerable Habar Yunis population had settled and come to dominate the export of livestock.[22] Since the port of Berbera was the only ready source of income for the government, President Tuur decided to nationalize it. The Habar Awal traders and civil leaders in Berbera saw this as an attempt to confiscate 'their' port and put up a stiff resistance.[23] The conflict spread to Bur'o in early 1992 while it raged in Berbera throughout that year.[24] It was only resolved in the Sheekh conference of late 1992.

The superposition of political, clan, personality and economic layers of conflict is indicative of the complexity that Somali conflicts commonly have. Reducing the factors of conflict to one set, e.g. clan or the economy, amounts to a misleading simplification. To continue with this example, the outcome of the conflict negotiated in Sheekh also had repercussions at each level:

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[18] See Compagnon 1993, Renders 2006, Farah & Lewis 1993, Bradbury 2008, and others.

[19] An example of corruption: Farah & Lewis 1993:54 note that the first batch of newly printed money obtained from Mogadishu by the Tuur administration largely disappeared into the pockets of the new leaders and those loyal to them. Compagnon 1993 also notes that the government looted the accounts of the NGO Care, who had deposited money in Somaliland's banks for a Cash-for-Work programme.

[20] Aideed had always been a supporter of the SNM, pointing out that genealogically the Habar Gedir and the Isaaq shared the common ancestor 'Irir'. He was the origin of the freshly printed Somali shillings sent to President Tuur.

[21] The United Nations courted Tuur in its efforts to bring Somaliland back under central rule.

[22] Cf Renders 2006 and Musa 2019: "From Trust to Oligopoly: Institutional Change in Livestock Trade in Somaliland after 1991"; p32.

[23] The conflict in Berbera is treated in detail in Farah & Lewis 1997.

[24] Compagnon 1993:16 reports up to 3,000 deaths in Berbera. In Burco 300 deaths were reported in four days of armed clashes. Bradbury 2008:82 gives a lower estimate of 'over 1000 killed' for both conflicts together. In both places there was also destruction of property, displacement of people and looting.

- In terms of personality, Tuur was discredited and his political career in Somaliland would soon be over. The status of Sheikh Madar, who since opposing the Barre government in 1982 was a star in Somaliland and one of the founding members of the Guurti,[25] took a hit because he was incapable of ending the conflict, despite being a native of Berbera. On the other hand, ministers opposing Tuur would continue to play a role under the next governments.

- In economic terms, the outcome of the conflict would propel the 'Ise Muse traders from Berbera to a leading role in building the national economy around the import/export nexus, and it would ensure lasting prosperity to the town of Berbera, which could dispose of part of the port's income.

- In political terms, SNM politicians who contemplated a future reunion with Somalia lost against nationalists within their ranks and outside of the movement; the SNM as a political force disintegrated at the end of 1992, allowing renovation of the political field, but the prestige and influence of the *'Alan 'As* military wing of the SNM, who saw themselves as founders of the nation of Somaliland,[26] remained; presidential candidate Bihi used his affiliation to this group to his advantage in the 2017 electoral campaign.

- In clan terms, the outcome signalled the ascension of the Habar Awal – Habar Je'lo alliance, and the relative decline of the Garhajis, notably the Habar Yunis. Despite being probably the largest of Somaliland's clans, the Habar Yunis never retrieved the leadership of the country. It was the major stake of the 2017 presidential elections, and the loss of the Habar Yunis candidate to a Habar Awal led to a sense of alienation among some Habar Yunis.[27]

The Gadabursi elders had to intervene to solve the conflicts in Bur'o and Berbera, which the Isaaq elders, to their embarrassment, could not achieve. Why were Gadabursi elders successful? One reason was that they were an external, and thus impartial, party. But they had also gained experience in governing Awdal, which had always been neglected by the Barre regime (too far away, no powerful clans) and which had been further isolated by the civil war against the Isaaq.

Awdal's capital Borama has been the home of the Amoud Secondary School since the 1950s, and many educated Somali have ties in the town. Intellectuals who fled from Mogadishu in the 1980s and early 1990s set up organizations to provide essential infrastructure (an airstrip) and social services (schools, clinics). They were supported by clan elders, who raised funds with local businessmen to implement projects related to security, social services and local administration.[28] The Borama *guurti* had thus more effective self-governance experience, which may have helped them identify solutions for the intra-Isaaq conflicts.

The solution found by the elders convening in Sheekh was to nationalize *all* infrastructure in Somaliland, while reassuring the Habar Awal traders that they would keep commercial control of the port. This is evidence that one cannot think, simplistically, that clan elders somehow stand in conceptual opposition to the modern state; in fact, they saved the modern state project from what seemed almost certain failure in the hands of the SNM, a supposedly modernizing force. The elders decided to convene the next meeting in Borama in February 1993, to 'determine the destiny of Somaliland'.[29]

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[25] Sheikh Madar was elected chair of the Somali National Movement in 1982; later he became the leader of the Guurti. He was the grandson of Sheikh Madar, a Qadiriyya Sufi leader and the founder of Hargeisa in the 1860s.

[26] Conversation with Roland Marchal, 11 September 2020.

[27] The Habar Yunis claim to political leadership is based, in part, on a stereotypical division of roles among the major Isaaq clans where the Habar Yunis are supposed to be politicians and intellectuals, the Habar Je'lo fighters and the Habar Awal traders ('Ise Muse) and farmers (Sa'ad Muse), but these stereotypes are now fading in popular culture.

[28] Renders 2006:233-235, drawing on a study by Ken Menkhaus for United Nations Development Office for Somalia on Awdal in 1997.

[29] Walls 2009: "The Emergence of a Somali State: Building Peace from Civil War in Somaliland"; p384.

1993-1997 From clan self-governance to State

The key institutions of Somaliland's state were determined at the Borama conference, from January to May 1993. In retrospect, it was also the high mark of Somaliland's dual political order. It started with three weeks of prayers and preparations. The 75 members of the Guurti selected another 75 delegates to ensure a proper representation of all clans, including the Dhulbahante and the Warsangeli. The agenda for the conference was also settled in this period.[30] There were no foreign mediators or emissaries (and only a few, mostly voluntary foreign observers) and the SNM movement had effectively collapsed at the end of 1992, so neither could influence the agenda or the outcomes of the conference. The foundations for Somaliland's state were established by clan elders with almost no interference.

Clan elders do not see themselves as politicians or administrators of society, but as peace-seekers (*nabadoon*) and judges applying *xeer,* customary law. In reaction to the horrors of the recent 'Isaaq genocide' and the conflict which was taking place in Mogadishu and Southern Somalia, the peace narrative became the cornerstone of emergent nationhood. It seemed validated by the successful conflict resolution by local social forces in Sheekh. The use of violence for political objectives was proscribed. Mindful of the precedent of Barre's military regime, the clan elders did not entrust the nascent state of Somaliland with 'the monopoly of violence'. Creating a national army and police force was on the agenda, but not a priority. Instead, keeping the peace would remain the responsibility of the clan elders themselves, in the informal sphere of self-governance.[31]

Although it was never expressly stated, the Borama conference confirmed the dual nature of power in Somali society, shared between the informal (represented by the elders) and the formal (represented by the state). The two main documents produced in the conference illustrate this. The 'Somaliland Communities Security and Peace Charter'—often abbreviated to 'Peace Charter'—is a social contract of sorts binding all communities to manage their own internal security and seek peaceful resolution of their disputes with other communities, under the general guidance of the multi-clan Guurti. The Transitional National Charter is a proto-constitution, based on the classical division of powers: a Parliament that represents all Somaliland's clans, an independent judiciary and a decentralized government.[32] The state's function was to develop the country and represent it toward the outside world. There was no discussion of what type of state Somaliland should have: this was presumably a domain where clan elders lacked the necessary competence.

The 150 delegates decided to establish a bicameral parliament to integrate the new government,[33] with the Guurti now representing the upper house, and the 75 new appointees becoming members of the House of Representatives (Golaha Wakiilada), the lower house of parliament. The Guurti would verify compliance of authorities and population with the Peace Charter, while the house of representatives would become a legislative body charged with elaborating a constitution. Many delegates doubtlessly thought that by keeping a close oversight over the government as a permanent body, they could avoid

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[30] Renders 2006 says that it was not clear what the Borama conference was to decide on – the security of the country? its political institutions? – until it started, when the participants took the agenda into their own hands.

[31] Hastings & Phillips argue that what they call the 'Independence discourse' "*frames the country's ability to maintain peace and political order as the cornerstone of its case for international recognition of its sovereignty. It frames Somalilanders as unified in their desire to avoid repeating the violence of Somalia's past which, it purports, both differentiates Somalilanders from other Somalis, and justifies their permanent legal separation from the Republic of Somalia*". Although they may have overstated the hegemony of this discourse (it concerns mostly Isaaq people in the heartland aligned with the state elites) the centrality of peace in the national Somaliland narrative is undeniable. Hastings & Phillips 2018: "Order beyond the state: explaining Somaliland's avoidance of maritime piracy"; p9.

[32] Art. 21 provided for the creation of regional and district councils.

[33] Bradbury 2008:98-99.

the chaos of 1991 and 1992. But, unlike in 1991 when the Guurti had decided to retain its autonomy by not becoming an institution of state, in Borama clan elders became part of the state apparatus, receiving payment and administrative support from the state, and establishing themselves in the capital.

