

## Summary of the Doctoral Defense Committee (Jury)'s Report

### **The State in Somalia: Between Self-Governance and International Order**

Defended by Robert Kluijver on 26 January 2023

at Sciences Po in Paris, in Political Science / International Relations

The jury was composed of

- Mme Laetitia BUCAILLE (President of the Jury), Professeure des universités, INALCO
- M. Markus Virgil HOEHNE, Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter, Universität Leipzig
- M. Jean-François LEGUIL BAYART, Professeur, IHEID (Geneva)
- M. Roland MARCHAL (PhD co-supervisor), Chargé de recherche, CNRS-CERI
- M. Luis MARTINEZ (PhD supervisor), Directeur de recherche FNSP-CERI
- Mme Hélène THIOULET, Chargée de recherche, CNRS-CERI

The members of the jury agreed that 'The State in Somalia' is an impressive thesis both in its empirical dimension and in its mastery of the relevant scientific literature, and that Kluijver succeeds in entering into a debate about fundamental theoretical aspects of the State; the proof is in the reactions that its reading elicits among the jury members.

They were also unanimous in their appreciation of the wide scope of Kluijver's thesis, using sources from many of the humanities and even from the exact sciences, leaning on a rich and varied bibliography. They mentioned they found it a pleasant and interesting read, despite its considerable length, in part because of the scientific imagination and provocative ideas the author deploys. They also agreed that the structure of the thesis is clear and balanced. The depth of knowledge of the literature on Somalia, notably on its history, and the use of many Somali sources besides Western ones, was appreciated. Jury members noted that the breadth of Kluijver's approach entailed a slightly superficial treatment of some of the domains they are more familiar with, but not a mistaken one, and they agreed the interdisciplinary approach had been fruitful.

The theoretical ambition of the thesis was underlined by several of the jury members, as Kluijver uses the first 120 pages to present a Dual Power Theory to explain the political order arising out of self-governance; that theory is then tested and refined throughout the following 300 pages, examining the history of the State in Somalia and the three state structures that currently govern Somali society (the federal government, Somaliland and Al Shabaab).

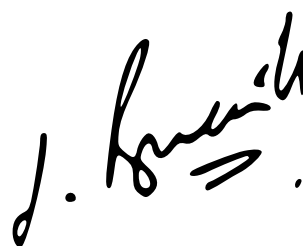
Although none of the jury members entirely agreed with the need for (or entire novelty of) the theory the author proposes – doubts were particularly expressed about 'the State of Nature' and what appeared to some as a binary view on political power, and at times what

seems like an idealisation of self-governance – they appreciated the manner in which it had been construed, and the serious questions it raises, prompting interesting discussions. Bayart found that the notion of ‘the rhizome state in Africa’ (that he had himself introduced in 1989) had been developed convincingly, and that the author had avoided the pitfalls of political evolutionism, the ideological claptrap of the ‘failed state’, the reduction of jihadi governance to its aspect of ‘terrorism’, and a conspirational reading of history. Several jury members noted that Kluijver had engaged some of the major thinkers of political science (from Locke through Gramsci and Weber to James C. Scott) in novel and intellectually stimulating ways.

The jury members expressed some regret that Kluijver had not exploited the precious empirical material he collected, through many interviews and years of field experience, notably among Somalis, but also as a participant observer within the international community. A more deductive anthropological or sociological approach could have put this rare material to better use, giving the reader precious insights into Somali sociopolitics. This was maybe due to the theoretical intent of the author. A future publication, Thiollet suggested, could be built on this empirical material.

Kluijver’s central hypothesis, that the main purpose and effect of international state-building activities in Somalia are to strengthen the international order, while their effects on political order in Somalia are mainly negative, was considered well demonstrated by all jury members. His responses to their questions, comments and criticisms during the three hours of the defense were judged relevant, honest and well-argued. They congratulated Kluijver on the quality of his doctoral thesis and conferred the title of doctor to him.

Please note that in France, since 2016, distinctions for doctors such as ‘cum laude’ or ‘les félicitations du jury’ have been abolished.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Bayart', with a stylized flourish at the end.A blue rectangular stamp with the following text: INSTITUT D'ÉTUDES POLITIQUES DE PARIS, ÉCOLE DOCTORALE, 27 rue Saint-Guillaume, 75337 PARIS CEDEX 07.

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