

**BUILDING PEACE AND THE STATE IN SOMALIA:
THE CASE OF SOMALILAND**

Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy Thesis

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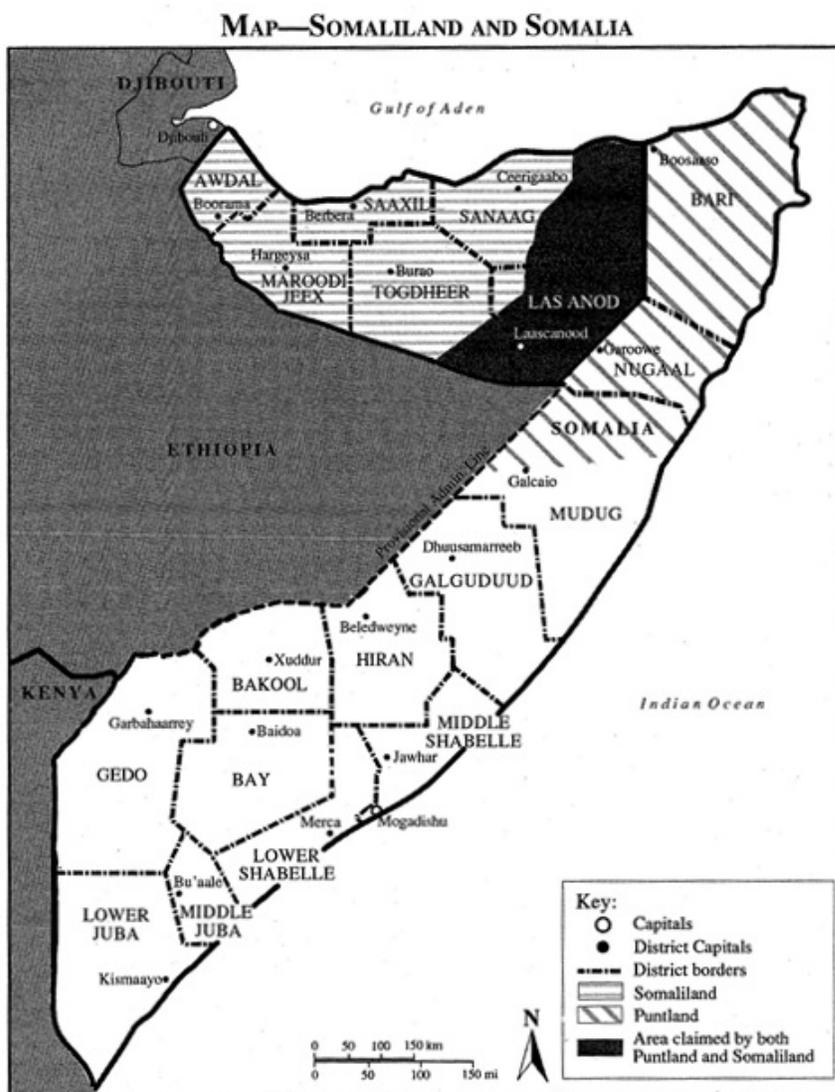
I. Introduction

Somalia typically evokes images of anarchy and war. Its Transitional Federal Government controls only part of Mogadishu, Somalia's capital, and the state cannot provide the most basic services to its citizens. Warlords and Islamists struggle for power and territory while the UN and other external actors seek to influence events in Somalia. The state exists only in name. However, subnational administrations have emerged in the north that function as de facto states, and the situation in those areas is not as dire as in south and central Somalia.

Puntland—a region in the northeast of the country—enjoys greater stability than the south, although its government is weak. It has attracted attention recently because most Somali pirates operating in the Gulf of Aden call it home. Though Puntland suffers from corruption, poverty, and a repressive security apparatus, its state institutions continue to function. It has governed itself autonomously since 1998, but it has remained committed to a unified state of Somalia.

By contrast, the region of Somaliland—in the northwest of Somalia—declared independence from Somalia in 1991. Though no other countries have recognized it, Somaliland has built state institutions and it boasts a representative government, having recently managed a peaceful transfer of power based on a free and fair election in which the incumbent president lost. It, too, struggles with poverty and security issues, but it is relatively peaceful and prosperous compared to other societies in the Horn of Africa. Somaliland's ongoing border dispute with Puntland over the Sool and Sanaag regions threatens its success, but Somaliland is stable, democratic, and it generally respects the rule of law. Puntland and southern Somalia cannot claim these achievements.

Somalia as a whole has a fairly homogenous society. Its inhabitants are overwhelmingly



Map 1

Source: *Democratization in Africa*, 2010, p. 250

ethnic Somalis, though minorities are present. Most Somalis speak standard Somali, and those who do not typically understand it. The most widely shared commonality is adherence to the Sunni branch of Islam. Somalis are divided into clan-families, clans, and further subdivisions based on lineage. Divisions along different configurations of clan lines are the primary fault lines of conflict. However, clan structure and the traditional institutions within the different clans are very similar. Southern Somalia is more ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse than the central and northern regions, but many similarities exist. Of course, even relative homogeneity does not guarantee social cohesion, but it is widely believed to facilitate it. For the sake of simplicity, this essay will treat south and central Somalia simply as southern Somalia. Despite greater heterogeneity in the south, the central and southern parts of Somalia both exist under anarchic conditions, whereas Puntland and Somaliland have functioning states.

Without ignoring that differences do exist among the Somali people, it is important to remember that they share many similarities. Given the ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural similarities between Somaliland, Puntland, and southern Somalia, it stands to reason that Somaliland's success could provide useful insights into how the situation in Puntland and southern Somalia might be improved. In 1991, when the Somali state collapsed, all of Somalia faced a similar anarchic situation. Yet, the regions have followed different trajectories. Attempting to pinpoint the reasons for these differences is the focus of this essay. Policy recommendations will also be made.

Overview

Somaliland's peacebuilding and statebuilding model has been laid out by many authors. In the words of Michael Walls, the process was characterized by a "sequence of small bilateral meetings designed to resolve immediate local issues, leading to larger conferences dealing with more complex issues."¹ The question of *why* this model worked has been less thoroughly examined, however. This study will argue that five factors contributed to Somaliland's success: shared identity, leadership, inclusiveness, local ownership, and innovation rooted in tradition.

Somaliland's model was one in which a strong sense of shared identity resulting from historical circumstances fostered an inclusive process that brought almost all relevant actors to the table for numerous local, regional, and statewide conferences. Somalilanders' sense of shared identity facilitated consensus-building throughout the process, which is also an important Somali social value. These factors boosted feelings of local ownership. That the process was rooted in traditional Somali modes of governance meant that it was familiar and accessible to Somalilanders. Moreover, the innovations that went beyond traditional patterns to create novel state and governance structures were developed by Somalilanders themselves. That the process was inclusive and locally produced meant that the peace agreements and the state apparatus that emerged reflected the will of the majority. Most Somalilanders were thus willing to accept the new status quo and to coexist peacefully with each other. Without the buy-in of the majority, a return to civil war would have been more likely.

Somaliland was also fortunate enough to have strong, charismatic, and largely selfless leaders who put the interests of Somaliland above their own pursuit of power. Although many of them did seek power, most did not do so to the point where personal ambition harmed Somaliland. In Somaliland's early years, such leaders were crucial to maintaining peace and

¹ Michael Walls, "The Emergence of a Somali State: Building Peace from Civil War in Somaliland," *African Affairs* 108, no. 432 (May 2009): 380.

building the state because stability had not yet been fully restored and a representative government with checks and balances had not yet been established. It would have been much easier in the early 1990s for a powerful leader to disrupt the entire process in pursuit of self-interest. Today, a system is in place in Somaliland that can rein in potential abuses of power, should they occur. In addition, the existence of an entity in the early 1990s that held the preponderance of power in Somaliland—the Somali National Movement (SNM)—greatly influenced the process by convincing potential spoilers that opposition was futile. Moreover, the good leadership provided by both the SNM and various individuals positively impacted the other four factors in Somaliland’s success.

In order to appreciate the analysis of Somaliland’s peacebuilding and statebuilding process, it is necessary to first understand the nature of Somali society as well as to have a grasp on modern Somali history. The current situation in Somalia is a result of its unique social and historical circumstances, most of which are unfamiliar to Western audiences. The next section will provide an overview of traditional society and Somali history before Somalia achieved independent statehood in 1960. The section following that will address Somali history since 1960, including discussion of the diverging paths taken by Somaliland, Puntland, and southern Somalia after 1991. This history will be essential to understanding how the different regions have grown apart after the initial pan-Somali fervor in 1960. It will also shed light on how Somaliland’s lessons might be applied to Puntland and southern Somalia. The remaining sections will offer a summary of Somaliland’s peacebuilding and statebuilding process as well as analysis and recommendations.

II. Traditional Society and Colonialism

Before its collapse in 1991, the story of Somalia was similar to many African states. After nearly a century of colonial rule, Somalia gained independence in 1960, amidst the wave of decolonization. It flirted with democracy until 1969, when Mohamed Siad Barre took power in a military coup. Siad Barre ruled as a dictator until 1991, often brutally repressing his own people. The civil war that led to Barre's fall did not, however, lead to a new national government. Instead, Somalia was plunged into a prolonged anarchic period without a functioning central government.

During the “scramble for Africa” in the late 1800s and early 1900s, colonial powers divided up the area inhabited by the Somali people. Traditionally Somali lands are broken up into four different modern-day states: Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia. While Somalia is entirely ethnic Somali with a few minorities, parts of Djibouti, Kenya, and Ethiopia remain home to large concentrations of Somali people, where they form local majorities. Many Somalis held on to the elusive dream of a state comprising all of “Greater Somalia” for decades after colonialism ended, although it has largely faded.

A key moment in the colonization period was the 1884 Berlin Conference (also known as the Congress of Berlin), when European countries met to officially divide up Africa. Though the actual conquest of parts of Somalia took a while, sometimes decades, the Berlin Conference marked the moment when “the colonial era can be said to have officially begun.”² By 1900, five colonial states had been created: “the British Somaliland Protectorate, Somalia Italiana, Côte Française des Somaliens (now Djibouti), the Northern Frontier District of Kenya, and the Abyssinian Empire of Menelik II.”³

After independence from the UK in 1963, Kenya retained its portion of Somali-inhabited lands, whereas Ethiopia (Abyssinia) has ruled the Ogaden region since the Anglo-Ethiopian treaty of 1897, a longstanding point of contention between Somalia and Ethiopia. When Djibouti gained its independence from France in 1977, it opted to stand alone as an independent state instead of joining Somalia, despite its large Somali population. Thus, the borders drawn during the colonial period have remained largely intact. The exception is modern-day Somalia itself, which was formed by the union in 1960 of the former Italian Somalia and British Protectorate of Somaliland.

The Somali People

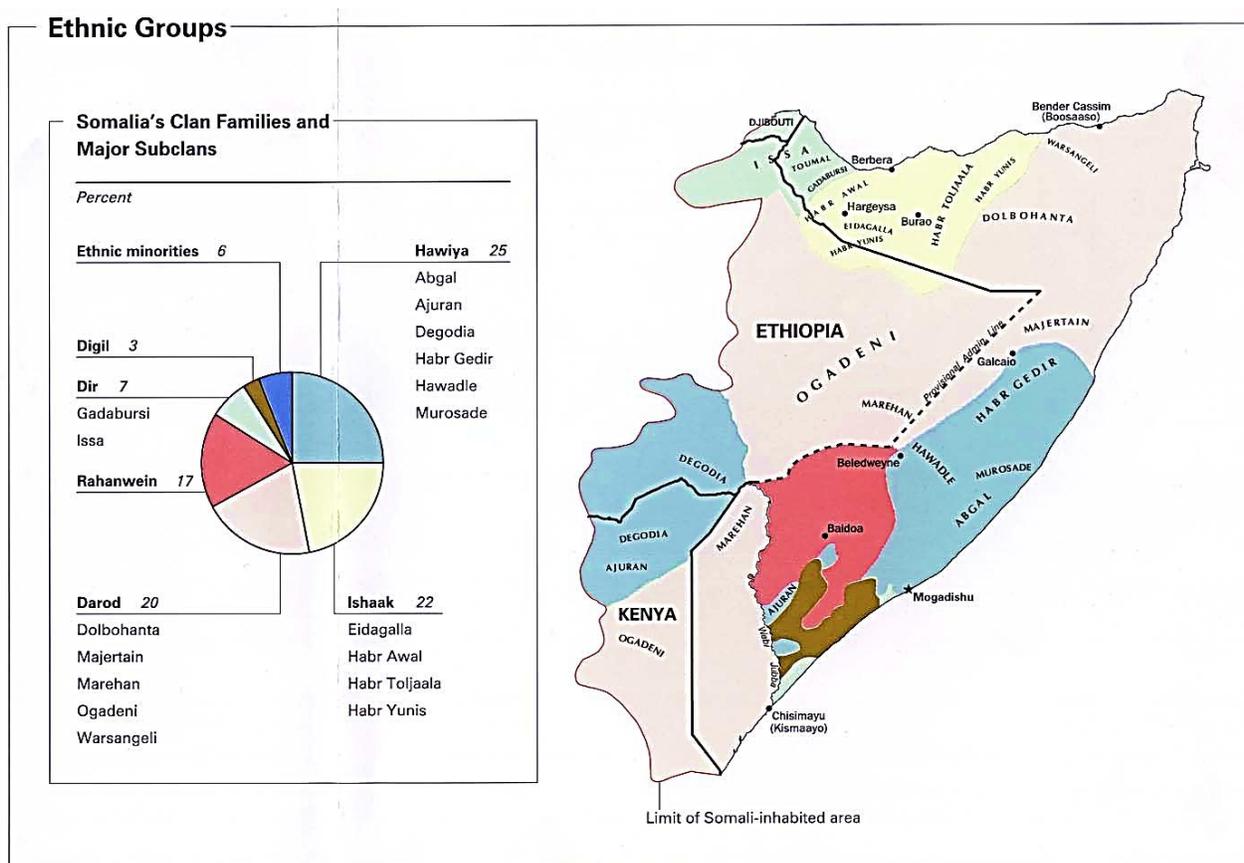
Somalis are divided into clan-families, clans, and multiple sub-units. The landmark 1961 book by I.M. Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy*, remains the standard framework for understanding Somali clans and traditional Somali society (especially the northern clans, on which the study is based).⁴ The politics of Somalia have certainly changed in the fifty years since its writing, with numerous alliances having been formed and broken. Somalis have also become more urbanized, and years of intense warfare have displaced hundreds of thousands of people, disrupting traditional lifestyles. However, the cultural foundations of Somali society have changed little.

² Lee V. Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society: Reconstructing the History of a Pastoral People, 1600-1900* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 183.

³ Mark Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), 24.

⁴ I.M. Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy: A Study of Pastoralism and Politics among the Northern Somali of the Horn of Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

Professor Lewis has written prolifically about Somalia, and he has been referred to as “the founding father of Somali Studies.”⁵ His taxonomy is therefore a good place to start. According to Lewis, six clan-families make up the Somali people: Dir, Isaaq, Hawiye, Darood, Digil, and Rahanweyn.⁶ They are concentrated in different parts of the Horn of Africa. Somaliland is dominated by the Isaaq, but there are sizable minorities of Dir and Darood within its borders. Puntland is inhabited entirely by Darood, and southern Somalia contains all six clan-families except the Isaaq. Outside of Somalia, there are large amounts of Hawiye and Darood in both Ethiopia and Kenya, whereas Djibouti and Ethiopia contain significant numbers of the Dir clan-family (See Map 2). Small ethnic minorities exist in Somalia—mostly concentrated in the south—that have often been on the fringes of mainstream Somali society. They continue to be victims of prejudice and their interests have generally been neglected over the years.



Map 2

Source: Somalia Summary Map, CIA, 2002. Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

⁵ Markus Hoehne and Virginia Luling, “Introduction: Lewis and the Remaining Challenges in Somali Studies,” in *Peace and Milk, Drought and War: Somali Culture, Society and Politics*, eds. Hoehne and Luling (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 1.

⁶ Many Somali names do not have a universally accepted spelling, and sometimes have multiple variations. I have attempted to use spellings that are among the most common.

The majority of Somalis are traditionally pastoral nomads, and many remain so today. Of the six clan-families, only the Digil and Rahanweyn are predominantly agro-pastoralists. Also known collectively as the Digil Mirifle, they primarily reside in the inter-riverine region between the Juba and Shebelle rivers in southern Somalia. Along the rivers, the land is more suitable for agriculture than the rest of Somalia, most of which is comprised of arid and semi-arid territory. It is therefore unsurprising that the majority of Somalis developed a pastoral nomadic way of life, which was historically better suited to this kind of climate than a settled existence.