The Borama conference, hosted by the local Gadabursi community, lasted four months and was comically nicknamed *buulo* (care for the elderly) given the average age of the participants.[34] It was an intense socialization process which created goodwill among the elders. Each decision was taken by consensus, which explains why the proceedings lasted so long. Elders, in the Somali clan system, have only an imperative, not an executive mandate; they did not have carte blanche but had to report back to their communities, especially when facing a decision that the community might object to. Sometimes communities withdrew an elder and sent another one instead, which they found better represented them.[35] Or communities would send several representatives, or a group of community elders (which as seen in Chapter One is any adult male with property and a family) would accompany their representative, giving the conference a chaotic but also merry character. Funding to pay for the conference was raised by businessmen, clans, the diaspora, own contributions from the delegates and the hospitality of the Gadabursi hosts.[36]

Another achievement of the Borama conference was the peaceful transition of power from the SNM to a civilian government. Although Tuur, who had supported the meeting, expected to be re-elected, the conference elected Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal (*Cigaal* in Somali) as transitional president for a two-year period. Egal would remain in power until his death in 2002. He received 99 of the 150 votes.[37] The main reason for his election seems to have been pragmatism. After the inept SNM government, the elders who had united in Borama needed someone with his experience, international reputation and connections, and his intimate knowledge of the state: a candidate with proven statesmanship. His lack of connection to the SNM convinced many non-Isaaq elders to support him.[38] He belonged to the Habar Awal/'Ise Muse and had good connections with the local and diaspora business elites of his clan; the latter lobbied for him successfully.[39]

It was the British- and Sudanese-trained Egal who, as Prime Minister of the Advisory Council set up by the British colonial administrator, had led Somaliland into its independence and union with Somalia in 1960. He had served as minister in the early post-independence governments, and was prime minister from 1967 to 1969, when the democratic government floundered and fell to the military coup by Siad Barre. He spent more than a decade in prison but returned to public life in 1982, as President of the Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture, where he established good relations with the Somali business community. After the fall of the Barre regime he was first against the secession of Somaliland, instead co-chairing a Somali reconciliation conference in Djibouti in 1991 which did not recognize Somaliland's independence. This did, surprisingly, not disqualify him for the presidency in Borama.

Egal rapidly started building up the power of the executive. He obtained large loans from a handful of businessmen which he repaid with trading concessions and by not taxing their profits.[40] He used that

[34] Farah & Lewis 1993:21.

[35] Renders 2006.

[36] About 100,000 USD was reportedly secured in funding from a Swedish and an American donor. Phillips 2013: "Political Settlements and State Formation: The Case of Somaliland"; p77.

[37] According to Renders 2006:216.

[38] Renders 2006:217.

[39] Hoehne 2011b:318.

[40] Sarah Phillips, basing herself on research at the Ministry of Finance, writes that Egal received 6 million USD from eight businessmen, all but two of them Habar Awal, and most of them based in Djibouti. Phillips 2020: "When

money to pay cantonment costs, so the militia would stop helping themselves along Somaliland's roads and in its markets. Setting up security forces—army and police—served the purpose of demobilization rather than safety.[41]

With the introduction of the Somaliland shilling in 1994 Egal created the embryo of a national financial sector structured around business groups mostly dealing in livestock trading, remittances, and import/ export. The intimate relationship between the trading elites (from all clans but tipped toward the Habar Awal and Habar Je'lo) and the executive became a determinant feature of Somaliland's state elites, leading to what Sarah Phillips calls 'vertical integration' in the economy of Somaliland, dominated by a few big men and their lineages.[42] She argues that Somaliland's political inclusivity was based on economic exclusivity,[43] in other words that lineages that lacked income were given a share of political power in return for their acquiescence with the economic status quo.

Egal's incremental widening of the pool of stakeholders in the development of Somaliland's state may have been essential to his success, as opposed to the broad-based, transparent and inclusive processes donors believe to be best practice in post-conflict situations today.[44] Nonetheless, this approach earned him enemies among the clans that felt left out.

The Gadabursi had cemented their role in the new state in Sheekh and Borama; in exchange they received the vice-presidency. This practice of 'farming out' positions in government to clans as a way to maintain clan balance was a practice at the intersection of clan identity and the state already common since Somali independence. The Dhulbahante, despite their larger numbers, 'only' obtained the position of speaker of the Lower House, and Egal's presidency signalled the beginning of Dhulbahante disaffection, which would grow over the coming two decades.[45] The Warsangeli retained their aloof and self-contained position, far from Hargeisa. As in centuries past, the Warsangeli Suldan presided over an effective system of self-governance funded by Warsangeli businessmen in Oman and other Gulf countries; this maintained peace and brought some prosperity (and humanitarian aid) to Warsangeli areas.

The main contestation came from the Garhajis: Habar Yunis and 'Idagale. Many of the clan elders withdrew their support from Egal's cabinet shortly after its announcement, as they were unhappy about their share of power and the eviction of Tuur, which came on the heels of the Habar Yunis 'defeat' in Berbera.[46]

The conflict that broke out in November 1994 was, to some extent, a repetition of the conflict that had wracked Somaliland throughout 1992. It was triggered by the control of Hargeisa airport, which was of vital importance to the urban traders, but which lay in traditional 'Idagale territory, and as such, its militia maintained security there.[47] This unruly militia 'taxed' cargo and travellers transiting through the airport at will, shaming the government that manifestly did not even control its international airport,

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There Was No Aid. War and Peace in Somaliland"; p94-95.

[41] As argued by Bulhan 2004: "Survey on Small Arms in Somaliland"; p5. Each recruit to the army and the police needed to bring his own weapon.

[42] Phillips 2020:96.

[43] Phillips 2020:99.

[44] Towards the end of this section Sarah Phillips confronts the theory of international state-building with Somaliland's experience.

[45] At the same time as the Borama conference, the Dhulbahante held a conference in Bo'ame, near the border with Puntland. Most delegates were against joining Somaliland, but they kept their options open and sent a high-level delegation to Borama.

[46] Admittedly, if the Garhajis indeed represent 27% of the total Somaliland population as, in my estimate, their share of 9/75 seats (12%) in the Parliament was on the low side. Jimcaale 2002: "Consolidation and Decentralization of Government Institutions".

[47] Bradbury 2008:114.

and they did not share the proceeds with the government. Eventually, both government and traders grew impatient with efforts to negotiate control over the airport from the 'Idagale clan leaders. The decision to take it back by force, and immediately thereafter mount a punitive expedition against the nearby 'Idagale town of Toon, sparked a conflict that lasted 18 months. The conflict spread to Bur'o in March 1995 when the government tried to dismantle Habar Yunis checkpoints manned by local lineages.

Egal's government did not, however, see this as a clan conflict, but as a political one where it confronted the opposition. After their defeat in Borama, ex-President Tuur and his vice-president General Yare ('Idagale) had accepted positions representing Somaliland in Aideed's government,[48] which remained staunchly opposed to Somaliland's secession. Although most of their clansmen were not against Somaliland's independence,[49] the presence of these leaders in Mogadishu cast suspicion over any opposition from these clans to Egal's government. This political vision of the conflict was supported by many Somalilanders, tired of clan discourse dominating the entire political space and supportive of the development of a state based on a national identity transcending clan.

The politicization of what was ostensibly a clan conflict provided a boost to the legitimacy of the state, but it did not help solve the conflict, which dragged on until late 1996. The government tried to sue for peace through the Guurti and the executive branch, but initially these initiatives came to nothing.[50] The Guurti and the parliament proved incapable of settling the conflict, as they were now seen as part of the government, and thus party to the conflict that opposed a nationalist government to treasonous 'unionist' forces. The armed forces and national police could not be used against Somaliland's population to restore the authority of the state, as that would run counter to the spirit of the peace charter.

It took the involvement of other, non-state, actors to settle the conflict. Clan elders from other parts of the country reached out to local clan leaders, breaking down the overall conflict into its many local facets, thus making it manageable. A series of peace conferences took place, often only between two opposing lineages but with the involvement of neutral clan elders, and thus, step by step, the warring parties were reconciled.

It seems that the localized peace conferences succeeded because they were held between clan representatives *on an equal basis,* while previous attempts to reconcile *the government and the opposition* had failed; an interesting case of framing the problem, for the participants in both kinds of meetings were largely the same.

The clan conflict, which had spread to other parts of Somaliland[51], led to the rise of rivalling leaders in each clan, sub-clan and lineage. The promise of lucrative involvement in the capital's politics attracted a new breed of urban-based political entrepreneurs who hoped to mediate between their lineage members and the state elites by joining the state elites. This undercut the position of the traditional clan elders, some of whom were tainted by their role in the state-controlled Guurti, while others were not accepted as representatives by Egal's government. Meanwhile, the death in August 1996 of General Aideed removed another obstacle to peace. Without Aideed, Tuur and Yare lost the basis for their own influence, and they ceased to play a role in Somaliland politics. This provided more space for new political entrepreneurs to represent the Garhaji clans in the upcoming Hargeisa Conference.

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[48] In 1994 Tuur became one of Aideed's many vice-presidents, while Yare was appointed 'Minister of Foreign Affairs' in Aideed's fictitious government.

[49] Notably the 'Idagale, whose principal political representative since those years has been Faisal Ali Waraabe, the leader of the UCID party, remained generally pro-independence. See Walls 2011: "State Formation in Somaliland: Bringing Deliberation to Institutionalism"; interview notes with Waraabe.