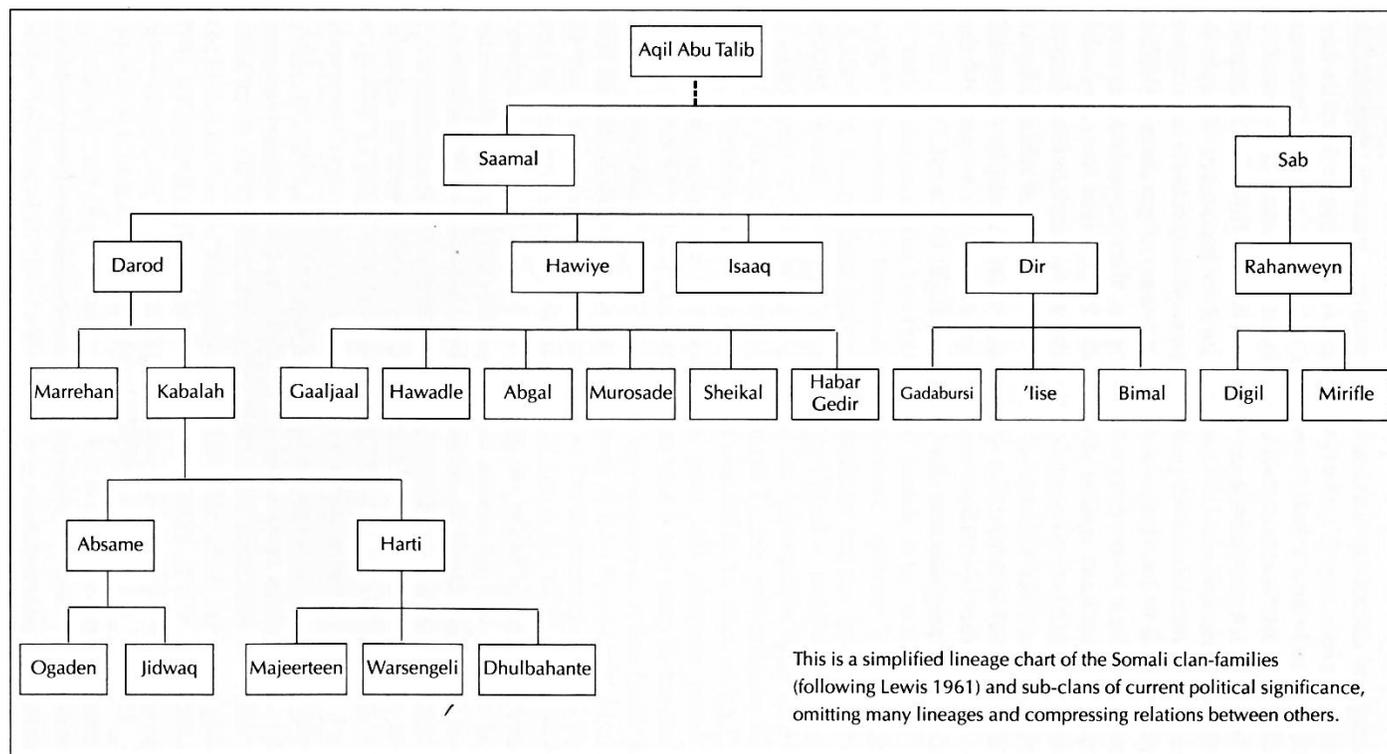


Figure 1: Somali Clan-Families

Source: Mark Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*, 2008, p. 258

The pastoral nomadic clans—Isaaq, Dir, Darood, and Hawiye—share very similar social structures. The Hawiye’s location in the more cultivable land of south and central Somalia has led them to evolve slightly different social patterns than their northern brethren, but they are still primarily pastoral nomads. The major cultural divide is found between the agro-pastoralist Digil and Rahanweyn clan-families on one hand and the pastoral nomads on the other. According to Lewis, “the four pastoral clan-families have a fairly uniform culture. Such differences as occur are most marked where alien institutions and customs have been adopted from neighbouring non-Somali peoples. There are also dialectal differences.”⁷ Primarily because the majority of Somalis are pastoralists or of pastoralist heritage, mainstream Somali society glorifies this way of life and the clan-families associated with it. Indeed, it has been common for the four nomadic clans to look down on the Digil, Rahanweyn, and ethnic minorities that are traditionally associated with agriculture, trade, crafts, and urban occupations.

⁷ Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy*, 8.

Though the Digil, Rahanweyn, and other groups living in the inter-riverine area understand spoken standard Somali (which is properly called *Af-Maxaa*), they speak a different language known as *Af-Maay* (also referred to as *Af-Maymay*, *Maay maay*, and other variants). Unlike the dialectal variations of *Af-Maxaa* found between different pastoral nomadic clans, *Af-Maay* and *Af-Maxaa* are not mutually intelligible.

As a people, the Digil and Rahanweyn are often called *Sab*, which refers to their ancient ancestor by the same name. The Isaaq, Darood, Hawiye, and Dir are known as *Samaale* for the same reason. *Samaale* gave his name to the Somali people, and these four clan-families are considered the quintessential Somalis. Both *Sab* and *Samaale* are said to have originated in Arabia centuries ago. Over the years, the term *Sab* has taken on a derogatory connotation and it is primarily used by the northern clans rather than the Digil and Rahanweyn themselves. These six clan-families comprise roughly 85 percent of Somalis.⁸ The rest are ethnic minorities.

Many minorities are integrated into the clan system through a process known as *sheegad*, which comes from the *Af-Maay* verb meaning “to say” or “to tell.”⁹ This is practiced in the south where most minorities reside. Thus, the practice is typically associated with the Digil and Rahanweyn clan-families, which “adopt” minorities by giving them client status and incorporating them into the clan structure. According to Christian Webersik, “This practice allows the peaceful integration of newcomers into resident clans. Further, it adds to the complexity of lineage identity in the riverine areas, such as Lower Shabelle or the Juba region.”¹⁰

The discipline of Somali studies was slow to recognize the prevalence of ethnic minorities in Somalia. As Ken Menkhaus points out, “Until 1990, Somalia was routinely portrayed as one of the few countries in Africa where nation and state were synonymous, an island of ethnic homogeneity in a sea of multi-ethnic states.”¹¹ In the past two decades, the discipline has come to appreciate the existence of several ethnic minorities.

One such ethnic minority is the Bantu, which was not identified as a distinct group until 1991. However, the people have long existed and have been treated poorly by ethnic Somalis. Comprised primarily of the descendants of East African slaves brought to Somalia in the 19th century and other “pre-Somali” peoples, the Bantu are estimated at about five percent of the Somali population.¹² They are often called *Jareer*, meaning “hard,” in reference to their stiffer, curlier hair. The majority of the Bantu are incorporated into the clan system through *sheegad*, but they are still more vulnerable to discrimination and violence than ethnic Somalis. Recognition of this led the United States to admit roughly 12,000 Bantu for resettlement in 2002 because of their chronic mistreatment.

As is evident, southern Somalia is more ethnically and culturally heterogeneous than the north. Islam, however, is shared by almost all Somalis, making it a point of common identity. Most Somalis are Sunni Muslims and many of them adhere to the Sufist branch. It is believed that Islam came to Somalia sometime between the tenth and thirteenth centuries with the arrival of Sheikh Darood and Sheikh Isaaq, whose names became associated with Somali clans-

⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, “Somalia,” *The World Factbook*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html> (accessed February 23, 2011).

⁹ Bernhard Helander, “Rahanweyn Sociability: A Model for Other Somalis?” In “Voice and Power: The Culture of Language in North-East Africa. Essays in Honour of B.W. Andrzejewski,” supplement, *African Languages and Cultures* 3 (1996): 198.

¹⁰ Christian Webersik, “Differences that Matter: The Struggle of the Marginalised in Somalia,” *Africa* 74, no. 4 (2004): 523.

¹¹ Ken Menkhaus, “Bantu Ethnic Identity in Somalia,” *Annales d’Éthiopie* 19 (2003): 323.

¹² *Ibid.*

families.¹³ It quickly spread throughout Somalia. Although Islamic sharia law was incorporated into Somali society, it has remained less important than traditional Somali law.

In *A Pastoral Democracy*, Lewis identifies five lineage-based social groupings of importance. In his words, “I propose to speak of clan-family, clan, sub-clan, primary lineage, and *diya*-paying group as divisions of decreasing size and to some extent of different characteristics.”¹⁴ According to Lewis, “The clan generally marks the upper limit of corporate political action.”¹⁵ Nevertheless, greater feelings of affinity and common identity typically exist within members of the same clan-family than between members of different clan-families. The political relevance of specific units can vary from time to time as alliances shift and fault lines arise within previously cohesive units. For example, the Isaaq are currently much more cohesive than the Hawiye due to historical circumstances that have led the Hawiye to fracture along clan and sub-clan lines. One typically only reads about clan-families and clans in the news, but the smaller units are the primary building blocks upon which Somali society rests.

These different units trace their lineages agnatically through their common ancestry (i.e., through males). Typically, they go back to an ancestor of note from whom the clan name is taken. Clan-families trace their common lineage back further than clans; clans trace their common lineage back further than sub-clans; and so on. Members of clan-families might trace their ancestry through thirty or more named generations, whereas members of *diya*-paying groups typically count four to eight named generations. Thus, the smaller units are more cohesive given the closer family ties that they share.¹⁶

The most important unit is the *diya*-paying group. *Diya* is an Arabic term meaning “blood money” (also spelled *dia*). The proper Somali word is *mag*, but *diya* is generally preferred in the literature and among Somalis. *Diya*-paying groups are bound to each other by social contract, known as *xeer*. They are committed to paying restitution to other *diya*-paying groups in the event that physical harm or death is inflicted by a member of one group against a member of another. If a member of one group murders someone, it is the responsibility of the murderer’s *diya*-paying group to collectively pay restitution to the *diya*-paying group of the victim. These groups number between a few hundred and a few thousand members, and they are typically larger among the southern clans of the inter-riverine area. Though enforced through custom and not by written law, the *xeer* system is widely adhered to throughout Somalia.

The notion of collective responsibility for crimes committed by individuals may seem alien to Western audiences, but the system has generally worked for Somalis. Moreover, *Diya*-paying groups also support each other in times of hardship in addition to fulfilling their obligations of collective payment. They are the basic unit of social organization in Somali society. As Christopher Coyne explains, “Of all the relationships an individual Somali might have, membership in and loyalty to a *diya*-paying group is the most binding and thus the most frequently invoked. In fact, the *diya*-paying group is the basic political and judicial unit.”¹⁷

Diya-paying groups are represented by at least one informal leader known as an ‘*aaqil*. The role is not one of strong authority, and it is akin to a mediator. The ‘*aaqilo* (plural) are charged with helping to resolve disputes by facilitating agreement. Many scholars argue that

¹³ I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 4th ed. (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2002), 209

¹⁴ Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy*, 4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4-6.

¹⁷ Christopher Coyne, *After War: The Political Economy of Exporting Democracy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 139.

traditional Somali society is acephalous, i.e., lacking a hierarchy. This is partly because of the consensus-based nature of essentially all decision-making. Indeed, Somali society is more egalitarian than most. However, Michael Walls argues that there is “a clear hierarchy of traditional roles.” Moreover, the importance of being able to build consensus favors certain types of people. He says, “Typically, the system is heavily biased against individuals who assume too much direct authority, while according considerable autonomy to those who act as mediators or facilitators.”¹⁸ The role of the *‘aaqil* exemplifies these biases; it would be difficult for a partisan, commandeering person to become an *‘aaqil*. Positions of greater authority than the *‘aaqil* also place a strong emphasis on consensus-building.

When serious problems arise that cannot be resolved by the *‘aaqilo* or between the families directly affected, ad hoc committees of prominent elders are set up to mediate the dispute. These committees are known as *guurti*, and they may include members of clans or sub-clans that are not party to the dispute. This allows for enough distance from the parties involved to ensure that the elders are impartial.

Colonial Rulers

During the era of the British Protectorate of Somaliland, British authorities sought to incorporate the *‘aaqilo* into colonial governance by formalizing the role and offering a small stipend. This politicized the role somewhat, and it increased the number of *‘aaqilo* in the Protectorate. However, it did not fundamentally change the traditional system in Somaliland. Generally, the British did not interfere much in local affairs during their rule. They primarily wanted the Protectorate so they would have easy access to Somali livestock in order to feed their troops stationed in Aden and other garrisons along the Red Sea. It also served as a way-station, providing logistical support to British operations in India and elsewhere, as well as helping them protect the sea lanes of communication through the Red Sea. The port of Berbera was a key city both for exporting livestock and supporting British maritime power. For the British, Somaliland was peripheral to its core interests. Thus, they stayed out of the affairs of Somalilanders as much as possible.

However, they did find it necessary to increase their presence somewhat throughout the late 1800s. This angered many locals and led to a revolt in the early 1900s spearheaded by Sayyid Mohammed Abdullah Hassan, known to the British as the “Mad Mullah.” He mobilized poor Sufi Muslim fighters known as Dervishes (which comes from the Persian word *darvish*, roughly meaning “beggar”). The rebellion raged for two decades, finally coming to an end in 1920. To put down the uprising, the British were forced to move further inland and to extend their effective control over the Protectorate. Their expanded presence remained after 1920, but they were still less invested in Somaliland than in many of their other colonies.

In the south and northeast, the Italians were much more intrusive in their colonial administration of Somali territory. In British Somaliland, there were no European colonists, just Protectorate administrators. In Italian Somalia, by contrast, many colonists settled in the inter-riverine region and in Mogadishu. Even in the northeast, where fewer Italians actually lived, their colonial style of governance was more heavy-handed, especially once fascism emerged in Italy in 1922. However, southern Somalia bore the brunt of Italian rule. The Italians sought to supplant traditional Somali practices with a Western-style bureaucratic, centralized state, in an effort to modernize Somalia. They undermined lineage-based social organization, pushed to

¹⁸ Walls, 374.

replace customary Somali law with Italian law, and railed against “tribalism.” They bribed clan elders and exacerbated clan divisions. They introduced new crops such as bananas, and encouraged their own burgeoning population to settle in Somalia.

In short, the Italians intended to Italianize and rule Somalia for themselves, whereas the British essentially wanted basing rights and favored trading status so they could support their other colonies. This dichotomy resulted in markedly different styles of colonial governance and, by extension, impacts on Somali society. According to Janina Dill, “While British rule in the north allowed for the preservation of traditional structures of self-governance, Italian colonialism in the south resulted in the erosion of traditional forms of political organization and centralized colonial administration.”¹⁹

During World War II, the Italians briefly conquered the British Protectorate. The British forced them out in 1941 and they took control of Italian Somalia as well. All of the Somali territories were controlled by the British Military Administration (BMA) from 1941 until 1950. Generally seen as benevolent and non-intrusive, the BMA allowed and even encouraged Somali nationalism to grow. For example, the Somali Youth League was founded in Mogadishu in 1943 with BMA assistance. It would soon become the most important political organization in Somalia during the push for independence and pan-Somali unity.

Italian Somalia was designated a UN Trust Territory in 1950, and the Italians were selected to administer it given their familiarity with ruling the area. That same year, the British Protectorate of Somaliland was recreated along the same borders as before. Both the British and the Italians soon began preparing their respective territories for independence and possible unification. At this point, their role was to assist in the transition. However, they did a poor job; the unification process was fraught with confusion.

¹⁹ Janina Dill, “Puntland’s Declaration of Autonomy and Somaliland’s Secession: Two Quests for Self-Governance in a Failed State,” in *Asymmetric Autonomy and the Settlement of Ethnic Conflicts*, eds. Weller and Nobbs (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 280.

III. Post-Colonial History

The Unification Process

On June 26, 1960, British Somaliland gained its independence and became a sovereign state. Five days later, Italian Somalia gained its independence as well. The two newly independent states joined to form the Republic of Somalia on July 1, 1960. After the initial excitement abated, it did not take long for skepticism of the new state to set in among Somalilanders. As Mark Bradbury explains, “Under British colonial rule the Isaaq clan had held a preponderance of administrative posts in Somaliland. With unification they became a minority in government... Only 26 per cent of parliamentary seats were allocated to the north and, with the senior ministries and senior army posts held by southerners, northerners felt politically marginalised within the new state.”²⁰ The unification process itself was also open to question. It appears that the two territories were simply unprepared. Saadia Touval finds this lack of adequate preparation strange given that “the possibility of territorial unions in the Horn of Africa has been widely discussed since the inception of Somali nationalism in the 1940’s... It seems that the British, Italians, and the United Nations (under whose auspices the trusteeship over Somalia was exercised) viewed it as an eventuality for which they would prefer not to share responsibility.”²¹

Somalilanders had sought signature of a joint Act of Union by both Somaliland and Italian Somalia upon unification. The Union of Somaliland and Somalia Law was passed by the Somaliland legislature on June 27, 1960, one day after its independence. Somalilanders intended that the same act be passed by the State of Somalia (as Italian Somalia was then known) before unification. However, the State of Somalia’s Constituent Assembly never passed the act and it therefore did not take effect in the rest of the country. Instead, the State of Somalia adopted “in principle” an *Atto di Unione* on June 30, 1960. Although the two acts were similar, Paolo Contini notes, “there were some significant differences between the two texts.”²²

According to Article 7 of the Union of Somaliland and Somalia Law, the Constitution of the Republic of Somalia was to be that of the State of Somalia, although certain conditions were stipulated in the law.²³ The State of Somalia’s Constituent Assembly had adopted the Constitution on June 21, 1960, and it was to take force on July 1, 1960, the date of unification. For the five days before unification, Somaliland was governed by its own Constitution, which it had adopted on June 26. In that short window of independence, Somaliland was recognized by 35 states.²⁴

On the day of unification, the newly elected Provisional President of the Republic Aden Abdullah Osman ‘Daar’²⁵ signed a decree-law that contained a shorter version of the *Atto di*

²⁰ Bradbury, 33.

²¹ Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism: International Politics and the Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 110.

²² Paolo Contini, *The Somali Republic: An Experiment in Legal Integration* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1969), 9.

²³ Pursuant to Articles 2 and 10 of the Union of Somaliland and Somalia Law.

²⁴ Iqbal Jhazbhay, “Somaliland: Africa’s Best Kept Secret, A Challenge to the International Community?” *African Security Review* 12, no. 4 (2003): 79.

²⁵ In Somali society, nicknames are an important part of one’s identity, and they are often the primary name by which people are known. They are typically given when one is older, but they can also be inherited from relatives. Throughout this essay, nicknames are indicated with single quotation marks when a person’s full name is given, in accordance with common practice. The quotation marks are dropped when the nickname stands alone. For more on

Unione. This was intended to formalize the union in light of the confusion generated by two differing acts of union, neither of which had been approved by both territories. However, the newly formed National Assembly did not vote upon the decree-law within the required five days to make it law.²⁶ Thus, it never acquired legal force, and the number of dubious acts of unification was now three.

According to Eugene Cotran, “the uncertainty as to the precise legal effect of these legislative instruments led the Somali Government, in order to remove any doubt, to pass a new Act in accordance with Article 60 of the Constitution.”²⁷ This was done six months after unification, with the National Assembly adopting by acclamation the Act of Union on January 18, 1961. It was promulgated on January 31, 1961, but it took retroactive effect dating to July 1, 1960. For Cotran, this act is the legal basis upon which Somalia became united; it and the Constitution of 1960 were the primary legal foundations of Somalia.

However, the Constitution itself was required to be put to a popular referendum.²⁸ By the time the constitutional referendum was held in June 1961, Somalilanders were opposed to it. The vote was boycotted, but some 100,000 turned out to vote anyway. Over 60 percent of them voted against adopting the constitution. In Hargeisa, 72 percent voted against, while Berbera and Erigavo both recorded 69 percent opposition, and 66 percent in Burao rejected the constitution. Nevertheless, it was passed due to strong support in the rest of Somalia.²⁹

Thus, the legal foundations of Somalia are open to question. Matt Bryden claims, “the de facto union between Somaliland and Somalia fell short of the legal requirements mandated by domestic and international law. Only the recognition of other states testified to the existence of the Somali Republic as a unified state.”³⁰

Despite controversy about the way in which Somalia was united, and although Somaliland voted against the referendum, it was clear that Somaliland had initially intended to join the union. As Contini says, “there is no doubt that on the first of July a full and lawful union was formed by the will of the peoples of the two territories through their elected representatives.”³¹ This made it harder to backtrack even after skepticism of the union had set in among Somalilanders. No serious effort was made by Somaliland to revert to independent statehood in the early years of the republic. Indeed, “when Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, an Isaaq and Somaliland’s former Premier, became Prime Minister in 1967 integration appeared to be an accepted fact.”³²

Somali nicknames, see Markus Hoehne, Muuse Cali Faruur, and Axmed Cabdullahi Du’aale, “Somali (Nick) Names and their Meanings,” in *Peace and Milk, Drought and War: Somali Culture, Society and Politics*, eds. Hoehne and Luling (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 345-364.

²⁶ Pursuant to Article 63 of the Constitution of the Republic of Somalia.

²⁷ Eugene Cotran, “Legal Problems Arising out of the Formation of the Somali Republic,” *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (July 1963): 1012.

²⁸ Pursuant to Article 3 of the Transitional and Final Provisions of the Constitution.

²⁹ John Drysdale, *Whatever Happened to Somalia?* 2nd ed. (London: HAAN Publishing, 2001), 133-134.

³⁰ Matt Bryden, “The Banana Test: Is Somaliland Ready for Recognition?” *Annales d’Éthiopie* 19 (2003): 343.

³¹ Contini, 10.

³² Bradbury, 34.

The Somali State: 1960-1991

Between 1960 and 1969, Somalia governed itself as a parliamentary democracy. During this period, it was generally seen as an exemplary African democracy. Feelings of pan-Somalism were strong, and the new state had great ambitions. It hoped to eventually incorporate the surrounding Somali-inhabited territory into a larger state.

However, when Kenya gained independence from the UK in 1963, the Northern Frontier District (NFD) was not permitted to secede from Kenya despite a British commission's findings that the Somali-dominated district overwhelmingly supported independence and eventual union with Somalia.³³ At the time, I.M. Lewis wrote that "the long-term effects of forcing some 200,000 Somali tribesmen to remain in Kenya may be far-reaching and ultimately damaging to Western strategy in Africa."³⁴ Indeed, it led to the secessionist Shifta War between the Kenyan government and ethnic Somalis rebels living in Kenya from 1963 to 1967, an insurgency that was eventually quelled. It also led Somalia to temporarily break ties with the UK and align itself with the Soviet Union. Losing the NFD generated negative feelings toward the British. As Lewis described it, "to Somalis this is a further injury in the long train of British betrayals of Somali interests which began with the Anglo-Ethiopian treaty of 1897."³⁵

The dream of Greater Somalia became even more remote when, in 1964, the Somali National Army attacked Ethiopian troops in the Ogaden region to support separatist guerrillas. The Ethiopian army beat back Somali troops and a ceasefire was signed after several weeks of warfare, leaving the Ogaden as part of Ethiopia.

The setbacks to engineering a pan-Somali state exacerbated internal governance issues. Despite early successes, Somalia's political parties soon began to break along clan lines. Its parliament fragmented and the government became a tool for patronage and corruption, rather than serving the people. Frustration and discontent grew among the population. On October 15, 1969, Somalia's president, Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, was assassinated in Las Anod by one of his bodyguards. Six days later, Major-General Mohamed Siad Barre seized power before Parliament could vote on a successor in what became known as a "bloodless revolution." The coup was not entirely surprising given dissatisfaction with the civilian government, and Somalis were generally relieved when Barre took power. He offered the stability and unity that seemed impossible in Somalia's fractious democracy.

Barre and his Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) controlled all levers of state power. Hours after the coup, they "abrogated the constitution and the Supreme Court, canceled the National Assembly, and forbade any political activity or organization."³⁶ In October 1970, the SRC laid out its agenda in the First Charter of the Revolution. "Blending concepts of wealth-sharing and self-reliance with Marxism-Leninism, Islam and anti-imperialism, the revolutionary agenda struck a sympathetic chord with the Somali public," says Bradbury.³⁷ Ahmed Samatar describes the SRC's agenda as an "odd but potent mixture of nationalism and neo-Marxism."³⁸ The socialist turn was due in part to "the army's growing dependence on Russia and the idealistic

³³ See *Report of the Northern District Commission*, Cmnd. 1900 (London: 1962).

³⁴ I.M. Lewis, "The Somali Republic since Independence," *The World Today* 19, no. 4 (April 1963): 173.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 172.

³⁶ Ahmed I. Samatar, "The Curse of Allah: Civic Disembowelment and the Collapse of the State in Somalia," in *The Somali Challenge: From Catastrophe to Renewal?* Ed. Ahmed I. Samatar (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), 115-116.

³⁷ Bradbury, 36.

³⁸ Samatar, 116.

orientation of young intellectuals unimpressed by Somalia's previous pro-Western policies," according to Lewis.³⁹

Somalia had reestablished its ties with the West in 1967, calming tensions left over from the perceived betrayal by the British over Kenya's Northern Frontier District. Then-Prime Minister Egal had also adopted a policy of détente with Kenya and Ethiopia, essentially abandoning pan-Somalism. The United States and Soviet Union had each been providing aid to Somalia in the 1960s and early 1970s as they jockeyed for influence in the non-aligned state. While Soviet aid was primarily military in nature, the United States focused on development assistance. However, Barre's adoption of Scientific Socialism alienated the United States, whose foreign policy was primarily motivated by containing the Soviet Union and the spread of communism. As Somalia moved closer to the Soviets ideologically and materially, the United States began to reduce its aid. "By 1974, U.S. assistance programs had ground to a halt. Siyaad Barre's revolutionary regime had made things progressively uncomfortable for the United States."⁴⁰

As part of the program of Scientific Socialism, Barre undertook a campaign against "tribalism" in 1970. Since unification, Somali leaders had viewed Somalia's clan-based society as antithetical to a modern state. Efforts had been made to downplay clan identity during the democratic years, but Barre undertook more extreme measures. According to Lewis, Barre's campaign involved abolition of traditional clan practices such as the payment of *diya*. The regime discouraged or prohibited traditional positions of authority and clan-based social organization, and it implemented multiple new programs designed to enhance allegiance to the state. These policies "culminated in demonstrations later in the year and early in 1971 when effigies representing 'tribalism, corruption, nepotism and misrule' were symbolically burnt or buried in the Republic's main centres."⁴¹

Anti-clan measures were not particularly popular, but much of what Barre accomplished in the first five years met with wide approval, both internationally and domestically. For example, he boosted economic development, empowered women, dramatically increased literacy rates, and introduced a common Somali orthography (based on Latin characters).

However, female empowerment and new family laws were not popular with Somali Islamic groups, nor was adoption of the Latin alphabet in 1972, which was chosen over Arabic and "various Somali-invented scripts."⁴² Some Islamic scholars raised protest upon adoption of a new Family Code, ten of whom were executed in January 1975. This type of crackdown on dissent was not uncommon under Barre, and it served to alienate much of the population and to radicalize Islamists.⁴³

In addition to summary executions and torture, Somalis could be arbitrarily detained without charge by the security apparatus, which primarily consisted of the National Security Service. The freedom to organize, protest, and speak freely were curtailed. Political opposition

³⁹ I.M. Lewis, *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland: Culture, History, Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 39.

⁴⁰ David Rawson, "Dealing with Disintegration: U.S. Assistance and the Somali State," in *The Somali Challenge: From Catastrophe to Renewal?* Ed. Ahmed I. Samatar (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), 160.

⁴¹ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 209.

⁴² Lewis, *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland*, 41.

⁴³ For more on Islamic radicalization, see Roland Marchal, "Islamic Political Dynamics in the Somali Civil War: Before and after September 11," in *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*, ed. Alexander de Waal (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 114-145.

was not tolerated, and the importance of Islam was downplayed by the secular, modernizing SRC. Such harsh measures alienated many Somalis from the state.

Moreover, a massive famine in the north of Somalia in 1974-1975 reduced confidence in Barre's regime. Though sparked by a drought, Ahmed and Green argue that government policies exacerbated the famine's scope. In their words, "the socialist experiment—and perhaps more crucially, the political hostility to an 'opposition' area—turned the 1974-75 drought into a major famine in the north, resulting in over 20,000 deaths, forcing 10% to 15% of the entire pastoral population to register in relief camps."⁴⁴ Among the causes that they cite are the market disruption caused by nationalization, failure of a food-rationing system, and restriction of foreign trade.

By the eve of the Somali-Ethiopian War (also known as the Ogaden War) in 1977, Somalis were generally dissatisfied with the Barre regime. "Increasingly, the state was identified with concentrated power, fear and intimidation, and disregard for any form of law and due process."⁴⁵ The war boosted the regime's popularity to its highest levels. It channeled latent pan-Somali feelings against a common enemy, distracting Somalis from their domestic troubles and uniting them behind the war effort. Somalis had long seen Ethiopia as a hostile state that occupied their native lands and ruled over their brethren in the Ogaden. The civilian administration's policy of détente with Ethiopia had contributed to the discontent that eventually resulted in its ouster. The SRC, aware of its dismal popularity, seized an opportunity to quickly turn its fortunes around by invading Ethiopia in support of the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), a Somali resistance movement in the Ogaden.

Somalia had been providing aid to the WSLF for many years. In 1974, when Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie was removed from power, the SRC boosted its support for the WSLF. In July 1977, the SRC ordered an outright invasion, hoping for a quick victory while Ethiopia was weak from its revolution, which had brought the Marxist-Leninist Mengistu Haile Mariam to power in February 1977. Mengistu was still consolidating his power at the time of Somalia's invasion, and the Somali National Army (SNA) made rapid gains. Ethiopia's more sizable army was unable to repel the SNA. According to Terrence Lyons, "The Soviets had built up Somalia's army, especially its tank forces, at a far faster rate than the United States had equipped Ethiopia. Moreover, Mogadishu was able to commit all of its forces to the Ogaden, whereas the Derg (the new Ethiopian revolutionary military government) had to fight simultaneously in Eritrea and against numerous other domestic rebel groups."⁴⁶

Somalia's initial success in the war was short-lived, however. The complex machinations of the global superpowers essentially determined the outcome. The Ethiopians forced the Somali National Army out of Ethiopia with the assistance of Russian and Cuban forces, which had arrived to support their communist brethren in late 1977. By March 1978, the war was over and Barre's renewed popularity among Somalis collapsed.

While the United States had supported Ethiopia in the early 1970s, Mengistu's rise to power led the Americans to cut off aid. The Soviets, as mentioned, had supported Somalia. However, even before Mengistu took power in Ethiopia, the Soviets began providing military support to the communist Derg, briefly supporting both Somalia and Ethiopia. Meanwhile, there

⁴⁴ Ismail Ahmed and Reginald Green, "The Heritage of War and State Collapse in Somalia and Somaliland: Local-level Effects, External Interventions and Reconstruction," *Third World Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (1999): 117.

⁴⁵ Samatar, 117.

⁴⁶ Terrence Lyons, "Crises on Multiple Levels: Somalia and the Horn of Africa," in *The Somali Challenge: From Catastrophe to Renewal?* Ed. Ahmed I. Samatar (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), 195-196.

had been some indication that the United States might resume aid to Somalia in return for cutting off ties with the Soviets. In November 1977, Barre, now out of favor with the Soviets for having invaded Ethiopia, and frustrated by the growing Soviet military aid to Somalia's enemy, expelled Russian advisors from Somalia. American military aid did not arrive, however. Not only that, "America refused to allow Iran and Saudi Arabia to send arms to the Somalis, and in January [1978] agreed with its N.A.T.O. allies to permit the Soviets to act alone with the Cubans in their adventure on the Horn."⁴⁷ It seems that domestic politics played a major role in the U.S. decision not to engage the Soviets in a proxy war in the Horn of Africa. Once the West officially decided not to get involved, it took only a couple of months for the Ethiopian-Russian-Cuban alliance to win the war.

Domestically, the loss was devastating for Barre and the SRC. Defeat made Barre look weak, and it exacerbated internal dissent. In April 1978, he survived a coup attempt by military officers who were members of the Majerteen clan (part of the Darood clan-family). One of the conspirators was Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, who managed to escape with his life and later became president of Puntland (1998-2004) and then of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (2004-2008). Barre's reaction to the coup attempt was to increase the insularity among the ruling elite. As Drysdale puts it, "This near-disaster for Barre, taken together with his military defeat in Ethiopia, followed by attempted assassinations, persuaded him to embark on a defensive course of Somali nepotism."⁴⁸

In contravention of his own anti-clan measures, Barre began to heavily favor certain clans and to mistreat others. Despite Barre's rhetoric, there had always been a bias toward the Mareehaan, Ogaden, and Dulbahante clans (Barre's own clan was the Mareehaan, whereas his mother's was the Ogaden and his son-in-law came from the Dulbahante). These favored clans, all part of the Darood clan family, were collectively referred to as the MOD because of their prominence in the Somali government, even before the war. After 1978, clan favoritism intensified.

The Ogaden War provoked a massive exodus of ethnic-Somali refugees from Ethiopia into Somalia. Hundreds of thousands flooded into Somalia, many of whom were set up in refugee camps. Lewis estimates that the refugees amounted to a nearly 20 percent increase in the population of Somalia.⁴⁹ Western donors took notice of the refugee crisis and increased aid to Somalia. With the Soviets out of the country, the role of propping up the Barre regime fell to the West. Though well intentioned, Western aid did not always make it to its intended beneficiaries, and it helped Barre remain in power throughout the 1980s. Bradbury says that aid amounted to about \$120 million annually, adding, "This became an important source of funding for the government and the military. While very little development assistance trickled down to the ordinary citizens, government employees, business people and residents near to refugee camps did benefit from access to cheap food diverted from the camps."⁵⁰ It has been estimated that over 80 percent of foreign aid targeted for refugees was misappropriated by the army.⁵¹ Had Somalia been abandoned to its fate after the Ogaden War, the Barre regime probably would have fallen in

⁴⁷ David Laitin, "The War in the Ogaden: Implications for Siyaad's Role in Somali History," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 17, no. 1 (March 1979): 107.

⁴⁸ Drysdale, 136.

⁴⁹ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 248.

⁵⁰ Bradbury, 42.

⁵¹ Ahmed and Green, 116.

the early 1980s, if not sooner. Foreign aid helped it cling to power, however, and it became brutally repressive.

Though the majority of conspirators who attempted the 1978 coup were executed, some escaped and soon formed the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF). It was headquartered in Ethiopia and enjoyed support from the Ethiopian government. This Majerteen-dominated insurgent group undertook a guerrilla campaign against the regime. Lewis notes, “That the Mijerteyn sought support in Ethiopia, Somalia’s traditional enemy, is both a sign of their desperation and a measure of the degree of disintegration of Somali national (and clan-family, e.g. Darod) solidarity.”⁵²

In April 1981, a similar opposition group, primarily comprised of Isaaq, was founded in London, known as the Somali National Movement (SNM). Following a government massacre of protesting students in Hargeisa in 1982, the SNM set up shop in Ethiopia and began its own guerrilla campaign of cross-border raids. Just as Barre’s regime supported insurgent groups inside Ethiopia, such as the WSLF, Mengistu’s government sought to increase its influence in Somalia by supporting groups such as the SNM and the SSDF. Michael Walls argues that the SNM’s relocation to Ethiopia in 1982 marked the beginning of the Somali civil war,⁵³ although most other scholars say that it began in 1988.

Both a political entity and an armed resistance movement, the SNM soon became the voice of Somaliland. The SNM reflected northern feelings of disenfranchisement and victimization, in addition to desires for autonomy. It coordinated some of its resistance efforts with the SSDF, led by Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed. Both of these movements enjoyed some military successes against the regime, which invited retaliation from Barre. He not only retaliated against the movements themselves, but also against the clans with which they were identified, regardless of whether or not individual clan members provided support to the movements. The Majerteen of the Mudug region were systematically targeted, and the Isaaq of the north suffered brutal repression that bordered on attempted genocide. Pan-Somalism had clearly fallen apart, giving way to brutal inter-clan warfare, primarily perpetrated by Barre’s favored MOD clans against any real or perceived enemies from other clans.

Clashes between clans had always been part of Somali society, but the intensity of this period of warfare reached new heights. Inter-clan hostility had been exacerbated by Barre’s favoritism of some clans and abuse of others. Moreover, “[Barre’s] policies of divide and rule, particularly since the Ogaden war, had included dispensing weapons to his current allies to fight his current foes, and this had facilitated the spread of modern arms throughout the country.”⁵⁴ Barre continued his cynical exploitation of clan divisions throughout the 1980s. For example, in the north he sought to convince non-Isaaq clans to support him against the SNM.⁵⁵ He also intentionally placed Isaaq military officers from the Somali National Army in “the Majerteen regions where the government was waging war against local people.”⁵⁶

In April 1988, Mengistu and Barre mutually agreed to stop supporting each other’s opposition groups. This forced the SSDF and the SNM to leave their safe havens in Ethiopia. In desperation, the SNM invaded Somaliland and captured the cities of Hargeisa and Burao from Barre’s forces in May 1988. Soon after, the regime retaliated with overwhelming force against

⁵² Lewis, *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland*, 67.

⁵³ Walls, 377.

⁵⁴ Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 263.

⁵⁵ Walls, 377.

⁵⁶ Ahmed and Green, 118.

the two cities, leveling them with artillery and aerial bombardment. Drysdale estimates that between 15,000 and 20,000 Somalis died in the onslaught.⁵⁷ The slaughter perpetrated against the Isaaq by its own government has become burned into the collective conscience and shared history of Somalilanders. To this day, a MiG fighter jet that was used by the Somali military during the bombardment stands as a monument in the center of Hargeisa, a reminder of the brutality that Somalilanders suffered. Hundreds of thousands of Somalis fled the country as a result of the assault, and the United States cut military aid to express its disapproval.⁵⁸ At this point, no doubt remained that a full-scale civil war was underway.

In addition to genuine disagreements about how to govern Somalia, and conflicts over resources, Afyare Abdi Elmi argues that clan pride played a major role in the civil war. In his words, “Clan pride and the culture of taking revenge against any member of the perpetrator’s clan (i.e., collective punishment) are not only the causes of traditional clan wars but the cause of the recent civil war.”⁵⁹ The massive death and destruction wrought by modern weaponry raised the intensity of the conflict to a level never before experienced by Somalis. The sheer number of people killed in relatively short periods of time contributed to an intense cycle of violence and revenge that has proven difficult to break.