[50] Bradbury 2008:122.

[51] Besides the conflicts in Hargeisa and Bur'o, there was clan conflict in Zeyla' and there were tensions in Berbera, Sanaag and Sool.

Egal did not progress much on the tasks he had been entrusted with at the Borama conference. His foremost task, to oversee the constitutional process, immediately resulted in a conflict with the lower house of parliament. The parliament had set up a committee to draft the constitution and prepare consultations with experts and the Somali population. President Egal, however, argued that it was his responsibility and he recruited a Sudanese lawyer to draft the constitution instead.[52] When the parliamentary committee resisted, he cut its funding and ordered them out of their building. The committee proceeded nonetheless, albeit without a consultative process. Its draft was discussed along that presented by the President in the Hargeisa Conference.

Beyond a typical struggle between the executive and the legislative over the type of system to be adopted in a constitution—presidential or parliamentary—this clash revealed two opposed visions of state-society relations in Somaliland. The parliament proceeded in the spirit of the Borama conference, attempting to establish a wide support base for the constitutional process. For Egal, the constitution was a formality, albeit one essential for state formation; his attitude may be called 'technocratic'. His main concern was not to have his presidential powers curtailed.[53]

Egal's relations with the Guurti were much smoother; it operated as a council of advisors to the government and has kept that function ever since. The clan elders who initially sat on the Guurti were never submitted to any electoral process and by the late 1990s the Guurti had lost most of its domestic legitimacy.[54] Egal obtained a mandate extension from it in 1995 to solve the conflict with the Garhajis, prepare a draft constitution to submit to a popular referendum, and organize national elections. Given the lack of progress on the latter two points, once the clan conflict had been resolved, in October 1996 the Guurti announced that a new leader would be elected in a national conference that would start in November 1996 in Hargeisa.

Despite serious misgivings about the neutrality of the convening committee (the pro-government national Guurti) and location (Hargeisa), opposition forces agreed to participate in the national conference.[55] Unlike previous conferences in Berbera, Bur'o, Sheekh and Borama, this *shir* was called 'national' (*qarameed*) rather than clan-based (*beeleed*). It was funded by the government, which allowed Egal to exercise control; besides the 150 delegates from the two houses of parliament, he suggested another 150 delegates, many of them pro-government elders.[56] These extra delegates, supposedly nominated by their clans for the Hargeisa Conference, were in fact selected through a process dominated by 'urban-based clan leaders and their political brokers'.[57] They represented the aspiring new political and economic elite, formed around the resources of the state and the formal economy.

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[52] By placing an ad in the Economist and paying him a reported 100,000 USD. Seidel 2017: "Involvement and Impact of External Actors on Constitution Making in South Sudan and Somaliland: A Comparative Study"; p27.

[53] Egal appears not to have been authoritarian by nature. He kept the executive unified by discussing most proposed courses of action with his whole cabinet; if they disproved, he would withdraw his proposal. Bryden 2003: "The Banana Test: Is Somaliland Ready for Recognition?"; p356.

[54] Hoehne 2013: "Limits of Hybrid Political Orders: The Case of Somaliland"; p202-204.

[55] The Peace Committee issued a declaration strongly condemning President Egal's 'clan politicking' and undemocratic approach, citing worries about his buying of delegates and funding of clan conflict. Peace Committee: "Report of the Peace Committee for Somaliland", January 1997:6-7 quoted in Walls 2011:152. Other efforts to delay the conference, hold it in another location, or change its composition, were firmly rejected by President Egal; see Bradbury 2008:125.

[56] Bradbury 2008:125.

[57] Jimcaale 2002: 42. See also Phillips 2013:59, whose critical reading contrasts with most other accounts, relatively favourable to Egal. The 'brokers' were popularly called '*af minshaaro*'.

The conference had the following results: first, an end to the civil war was declared. It proved effective because there has been no more conflict at this scale in Somaliland since then. Second, an interim constitution was agreed on,[58] to be further developed and submitted to a popular referendum by 2000. Third, a multiparty electoral system was suggested to overcome the *beel* (clan) system; local council and presidential elections were to be held by 2002, and parliamentary elections in 2003. The fourth result was a reconstruction fund for Bur'o, interpreted as a gesture from Hargeisa to the troubled East and the Habar Yunis.[59]

This was the crowning moment of Somaliland state formation. But politically there was mostly continuity. As in Borama, the two houses of parliament extended their mandate until the next elections. The number of members in both parliaments was increased from 75 to 82, the additional fourteen people reportedly 'hand-picked' by President Egal, to the disappointment of the constituents whom the appointees were supposed to represent.[60] Although the extra people were from previously disadvantaged clans (like the Habar Yunis or the Gabooye), they were also all pro-government.[61] Unlike the conference at Borama, where the incumbent president was unseated, the Hargeisa Conference re-elected Egal and his running mate Dahir Riyale Kahin with 70% of the vote. To secure his re-election, Egal changed the conditions for presidential candidates in a transparent attempt to eliminate rivals[62] and reportedly paid bribes to delegates.[63]

By including the extra delegates and members of parliament, the social compact underlying the state expanded, but there was no substantial change. The expansion took place in two directions: the Garhajis and the smaller Isaaq clans, and the rising urban middle class. But the Dhulbahante and the Warsangeli of Eastern Somaliland felt even more left out, leading them to participate in the creation of the state of Puntland a year and a half later. Though the Hargeisa Conference established a sense of nationhood in Somaliland's heartland, which would be the basis for its subsequent peace and prosperity; it left one fifth of Somaliland's population feeling they were not part of that nation.

Comparison with externally supported state formation processes

The formation of Somaliland's state received practically no external support. From 1992 to 1995 Somaliland was actively opposed by UNOSOM. Firmly rejecting the secession of Somaliland, the UN attempted to force Somaliland to let them establish local councils that had been agreed on in the Addis Ababa peace conference of March 1993. When Somaliland authorities rejected this interference, UNOSOM even suggested sending troops to Somaliland to achieve this.[64] The UN regarded the local peace processes and the resultant government as illegitimate, considering them crippled by the lack of participation by women, youth and civil society and the absence of representative electoral democratic

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[58] The interim constitution consisted of 60% of the parliamentary committee's draft and 40% of the presidential consultant's draft. Each of the 156 articles was discussed by participants.

[59] Bradbury, Abokor & Yusuf 2003: "Somaliland: Choosing Politics over Violence".

[60] Hoehne 2013:203-4.

[61] Jimcaale 2002:41.

[62] Phillips 2013:59 writes "*Egal also changed the rules for presidential candidature to undermine other actors with presidential ambitions. The presidency became available only to candidates that were married to Muslim women, thus disqualifying the Chairman of the Guurti, Saleban Gaal, who was married to a European woman. To this, Egal added that prospective candidates must have spent the past five years in Somaliland, thereby eliminating several other hopefuls from the race.*"

[63] Renders 2006:309 quotes the local news source Indian Ocean Newsletter of May 15, 1997, which reported vote-buying by Egal, paying 1,500 to 5,000 USD per vote among the 315 delegates (according to their degree of education).

[64] UNOSOM's Head of Political Affairs Leonard Kamungo, when threatening President Egal with this option, was given 24 hours to leave the country. See Renders 2006:250-251 and Bryden: "Fiercely Independent"; p40.

processes, and firmly stood by this point of view until the end of the mission in 1995.[65] UNOSOM persevered in its efforts notably in Sool and Sanaag, exploiting the perceived dissension among many Dhulbahante and Warsangeli. It accepted as representatives of this region any groups opposed to Somaliland's independence, even when they obviously had no popular backing.[66] In its effort to base the political process on the participation of the armed faction leaders, the UN dealt with ex-President Tuur (who had not accepted his electoral defeat in Borama) as the legitimate representative of the SNM, even though the movement had disbanded at the end of 1992. UNOSOM's political affairs officers reported falsely to the Secretary General that most Somalilanders desired national unity.[67] The firm opposition to Somaliland's independence by the UN meant that none of the member states could recognize the new nation.

There was assistance to the people of Somaliland through the humanitarian and development activities of NGOs, but not (or very little) to the political process.[68] This lasted until the late 1990s. It may be interesting to speculate what would have happened if Somaliland had been assisted from the outset by the international community. In a paper tellingly called 'When Less Was More', Sarah Phillips[69] uses the case of Somaliland to question the following assumptions of Western state-building and post-conflict transition:

- An institutional endpoint must be predefined, preferably with deadlines; usually this endpoint is democratic elections after a constitution has been adopted through a national referendum.
- The more inclusive the settlement, the greater its legitimacy and thus the stronger.
- Effective Weberian governance institutions are essential for maintaining peace.
- External assistance is necessary to end conflict and support the transition to peace.

Philips notes how important it was that Somaliland's foundational conferences had no predetermined outcome. The agendas for the national peace conferences were vague and changed during the negotiations. Instead of proceeding through milestones, the processes evolved organically. Voting was rarely used; consensus was preferred.[70] When seemingly intractable issues arose, parties were given deadlines to come up with a solution that would be acceptable to all. If the deadline could not be met, the chair might 'fall ill' thus giving parties more time to hammer out a consensus.[71] By extending the deadlines for the outcomes determined in Borama in 1993 beyond what any donor would have accepted—eight years for the constitutional referendum and twelve years for the first parliamentary elections—the state secured sufficient buy-in of the population and the ruling elites to ensure these processes were successful.

[65] Renders 2006:253.