By the late 1980s, the Somali state was on the verge of collapse. For the most part, it was unable to fulfill the basic functions of a state. Constant warfare obviously made the situation worse. In 1989, two more opposition groups were formed, the United Somali Congress (USC) and the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM). The Hawiye clan-family dominated the USC, and the Ogaden clan (of the Darood clan-family) formed the majority of the SPM. Soon after its founding, General Mohamed Farah ‘Aideed’ rose to become the head of the USC. He would become infamous for his role in the 1993 “Blackhawk Down” incident.

With Siad Barre’s regime reeling, the SNM, SPM, and USC formed an alliance in August 1990. It was not long before USC forces entered Mogadishu and brought the war directly to Barre. Fighting in Mogadishu was fierce in December 1990 and January 1991, ultimately forcing Barre to flee on January 27, 1991. Though the regime had been toppled, the different factions could not agree on how to proceed with the creation of a government, and the civil war continued unabated.

After the Collapse: 1991-2011

Much of the fighting in the immediate aftermath of Barre’s departure was between General Aideed and Ali Mahdi Mohamed, both of whom were members of the USC and the Hawiye clan-family. Aideed’s Habar Gedir clan and Ali Mahdi’s Abgal clan became bitter adversaries locked in an intractable conflict.

Meanwhile, the SNM withdrew to the north and declared Somaliland an independent state in May 1991. With Barre gone, the SNM was no longer concerned with matters in the south; it refocused its energies on making peace in Somaliland and rebuilding its shattered society (the process of peacebuilding and statebuilding in Somaliland will be addressed in detail in the next section).

⁵⁷ Drysdale, 138.

⁵⁸ Bradbury, 44.

⁵⁹ Afyare Abdi Elmi, *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration: Identity, Political Islam and Peacebuilding* (London: Pluto Press, 2010), 20.

The geopolitical landscape in 1991 was vastly different than during the Ogaden War and the years immediately following it. With the Soviet Union collapsing and the United States exploring a newfound freedom to utilize its military might in the Persian Gulf, a significantly more interventionist international community was taking shape. Somalia, lacking a government and with a civil war raging uncontrollably, attracted the attention of numerous international actors.

However, Somalia was of less strategic interest to the United States now that it was no longer seen through the prism of U.S.-Soviet competition. Thus, aid agencies and humanitarian NGOs were among the first to arrive on the scene, seeking to provide life's basics to the war-ravaged Somalis. Multiple states and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a regional organization comprised of east African countries, sought to mediate between the warring factions. Conferences were held in Djibouti in May and June, but no agreement was reached. Throughout, the SNM stayed away, committed as it was to Somaliland.

After roughly 16 months of intense warfare in the south that claimed the lives of about 25,000 in Mogadishu alone,⁶⁰ the UN secured a ceasefire between Ali Mahdi's and Aideed's factions, the principal belligerents at that point. Soon after, on April 24, 1992, the UN Security Council (UNSC) passed Resolution 751, which created the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM). The mission was primarily designed to distribute aid and to observe the ceasefire. Thus, it was relatively small. It was not long before convoys were attacked and aid was stolen by armed militiamen, prompting U.S. President George H.W. Bush to propose sending 28,000 troops to protect and support the aid effort; the proposal was accepted.

The Unified Task Force (UNITAF) was authorized by UNSC Resolution 794 on December 3, 1992, which invoked Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Led by the United States, UNITAF's mission was to "establish a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia as soon as possible."⁶¹ It is generally seen as having been successful, and it paved the way for UNOSOM II to take over with a broader mandate and more forces in May 1993.

Authorized by UNSC Resolution 814 on March 26, 1993, UNOSOM II's goals were to support a peace agreement signed in Addis Ababa earlier that month, and to assist in restoring a central government. Before long, UNOSOM II became involved in factional fighting, much of which was blamed on Aideed. After Aideed's forces attacked Pakistani peacekeepers on June 5, 1993, the United States decided to capture him, which was attempted in October 1993. The mission led to the death of 18 U.S. rangers and hundreds of Somalis. As Americans questioned why they were sacrificing lives for a conflict that seemed of little concern to them, President Clinton began to pull U.S. personnel out of the UN mission. They were all withdrawn by March 1994. Other nations began to withdraw their forces as well, and UNOSOM II left Somalia by March 1995.

Ever since their inauspicious beginnings in the early 1990s, international efforts to bring peace and a functioning government to Somalia have failed. Myriad peace conferences, held outside of Somalia, have focused on implanting a compromise government in Mogadishu after warring factions promise to cease hostilities. They have demonstrated the would-be peacemakers' ignorance about local history, clans, and social structures. Too often they have also been dominated by the self-interested designs of Somalia's neighbors, especially Ethiopia.⁶²

⁶⁰ Bradbury, 47.

⁶¹ United Nations Security Council (SC), Resolution 794, "Somalia," ¶ 7, December 3, 1992.

⁶² For a critique of the international community's interventions in Somalia, see Elmi.

After UNOSOM II left Somalia in 1995, the next promising international attempt to create a functioning government for all of Somalia came out of the Arta peace conference in Djibouti, which lasted from May to August 2000. This conference established the Transitional National Government (TNG). There was initially much optimism about the TNG because the Arta conference included a broad cross-section of Somali clans, elders, religious leaders, and intellectuals⁶³ while minimizing the influence of the warlords.⁶⁴ Thus, it was seen as a home-grown Somali solution despite being hosted in Djibouti. The conference created a representative parliament with seats divided among the major clan-families and with some reserved for minorities. The Isaaq were not included because Somaliland did not participate in the conference. The TNG was backed by the United States, European Union, UN, IGAD, and various other states. Despite initial high hopes, the TNG never garnered much support from Somalis, and it never effectively controlled more than a few blocks of Mogadishu before collapsing in 2002.

In 2004, after a two-year conference in Mbagathi, Ethiopia, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was created. It was similarly supported by various international actors. A greater proportion of warlords were invited to this conference in the hopes that they would be able to secure peace after agreement was reached, despite their general lack of legitimacy to govern among Somalis. Lewis reports that “Ethiopia and Kenya, which had experienced Somali irredentism in the past, were both strongly involved.”⁶⁵ Indeed, Ethiopia was instrumental in securing the election of Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed as president of the TFG. Yusuf had enjoyed Ethiopian support for the majority of the previous 25 years, first as head of the SSDF and later as president of Puntland. He was one of many Somalis that Ethiopia backed in pursuit of its own interests within Somalia. Unsurprisingly, the TFG was not welcomed by Somalis. It could not even enter Mogadishu, instead establishing itself in Jowhar and later Baidoa. It was not until after the Ethiopian invasion of 2006 that the TFG could even set foot in Somalia’s capital.

Ethiopia invaded southern Somalia with the support of the United States and others because of the growing power of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC). A loose collection of sharia courts whose primary affinity aside from Islam was a shared distaste for warlords and the TFG, as well as a desire for order, the UIC quickly rose in prominence. In 2006, the UIC’s militias mounted an offensive against the local warlords. They quickly won multiple victories, and by late 2006 they were in control of much of southern Somalia, including Mogadishu. The UIC brought a level of order and security to southern Somalia and the capital not seen since 1991. Though Somalis are generally tolerant Muslims and would likely have militated against some of the courts’ more conservative policies in the long term, such as forcing women to wear the veil, local Somalis were primarily grateful for the calm. The UIC also shares kin ties with the local Hawiye clan-family, which helped bolster its support.

The rise of the sharia-based UIC alarmed Christian-dominated Ethiopia as well as a post-9/11 United States consumed by fears of Islamic terrorism. Moreover, Yusuf’s TFG was supported by Ethiopia and many others in the international community. With the UIC controlling Mogadishu and exercising effective control over vast swathes of southern Somalia, the TFG’s legitimacy was more in trouble than ever. The UIC were labeled terrorists despite their role in pacifying Somalia. Ethiopian and U.S. fears were not entirely baseless, however. As Lewis

⁶³ Lewis, *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland*, 81.

⁶⁴ Warlords in Somalia are generally not traditional leaders within the clan system, but they have gained power through violence, looting, and blackmail.

⁶⁵ Lewis, *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland*, 83

notes, “The Islamists’ hysterical calls for an international Muslim *jihad* against Abdillahi and his Ethiopian and US allies did little, of course, to dismiss the claims that they were ‘terrorists.’”⁶⁶ Still, the rush to invade and install the highly unpopular TFG in Mogadishu demonstrated a short-sighted outlook.

Backed by the United States, Ethiopian forces began operations in Somalia in December 2006, quickly overpowering the UIC militias. By May 2007, Yusuf had declared victory and he sought to root out Hawiye Islamists from Mogadishu through the combined efforts of his own army and Ethiopian forces. Hundreds of thousands of inhabitants fled Mogadishu as the TFG and Ethiopian forces “turned their heavy artillery against the civilian quarters of the city where they believed their opponents were concentrated.”⁶⁷ Many civilians were killed and wounded.

In February, while Ethiopian forces were still combating the UIC, the UN authorized the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) through UNSC Resolution 1744. The mission remains active today, and it has helped maintain some semblance of calm over the past few years. Ethiopian troops withdrew in January 2009, but the TFG still lacks effective control over Somalia, apart from sections of Mogadishu. It has little support among Somalis, and its international backers have lost patience with the TFG due to its failure to achieve much of anything. Despite a new president, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, who replaced Yusuf in January 2009, the TFG has remained ineffective. Meanwhile, Islamists and warlords continue to vie for influence among the local population.

The two primary Islamist groups of concern to the TFG are Al-Shabaab and Hizb al-Islam, yet they do not share identical agendas.⁶⁸ Indeed, they have fought against each other in recent years. In May 2010, a renewed offensive by the Al-Qaeda-linked Al-Shabaab against TFG and African Union forces started a fresh round of fighting, which has yet to end. On December 24, 2010, Al-Shabaab and Hizb al-Islam merged⁶⁹ after Al-Shabaab’s military superiority became clear on the battlefield. In the last few months, AMISOM has been fighting the merged organization, and it appears to have made ground against Al-Shabaab. In early April 2011, AMISOM claimed that it had retaken much of Mogadishu and was slowly making gains against Al-Shabaab elsewhere.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, the TFG’s international backers expressed dissatisfaction with its parliament’s unilateral decision on February 3, 2011, to extend itself for an additional three years. The TFG’s mandate had been set to expire in August 2011, and many in the international community were planning for what was to come after. The decision blindsided many of them, and the United States and UN both “signaled their displeasure...with the Somali Parliament’s decision to extend itself for three more years, despite accomplishing almost nothing.”⁷¹ In addition, the Transitional Federal Institutions decided on March 27, 2011, to extend its mandate for one year.⁷² The move was opposed by the Somali Parliament, despite having taken a similar action. Most in the international community oppose the extension of both the government’s and

⁶⁶ Ibid., 88.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 89.

⁶⁸ See International Crisis Group, *Somalia’s Divided Islamists*, Africa Briefing 74 (Nairobi/Brussels: International Crisis Group, May 18, 2010).

⁶⁹ “Somali Rebel Leader Backs Merger with Al-Shabaab,” *The Daily Star* (Lebanon), December 28, 2010.

⁷⁰ Herve Bar, “African Troops Pinning Back Rebels in Mogadishu,” *Agence France-Presse*, April 7, 2011.

⁷¹ Jeffrey Gettleman, “U.S. Critical of Assembly in Somalia,” *The New York Times*, February 4, 2011.

⁷² Michael Onyiego, “Somali Government Future Clouded as Mandate Nears Expiration,” *Voice of America News*, March 30, 2011.

the parliament's mandates. The United States and UN are now calling for the TFG to step aside in August.⁷³

To add to the complexity of the situation, a sizable area in Somalia's southwestern corner along the Kenyan border was created as a semiautonomous region on April 5, 2011. It is known as both Jubaland and Azania, and it is supported by Kenya. Its new president, Mohamed Abdi Gandhi, has pledged to fight against Al-Shabaab and Islamic extremism.⁷⁴ Whether Jubaland will consolidate its strength and grow to resemble a de facto state remains to be seen.

Afyare Abdi Elmi argues that U.S. policy towards Somalia has been dominated by fears of terrorism, leading it to support secular governments that are corrupt and feckless instead of Islamist groups that are at least able to bring order and root out corruption. Ethiopia, meanwhile, "is interested in establishing several clan-based regions that are hostile to each other but that have good relations with Addis Ababa."⁷⁵ Whether or not one agrees with Elmi's analysis, Ethiopia does have good relations with both Somaliland and Puntland.

Created in 1998, Puntland is a self-declared autonomous region in Somalia's northeast. Officially, it is dedicated to a unified Somalia, but this came into question when it announced in January 2011 that it would no longer cooperate with the TFG, as it had been doing previously.⁷⁶

After Somalia had languished for seven years without a central government, the SSDF and local leaders carved out their own section of Somalia in the Majerteen-dominated northeast, which the Italians had referred to as Migiurtinia. The Majerteen is a sub-clan of the Harti clan, which itself is part of the Darood clan-family. The Darood is essentially the only clan-family that resides in the northeast, apart from a smattering of non-Darood.

From 1995 to 2000, the international community was largely absent from Somalia, and Somalis began forming various local and regional administrations. Once the international community again became active in Somalia, beginning with the Arta conference in 2000, local processes became warped and distorted due to individual incentives to curry international favor. In the late 1990s, Somaliland was consolidating its power, and other regions seemed to be forming effective regional governments—one being a Digil and Rahanweyn administration in the Bay and Bakool regions, and another being a Hawiye government in Mogadishu that was gaining control of the surrounding territory. These efforts soon floundered. However, they helped spur the creation of Puntland.

The SSDF helped organize a conference of elders in the town of Garowe and, on May 5, 1998, the participants declared the Puntland State of Somalia as an autonomous region. With Garowe as its capital, they hoped it would someday form one piece of a federal Somalia. The conference itself had been "preceded by lengthy meetings of clan elders across the region."⁷⁷ This was seen as crucially important because "leaders in the north realized that the key shortcoming in the south was the failure to first conduct a grassroots campaign to rebuild inter-

⁷³ Hamsa Omar and Sarah McGregor, "Somalia's Government Says It Opposes United Nations-Backed Talks in Kenya," *Bloomberg*, April 11, 2011.

⁷⁴ Alex Thurston, "New Semiautonomous Region in Somalia Vows to Fight Al-Shabaab," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 6, 2011.

⁷⁵ Elmi, 103.

⁷⁶ Michael Onyiego, "Renewed Mandate in Doubt as Puntland Breaks Away From Somali Government," *Voice of America News*, January 18, 2011.

⁷⁷ International Crisis Group, *Somalia: The Trouble with Puntland*, Africa Briefing 64 (Nairobi/Brussels: International Crisis Group, August 12, 2009), 4.

clan cohesion and unity of purpose.”⁷⁸ Whatever the reasons for its success, Puntland has been significantly more stable than the south ever since.

Though not fully democratic, Puntland has developed some characteristics of representative government. Its parliament is weak and based on clan and sub-clan affiliation, but the existence of the institution could help its own development over time. Members are elected by clan and sub-clan leaders, and must be endorsed by an electoral commission. This means that not anyone can run for office, but organizing parliament along traditional clan-based methods of governance has proven fairly effective in Puntland.⁷⁹ Moreover, presidential elections in 1998, 2005, and 2009 were generally seen as free and fair, and the contesting parties adhered to the results. Nevertheless, respect for the rule of law and the existence of an independent judiciary are areas that need improvement.

Yusuf, who was still a key figure in the SSDF in 1998, presided over Puntland as president from its founding until 2004, at which point he left to become president of the TFG. The SSDF has since been dissolved, but its former members are still important powerbrokers. During Yusuf’s tenure, Puntland made progress in consolidating state power and building institutions. However, Yusuf refused to step down when his term expired in 2001, instead cracking down on supporters of the man who won the election to replace him, Jama Ali Jama. This was a major setback for the incipient democracy in Puntland. Worse still, “Yusuf gave his elite special security forces, the Darawish, and the Puntland Intelligence Service (PIS) unrestricted leave to clamp down. Nepotism, cronyism and corruption took root.”⁸⁰

Yusuf had refused to step down because several constitutional and legal milestones had not been met that were outlined in the 1998 Puntland Charter. However, the same charter stipulated that if they were not met, the chairman of the Supreme Court would become the interim president.⁸¹ Despite opposition to extending his term for three years, Yusuf remained in power by force of arms, with his militia battling those of his opponents. After prolonged debate and mediation efforts, it was agreed in 2003 to officially allow Yusuf to remain as president until 2004. Crisis was averted, but much damage had already been done to Puntland’s emerging government institutions. Moreover, Yusuf had frequently been absent from Puntland so he could attend various internationally organized peace conferences, which eventually resulted in his election as president of the TFG. His absence during much of the preceding years created a power vacuum just when Puntland needed strong, unifying leadership.

After Yusuf left for the TFG in 2004, things got worse. His replacement as president, General Adde Muse Boqor, was an erstwhile opponent whose militia had been incorporated into Puntland’s security forces as part of the 2003 agreement. Adde Muse initially took over on an interim basis, but he was elected in 2005. He was weak and lacked Yusuf’s charisma. Puntland’s successes eroded further under Adde Muse’s leadership. His successor, Abdirahman Mohamed Farole, was elected in 2009 and has not done much to remedy the situation. Puntland is still better off than southern Somalia given that it at least has a state that can provide some services and security, but corruption, piracy, and lawlessness are rampant. The state’s security apparatus continues to be repressive, and the civil liberties that were taking root in the early years of Puntland’s existence have been curtailed.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 9.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 5.

⁸¹ Interpeace and Puntland Development Research Center (PDRC), *The Puntland Experience: A Bottom-Up Approach to Peace and State Building* (Garowe, Puntland: Interpeace and PDRC, 2009), 26.

Moreover, periodic skirmishes with Somaliland over parts of the Sool and Sanaag regions pose a threat to security. Sool and Sanaag are primarily inhabited by the Warsangeli and Dulbahante, sub-clans of the Harti clan. They feel greater affinity towards Puntland and their Harti brethren residing there (although the Majerteen sub-clan dominates Puntland). Thus, they would prefer to be affiliated with Puntland and remain part of Somalia, despite residing within the boundaries of Somaliland and the old British Protectorate. Puntland supports their ambitions, which is an ongoing point of tension between Puntland and Somaliland.