[66] Such as the United Somalia Party, a political party that had dissolved in the early 1960s and was resurrected by Darood politicians to represent the Harti in Somaliland at the negotiation table.

[67] The Report by the Secretary General on the Situation in Somalia of 17 September 1994 stated that factions from Somaliland meeting in Garowe had declared that 'the secession of the north was neither feasible nor desirable', assuming that these factions represented majority opinion in Somaliland.

[68] It is incorrect to say that there was NO support. The UNDP supported local authorities with stipends, equipment, and by paying travel costs; the short-lived UN Development Office for Somalia (UNDOS) provided funding to the business community of Somaliland. The EC representative Sigurd Illing (1993-97) gave some support to Somaliland and Puntland's local political processes. But altogether this financial and political support, according to both foreign and local observers, was insignificant.

[69] Phillips 2016: "When Less Was More: External Assistance and the Political Settlement in Somaliland".

[70] "*Voting is fighting. Let's opt for consensus*" one elder at Borama said, as cited in Academy for Peace and Development & Interpeace (APD) 2008, "Peace in Somaliland: an Indigenous Approach to Statebuilding"; p52.

[71] APD 2008:52.

It is unlikely that the mostly Isaaq elders who convened with the SNM leadership in Berbera, Bur'o and Sheekh, or the hundreds of old men that met in Borama, would have met the criteria for inclusiveness of international partners. UNOSOM, as we shall see below, clearly did not find these conferences represented the diversity of Somaliland's population. Where were the women, youth, and minority groups?[72] But, as Phillips notes, a narrow interest-based coalition may initially work better in terms of providing security and stability than an early attempt to rope in many oppositional groups, contenders and excluded parties. As she puts it: "*While this collusive model of development chimes with historical narratives of state formation in Europe by sociologists such as Charles Tilly and Norbert Elias, it is out of step with contemporary international expectations that peace and development emerge through inclusive, liberal processes that are conducted through the channel of formal state institutions*".[73]

Regarding 'effective Weberian governance institutions', Phillips conjectures that the weakness of formal institutions provides an incentive for peaceful cohabitation between those with the capacity to organize violence, because there are no positions of value to fight for: a "*finding that runs contrary to the structural accounts of order that dominate the literature*".[74]

Finally, the assumption of international interventions that external assistance to peace- and state-building is required, remains wholly unproven. In any case Somaliland managed without. External funding for post-conflict peace processes, especially when coupled with the exigency of 'inclusiveness', leads to the emergence of small groups that claim to represent a large constituency in the hope of gaining a place at the negotiation table. It allows warlords to transform their military position into internationally sanctioned political power, gaining legitimacy and access to funding, and thus high-level international peace conferences incentivize conflict. At a more prosaic level, invitations to luxury hotels abroad with generous daily stipends do not stimulate political expediency. The Eldoret and Mbagathi conferences held in Kenya, which led to the establishment of the Transitional Federal Government, lasted nearly two years and cost the international community many millions in hotel bills and stipends.

If the international community had recognized the independence of Somaliland and supported its peace- and state-building processes from the outset, following the principles outlined by Phillips above, the outcome would likely have resembled the federal government in Mogadishu. In brief, one may safely assume that state formation in Somaliland has succeeded *because* of the absence of external state-building support, not *despite* it.[75]

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[72] In fact, some of the minority groups (Gabooye) and small clans were well represented, but not women or youth.

[73] Phillips 2016:639.

[74] Phillips 2016:640.

[75] Richards 2014:181.

Appendix 4 Official correspondence of Al Shabaab to Humanitarian Agencies

1: 5 November 2009

DRAFT TRANSLATION

Islamic Administration of Bay and Bakool

CC: Governor of Bay and Bakool (Wali)

CC: Head of security for Bay and Bakool

To: UNOCHA

Subject: Notice

We are notifying all agencies that operate in Bay and Bakool, that the security of the two regions are 100% ok with the will of Allah.

In regard to this, Bay and Bakool Islamic administration is hereby granting agencies access after they fulfill the following conditions.

Conditions

Conditions that agencies need to fulfill are:

1. Agencies have to liaise with the office of the humanitarian sector of the administration for all projects they are intending to implement, in order to channel the assistance to the appropriate/needy locations.
2. The agency has to increase developmental operations/activities, it has to do something on the economic infrastructures in Bay and Bakool i.e. building or rehabilitating the poor roads, bridges, environmental sanitations and constructions of educational facilities while collaborating with the Islamic administration.
3. The agency has to distance itself from all aspects that can affect Islamic fundamentals i.e. (a) spreading Christianity (b) encouraging secularism, democracy and unfaithfulness.
4. Agencies have to distance themselves from all things that are against the good manners of Islamic religion/Teaching: (a) importating and drinking wines (b) encouraging prostitutions and encouraging women groups/organizations (c) bringing any type of movies/films (d) holding/observing programmes like New Year Eve or observing days like HIV/AIDS day, World Women Day, Teachers day and all those thing that can facilitate the integration of male and female.
5. Agencies have to substitute female workers to men for the positions they are holding at the moment, women are not allowed to work with agencies, and they are only allowed to work in the hospitals, MCHs and health centers. Female workers have to be substituted with men in three months time.
6. Agencies cannot communicate with anyone who is not part of the Islamic administrations of Bay and Bakool and cannot share the information between the agency and the administration to a third party.
7. The agency should distance itself from any thing that can lead to destabilizations/conflict. I.e. (a) creating conflict between the communities and the administration (b) creating conflict between clans and all sectors of the communities. (c) Encouraging money inflation.
8. Agencies should not deliver food at the time of harvesting period, if the agencies mandate is food delivery.
9. Agencies should not show up flags or emblems as they do now in their respective compounds or vehicles, flags or emblems that are currently in the compounds or on vehicles have to be removed immediately.
10. Agencies should not host another agency in its compound or premises, at any given time each agency should have their own premises for themselves and their staff only.
11. The agency (UNOCHA) has to pay money amounting to $ 30,000 (thirty thousand US dollar) every six months, the money will be used for security of Bay and Bakool and registration, the money has to be paid in a month time starting from 04/11/09 and it will end 04/12/09.

(No signature)

Official correspondence of Al Shabaab to Humanitarian Agencies 2: 22 May 2012

OSAFA communique of 22/05/2012
Unofficial Translation (NSP)

Following complaints received by OSAFA from Somali businessmen in the Wilayaat (AS-controlled areas), regarding WFP's actions that are negatively impacting on food prices and therefore jeopardizing their business activities. OSAFA conducted an investigation and came to the following conclusions:

1. WFP started a new phase of activities negatively affecting the Muslim communities in Somalia.
2. After people recovered from the effect of WFP previous food distributions that used to destroy farmers' harvest, WFP has turned to destroy the business activities of the people.
3. WFP is siding with individuals to the expense of other businessmen in the Wilayaat.

In respect to that, the Islamic religion encourages to safeguard assets of the Muslims. Therefore OSAFA decreed the following resolutions which will be effective starting from the day the declaration is made (22-05-2012):

Resolutions from OSAFA:

- It is totally prohibited to get contracts from the organizations that have been previously banned, including WFP.
- It is prohibited to purchase/buy food from WFP in order to avoid a drop of food prices as well as to avoid assisting individuals with contracts to the expense of others or even farmers.
- Anyone found implementing projects that jeopardize or negatively affect the good and sound economy of the Somali people will face the sharia law.
- Countries and foreign organizations that are implementing projects that have a negative economic impact will face severe punishment.

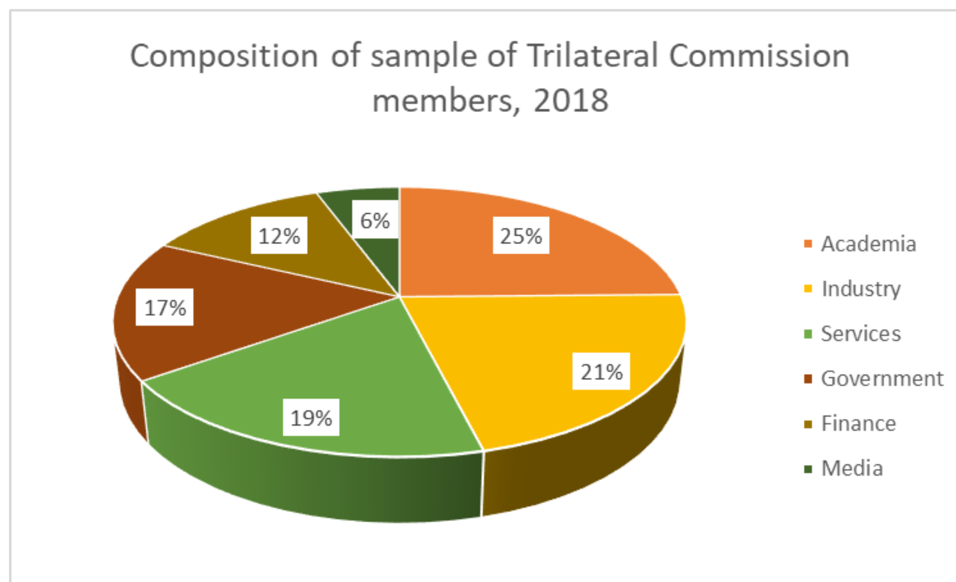
Notes:

- OSAFA stands for Office for Supervising the Affairs of Foreign Agencies.
- Point 3 refers to the practice of foreign agencies to contract all the work to one local business partner; given the volume of such contracts, this confers an enormous advantage to that organization and the lineage/community involved, frequently destabilizing the local balance of power.