In February 2011, heavy fighting broke out between Somaliland forces and local clans in the village of Kalshaale and other parts of the Buhodle district. Puntland President Farole threatened to intervene if Somaliland's army did not cease hostilities.⁸² Clashes have continued in Sool and Sanaag, including fighting between Puntland fighters and Somaliland's military. The violence has remained at a low level, but it could escalate.

Somaliland's efforts to accommodate its own clan minorities and to allow for greater local autonomy has been part of the process of peacebuilding and reconciliation since it declared its independence in May 1991. There is clearly more that still needs to be done to appease minority clans, but Somaliland's achievements since 1991 are impressive.

⁸² "Fears of War in Northern Somalia, Dozens Killed as Somaliland Retreats," *Garowe Online*, February 21, 2011.

IV. Building Peace and the State in Somaliland

Since the late 1990s, scholars and policymakers have increasingly recognized the links between peacebuilding and statebuilding. Many have noted that without a functioning state, peace deals can often fall apart. Thus, ensuring that peace is sustained often has much to do with the institutional capacity and organizational arrangements of the state,⁸³ whether the state is unitary, decentralized, federal, et cetera.

The definition used for peacebuilding in this study follows Charles Call: “actions undertaken by international or national actors to consolidate or institutionalize peace.”⁸⁴ It is necessarily broad to include the myriad ways in which long-term peace can be promoted. Indeed, peacebuilding in Somaliland involved numerous different aspects that will be discussed below. Call also identifies some of the diverging interests that accompany peacebuilding: “(1) between negotiated deals and their consequences for a sustainable state; (2) between capacity and legitimacy; (3) between urgent short-term measures and long-term sustainability; (4) between international interests and recognition versus national interests and legitimacy; and (5) between the interests of elites, especially combatants, and of the population at large.”⁸⁵ Such competing pressures were present in Somaliland’s peacebuilding process.

The Somali National Movement and the Rebirth of Somaliland: 1981-1993

The story of Somaliland from 1981 until 1993 is closely linked with the Somali National Movement (SNM). Founded in London in 1981, it led Somaliland’s opposition to the Barre regime and was instrumental in forging peace and in building Somaliland’s government after the collapse of the Somali state.

As mentioned earlier, the SNM relocated to Ethiopia soon after its founding and began conducting cross-border attacks against Barre’s regime. The SNM’s financial support primarily came from the Isaaq diaspora community, while most of its fighters were drawn from the rural Isaaq community within Somaliland. The SNM received some assistance from Ethiopia until 1988, but it essentially consisted of permission to operate in Ethiopian border towns. After 1988, the SNM was self-sufficient. Throughout its existence, it was self-governing and democratic. Cabdiraxmaan Jimcaale argues that “its decentralized leadership, its democratic transfers of power and its institutionalization of traditional leadership are counted among the SNM’s more valued legacies to post war Somaliland.”⁸⁶

The SNM’s internal mechanisms included a Central Committee that was tasked with most decision-making, and it held regular congresses to elect leadership. Multiple clans were incorporated into the SNM, and leadership positions were spread across different clans and clan-families, although the Isaaq comprised the majority in the Central Committee. In just ten years, the SNM had five different chairmen of the Central Committee, a testament to its commitment to rotating leadership.

⁸³ Charles Call, “Ending Wars, Building States,” in *Building States to Build Peace*, eds. Call and Wyeth (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008), 8-9.

⁸⁴ Call, “Ending Wars, Building States,” 5.

⁸⁵ Call, “Ending Wars, Building States,” 3.

⁸⁶ Cabdiraxmaan Jimcaale, “Consolidation and Decentralization of Government Institutions,” in *Rebuilding Somaliland: Issues and Possibilities*, ed. WSP International (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 2005), 60.

Initially, the SNM did not intend for Somaliland to break away from Somalia. The primary unifying factor was a shared feeling of victimization at the hands of the government in Mogadishu, and the SNM's objective was to topple Barre. Often, the movement's goals seemed incoherent, in large part because of the effort to build consensus in a movement with diverging visions. Leadership changed frequently. According to Bradbury, "the acceptance of pluralism and dissent reflected a pragmatic and realistic approach to politics within the movement, but it also proceeded from a lack of organisational discipline that weakened operational effectiveness and strategic coherence."⁸⁷ However, after Barre began to wage total war against northerners starting in 1988, it was not long before a desire for independence began to emerge in Somaliland.

The SNM's campaign intensified in 1988 when Ethiopia withdrew its support from the SNM and other Somali rebel groups as the result of an agreement between Barre and Ethiopia's Mengistu. In a brazen attack, the SNM captured Burao and Hargeisa (the current capital of Somaliland) in May 1988. Both towns are primarily inhabited by the Isaaq clan-family. Soon after their capture, the Somali National Army (SNA) razed the two towns in retaliation, which solidified Isaaq opposition to Barre's regime. The civil war entered a more intense phase.

According to Hussein Adam, the SNM truly became a movement of the people after the SNA bombardment of Hargeisa and Burao. "During its early years, the SNM represented an elitist, external, armed guerilla band claiming to represent the people in the north—the Isaaq community in particular."⁸⁸ After Barre's attacks, Somalis fled to refugee camps in Ethiopia. It was there that the SNM developed strong grassroots support among northern Somalis. The elders in and around refugee camps supported the SNM by "organising the distribution of food aid and other forms of relief, in adjudicating disputes and in recruiting fighters for the SNM."⁸⁹ A *guurti* (council of elders) was formed to guide decision-making and to advise the SNM Central Committee. This helped to link traditional leaders with the political elite of the SNM. The groundswell of support for the SNM, combined with the SNM's internal democratic procedures would be an integral part of post-war peacebuilding.

Within about a year and a half after the bombardment, the Somali National Army had lost much of its control over the northwest of Somalia. With the situation in Somaliland clearly favoring the SNM, minority clans living in the former British Protectorate reached out to SNM leaders. The primary minority clans are the Gadabuursi and 'Iise (Dir clan-family) in the west, and the Warsangeli and Dulbahante (Darood clan-family, Harti clan) in the east. Few members of these clans were affiliated with the SNM, and many sided with Barre's regime during the civil war, some of whom served in the SNA. However, the Isaaq-dominated SNM had adopted a policy of trying to reconcile with Somaliland's minority clans instead of fighting to the bitter end. With Barre's regime clearly falling apart, many minority clans were open to negotiation. This would prove important in laying the groundwork for future peace talks.

According to Michael Walls, talks between the Dulbahante clan and the SNM began in early 1990 and continued throughout the year. They eventually agreed to meet at a conference in Berbera in February 1991 that would be open to all of the northern clans. The leading Dulbahante figure in negotiations was Abdiqani Garaad Jama, their most senior *garaad* (a titular leader among the Dir and Darood clan-families). *Garaad* Abdiqani played a crucial role throughout the early peacebuilding process as a mediator and consensus-builder.

⁸⁷ Bradbury, 65.

⁸⁸ Hussein Adam, "Formation and Recognition of New States: Somaliland in Contrast to Eritrea," *Review of African Political Economy* 21, no. 59 (March 1994): 32.

⁸⁹ Adam, 32.

In January 1991, SNM forces were on the verge of capturing Borama, the most important Gadabuursi town. Instead of plunging into battle, they allowed time to negotiate a ceasefire, which was mediated by SNM Colonel Abdirahman Aw Ali, a member of the Gadabuursi clan.⁹⁰ His efforts, along with the goodwill demonstrated by the SNM in seeking to negotiate, saved the town and helped rebuild trust between the clans. The Gadabuursi leaders were then convinced to attend the Berbera conference.⁹¹ Leaders from the 'Iise and Warsangeli clans also attended. Walls argues that “the pattern established in this sequence of small bilateral meetings designed to resolve immediate local issues, leading to larger conferences dealing with more complex issues, was repeated throughout the process of peace building in Somaliland.”⁹²

Of course, clashes did occur between clan militias and SNM forces. The SNM also executed some of those who had fought with the Barre regime. However, the SNM conducted very few reprisals against its erstwhile enemies, which helped rebuild trust and confidence between the clans. After the regime fell, the SNM was by far the most potent military force in Somaliland, making resistance to the newly dominant power an ill-advised undertaking. This preponderance of power, combined with the SNM’s willingness to extend an olive branch to other clans helped establish peace and stability.

In the south, Barre fled Mogadishu in January 1991, and civil war continued. In the north, however, the February 1991 conference in Berbera—an Isaaq town—formalized and helped solidify a region-wide ceasefire. The SNM hosted and funded the conference, inviting clan elders and other important figures. There was no talk of secession at this point; the SNM still supported union with Somalia, but there was a clear desire for greater autonomy if the Somali state were to be reconstituted. Conferees also agreed to meet again in late April 1991 at a bigger conference, which became known as the Grand Brotherhood Conference of the Northern Clans. This conference, held in Burao, turned out to be a key moment in Somaliland’s history.

Burao was significant because it is the second-largest Isaaq town and it had also become a symbol of Barre’s brutality due to its destruction in 1988 at the hands of the SNA. The conference was designed to solidify peace in the north and to discuss the future of Somaliland. During the conference, the SNM also held a Central Committee meeting. Discussion of independence was not on the agenda.

However, public sentiment in favor of full independence had been growing. In the south, Ali Mahdi had declared a USC-led interim government, breaking agreements that the USC had made with the SNM. This did not sit well with northerners, who had not been consulted on the decision; it was reminiscent of the kind of marginalizing rule from Mogadishu that they had endured under Barre. The desire for independence had become strong among all of the northern clans, and the SNM had taken note.

Thus, on May 18, 1991, the Central Committee declared Somaliland to be an independent state. It was well received among Somalilanders. The Central Committee chairman, Abdirahman Ahmed Ali ‘Tuur’ became the interim president and the Central Committee became the interim parliament. “Given a two year mandate, the administration was tasked with accommodating non-Isaaq communities into the government, developing a constitution and preparing Somaliland for an elected government.”⁹³

⁹⁰ Bradbury, 91.

⁹¹ Walls, 377-8.

⁹² Walls, 380.

⁹³ Mark Bradbury, Adan Yusuf Abokor, and Haroon Ahmed Yusuf, “Somaliland: Choosing Politics Over Violence,” *Review of African Political Economy* 97 (2003): 459.

Despite the effective reconciliation at the Burao conference, rifts still existed within the SNM, among the Isaaq, and between different clans. The SNM and the Isaaq were the most sharply divided, with different Isaaq clans sometimes fighting each other. Though such divisions were understandable after the stresses of civil war, they threatened to plunge Somaliland back into civil war as outbreaks of violence flared in 1991 and 1992. One incident occurred in Berbera in March 1992, when intra-Isaaq fighting erupted in response to the new government's effort to take control of the port as a source of revenue.⁹⁴

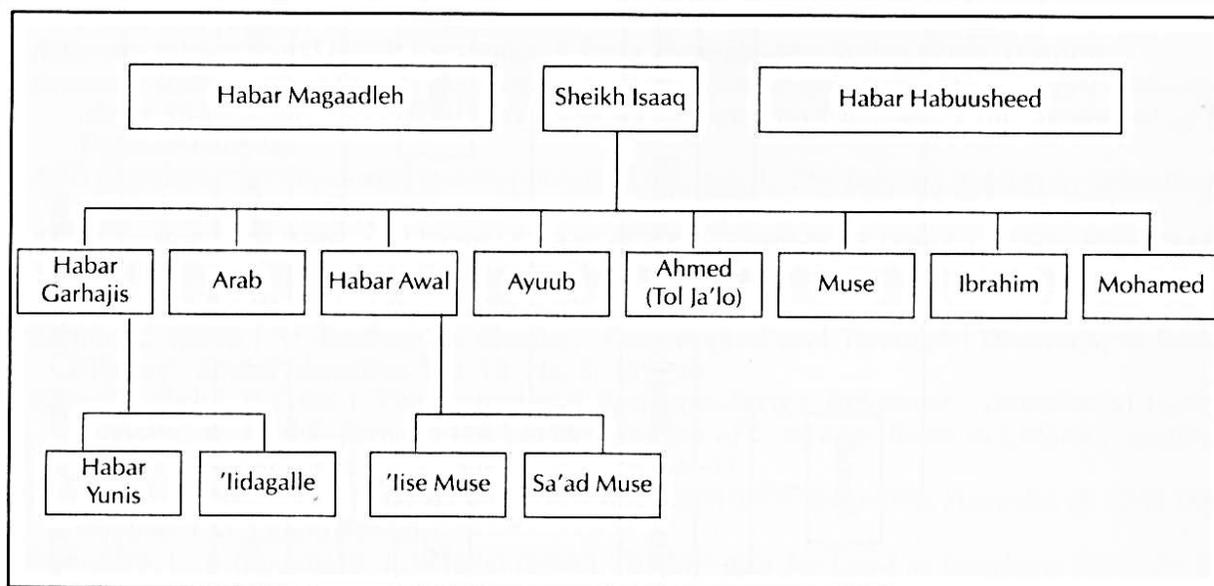


Figure 2: Primary Isaaq Lineages

Source: Mark Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*, 2008, p. 257

Fighting broke out in Berbera because it traditionally fell under the jurisdiction of the 'Iise Muse clan. When the government tried to take control of the port and its revenues, Colonel Ibrahim Dagaweyne fought back with his militia made up of 'Iise Muse in alliance with the Habar Ja'lo clan. Government forces were drawn from many clans, but the majority was from President Tuur's Habar Gharhajis clan, especially his specific sub-clan, the Habar Yunis. The main clans fighting in Berbera were all part of the Isaaq clan-family, and fears of intra-Isaaq civil war began to loom large as casualties mounted. Fortunately, traditional clan elders were able to quell hostilities before they got out of hand. Non-Isaaq and non-SNM leaders were instrumental in resolving the Berbera conflict and other such disputes—including one in Burao in January 1992—due to their status as third-party mediators.

A crucial aspect of the negotiations that settled the Berbera conflagration was to waive compensation rights for those wronged during the fighting. As Walls explains, because “the financial and human cost of the fighting had been high, no attempt would be made to calculate compensation of people killed or property destroyed.”⁹⁵ The principle of *xeer* was too difficult to apply in such a case, so it was deemed acceptable to forgo what would be a long, contentious process of figuring out which *diya*-paying groups owed what to whom. Though rare, this practice

⁹⁴ Bradbury, Abokor, and Yusuf, 459.

⁹⁵ Walls, 382.

was not unheard of in Somali society, and it would be repeated many times during Somaliland's peacebuilding process.

At this point, the SNM was severely weakened by internal divisions and it was no longer able to maintain peace without the assistance of elders as mediators. This pointed to the need for a broad-based civilian government to take control of Somaliland, which led to a greater role for the *guurti* that had been formed in 1988 during the SNM's war effort. After the Burao conference, the *guurti* had been expanded to allow for greater non-Isaaq representation.⁹⁶ As the SNM floundered in 1991 and 1992, the *guurti* began to step into the void. Numerous local *guurti* were also convened throughout Somaliland to manage an array of issues typically charged to municipal governments. According to Bradbury, they "took on the functions of local quasi-administrations, managing militias, mediating disputes, administering justice, interacting with international agencies and raising local revenue."⁹⁷ In traditional society, the *guurti* had always been involved in resolving disputes, but the range of activities they performed during the SNM administration was much broader than normal.

After the violence in Berbera was halted, a *shir beeleed* (clan conference) in Sheekh solidified the truce. The expanded *guurti* took the lead at the Sheekh conference, held in October and November 1992. President Tuur had asked the *guurti* to mediate between the government and the opposition in light of the SNM's inability to restore peace on its own. The conference produced three important outcomes. First, it affirmed that the port at Berbera was a public asset that would provide revenue to the government. Second, a national *Guurti* was created as a formal institution that included all of Somaliland's clans, and it was given various official responsibilities. Third, clan elders were formally tasked with controlling their clan militias and for stemming aggression and violence. The mediation efforts of the non-Isaaq clans had made it clear that they were essential to Somaliland's future and they were therefore included in providing security for Somaliland.⁹⁸

Soon after Sheekh, another major *shir beeleed* was held in Borama, the primary Gadabuursi town that had avoided destruction in early 1991 due to successful mediation by Colonel Aw Ali. Taking place from January to May 1993, the Borama conference was one of the most important. It laid the groundwork for Somaliland's system of government and formalized the role of traditional institutions. According to Seth Kaplan, it was "attended by five-hundred elders, religious leaders, politicians, civil servants, intellectuals, and businesspeople."⁹⁹ One hundred fifty voting delegates attended the conference, drawn from nearly every clan in Somaliland.¹⁰⁰ The conference was supposed to last a month, but it extended for more than four months, eventually producing a Peace Charter and a Transitional National Charter.

Civilian Rule: 1993-2011

The Peace Charter was crucial in establishing law and order after two years of heightened crime, banditry, and occasional warfare. It was based on *xeer*, and it incorporated Islamic principles as well. It formed a code of conduct governing inter-clan relations on a national level.

⁹⁶ Walls, 382-3.

⁹⁷ Bradbury, 86.

⁹⁸ Bradbury, Abokor, and Yusuf, 460.

⁹⁹ Seth Kaplan, "The Remarkable Story of Somaliland," in *Democratization in Africa: Progress and Retreat*, 2nd ed., eds. Diamond and Plattner (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 253.

¹⁰⁰ Jimcaale, 63.

The Transitional National Charter was to be in place for three years, until a proper constitution could be drafted, but it lasted seven years longer than anticipated. It created what would become known as the *beel* (clan or community) system of government. As Bradbury et al. explain, “the Borama conference was important for the way in which issues of representation and power-sharing were dealt with, by institutionalising clans and their leadership in the system of governance.”¹⁰¹ The *beel* system formally recognized the role of clans and elders, incorporating them into a consociational system of checks and balances that would govern Somaliland for the next ten years. As is standard with consociational systems, power-sharing was institutionalized by allotting representation based on clans so each distinct group would be assured a voice in the government. Walls and Kibble describe *beel* as “a hybrid system combining traditional institutions of clan governance (meaning male pastoral democracy) with many of the formal government institutions of the Weberian state.”¹⁰²

The Charter spelled out the positions and duties of the executive branch, which included a president, vice-president, and council of ministers. It also created an independent judiciary and a bicameral parliament. The lower house was to consist of elected representatives. The upper house was comprised of the *Guurti* elders, and it became officially known as the *Guurti*. It was designed to act as a check on the lower house and the executive, leveraging the moral authority of the elders to maintain peace and security. Though not elected, the *Guurti* was widely seen as legitimate among Somalilanders; in addition to serving as a peacemaking institution, it was charged with electing the president and vice-president, as well as safeguarding moral and religious values.¹⁰³

One consequence of the *beel* system’s clan focus was to marginalize women. In traditional Somali society, women are not afforded equal status with men. Yet, the prevalence of intermarriage among northern clans and clan-families often means that women act as ambassadors between conflicted clans. Throughout the warfare in 1992, women’s groups demonstrated for peace. They also helped with planning and logistics for the conferences. Despite women’s role in promoting peace and reconciliation, they were not given any seats in parliament. Arguably, this was necessary during the transition from a devastated, war-torn society to a modern state because the most important first step was to establish peace and security. The traditional male elders already had the respect and authority to do so, and introducing too many changes at once may have been difficult to manage for a society that was not accustomed to the notion of gender equality. However, women in Somaliland are increasingly demanding more rights and opportunities; many scholars and policymakers argue that the subservient role of women must soon be addressed if Somaliland is to continue to make progress toward becoming a modern state.