Appendix 5 The Trilateral Commission Today

The evolution of the Trilateral Commission over the past 45 years indicates at once the staying power of the core transnational elites, and the adaptability of the group to contemporary currents and socio-political shifts. It provides an illustration of how the transnational governance cycle (Fig. 31, p426) functions.

The Trilateral Commission's membership list in October 2018 consists of 444 names, split as follows: 198 Europeans, 141 North American and 102 East Asians; there are also three 'global members' from Lebanon, Turkey and Russia. I selected three pages from the seventeen pages-long list, one random page each for the European, North American and East Asian member lists. Of the 89 (20% of total) members on these pages, the breakdown is roughly:



Surprisingly, 25% of the members represent an academic institution, indicating that ‘organic intellectuals’ are needed in the Commission. More than half of the members work in the industry, services and financial sector—almost all in multinational companies. Members working for the media represent a broad scale of the global media, Facebook, and the main national media outlets of the largest countries. Their relatively small presence may suggest that they are invited as transmitters rather than as strategists. There are no representatives of civil society (labour movement, NGOs, development community) although, on the commission's website, it does purport to include members of civil society (Trilateral Commission, 2019). The disappearance of trade union leaders, who between 1973 and 1986 constituted 5% of the Commission, is an example of how transnational elite composition shifts.

It may be further noted that almost all members come from OECD countries. The Commission appears to be concerned with creating consensus at the core, both in geographical and thematic scope.

In terms of values, on the commission's 'about' webpage it is stated: "*Its members share a firm belief in the values of rule of law, democratic government, human rights, freedom of speech and free enterprise that underpin human progress. Members are also committed to supporting a rules-based international system, closer cooperation across borders and respect for the diversity of approaches to policy issues*" (Trilateral Commission 2020). In the summer of 2019, the Trilateral Commission published a pamphlet called ‘Democracies Under Stress’—apparently in echo to the seminal 1975 report ‘The Crisis of Democracy’—in which it reaffirms its original mission but indicates it is rejuvenating itself to accomplish it. The main threat it identifies to a 'rules-based international order' is the rise of nationalism and

populism while "*Beijing in particular is offering the world what many see as a viable alternative to democracy*" (Trilateral Commission 2019). It does not mention US President Donald Trump, but clearly identifies him and his populist co-leaders in the developed world as a problem that must be confronted by closer cooperation between commission members.

The 'rejuvenated' commission (UK Labour Party leader Keith Starmer was a member in 2019) "*has identified a number of contemporary themes—such as technology, populism, economic competitiveness, rule of law, and demographics—to which it will return regularly. The Commission is also identifying issues that can be advanced by its mix of policy and business leaders and do not necessarily require the adoption by national governments to have an impact*." This statement indicates how the organisation seeks to influence policy without passing through the state and domestic politics. It also wants to draw in a more diverse membership and increase its transparency. It seeks to return to publications as seminal as 'The Crisis of Democracy' discussed above (Trilateral Commission 2019).

Of the anticipated outputs, two are particularly interesting: "*Reassurance of American allies about the depth of U.S. commitment to playing a leadership role in the world; and the forging of personal relationships spanning countries, cultures, and sectors*". The second quoted output indicates the 'how', the first one the 'what', albeit incompletely. By acknowledging the need to restructure the North-American panel of the commission by including 'non-elite representatives from the American heartland' alongside 'coastal elites', the Commission is obviously reacting to political tendencies epitomized by Donald Trump; by forging personal links between the old elites, already part of the Trilateral Commission, and these new elites the Commission hopes to reconcile the 'non-elite representatives from the American Heartland' with the current world system—form a consensus—as much as reassure American allies about the US commitment to play a leadership role. The new North America executive director of the Commission, Richard Fontaine, is the CEO of the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), a think-tank that stands firmly on the right of the political spectrum, likely to appeal to 'non-elite' Americans more than to the international members of the commission. Here we see how the transnational elite at once absorbs a counterhegemonic tendency and evolves itself, by seeking consensus through socialisation, in both senses: adapting to the values of the majority and by '*the forging of personal relationships*'.

Two of the expected impact bullet points are worth dwelling over: "*Better domestic and foreign policy outcomes achieved by injecting new, innovative prescriptions into the national debate and governmental process; and a growing consensus for global engagement encompassing elites and non-elites—which is a prerequisite for leadership in international politics and business*". The prescriptive element may worry those who would like such debates to take place in the democratic arena, instead of being 'injected' by members of the unaccountable commission. As to the consensus, it seems the authors of the pamphlet are reflexively following Gramsci's prescription for establishing hegemony.

The study of the Trilateral Commission suggests that the composition of the transnational elites and the values that underpin them have only undergone gradual shifts while the global consensus has absorbed counter-hegemonic tendencies such as non-white, post-colonial intellectuals or anti-elite populists, reflecting the evolution of the socio-economic basis of global society from national social democracy to neoliberalism, global capitalism and perhaps in the future the return to a more authoritarian model of global governance.

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Résumé en Français

L'État en Somalie : Entre Autogouvernance et Ordre International

En Bref

Dans cette thèse, je soutiens que le but principal de l’intervention de la communauté internationale en Somalie est de renforcer l'ordre international. En effet, les efforts déployés pour construire l’État somalien perturbent l’ordre sociopolitique informel, qui maintient un équilibre dans la société clanique somalienne, et génèrent ainsi des conflits. Une étude des origines de l'État moderne démontre que c’est une construction sociale destinée à asseoir l’hégémonie des élites dirigeantes au sein d’une société, et que l'ordre étatique international étend la domination des élites ‘occidentales’ au reste du monde. La science politique a contribué à construire le mythe que seul l’État peut générer un ordre politique et que sa seule incarnation légitime est la démocratie libérale.

Par conséquent, il manque une théorie pour expliquer l’existence en Somalie de l'autogouvernance par le clan, cet ordre informel aux racines millénaires. Je développe donc ce que j’appelle la Théorie des Deux Pouvoirs, en me basant sur les concepts prémodernes de « l’État de Nature » et en utilisant la distinction entre arbre et rhizome introduite par Deleuze et Guattari, appliquée par la suite à l’étude des États africains par Jean-François Bayart. Selon cette théorie, le champ politique est composé de deux types de pouvoir : le pouvoir social, informel, exprimé par l'autogouvernance de communautés dans « l’État de Nature » (rhizome), et le pouvoir symbolique, formel, exercé par les élites dirigeantes à travers les instruments de l'État (arbre). Ce prisme est ensuite utilisé pour examiner les relations entre la société et l'État en Somalie, depuis la période coloniale jusqu'aux interventions de l'après-guerre froide. L'État légué par la tutelle onusienne a permis aux réseaux claniques des élites d’avoir accès aux ressources mondiales. Ces réseaux se sont d’abord ‘partagé le gâteau’ pacifiquement, et puis, suite à la dictature militaire de Siad Barre, par les armes. Cela a épuisé l'État, provoquant son effondrement en 1991, et a généré au sein de la société somalienne des déséquilibres claniques qui se sont manifestés violemment par la guerre civile.

Trois ordres politiques ont émergé des ruines de l'État somalien : le Somaliland indépendant mais non reconnu, un État fédéral dépendant du soutien étranger et le régime d'Al Shabaab. L'État du Somaliland s'est formé organiquement en tant que double ordre politique, basé sur l'autogouvernance des clans et le désir d'État. Mais, dans un processus mimétique, cet État s'est transformé en un ordre politique hybride, où le pouvoir social est nié pour soutenir la prétention que l'État est la seule source de pouvoir. Le gouvernement fédéral est aussi un ordre politique hybride, où, à l’instar du Somaliland, les réseaux sociaux claniques captent les institutions de l'État pour les vider de leurs ressources, fournies en grande partie par la communauté internationale. Quant à la gouvernance par Al Shabaab, elle se rapproche le plus de la réalisation de l'idéal wébérien recherché par la communauté internationale : un État juridique-rationnel avec un monopole sur la violence, où le pouvoir est exercé de manière impersonnelle ; mais le mouvement refuse de soumettre cet État à l'hégémonie occidentale.

Enfin, nous devons nous demander pourquoi la communauté internationale intervient en Somalie. En utilisant la théorie des deux pouvoirs, je soutiens que l'intervention est un outil de méta-gouvernance qui permet à une élite transnationale de renforcer son hégémonie systémique, quelles qu’en soient les conséquences pour la Somalie.

La thèse se termine par le constat que la double nature du pouvoir doit être reconnue, libérant l'imagination politique de l'hypothèse de sens commun, selon laquelle l'État démocratique libéral moderne serait le seul modèle possible.

Enfin, de nouvelles directions de recherche se profilent, comme celle qui consiste à enrichir la science politique par les récentes études sur les écosystèmes forestiers. Ces nouvelles sources d’inspiration pourraient nous aider à concevoir des sociétés humaines post-étatiques.

Pourquoi cette thèse ?