Nevertheless, the conferees at Borama crafted a system delicately balanced between traditional governance and the modern Western conception of the state; it provided a largely successful transitional period for a society that was most comfortable with its own traditions yet also desired modern democracy. The Borama conference was a quintessential example of Somaliland’s process of peacebuilding and statebuilding. As Iqbal Jhazbhay summarizes the Somaliland model, “The dynamics of Somaliland reconciliation revolve around the complex interplay of accommodation between what might be termed the forces of modernity, represented

¹⁰¹ Bradbury, Abokor, and Yusuf, 460.

¹⁰² Michael Walls and Steven Kibble, “Beyond Polarity: Negotiating a Hybrid State in Somaliland,” *Africa Spectrum* 45, no. 1 (2010): 40.

¹⁰³ Bradbury, 99-100.

in the rise of the Somali National Movement (SNM) as a phenomenon of the early generation of African post-colonial liberation-cum-resistance, on the one hand, and the indigenous forces of tradition vested in the north west region's clan leadership on the other."¹⁰⁴ The conference was supported primarily by the diaspora and business community. It was not rushed, allowing the necessary time to build consensus, and it was an indigenous process. Ahmed and Green note that "with the exception of some very limited logistical support for the Borama conference, the UN and other agencies did not provide support for (in fact opposed) many successful local level initiatives."¹⁰⁵ The UN and other actors preferred to focus on reconstituting a central Somali government and they feared that local initiatives would undermine the country-wide process. The differing outcomes between the locally owned processes and the internationally sponsored conferences are striking.

The 150 voting delegates at Borama formed the first *Guurti* and they elected Mohamed Ibrahim Egal as president of Somaliland for a two-year term, to expire in May 1995. They chose Colonel Aw Ali as vice-president. An Isaaq intellectual, Egal had been prime minister of Somalia when Barre took power in 1969. He served in Barre's government, but also spent nearly twelve years as a political prisoner. Egal did not support the SNM, and when the Central Committee declared Somaliland's independence in 1991, he expressed opposition, preferring Somali unity. However, he would eventually become a strong supporter of Somaliland's independence who pushed hard for international recognition.¹⁰⁶ He served as president until his death in 2002 due to illness.

At the sub-state level, a peacebuilding process in the Sanaag region ran parallel to the Borama conference. The Sanaag Grand Peace and Reconciliation Conference concluded in October 1993, but it was the culmination of 18 months of negotiations, bilateral meetings, and smaller conferences. Held in Erigavo, the conference laid out a framework for peace and prosperity in a contentious region that is cohabited by the Warsangeli, Dulbahante, and Isaaq. It addressed local issues relating to freedom of movement and trade, common grazing areas, water resources, and misappropriated property. According to Bradbury, "the grassroots process of peacemaking was necessarily slow in order to be inclusive, and involved people at each level of clan segmentation resolving their disputes before convening as a larger body."¹⁰⁷ The success of the conference was undoubtedly facilitated by the commonalities of the northern pastoral clan-families, making it easier to find common ground despite legitimate grievances. The process was consistent with the paradigm that Walls outlines and which characterized the peacebuilding process in Somaliland generally.¹⁰⁸

After Egal's election, his administration began its work by forming a national army and disarming the various militias that existed in Somaliland, which was generally successful. Many fighters were willing to lay down their arms in deference to the new government that Somalilanders saw as legitimate. Many former militia members either returned to private life or were incorporated into the national army. Egal also made progress in reestablishing government institutions, consolidating a tax base, generating revenue, and boosting economic recovery. Though some have criticized his authoritarian techniques, he laid the groundwork for long-term

¹⁰⁴ Iqbal Jhazbhay, *Somaliland: An African Struggle for Nationhood and International Recognition* (Midrand, South Africa: The Institute for Global Dialogue, and Johannesburg, South Africa: The South African Institute of International Affairs, 2009), 27.

¹⁰⁵ Ahmed and Green, 124.

¹⁰⁶ Bryden, "The Banana Test," 347.

¹⁰⁷ Bradbury, 103.

¹⁰⁸ Walls, 380.

growth and stability. As Matt Bryden puts it, “Egal’s methods may not have earned him any awards for good governance, but the achievements of his administration were nevertheless remarkable.”¹⁰⁹

One controversial move was the introduction of Somaliland’s own currency in 1994, the Somaliland shilling. Some in the opposition criticized the new shilling as an effort to strengthen the president and his Isaaq clan, the Habar Awal. Other clans and sub-clans were not entirely supportive of Egal, which influenced their opposition to the new currency. Not all tensions had been resolved at Borama, and mutual suspicions remained between certain clans. In particular, former President Tuur’s sub-clan, the Habar Yunis, was opposed to Egal even though Egal’s maternal clan was the Habar Yunis. Many members of the influential Habar Gharhajis clan (of which the Habar Yunis is a sub-clan), also opposed Egal and the Habar Awal. Some Habar Gharhajis, led by Tuur, even declared allegiance to Somalia as a whole, supporting a federal union.

According to Jimcaale, “many Somalilanders considered the new currency as one of the contributing factors in the war that erupted in Somaliland in November 1994,”¹¹⁰ but simmering inter-clan hostilities and the contentious process of statebuilding were the underlying causes. Civil war was sparked when the government moved to take control of Hargeisa airport. It had been agreed that the airport was a public asset, but it was still controlled by a militia that refused to relinquish it to the government. Despite progress in disarming militias, some remained. The operation to reclaim the airport set off a chain of events that plunged Somaliland back into civil war for the next two years. The war was fought along clan lines within the Isaaq clan-family, but entire clans were not mobilized into the war; it was primarily fought between the political elite of different clans as they struggled for power and influence.¹¹¹ The Dir and Darood clan-families largely remained on the sidelines.

The war was not nearly as devastating as the fighting with Barre’s regime from 1988 to 1991; those living in opposition areas suffered the most during the war. Egal steadfastly refused to engage in inter-clan dialogue, arguing that the agreements at the Borama conference had bestowed legitimacy on his government and that the conflict was a political dispute over power and resources, not a clan issue. Instead, he required belligerents to negotiate with the government. His administration was, indeed, broadly representative of Somaliland’s clans in spite of a bias toward his own clan and allies.

In April 1995, in the midst of the war, the *Guurti* approved an 18-month extension to Egal’s term, which would have expired in May 1995. The fighting reached a stalemate in late 1995, but it took until early 1997 before the war formally ended at a peace conference in Hargeisa, which lasted from October 1996 to February 1997. In contrast to the Borama *shir beeleed* in 1993, the Hargeisa conference was funded by the government, a testament to the progress made in building the state since then. The delegates numbered 315 and women were permitted to attend, but only as observers.¹¹² All 150 members of parliament attended as delegates and the rest were newly elected delegates representing all of Somaliland’s clans. As president, Egal was able to steer the conference more than anyone else. Bradbury remarks, “Egal’s influence over the conference damaged the credibility of a national *shir* as a mechanism

¹⁰⁹ Bryden, “The Banana Test,” 352.

¹¹⁰ Jimcaale, 65.

¹¹¹ Bradbury, 116.

¹¹² Jimcaale, 67.

for political change in the future and re-affirmed patronage as a central element of politics.”¹¹³ Despite these criticisms, Egal did make concessions and he was instrumental in bringing stability back to Somaliland.

Aside from a formal peace, one of the most consequential outcomes of the conference was the adoption of an interim constitution to replace the National Charter. The constitution was the result of negotiations between elders, the government, and other stakeholders. It stipulated that it was to be approved by referendum, and it was an important statebuilding step because it gave Somaliland time to strengthen its institutions before adopting a permanent constitution. It would eventually lead to multi-party elections to replace the *beel* system, and it sought to institutionalize decentralized government. The conference also increased the number of seats in parliament allotted to the opposition and it afforded representation to minority communities in parliament.¹¹⁴

In late February 1997, Egal was elected to a five-year term, with Dahir Riyale Kahin as his vice-president. As a member of the Gadabuursi clan, Kahin’s election upset leaders of the Harti clan in the east (Dulbahante and Warsangeli sub-clans). Some efforts were made at the conference to appease the minority Harti through government programs, but they still felt marginalized within the new government. Moreover, Egal rejected a list of ministerial and parliamentary candidates put forward by *Garaad* Abdiqani, the Dulbahante leader who had proven so influential in brokering a ceasefire in 1991 and at subsequent peace conferences. Many in the Harti clan began to feel like they were not welcome in Somaliland. According to Bradbury, Abdiqani and other influential Dulbahante “withdrew their support from Somaliland and gave their backing to the formation, in the north-east in 1998, of the Puntland State of Somalia.”¹¹⁵ Despite the positive outcome of the conference on Sanaag in Erigavo in 1993, feelings of disenfranchisement were strong enough to undermine much of the progress that had been made. This marked the origin of the ongoing conflict between Puntland and Somaliland over Sool and Sanaag.

In spite of the troubles born in the east of Somaliland at the Hargeisa conference, the rest of Somaliland has been stable ever since. Though different in nature from the previous *shir beeleed* peace conferences, it was still a locally owned process. While the *shir beeleed* were clan-centric peace conferences, the Hargeisa conference was more political, and negotiations cut across clan lines. It marks a point in Somaliland’s evolution from a traditional clan-based society to a more modern democratic polity. Walls and Kibble argue that “Somaliland’s remarkable achievement in establishing a durable stability is due in large part to the ad hoc, organic and unplanned adoption of a hybrid political system that fuses elements of kinship affiliation and ‘modern’ constitutional design.”¹¹⁶ Clan affiliations and kinship still matter, of course, but not to the same degree as before.

Egal’s second administration oversaw increased security and growing prosperity. The government increased tax revenue, rebuilt infrastructure, and encouraged private-sector growth. Commerce and investment grew dramatically. Egal’s government held the referendum that overwhelmingly approved the constitution on May 31, 2001, and it began the process of decentralization. Political parties were formed under Egal, and his administration prepared Somaliland for its first multiparty elections in 2002. Despite criticisms about moving too slowly

¹¹³ Bradbury, 126.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 125.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 126.

¹¹⁶ Walls and Kibble, 39-40.

on the process of decentralization and some disapproval of his authoritarian style, Egal brought to Somaliland a level of stability that it had not known. Amidst the challenges of rebuilding a war-torn society and constructing state institutions, he remained firm. His charisma, intelligence, pragmatism, and resolve made him a strong leader, though he was not always liked. Indeed, Matt Bryden has referred to him as “the man Somaliland loved to hate.”¹¹⁷

President Egal died in May 2002 while he was visiting South Africa. The recently approved constitution stipulated that the vice president would take over. Thus, it was President Dahir Riyale Kahin who actually presided over the first multiparty elections in December 2002, which were held to elect local council members. These set the stage for the presidential election on April 14, 2003. Ironically, the timing of Egal’s death may have benefited Somaliland by allowing a new president to take over. As a 9-year incumbent who had brought peace and prosperity, Egal was favored to win the presidential election in 2003. Had he become too powerful and entrenched, Somaliland’s burgeoning democracy may have been stifled. Indeed, a study by the Hargeisa-based Academy for Peace and Development notes that “the absence of Cigaal [Egal] from the political scene provided a much more open playing-field.”¹¹⁸ In the end, Kahin won the election and remained as president until 2010, presiding over continued peace and stability. However, it is Egal who deserves much of the credit for Somaliland’s modern democratic system. As Bryden says about Egal, “one of the most remarkable features of his legacy [is] the transformation of Somaliland’s clan-based political system into a constitutional democracy.”¹¹⁹

In 2010, Somaliland’s democratic system further demonstrated its strength with the election of Ahmed Mohamed Mahamoud ‘Silanyo.’ The election was supposed to take place in August 2008, but the *Guurti* repeatedly delayed it due to instability in Sool and Sanaag. The *Guurti* also extended President Kahin’s term on several occasions until elections could be held. Both of these actions drew much criticism from opposition parties. However, when the election finally occurred, on June 26, 2010, it went smoothly. According to the International Republican Institute, “Somaliland’s National Election Commission (NEC) deserves much credit. The establishment of a voter registry and cards in particular were a step forward for the election process.”¹²⁰ Parliamentary elections were held in 2005, but this was the first presidential election since 2003. In 2003, Kahin defeated Silanyo by a mere 80 votes, and the results were respected. In 2010, Silanyo defeated Kahin by a much wider margin, and Kahin peacefully relinquished power. This was Somaliland’s first electoral transfer of executive power to an opposition party, a major test for new democracies.

Silanyo’s government has continued along Somaliland’s path of stability, but challenges remain. Decentralized governance, which is emphasized in Somaliland’s constitution, is still being implemented. Confusion over divisions between national, regional, and local governments remains an issue.¹²¹ Moreover, the Dulbahante and Warsangeli are still not satisfied that they have enough local autonomy, which is why many of them support Puntland, where they have closer kinship ties. Though difficult, effectively decentralizing governance in a way that

¹¹⁷ Bryden, “The Banana Test,” 346.

¹¹⁸ Academy for Peace and Development (APD) and Interpeace, *Local Solutions: Creating an Enabling Environment for Decentralisation in Somaliland* (Hargeisa, Somaliland: APD, September 2006), 6.

¹¹⁹ Bryden, “The Banana Test,” 352.

¹²⁰ “Somaliland Holds Credible Presidential Election,” *International Republican Institute*, June 27, 2010, <http://www.iri.org/news-events-press-center/news/somaliland-holds-credible-presidential-election> (accessed March 14, 2011).

¹²¹ APD and Interpeace, *Local Solutions: Creating an Enabling Environment for Decentralisation in Somaliland*, 30.

addresses the demands of minority communities in Somaliland would likely resolve many problems and could reduce tensions between Puntland and Somaliland. Although sporadic violence in Sool and Sanaag has remained localized, it could spiral out of control. Of course, Somaliland also faces many of the problems confronting any developing state, but its peacebuilding and statebuilding process has been remarkably successful and has put it on a path to long-term peace and prosperity.

V. Analysis: Reasons for Somaliland's Success

Many factors have contributed to the success of Somaliland's peacebuilding process, and it is difficult to pinpoint all of them. However, a few key components can be identified. These can broadly be categorized as follows: shared identity, leadership, inclusiveness, local ownership, and innovation rooted in tradition. These factors are all interrelated to some degree, but analyzing them separately will help elucidate their importance within the process as a whole.

Shared Identity

It should be clear by now that Somaliland's people are relatively homogenous. Aside from small numbers of minorities, they are from pastoral nomadic clan-families; they are Sunni Muslim; they share the same ethnic heritage; and they speak the same language. The presence of three different clan-families makes Somaliland less homogenous than Puntland, but Somaliland is significantly more homogenous than southern Somalia. Somaliland's shared culture and social structures gave its people a common platform from which to address the many contentious issues created by civil war.

The north was also marginalized economically and politically during the years of the Somali state. This created feelings of shared plight that boosted a common identity. Additionally, the civil war years from 1988 until 1991 wrought such destruction in Somaliland so as to create a sense of victimization at the hands of a common enemy, even though that enemy was the state itself. According to Henry Srebrnik, in May 1988 "the brutal campaign of murder, torture, rape and extortion escalated. Children were killed, entire villages depopulated, livestock slaughtered and towns plundered. Isaaq were being killed by heavily-armed Ogaden Darood militiamen, some known as the 'Isaaq Exterminating Wing'. Some one million land mines were planted by the government."¹²² According to Rayika Omaar, "the scale and ferocity of the war in the north had nurtured a visceral hatred not only of the regime but of everything it represented, including the union."¹²³

Ian Spears notes that many scholars have argued that war has played a critical role in identity construction and state formation in Europe. In addition to forcing the development of a more efficient state apparatus to wage war, "warfare also tended to break down divisions between groups and generate domestic solidarity for the purposes of defeating another common enemy. Indeed, specific battles—ones which involved great victories or painful losses—helped forge common identities which define the sense of nation for succeeding generations."¹²⁴ This undoubtedly applies to Somaliland; the ruthless destruction of Hargeisa and Burao in 1988 and the ensuing years of war contributed greatly to Somaliland's common identity, which has endured. As Matt Bryden explains, "Somaliland continues to define itself with respect to the persecution of northerners under the Barre regime and thus with the generally accepted right to

¹²² Henry Srebrnik, "Can Clans Form Nations? Somaliland in the Making," in *De Facto States: The Quest for Sovereignty*, eds. Bahcheli, Bartmann and Srebrnik (New York: Routledge, 2004), 214.

¹²³ Rakiya Omaar, "Somaliland: One Thorn Bush at a Time," *Current History* 93, no. 583 (May 1994): 233-234.

¹²⁴ Ian Spears, "Reflections on Somaliland and Africa's Territorial Order," *Review of African Political Economy* 30, no. 95 (March 2003): 93-94.

rebellion of a people subjected to the systematic violation of fundamental rights and freedoms.”¹²⁵

Though the Isaaq suffered the most among Somalilanders and some from non-Isaaq clans in Somaliland fought with Barre, many in non-Isaaq clans felt that Mogadishu did not represent them by 1991. At that point, many non-Isaaq had been welcomed into the SNM. Moreover, Ali Mahdi’s self-appointment as the interim president violated agreements between his United Somali Congress and the SNM. It appeared that the north would again be marginalized under a reconstituted Somali state. Of course, the death and destruction wrought by Barre’s regime affected all clans in Somaliland. In addition, the SNM’s policy of non-retribution and negotiation with non-Isaaq clans helped create mutual trust among all Somalilanders, which made them feel like they had a stake in Somaliland.