La communauté internationale intervient dans de nombreux pays en développement pour les aider à construire un État moderne. Que l'intervention soit principalement à but humanitaire ou d'aide au développement, pour résoudre un conflit ou pour lutter contre le terrorisme, un État efficace est toujours considéré comme le fondement d'une solution durable pour le pays dans lequel on intervient. De plus, la démocratie libérale semble être la seule forme acceptable d'ordre politique. Depuis la fin de la guerre froide, des interventions de construction de l'État ont eu lieu dans un large éventail de contextes culturels et politiques sur tous les continents, du Sierra Leone à la Bosnie, du Timor Leste et du Cambodge à Haïti, de l'Afghanistan à l'Iraq. La plupart d'entre elles sont toujours en cours ou se sont soldées par un échec. Les États qui en résultent sont faibles, restent dépendants de l'aide extérieure et semblent souvent manquer de légitimité populaire.

La question qui a suscité cette recherche doctorale est donc la suivante : pourquoi la communauté internationale poursuit-elle des interventions pour construire des États si leurs résultats sont si discutables ? Cette question est apparue au fil de vingt ans de pratique professionnelle et s'est forgée à partir du constat qu'en dépit de l'absence d'un État efficace, certaines sociétés parviennent toutefois à un certain niveau de paix et de développement social et économique. En termes d'ordre politique, cela peut être qualifié d'autogouvernance, par opposition à la gouvernance de l'État. Mais les mécanismes sociétaux d'autogouvernance sont rarement intégrés dans les projets de construction de l'État. L'hypothèse centrale qui sous-tend cette recherche est que les efforts extérieurs de construction de l'État sont essentiellement entrepris pour renforcer l'ordre international et échouent parce qu'ils ne reconnaissent pas l'autogouvernance.

Le développement de cette hypothèse s'est immédiatement heurté à un problème majeur : il n'existe pratiquement aucune théorie politique sur l'autogouvernance dans la littérature académique et, de fait, les organisations internationales et même les médias ignorent l'autogouvernance en l'absence d'un État efficace ; cette théorie devait donc être élaborée, de préférence de manière à également expliquer les interactions entre les deux formes de pouvoir. Ainsi, à partir de différentes sources, j'ai développé une théorie présentée ici comme la Théorie des Deux Pouvoirs.

Cette théorie postule qu'il existe deux types de pouvoir politique : le pouvoir social et le pouvoir symbolique ou étatique. Le premier est basé sur la volonté collective de préservation d'une communauté et s'exerce par le biais de l'autogouvernance. Le deuxième repose sur des lois établies par l'homme et est exercé depuis deux siècles par l'État moderne. Pouvoir social et pouvoir étatique structurent ensemble le champ politique. De cette théorie, un cadre analytique est dérivé pour examiner les relations entre la société et l'État.

La zone géographique choisie pour cette enquête est la Somalie, car c'est un 'État failli' par excellence. Ce pays a connu tous les types d'interventions internationales depuis la période coloniale. Les Britanniques ont tenté d'imposer un ordre politique au Somaliland britannique ; le fascisme Italien a poursuivi le développement économique de La Somalia Italiana ; l'État somalien indépendant a été conçu sous la tutelle des Nations Unies ; les deux superpuissances sont intervenues pendant la guerre froide ; et dans les années 1980, les institutions financières internationales supervisaient les programmes d'ajustement structurel tandis que l'ONU et les ONG internationales lançaient des programmes humanitaires et de développement à grande échelle. Depuis l'effondrement de l'État somalien en 1991, le pays a été le site d'interventions de toutes sortes : humanitaires, de développement, militaires (dans le cadre de la guerre contre le terrorisme), de pacification, ainsi qu'un effort international constant pour reconstruire un État somalien, protégé par une force de maintien de la paix de l'Union Africaine, l'AMISOM.

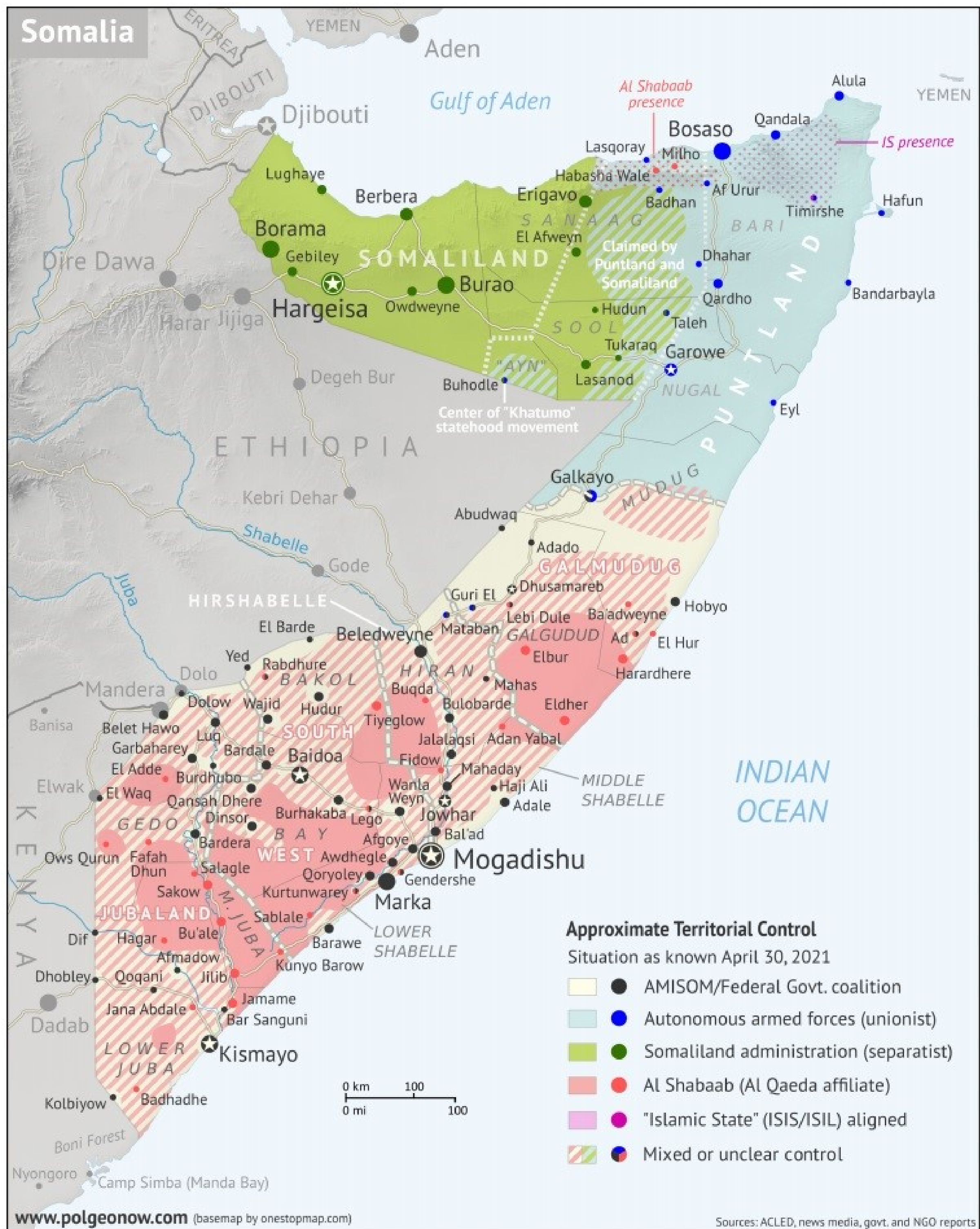

Figure 1. Political Geography Now, Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control as of 30 April 2021 (www.polgeonow.com)

Pendant ce temps, l'autogouvernance a assuré un certain degré d'ordre politique dans la plupart des régions de la Somalie. Une partie du pays, le Somaliland, a fait sécession en 1991 pour créer son État indépendant, tandis que la plupart des régions du sud et du centre de la Somalie sont sous le contrôle total ou partiel d'Al Shabaab, un mouvement salafiste insurgé. La Somalie offre donc un terrain idéal pour étudier à la fois l'intervention et l'autonomie.

Le sujet central de cette thèse est l'État. Pourquoi la communauté internationale insiste-t-elle sur la formation d'un État démocratique libéral en Somalie ? Que signifie exactement le terme «communauté

internationale» ? Les Somaliens ont-ils même besoin d'un État ? Et, si oui, quelle marge de manœuvre ont-ils pour former leur propre État ? Étant donné que l'hypothèse selon laquelle l'État serait la seule forme valable d'ordre politique (et le seul pouvoir souverain) est fondamentale à la science politique, ainsi qu'à la pratique des relations internationales, une analyse critique de ces questions nous conduit au-delà du cadre de la théorie des relations internationales. Pour concevoir des ordres politiques au-delà de l'État tels que l'autogouvernance, d'autres cheminements intellectuels et d'autres domaines scientifiques (notamment les sciences humaines et de la vie) doivent être mobilisés.

Méthodologie

La Somalie n'est pas un terrain facile. J'y ai d'abord eu accès par le biais d'un poste de chercheur au sein d'une ONG basée à Nairobi et Hargeisa pendant mes deux premières années de thèse, ce qui m'a permis d'établir un réseau de contacts parmi les chercheurs somaliens et les ONGs. Grâce à des nombreux séjours, surtout au Somaliland, j'ai pu approfondir ma connaissance du pays, de sa géographie, de sa population, de son histoire et de sa culture. Après avoir quitté cette ONG, j'ai pu utiliser ces connaissances et contacts pour organiser de nouveaux voyages d'étude. Pour éviter de me retrouver enfermé dans la zone de l'aéroport (Halane) où sont cloîtrés presque tous les étrangers, je me suis fait inviter comme 'guest lecturer' par la Somali International University à Mogadiscio. Grâce à cette invitation j'ai pu m'entretenir formellement avec des représentants de la société somalienne, et en rencontrer beaucoup d'autres sur leur propre lieu de travail. J'ai en outre conduit un séjour de terrain au Somaliland, où les restrictions de sécurité sont beaucoup moindres, pour y mener mes recherches par le biais d'autres entretiens. Pendant cette période, j'étais basé d'abord à Nairobi, puis à Hargeisa et à Addis Abeba, où j'ai rencontré surtout des intervenants et spécialistes étrangers. En 2020 et 2021 j'ai pu revenir en Somalie et dans la région somalienne d'Éthiopie en tant que consultant, ce qui m'a permis de réaliser 21 entretiens supplémentaires et de nombreuses autres rencontres.

Les entretiens étaient semi-structurés. Après avoir posé des questions préparées, je laissais la discussion dévier selon les intérêts de mes interlocuteurs, tout en prenant des notes manuscrites. Le soir venu, je transcrivais mes notes sur ordinateur et s'il manquait des informations ou des précisions, je pouvais recontacter les personnes rencontrées. En tout, j'ai ainsi recueilli 70 entretiens, la plupart avec des Somaliens. La liste se trouve en annexe 1.

L'autre source primaire utilisée pour élaborer cette thèse est l'observation participante. Pendant tous mes séjours et voyages en Somalie, je n'étais entouré que de Somaliens. Cela m'a permis de socialiser en passant des heures de loisir avec eux, en apprenant leur langue (bien que mon niveau ne fût jamais suffisant pour mener seul des interviews en Somali) et en m'adaptant à leurs us et coutumes. En sus des entretiens mentionnés, j'ai profité d'innombrables discussions plus informelles pour consolider ma connaissance des sujets traités dans cette thèse.

Mais l'observation participante s'étend surtout à la communauté internationale, étant donné que je travaille dans le secteur des interventions internationales depuis 1997 (25 ans), dans les pays du Moyen Orient, d'Asie Centrale et de la Corne de l'Afrique. J'ai travaillé pour de nombreuses organisations (ONG, ONU, UE, Banque Mondiale, donateurs privés ou institutionnels, organismes de recherche), souvent en tant que consultant, plus rarement en tant que salarié. Cependant, lors de chaque mission, je m'efforçais de rencontrer essentiellement la population locale car je ne me suis jamais senti complètement à l'aise dans la bulle des expatriés. Cette expérience des deux côtés de la barrière qui s'érige souvent entre les intervenants internationaux et les populations sur lesquelles ils sont censés agir se retrouve dans cette thèse, notamment dans la section 9.1, où je constate le décalage entre la réalité discursive dans laquelle évoluent les intervenants internationaux et la réalité sociale dans laquelle vivent les populations locales.

Par ailleurs, je me suis abstenu d'utiliser des méthodes quantitatives. En effet, la Somalie manque de données fiables. Par exemple, la population est souvent estimée entre 15 et 17 millions, mais une étude que j'ai menée au Somaliland, où se trouveraient au moins 3,5 millions d'habitants selon l'ONU, et bien plus selon les autorités locales, démontre que cette estimation est probablement très exagérée. Sans estimation fiable de la population, que dire des autres données ? Quant à l'économie, il faut noter que l'économie informelle est très probablement bien plus importante que l'officielle. Il est donc difficile de se fier aux chiffres fournis par la Banque Mondiale, le gouvernement somalien ou les agences des Nations Unies.

Pour ce qui est des sources secondaires, j'ai été contraint de suivre une approche éclectique, car dans les sciences politiques on ne trouve pas de théorie de l'autogouvernance sans État. J'ai ainsi dû m'aventurer dans des champs épistémiques inconnus pour moi, mais sans avoir le loisir de les approfondir suffisamment pour pouvoir en parler avec autorité académique. Dans cette thèse sont présents plusieurs de ces champs, comme le système inter-étatique des Nations Unies, les études sur les relations post-coloniales des États africains, la signification du concept de l'État dans la philosophie politique arabe, l'impact de la socialisation sur les organisations, les théories de la loi naturelle et, bien sûr, les sciences de la forêt et des écosystèmes avec le rôle qu'y joue le mycélium rhizomique.

En abordant ces champs de connaissance nouveaux, je me suis laissé guider par mes lectures, l'intuition et le hasard. Au fur et à mesure s'est dessinée une méthode applicable. Une fois que j'avais recueilli des points de vue et arguments qui m'aidaient à cerner mon problème, je les testais dans le secteur académique où ils avaient été développés. Si je constatais que d'autres scientifiques émettaient des doutes, ou rejetaient la théorie, j'abandonnais ces arguments. Par exemple, pour ce qui est des sciences de la forêt, j'étais d'abord inspiré par le livre de Peter Wohlleben « La Vie Secrète des Arbres ». Mais en le soumettant à l'examen de ses pairs, j'ai trouvé qu'ils mettaient en doute ses méthodes et résultats, donc j'ai finalement écarté la plupart de ses axiomes. Par ce biaisj'ai découvert les travaux de Suzanne Simard, qui est unanimement respectée dans son domaine, et dont j'ai utilisé les vues et résultats. J'ai procédé de même dans les autres champs épistémiques où je manquais de connaissances approfondies. On pourrait peut-être appeler cette méthode celle de l'éclectisme intuitif.

Structure de cette thèse

La thèse s'articule en trois parties, divisées en onze chapitres. La première partie est théorique et mène à l'élaboration de ma théorie des deux pouvoirs ; la deuxième est historique et montre comment, sur une toile de fond internationale, les relations entre société et État se sont développées en Somalie de l'époque coloniale à 2012 ; la troisième partie procède à l'analyse politique des trois formes d'État qu'on trouve aujourd'hui en Somalie, suivie par une analyse, à travers le prisme de la double nature du pouvoir, de la communauté internationale elle-même.

Dans le premier chapitre, suivant les suggestions de Bourdieu, je procède à une déconstruction radicale de l'Etat. La généalogie européenne de l'État, depuis Thomas d'Aquins jusqu'à Carl Schmitt, montre comment l'État a progressivement remplacé à la fois la souveraineté humaine et la souveraineté divine. L'idéalisme allemand et, plus tard, les disciplines de la science politique ont contribué à créer le mythe d'un État moderne au pouvoir absolu. Un mythe similaire entoure la création de l'ordre étatique mondial, tous deux tirant leur pouvoir symbolique de la Loi. Pourtant, un examen de son ontologie suggère que l'État est une construction sociale qui est utilisée comme instrument de domination par les élites dirigeantes. Cette démystification permet d'envisager d'autres formes d'ordre politique.

Le deuxième chapitre introduit l'autogouvernance somalienne comme une réalité historique, et confirme la nature historiquement transitoire de l'État en Somalie. Depuis l'Antiquité, les nomades

somaliens ont interagi avec les structures étatiques de leurs voisins yéménites et éthiopiens. Ils ont participé au commerce de l'Afrique de l'Est et de l'Océan Indien aux côtés d'Arabes et de Persans organisés en sultanats-cités. Toutefois, ils ont toujours conservé leurs structures d'autogouvernance, même en milieu urbain. L'Islam a réorienté le système clanique parmi les agriculteurs sédentarisés et mené à l'État somalien d'Ajuraan, mais l'expérience d'un État autoritaire, injuste et avec un degré élevé d'imposition fut jugée négativement et, après cinq siècles de cet État, les Somaliens sont revenus à l'autogouvernance *clanique*, montrant que la prémisse selon laquelle les sociétes humaines évolueraient linéairement des tribus vers l'Etat n'est pas valide dans le cas de la Somalie.

L'ordre politique qui découle de l'autonomie clanique est analysé au chapitre trois, puis interprété à travers la notion de Jean-François Bayart de « l'État-rhizome en Afrique », faisant référence à l'opposition conceptuelle de Deleuze et Guattari entre le rhizome (les nomades) et l'arbre (l'État). Le modèle rhizome/arbre est enrichi par les apports des sciences contemporaines de la forêt, démontrant que si ces deux archétypes de structure et de croissance sont conceptuellement opposés, ils interagissent continuellement pour produire la vie. Les débats sur la généalogie de l'État dans le premier chapitre ont révélé que l'État s'est constitué en opposition à un 'État de Nature' théorique où les humains conserveraient leur souveraineté. Les parallèles sont trop évidents pour être ignorés : l'autonomie des clans somaliens est un ordre politique dérivé de 'l'État de Nature'. Je soutiens que le rhizome est la forme archétypale de la société humaine. Ce troisième chapitre se termine ainsi par une définition de la double nature du pouvoir, en classant les opposés binaires abordés dans cette première partie théorique selon les deux archétypes : le rhizome et l'arbre. J'appelle ce cadre d'analyse la Théorie des Deux Pouvoirs.