Leadership

In a study on political decentralization, Dawn Brancati emphasizes the powerful influence that regional parties can have on fomenting secessionism and on constructing regional identities.¹²⁶ In the case of Somaliland, the SNM played an important role in molding northern grievances into a distinct identity. Although the SNM did not initially advocate secession, its demands for greater autonomy fueled desires for independence among Somalilanders. Once the decision was made to secede, the SNM played a powerful unifying role within Somaliland. Brancati also argues that statewide parties are better at fostering unity, which the SNM did after Somaliland constituted itself as a separate state. In 1991, it was the only political entity of any consequence in Somaliland. Through its strong, statewide leadership, the SNM helped prevent further fragmentation within Somaliland along clan lines, and it was able to bring all parties to the table for peace conferences. Successful ceasefire negotiations by individual leaders such as Colonel Aw Ali were crucial to the SNM’s success.

The SNM’s preponderance of power in Somaliland certainly helped advance peacebuilding efforts. Minority clan-families in Somaliland realized in 1990 and 1991 that they could either negotiate with the SNM and lay down their arms or continue fighting against overwhelming odds. Leaders of minority clans also deserve much credit for their efforts to breach the divides and to bring their clans along with them. Particularly noteworthy is *Garaad* Abdiqani, of the Dulbahante clan. He was instrumental throughout the early 1990s in negotiating consensus with the Isaaq and in making sure that the Dulbahante complied with the various agreements. Many other traditional elders from different clans and clan-families also contributed to this effort. Of course, had it not been for a shared identity and the SNM’s restraint in engaging in retribution, negotiations would have proven more difficult.

As SNM power waned in 1992 and 1993, President Tuur demonstrated wise, selfless leadership by empowering the *guurti* to mediate the Sheekh and Burao conferences. The SNM government had lost much trust and credibility by late 1992, and transferring responsibility to the broadly representative group of traditional elders proved prescient. According to Walls, “this unilateral move did not strengthen his position, but it did ultimately enable a peaceful transfer of

¹²⁵ Matt Bryden, “State-Within-a-Failed-State: Somaliland and the Challenge of International Recognition,” in *States-Within-States: Incipient Political Entities in the Post-Cold War Era*, eds. Kingston and Spears (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 172.

¹²⁶ Dawn Brancati, *Peace by Design: Managing Intrastate Conflict through Decentralization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 12-17.

power, and it had the effect of hastening the institutionalization of the *guurti* as an organ of government.”¹²⁷ Tuur’s action was consistent with the Somali preference for mediation and consensus-building over domineering rule.

Probably the most important leader in Somaliland’s peacebuilding process was President Egal. Although he was not as central a figure in the peace conferences before 1993, he steered Somaliland through civil war from 1994 to 1996, and he was instrumental in building the state institutions that have enabled long-term peace. By insisting that belligerents negotiate with his government during the civil war, instead of holding another clan conference, he helped strengthen Somaliland national identity and weaken clan affiliations. On the road to constitutional democracy, this was a necessary step. The *beel* system served Somaliland well for ten years, but the model itself contained the seeds of its own demise. Because it excluded women and allotted representation based on clan affiliation, it would not have withstood Somalilanders’ demands for representative democracy in the long term. Egal also oversaw the adoption of Somaliland’s constitution and prepared the state for its first political parties and elections.

Egal’s strong, pragmatic leadership fostered economic growth that solidified peace over the five years from 1997 until his death in 2002. As I.M. Lewis notes, Somalis are fond of a saying that contrasts “peace and milk” to “war and famine.”¹²⁸ Egal, by fostering the “milk” of economic growth, helped secure lasting peace. In extolling Egal’s accomplishments, Mark Bradbury says, “even his most ardent critics concede that under his presidency security was restored, clan militias were demobilized, the economy recovered and a political entity with most of the attributes of a self-governing state emerged.”¹²⁹ Even in death, Egal had a positive effect on Somaliland’s development by enabling a hotly contested election that solidified Somaliland’s democratic credentials.

It is often not enough that the right conditions for peace are present. There must also be leaders that are charismatic enough to guide their people to peace. From the case of Somaliland, it would appear desirable that these leaders be selfless enough to allow for dissent and alternative visions, yet also strong enough to press forward in spite of disagreement. Rebuilding war-torn societies requires a delicate balance between inclusiveness and effectiveness. A new government that is paralyzed by indecisiveness will not satisfy its people’s needs, which could lead to such disarray in the country that it eventually returns to war. On the other hand, if the government is so domineering that the opposition deems resistance more desirable than cooperation, a return to war is also possible. The Somali tradition of seeking consensus certainly helped in Somaliland, but Somalilanders were also lucky enough to have capable leaders that emerged when they were needed.

To some degree, Somaliland’s early leaders were forced to be inclusive because of the dictates of traditional Somali society. By rewarding consensus-builders, the social structure in Somaliland may have selected the particular leaders that it did while weeding out more authoritarian types. However, Egal was a stronger figure than the archetypal traditional elder, and Somaliland was better off for it.

¹²⁷ Walls, 383.

¹²⁸ I.M. Lewis, *Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1994), ix.

¹²⁹ Bradbury, 136.

Inclusiveness

Much of Somaliland's initial success is owed to the inclusive peacebuilding process that was repeated time and again. The major conferences were characterized by broad participation that was representative of the different clan-families, clans, and sub-clans. The meetings and negotiations leading up to the major conferences allowed for extensive discussion of injustices and possible remedies. The conferences themselves almost always ran months longer than initially planned in order to allow a full airing of grievances and to take the time to slowly work toward reaching consensus on intractable issues. This pattern of peacebuilding meant that the majority of Somalilanders felt that they had been heard and that their complaints had been taken into account. Thus, they were much more likely to view as legitimate the peace agreements and the government that emerged from these negotiations. They felt a great degree of ownership and were therefore more willing to tolerate apparent setbacks in the short-term, giving the government and the system that they had helped create time to work.

Of course, the high level of participation would not have been possible if the peace conferences were not held in Somaliland itself. Most cannot afford to attend international conferences, even in a neighboring state. Holding the conferences in the towns and villages of the communities that were parties to the conflict allowed many more people to participate and observe. Moreover, the elders involved in the conferences interacted with their constituents on a daily basis, reporting the latest from the ongoing debates and receiving feedback from locals.¹³⁰ The visibility of the conferences themselves helped the cause of peace as locals were acutely aware of the ongoing efforts at reconciliation. The Somali traditions of poetry and drama were often utilized to convey important information from conference proceedings to locals by holding performances in town centers. This made the conferences and their outcomes more accessible to a wider audience.

By convening the conferences in Somaliland's territory, the problem of excessive international meddling was also avoided. Often, the international community, though it means well, artificially decides who the power brokers will be by choosing who will attend international conferences. Of course, efforts are made to select all of the "right" actors, but outsider knowledge of a society can never be as good as that of locals. Thus, mistakes are inevitably made by international actors. Sometimes people who appear important are invited to international conferences despite their lack of local legitimacy. Likewise, people who enjoy local legitimacy and influence are sometimes left off the invite list either for political reasons or simply in error. With all of the conferences held in Somaliland and the invitees determined by Somalilanders, they were much more inclusive than if they had been organized by outside actors.

Local Ownership

Closely related to the inclusiveness factor is the high degree of local ownership. There is a difference, however. Peacebuilding processes can be entirely locally designed and implemented, but they would lack inclusiveness if they were limited to a few elites that did not broadly represent society. Thus, the distinction is worth making. Of course, in Somaliland's case, the highly inclusive process served to bolster local ownership.

Apart from inclusiveness, a few factors in Somaliland's peacebuilding process increased the level of local ownership. One important element was the grassroots legitimacy enjoyed by

¹³⁰ Omaar, 236.

the SNM. As the primary driver of the early peace process, it was important that the SNM was widely supported by Somalilanders, both Isaaq and non-Isaaq. The bonds that the SNM forged with the local population during the civil war meant that the SNM was a movement of the people. The SNM's work in refugee camps, in particular, strengthened its connection with Somalilanders. Had the SNM lacked legitimacy and merely been the most powerful military force in the region, its early peacebuilding efforts might have floundered. In southern Somalia, this has been a major obstacle because the powerful warlords often lack any sort of legitimacy among the broader population.

Another factor was the SNM's internal democratic processes, which gave the fledgling state of Somaliland a foundation upon which to build representative government. The SNM had ten years of experience with peaceful leadership changes through voting, and its procedures were developed entirely by Somalis. Though the *guurti* and traditional methods of governance were instrumental in forging peace and building the state, the modern aspects of the system initially came from the SNM. Thus, they were not imposed top-down by external actors. If the SNM did not impart a framework for managing representative government to the state of Somaliland, the process of statebuilding and institutional design may have been more contentious, which could have exacerbated internecine warfare. This is not to say that international actors cannot provide useful expertise and advice in statebuilding processes. However, systems are much more likely to be responsive and successful if they are primarily created by the people affected by them. As Seth Kaplan notes, "development and democratization work best when a state's institutions are genuine reflections of an organic historical process."¹³¹

The role of the local business community and Somaliland's diaspora in providing the resources necessary for the peace conferences also boosted local ownership. The UN and other international actors provided some funding for the 1993 Borama conference, but the overwhelming majority of resources were put forward by Somalilanders. This meant that conferees were accountable only to Somalilanders, and there was greater pressure to produce solutions given the expenditure of limited local resources.

A key result of the high degree of local ownership was that material issues were adequately addressed. Often, internationally sponsored peace conferences result in a national grand bargain that serves as a macro-level framework for peace. This is one important aspect of creating long-term peace, but in the rush to resolve nation-wide issues such as who will govern and how power will be organized, the internationally sponsored peace conferences on Somalia often ignored the mundane disputes over property that have created and fuelled conflict. In Somaliland, local ownership meant that these minor issues were dealt with before nation-wide conferences addressed larger issues. According to Omaar, "placing material questions at the heart of the peace agenda at the local level, and implementing agreements on them before moving on to regional disputes, have been the key to the elders' success. Improvements in the security situation have resulted in tangible material gains, such as the return of property and the reopening of trade routes for livestock."¹³² A perfect example of this is the peacebuilding process in Sanaag, mentioned earlier, in which 18 months of local meetings and negotiations preceded the regional conference held in Erigavo in October 1993.

¹³¹ Kaplan, 261.

¹³² Omaar, 235.

Innovation Rooted in Tradition

Local ownership and inclusiveness were inextricably linked to the successful use of traditional methods to resolve disputes and build peace in Somaliland. However, it was crucial that elders and other leaders did not strictly limit themselves to tradition. They improvised and innovated along the way. This ensured that a pragmatic approach was often taken.

It should be reemphasized that the smaller colonial footprint in Somaliland meant that traditional systems and power structures were more intact in Somaliland than in the rest of Somalia. The British did not fundamentally alter Somali society in the Protectorate, whereas the heavy-handed Italian administration in the rest of Somalia dramatically eroded traditional social structures and conflict-resolution mechanisms without successfully implanting alternative ones. Consequently, Somaliland arguably had more tools at its disposal than the rest of Somalia.

Of course, the heavy emphasis on elders and consensus-building negotiation throughout the peacebuilding process provided a clear connection for Somalilanders to familiar traditional mechanisms. When votes were held at conferences, the outcome was typically a foregone conclusion; they were essentially formalities to confirm the months of negotiations that had generated a resolution that was acceptable to everyone. Ahmed Farah and I.M. Lewis have found that “the slow, local, traditionally based Somali diplomacy is the most effective process of peace-making, and that external ‘conflict resolving techniques’ should be tried on a pilot basis before being widely used in Somalia.”¹³³ Traditional methods were the roots of the peacebuilding process, but elders and non-traditional leaders—such as SNM politicians and the business community—conferred to devise new solutions to issues of conflict and governance.

One instance of innovation rooted in tradition was the decision by clan elders not to calculate damages and *diya* payments when fighting left many dead and resulted in extensive destruction. As discussed, this was employed in negotiations that ended the 1992 violence in Berbera that had resulted from a dispute over the port and its revenues. It was repeated many times throughout the peacebuilding process. According to Walls, “the idea that grievances should be forgotten (*xalaydhalay* or *duudsi*) is also not a given in Somali society; it is an option in situations where conflict has been so complex or devastating as to make calculation of *mag* [*diya*] compensation impossible. When applied, this principle stands in marked contrast to the popular notion that truth telling is one of the essential mechanisms of peace building.”¹³⁴ Thus, precedent existed in traditional Somali society for such action. However, it was not clearly prescribed, and the decision to forget grievances was a pragmatic calculation based on particular circumstances. A certain degree of flexibility is built in to Somali *xeer* to allow for such pragmatic calculations, and this example therefore contains a greater emphasis on tradition rather than innovation.

The best example of innovation rooted in tradition was the creation of the *beel* system that governed Somaliland for ten years before the transition to constitutional democracy. As discussed above, the Sheekh and Borama conferences balanced the continuity of traditional practices with the creation of new representative institutions. By charging clan elders with controlling their members to ensure security, the code of conduct outlined in the 1993 Peace Charter was strongly tradition-based. The 1993 Transitional National Charter contained many more modern elements, including a consociational representative system that is best

¹³³ Ahmed Farah and I.M. Lewis, “Making Peace in Somaliland,” *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 37, no. 146 (1997): 375.

¹³⁴ Walls, 387.

characterized as quasi-democratic, but which paved the way for full democracy. The *beel* system was uniquely Somali in its mix of indigenous mechanisms and Western institutions, carefully tailored to mesh in a way that made sense to Somalilanders.

In 1996 and 1997, the Hargeisa conference demonstrated how Somaliland had evolved in just a few short years. That conference was funded by the government, a measure of success in strengthening the state. It was also more political, although clan affiliations still influenced deliberations. Moreover, women were allowed to attend the Hargeisa conference, although they were not permitted to vote.

Since the Hargeisa conference, Somaliland has continued to evolve in the direction of a liberal democracy. It still has a long way to go before it is a fully inclusive, liberal democratic polity, but its progress has been impressive. Its growth is rooted in the hybrid system created in the early 1990s that merged innovative concepts with traditional institutions. The interim steps of the clan-centric peace conferences led by traditional elders and the resulting *beel* system were crucial. Had they not been taken, Somaliland may not have been as successful as it has been. As Walls and Kibble put it, “It is vital that we recognize the ways that the people of Somaliland have been successful in achieving peace through understood, indigenous mechanisms. Long-standing traditions based on kinship, mediation and dialogue, and customary law were combined with the pragmatic efforts of individuals to enable the construction of a nation-state.”¹³⁵

No societies are static, but it is important to let them evolve naturally instead of trying to introduce radical change abruptly before the people are ready for it. On the road to democracy, less-than-democratic interim measures that allow for some degree of representative government are often necessary and desirable. This gives the people time to adjust to democratic processes and for civil society to develop, while also leaving some familiar practices in place that have worked in the past.

Conclusion

This section has discussed the primary reasons for Somaliland’s successful peacebuilding and statebuilding: shared identity, leadership, inclusiveness, local ownership, and innovation rooted in tradition. In war-torn societies with weak or non-existent states, the process of peacebuilding typically requires a parallel statebuilding project in order to quickly provide broad-based, tangible material benefits to peace. This solidifies the progress made during the peace process and helps prevent the resurgence of conflict, paving the way for long-term peace and stability. Somaliland accomplished this through a confluence of factors. Though some of them are hard to replicate, a deep understanding of them presents potential courses of action for other attempts to build peace and functioning states, both in the rest of Somalia and elsewhere. The next section seeks to apply some of Somaliland’s lessons to Somalia and offers recommendations for the international community about appropriate courses of action.

¹³⁵ Walls and Kibble, 54.

VI. Implications for Somalia and Recommendations for the International Community

It must first be said that it is unwise to continue to treat Somalia as one political entity. Decades of discrimination, followed by civil war and twenty years of separate existence have eliminated any bonds that once existed between Somaliland and the rest of Somalia. The lack of a central government with any effective control over Somalia means that there is no longer any such thing as the state of Somalia. It is a fiction, existing only in the abstract legal sense. Even if one of the many internationally sponsored peace conferences had been able to create a functioning government, it would have lacked legitimacy in Somaliland because Somaliland did not participate in any of the peace conferences.

Though Puntland professes loyalty to Somalia as a whole, Puntland has functioned as its own state since 1998. It has sought to be one autonomous region within a federal state of Somalia. Given that no central state has emerged, Puntland has de facto been an independent state. Despite its continued commitment to Somalia, Puntland has drifted from the south. As mentioned earlier, Puntland announced in January 2011 that it would cease cooperating with the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), further weakening the bonds that once made Somalia a single political unit.

Unless facts change, the international community must treat Somalia as three distinct areas: Somaliland, Puntland, and southern Somalia. Different policies must be adopted for each area based on the realities of that region. Such an approach is politically delicate given the general commitment to the territorial integrity of existing states within the international system, especially among the African Union and its member states. Decisions to give either de facto or full recognition to new states that were once part of a unified state should not be taken lightly due to the potential for conflict and fragmentation in the international system. However, this does not mean that they should not be taken when the circumstances warrant it. The division of the USSR, Yugoslavia, and Sudan are just a few examples in which it was deemed necessary to recognize smaller states born of larger ones. Given the events of the last 20 years, Somalia is a case that should be added to that list.

Full recognition should be extended to Somaliland, along with all of the benefits that it entails. Puntland and southern Somalia should be treated as one territorial entity, but policies toward the two regions should be tailored to the specific circumstances of each. Puntland actually has a state apparatus, albeit a very weak one. Southern Somalia has no state, although local forms of governance do exist. The relevant lessons from Somaliland's peacebuilding process should be taken into account when devising policies toward Puntland and southern Somalia. Moreover, international support for the TFG should be ceased in August 2011. The United States and the UN are already leaning toward this option. This is when the TFG's mandate was initially scheduled to expire.

Southern Somalia

The situation in Southern Somalia was more complex in 1991 than it was in Somaliland, and it has been ever since. Four fundamental differences have led to the perennial failure of attempts at peacebuilding in southern Somalia. Each difference alone has made conflict resolution more difficult, and the four acting simultaneously have exacerbated each other. First, southern Somalia is significantly more heterogeneous than both Somaliland and Puntland.

Second, Italian colonial rule was much more corrosive to traditional Somali society than British rule was. Puntland also fell under Italian rule, but the Italians were less intrusive in the north than in Mogadishu and the inter-riverine region in the south. Therefore, their effect on Puntland (Migiurtinia, as it was then known) was not as pronounced as in the south. Third, no unified armed group emerged with a clear preponderance of power. Fourth, southern Somalia has suffered from the perverse effects of numerous ill-conceived international interventions since 1991.