L'avantage d'établir une théorie du pouvoir dans la première partie de la thèse est qu'elle peut être testée dans le reste du texte. Une bonne théorie doit fournir une clarté conceptuelle lorsqu'elle est appliquée à des problèmes et, idéalement, avoir une valeur prédictive aussi. La tester permet d'ailleurs d'affiner la théorie. L'imagerie végétale est développée dans les chapitres suivants. Quelles sont les fonctions des racines, du tronc et des branches de l'État-arbre ? Comment les racines se connectent-elles au rhizome et en extraient-elles des ressources pour construire l'État-arbre ? La fonction biologique des branches, qui par les feuilles puisent des ressources dans l'air et en utilisent une partie pour la croissance de l'arbre, tandis qu'une autre partie est renvoyée au rhizome par les racines, peut-elle aider à comprendre les relations entre État et Société ? Cette imagerie peut-elle être mise en relation avec les mécanismes d'extraversion (la capacité des élites locales d'extraire de leur positions institutionnelles des rentes étrangères qui leur permettent de rester en place) et de clientélisme ? **Si l'État moderne est un arbre importé, comment prend-il racine et se connecte-t-il au rhizome somalien ?** Ces questions sont traitées dans les chapitres quatre à huit, qui analysent l'histoire des relations entre État et société somalienne dans leur contexte international.

Le chapitre quatre traite de la période coloniale, 1890-1960. La Somalie a été continuellement soumise à l'intervention internationale depuis sa rencontre avec l'État moderne à la fin du XIXe siècle, et les efforts visant à établir un ordre politique convenant aux intervenants par le biais de la transformation sociale ont toujours été au cœur de ces interventions. Pour la première fois de leur histoire, les Somaliens ont été soumis à un pouvoir extérieur et à la domination hiérarchique. Bien que la pratique de l'État colonial ait souvent été assez faible, son image a durablement marqué la psychologie somalienne. Le noyau dur d'une classe étatique moderne a émergé, et pendant la période de tutelle de l'ONU (1950-1960) les clés du futur État lui ont été remises. La résistance au projet d'édification de l'État moderne n'est pas venue de la société clanique, mais des milieux religieux.

Le chapitre cinq traite de l'État somalien indépendant de 1960 à 1990. Dès l'origine, les élites somaliennes ont traité l'État comme une chamelle à traire. Les réseaux claniques se partageaient le gâteau de l'État (sans conflit) pour accéder aux rentes nationales ou externes, qu'ils distribuaient

ensuite par le biais de réseaux de clientélisme afin de se maintenir au pouvoir. Ces politiques furent interrompues par le coup d'État militaire de Siad Barre en 1969, qui, avec le soutien des pays communistes, tenta de forger et développer un État-nation. Ce projet a échoué pendant la guerre d'Ogaden (1977-78), chamboulant les alliances de la guerre froide. Par la suite, le régime de Siad Barre a utilisé le soutien occidental pour rester au pouvoir pendant que sa base clanique se rétrécissait et que ses forces de sécurité éliminaient la dissidence.

La violence du régime Barre déclencha la guerre civile, qui commença en 1988 lorsque les dirigeants traditionnels des clans ont décidé de soutenir les groupes de guérilla qui sont ainsi devenus des factions claniques armées. Début 1991, le pays s’est désintégré et une guerre entre clans a eu lieu à Mogadiscio, dans d'autres villes et dans des zones rurales contestées, tandis qu'une famine emporta un quart de million de Somaliens. Quel fut le rôle du clan dans la désintégration de l'État somalien ? Cette question a fait l'objet de virulents débats savants, sur lesquels je reviens, épaulé par la Théorie des Deux Pouvoirs. Dans la dernière section du chapitre six, l'évolution de l'État somalien est placée dans le contexte de la décolonisation et de l'intervention occidentale en Afrique qui a suivi. Cela montre que les politiques étrangères appliquées en Somalie n'étaient pas spécifiques à ce pays, mais faisaient partie d’une réorganisation plus vaste de l’ordre international.

Le chapitre sept commence à New York alors que les contours du ‘nouvel ordre mondial’ de l'après-guerre froide sont dessinés, avec un rôle clé pour les Nations Unies. La Somalie devient le premier test de son « Agenda pour la Paix », avec une mission multilatérale de maintien de la paix où la plupart des troupes sont fournies par les États-Unis, sous le commandement de l'ONU. L'échec de cette intervention asséna un camouflet à l’ONU et provoqua son retrait de la Somalie. Laissé à lui-même, le pays s'est progressivement pacifié, mais lorsque la guerre mondiale contre le terrorisme a éclaté, la Somalie est devenue l'un des pays cibles. Des conférences internationales conduisirent à la création d'un gouvernement fédéral de transition en exil, tandis qu'une vague de tribunaux islamiques rétablit l'ordre, balayant sur son passage le sud et le centre de la Somalie. Mais ce mouvement fut identifié comme une menace terroriste et fut donc délogé par une invasion éthiopienne soutenue par les États Unis, plongeant la Somalie dans un nouveau cycle de conflits marqué par la montée rapide d'Al Shabaab.

Au cours de la deuxième partie, la Théorie des Deux Pouvoirs se voit donc confirmée et précisée. Cela mène à élaborer un cadre analytique utilisé pour catégoriser les efforts contemporains de construction de l’Etat en Somalie, le sujet de la troisième partie. Les relations entre société et État dans les trois régimes qui co-existent en Somalie aujourd'hui, ainsi que les relations entre l'État et la communauté internationale, peuvent ainsi être examinées à l’aune de leurs aspects structurels *et* rhizomiques.

Cela conduit à plusieurs avancées conceptuelles, telles que la différence entre un ordre politique hybride et un double ordre politique, développée dans le chapitre huit sur le Somaliland. Son État a été formé largement à l'initiative des dirigeants claniques. Cette *formation* d’État – sans aide internationale – est à distinguer du ‘state-building’ qui ressort des interventions étrangères. Le rôle des anciens dans le maintien de la paix sociale illustre comment l’autogouvernance clanique peut s’intégrer à côté du pouvoir de l’État dans un système double. Mais ce système se mua, par un effort de mimétisme, en un ordre hybride, où l’autonomie du clan est niée, pour ensuite infiltrer les structures de l'État et de l'économie. Le soutien international accentue ce déséquilibre et, bien que non-reconnu, le Somaliland en devient dépendant.

Le chapitre neuf commence par examiner le gouvernement fédéral de la Somalie en tant que création internationale, y compris l'impact économique de l'aide internationale et de l’industrie de la sécurité. L'écart croissant entre le discours international sur l'État somalien et le fonctionnement réel de cet État devient évident lorsqu'on observe les négociations entre les élites somaliennes pour se partager le pouvoir et redistribuer les rentes associées à l'État. Les attitudes somaliennes envers l'État montrent,

dans leur ambivalence, comment les deux pouvoirs (social et symbolique) imprègnent également l'individu, en tant que citoyen et en tant qu'humain, conduisant parfois à des prises de conscience contradictoires. En tant que citoyen, le Somalien cherche à s'aligner non pas sur l'État national mais sur l'ordre étatique international, tandis que l'humain reste ancré à la parenté, au clan, et aux autres réseaux de soutien mutuel. Un cas à part est formé par les identités diasporiques et islamistes, particulièrement en vogue parmi les élites dirigeantes.

Le chapitre dix étudie Al Shabaab, non pas à travers le prisme habituel du terrorisme, de la radicalisation et de la violence, mais en tant que mouvement politique efficace. La gouvernance d'Al Shabaab se rapproche à bien des égards de l'idéal étatique légal-rationnel de Weber. Il parvient à séparer sa pratique de gouvernance (l'arbre) de son identité contre-hégémonique et salafiste-nationaliste (le mouvement comme rhizome), instituant ainsi un double ordre politique au lieu d'un ordre hybride. Cela donne une légitimité au pouvoir d'Al Shabaab, même si le mouvement et son idéologie sont rejetés par la plupart des Somaliens, qui préfèrent la perspective de relations harmonieuses avec la communauté internationale. La nature contre-hégémonique de la politique d'Al Shabaab peut expliquer pourquoi elle fait face à une opposition aussi déterminée et violente de la part de la communauté internationale.

Enfin, au chapitre onze, la théorie des deux pouvoirs est appliquée à l'analyse de l'ordre international. La théorie postule que derrière chaque structure il y a un agent, et que celui-ci opère selon les règles rhizomiques du pouvoir social. D'abord, il faut une définition de l'intervention, parce que l'intervention a remplacé la guerre comme principal mécanisme pour maintenir ou modifier le rapport des forces dans le système international. Ensuite, l'agent de cet ordre est défini comme 'l'élite transnationale'. Elle fonctionne effectivement comme un rhizome, établissant un consensus par la socialisation permanente. Ce consensus constitue l'assise de son hégémonie qui est diffusée à travers la méta-gouvernance des institutions internationales et nationales. Cela permet à cette élite, qui reste une entité postulée et donc abstraite, de former le monde à son image. Le « state-building » devient un outil de gouvernance transnationale et son objectif est double : étendre le pouvoir de cette élite transnationale sur les sociétés du monde à travers un État unique, tout en renforçant le consensus sur l'État comme seule source et expression de l'ordre politique. Cette croyance en l'État, définie dans le premier chapitre, est la clé de l'hégémonie de l'élite transnationale, à laquelle le destin d'un pays comme la Somalie importe peu.

La conclusion revoit l'argumentation développée tout au long de la thèse pour en extraire les concepts clés, qui méritent tous des recherches plus approfondies. Je soutiens que la Théorie des Deux Pouvoirs pourrait renouveler la science politique et libérer l'imagination politique du monopole de l'État. Cela permettrait non seulement une approche plus raisonnable et ancrée dans la réalité sociale de l'ordre politique en Somalie, mais aussi la conception d'un ordre politique post-étatique, qui prendrait son essor à partir de l'État de Nature.