As discussed earlier, substantial numbers of five Somali clan-families inhabit southern Somalia; only the Isaaq are without a consequential presence. Ethnic minorities such as the Somali Bantu also comprise a significant portion of the southern population. In addition, there are large numbers of both pastoral nomads and agro-pastoralists, which has historically been a point of contention given the superior social standing that pastoral nomads have enjoyed in traditional Somali society. Southern Somalia was also the seat of government throughout Somalia's existence as a state, which tended to lead to jockeying for power and patronage. By contrast, Somaliland was fairly uniformly neglected and discriminated against before being subjected to brutal civil war. Therefore, southern Somalia did not develop nearly the same degree of shared identity that Somaliland did.

With regards to colonial rule, the Italians significantly eroded the traditional clan system of governance, and fostered corruption in southern Somalia. They discouraged "tribalism," imposed Italian law, and bribed leaders, setting up a corrupt, patronage-based modus operandi that became habitual for southern Somalis. As a result, Somali social institutions such as *xeer*, the emphasis on consensus-building, and the importance of elders were severely weakened. This does not mean that they have ceased to exist, but they do not possess the same gravitas in society that they once did. Thus, reining in warlords through the influence of elders has not been as potent a tool as it was in Somaliland. Likewise, the perceived need for consensus no longer carries as much weight in shaming warlords and others to seek dialogue. The power of tradition has been limited.

In the south, the United Somali Congress (USC) and the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) were the two most powerful groups in the early 1990s. However, after the Barre regime's collapse, rival factions within the USC went to war with each other. Ali Mahdi led one, and Mohamed Farah 'Aideed' led the other. Most of the fighting in the early 1990s was between these two factions, and neither was able to emerge as the dominant power. Since then, the most powerful group to emerge was the Union of Islamic Courts in 2006. Its militias and administrative capacities were strong enough to impose order on much of southern Somalia, but it was toppled by the invasion of U.S.-backed Ethiopian forces.

The single most damaging factor in building peace in southern Somalia has been the hastily organized and poorly informed international attempts to broker a peace deal. Some international interventions in Somalia, such as UNITAF in 1992 and 1993, have been successful in providing humanitarian aid and saving lives. However, the peace conferences have been abject failures. They have been too short; they have not been held in Somalia; the right actors frequently have not been invited, while the wrong ones have been; and foreign powers such as Ethiopia and Kenya have often manipulated outcomes to benefit themselves, to the detriment of Somalia. These factors have been particularly harmful to local ownership and inclusiveness. They have also meant that leaders have not emerged through a completely organic, local process, which has arguably affected the quality of the leaders that have come to the forefront. Obtaining

a leadership role has been more a function of ability to woo and impress foreigners rather than of earning the respect of the people.

Of course, identifying the right actors is not an easy task, especially given the fluid nature of clan identity in the south, which Afyare Abdi Elmi has noted. He says, “it is very difficult to determine who is to be included and who is to be excluded in both peacemaking and peacebuilding activities. Several warlords of sub-sub-clans such as the Daud and Sa’ad sub-clans, which belong to Hawiye, have participated in peace conferences, while bigger clans who were not armed were excluded...A close observation reveals that whenever a peace process was being organized, clashes among clans increased as each wanted to show its relevance by using force to occupy a new district or town.”¹³⁶ Christian Webersik has pointed out the same phenomenon, claiming that “people such as the Jareer [Somali Bantu], without access to economic and political resources, took up arms to be heard in the international peace talks in Kenya.”¹³⁷ The international community needs to be aware of this side effect of its peace conferences and must be careful not to reward this behavior.

Any future international efforts at peacebuilding in Somalia should be focused on southern Somalia only, and all attempts to create a government for the whole of Somalia should be abandoned. Puntland should be left out of peacebuilding in southern Somalia due to the possibility that it will manipulate events and sow discord so as to emerge stronger vis-à-vis the south. However, given that it has never renounced the state of Somalia, Puntland would have to be included in any talks that sought to create a central government for Somalia. Of course, Somaliland will inevitably continue its policy of not participating in any Somalia-wide talks. As Matt Bryden points out, “since Somaliland has removed itself from the southern political picture, numerous smaller factional groups in the south have succeeded in casting themselves as ‘national’ actors. The fact that most southern factions lack the wherewithal either to impose their will on the battlefield or to administer significant blocks of territory has seriously complicated the prospects for settlement in southern Somalia, and especially in Mogadishu, where most aspirants to national leadership are clustered.”¹³⁸

Unless peace conferences are painstakingly planned and well informed, it would actually be better for southern Somalia in the long run if the international community left it alone to work out its own problems. If the political will to make a sizable investment of time and resources does not exist within the international community, it should withdraw from southern Somalia and focus on strengthening Puntland and Somaliland. This would ensure that any outcome in southern Somalia would be the result of a local process, and that the perverse effects of international involvement would be avoided. Of course, there is the potential for much bloodshed. But if Edward Luttwak is correct, this could ultimately make peace in Somalia more likely. As he says, war “can resolve political conflicts and lead to peace. This can happen when all belligerents become exhausted or when one wins decisively... War brings peace only after passing a culminating phase of violence.”¹³⁹ Although allowing the possibility that southern Somalia could descend further into chaos may not be the ideal option from the perspective of the international community, it would be better than the half-measures it has taken thus far, which have only perpetuated the conflict. For example, Ethiopia’s invasion in 2006 to prop up the floundering TFG toppled the nascent UIC, which was the closest southern Somalia has come to a

¹³⁶ Elmi, 37.

¹³⁷ Webersik, 529.

¹³⁸ Bryden, “State-Within-a-Failed-State,” 168.

¹³⁹ Edward Luttwak, “Give War a Chance,” *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 4 (July/August 1999): 36.

functioning government since 1991. This set southern Somalia back in the process of peacebuilding, and it boosted the power of radical Islamists.

If the political will does exist to make a serious investment in building peace in southern Somalia, several courses of action present themselves. While acknowledging the more complicated situation in southern Somalia, the lessons from Somaliland's peacebuilding process can still serve as a guide to the international community if it attempts to hold peace conferences in the future. As much as possible, peacebuilding in southern Somalia should endeavor to bolster local ownership and to be more inclusive, while also encouraging the utilization and adaptation of traditional conflict-resolution measures. Identifying good leaders is a very difficult task, but international actors should generally seek out respected consensus-builders and should attempt to marginalize warlords when feasible. The issue of shared identity cannot meaningfully be affected by international actors, so this aspect of Somaliland's success cannot be replicated.

In southern Somalia, the international community should limit itself to providing security, supplying resources, and offering expertise. It is crucial that the international community interfere as little as possible in crafting peace deals and in designing government institutions, limiting itself to an advisory role. This will help ensure that any outcomes are the result of indigenous processes and will therefore be better tailored to Somali society and seen as more legitimate. As Kaplan notes, "far too many poor states are held back by administrative and political systems built separately from the societies that they are meant to serve, thus rendering those systems illegitimate, ripe for exploitation, and a major hindrance to democratization and development."¹⁴⁰

As mentioned above, the TFG should be cut off from international support in August 2011. It has accomplished essentially nothing since 2004, and it lacks support among Somalis. Perpetuating its existence is harmful to Somalia. After August 2011, AMISOM troops should continue to help provide security under a new UN Security Council mandate that is not explicitly tied to the TFG. Their numbers may also need to be increased from the current number of roughly 8,000. Uganda and Burundi are the only countries contributing troops to AMISOM, and they recently pledged an additional 4,000 soldiers.¹⁴¹ If the recent gains against al-Shabaab continue, there may be room for moderate elements in southern Somalia to form rudimentary government structures and to engage in talks.

In the meantime, the groundwork should be laid for a peace conference to be held in southern Somalia, whether in Mogadishu or elsewhere. By holding it in Somalia, more people will be able to participate, and participants will be more accountable to the people they represent, boosting both inclusiveness and local ownership. The reaction within Somalia to a UN conference on Somalia's future held in Nairobi on April 12 and 13, 2011, illustrates the need to hold peace talks in Somalia itself. A meeting of prominent elders and clan leaders held in Mogadishu in early April condemned the notion of holding talks on foreign soil.¹⁴²

Taking cues from Somaliland, the conference should not be rushed, and extensive local negotiations should precede it throughout southern Somalia. International humanitarian organizations, NGOs, and the UN could play an important role in helping to foster peacebuilding. Elders, Islamic leaders, and prominent members of civil society should be actively engaged and encouraged to set up rudimentary local systems of governance to provide

¹⁴⁰ Kaplan, 249.

¹⁴¹ Michael Onyiego, "Uganda, Burundi Pledge Additional 4,000 Troops in Somalia," *Voice of America News*, March 28, 2011.

¹⁴² Abdiqani Baynah, "Somali Clan Leaders Warn the UN over Meetings," *Somaliland Press*, April 4, 2011.

some basic functions of government. Grievances should be discussed, and material issues should be addressed, including stolen property and land usage. Efforts should be made to take kinship into account and to identify relatively cohesive social units, whether clan-based or not, and they should be encouraged to govern themselves while also engaging in talks with their enemies. Although clan affiliation is less binding in southern Somalia than in Somaliland, sources of common identity exist among subsets of the population, as they do anywhere. They may emerge from being part of the same religious community, inhabiting the same town, sharing similar ideals, etc. Finding some kind of shared identity can help resolve conflict within that group and it can make that group a better negotiating partner because its cohesion will make it more likely that all of its members will abide by any agreements that are reached.

Moderate warlords must also be included, but the intractable ones should be marginalized, and perhaps targeted by AMISOM forces. The core of Al-Shabaab should not be engaged, but moderates within it could be incentivized to abandon the group and lay down their arms. The current offensive against Al-Shabaab by AMISOM troops should be continued parallel to peacebuilding efforts throughout southern Somalia. In Somaliland, it was crucial that those with the power for destruction were included in negotiations along with those with the respect and influence to build peace. Although warlords often lack the ability to craft systems of governance that will be acceptable to the majority, they can act as spoilers if not included. Moreover, they can help provide security in their locales, perhaps entering into cooperative agreements with AMISOM if they appear trustworthy.

Again, a southern Somalia-wide conference should not be too hastily organized. The timing should be left up to Somalis, but it would be reasonable to expect that a major reconciliation conference would have to wait perhaps a year. That would give Somalis time to make progress on contentious issues and to start to develop a consensus on how best to move forward. If a conference does occur, the start and end dates should not be too rigid. Moreover, it should not be presumed that all issues will be resolved; further conferences may be required. The UN and international donors should provide funding for the conference and other peacebuilding initiatives, but Somalis should be asked to contribute as much as possible so as to boost their ownership of the process. Resources should be very carefully allocated so as not to pervert the process and to avoid the possibility of Somalis fighting over international handouts.

At least in the near future, talks about the future of southern Somalia's government should focus on developing a decentralized system that allows for much local autonomy. Southern Somalia has become so fragmented that decentralization appears to be the best option. Of course, if Somalis prefer to create a centralized government, that is their choice. However, this is unlikely given Somalia's fragmentation. Nevertheless, there is the danger that a highly decentralized system could lead to internecine warfare. Thus, local sensitivities must be carefully handled so as to avoid this. Emerging administrations, like that in Jubaland, should be encouraged to govern themselves, and they should be offered material aid as well as expertise, where appropriate.

If a patchwork of local administrations is constituted into a central state in southern Somalia, it could be designed to function as a "mediated state." Ken Menkhaus advocates such a solution for Somalia as a whole, but it could also function just for southern Somalia. According to Menkhaus, the "best hope for state revival may lie in the explicit pursuit of a mediated state—in which a central government with limited power and capacity relies on a diverse range of local

authorities to execute core functions of government and mediate relations between local communities and the state.”¹⁴³

This is akin to the “building block” approach that has been advocated by some policymakers and scholars. It was initially proposed in an IGAD position paper drafted by the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1998. According to Matt Bryden, the paper “notes simply that ‘local administrative structures could constitute building blocks’ in the restoration of peace and statehood to Somalia and that ‘an important role should be played by civil society—the emergence and role of which should be encouraged by the international community.’”¹⁴⁴ Some have accused this approach of playing into the hands of a landlocked Ethiopia that seeks a collection of small, weak administrations along its border that it can manipulate in order to more easily gain access to ports, among other things. Whether or not this is the Ethiopian intention, the building block proposal itself is wise because it recognizes the “radical localization”¹⁴⁵ of Somali society and proposes a solution based on this reality. Besides, Ethiopia already has good relations with Somaliland and has access to the port of Berbera. Indeed, Ethiopia and Somaliland are currently seeking EU funding to refurbish a road leading from the Ethiopian border town of Togochale to Berbera (known as the Berbera Corridor).¹⁴⁶

If peacebuilding is successful in southern Somalia and various local administrative entities are able to function on a basic level and coexist relatively peacefully, Puntland may decide to form a federated state along with these “building blocks.” Discussions about what a future state might look like should run parallel to local peacebuilding processes, but it may be necessary to wait until consensus has emerged on what a new central government should look like before forming one. As of now, it appears that a new Somali state would exist within the boundaries of the former Italian Somalia. However, if Puntland and southern Somalia continue to drift apart, it may be advisable for Puntland and southern Somalia to form separate states. That decision, of course, should be left to the Somalis.

Puntland

Puntland’s experience has been similar to Somaliland’s. Although it has not declared independence from Somalia, it has formed a state through a tradition-based, inclusive, locally owned peacebuilding process. Moreover, Puntland’s shared identity is even stronger than Somaliland’s. It is comprised entirely of the Darood clan-family, and the Majerteen sub-clan from the Harti clan dominates. Ken Menkhaus has referred to it as an “ethnostate.”¹⁴⁷ Although Puntland had a strong leader in Abdullahi Yusuf, his personal ambitions got in the way of his dedication to Puntland. This and Puntland’s general orientation toward Somalia as a whole have impeded growth and consolidation of Puntland’s early success.

In the aftermath of the civil war, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF)—which was led by Yusuf—held an overwhelming preponderance of military power in Puntland, much

¹⁴³ Ken Menkhaus, “Governance without Government in Somalia: Spoilers, State Building, and the Politics of Coping,” *International Security* 31, no. 3 (Winter 2006/7): 103.

¹⁴⁴ Matt Bryden, “New Hope for Somalia? The Building Block Approach,” *Review of African Political Economy* 26, no. 79 (March 1999): 134.

¹⁴⁵ Bryden, “New Hope for Somalia?” 135.

¹⁴⁶ Qalinle Hussein, “Ethiopia and Somaliland Seek EU Funds for Berbera Corridor,” *Somaliland Press*, March 7, 2011, <http://somalilandpress.com/ethiopia-and-somaliland-seek-eu-funds-for-berbera-corridor-20670> (accessed March 23, 2011).

¹⁴⁷ Menkhaus, “Governance without Government in Somalia,” 84.

like the SNM did in Somaliland. This helped rein in lawlessness and banditry, while also preventing the emergence of a power center that could rival the SSDF. It also meant that the SSDF had the power to bring people to the negotiating table and enforce agreements.

Although Puntland did not constitute itself as a state until 1998, multiple peace initiatives ensured that Puntland was relatively more peaceful and stable than southern Somalia. From 1991 until the formation of the Puntland State of Somalia, “conflicts were resolved through interplay of the political elite together with traditional leaders, intellectuals and members of the diaspora who all contributed to mediation of clashes, crises, and facilitation of the delivery of humanitarian assistance by international agencies.”¹⁴⁸ This process greatly resembles that of Somaliland, and it was equally successful in building peace and establishing a state. Despite falling under Italian rule, traditional social structures were maintained in Puntland due to less direct Italian involvement. Additionally, shared Darood lineage did much to preserve respect for elders, *xeer*, the focus on consensus, and other traditional institutions. Puntland also exhibited innovation in its parliamentary and constitutional design, while rooting them in tradition. These facts facilitated peacebuilding in Puntland.

During the first three years of Puntland’s existence, President Yusuf oversaw much progress in establishing law and order, building state institutions, and improving the economy. However, his Somalia-wide ambitions eventually distracted him from the task of governing Puntland, and he undermined the incipient democracy in Puntland by refusing to step down when his term ended in 2001. Since then, Puntland has been on a downward trajectory that has led to corruption, disrespect for the rule of law, criminality, violence, and piracy. Of course, it is not just Yusuf’s fault. Puntland, in general, has been overly focused on reconstituting the central state of Somalia. According to Janina Dill, “the purpose of Puntland’s declaration of autonomy, it should be recalled, was to consolidate the territorial power base for the SSDF in order to protect it against interference by other factions involved in the central peace process and in turn to use it as an asset for participation therein. Puntland’s trajectory of self-governance, that is, the pursuit of autonomy, is in accordance with this purpose. It is oriented toward the central state.”¹⁴⁹

Had Puntland not been constantly focused on Somalia as a whole and had it simply concentrated on its own affairs, it would likely be better off today. Perhaps Puntland’s January 2011 declaration that it would no longer cooperate with the TFG is a sign that it will become more internally oriented. However, Puntland’s current president, Abdirahman Mohamed Farole, does not have the strength, charisma, and pragmatism that Yusuf did. Had Yusuf unselfishly dedicated himself to building the state and had he respected the democratic process, he could have had a similar effect on Puntland to the one President Egal had on Somaliland. An opportunity was clearly lost in Puntland’s first few years, but more will inevitably arise in the future.

Given that Puntland already has a functioning state and is relatively peaceful, the international community should focus on assisting Puntland in developing its institutions and capabilities. Helping to curtail corruption, professionalize the security forces, and strengthen law and order are a few key areas where assistance could provide major benefits. Targeted development assistance would also help. Additionally, the international community must address illegal fishing and toxic waste disposal off Puntland’s shores. This reckless behavior may well have contributed to piracy in Puntland. According to Santiago Iglesias Baniela, “Several of the pirate groups argue that fisherman have become pirates because their way of life has been

¹⁴⁸ Interpeace and Puntland Development Research Center (PDRC), *The Puntland Experience*, 30.

¹⁴⁹ Dill, 290.

destroyed by the illegal fishing and toxic waste dumping that has been ignored by foreign governments. They see, or have at least depicted, themselves as protectors, either of their local communities or of the local marine environment, adopting names such as ‘*National Volunteer Coastguard*,’ ‘*The Guards of Somali Marine Resources*,’ ‘*Central Regional Coast Guard*,’ or ‘*Somali Coast Guard*’ to suggest that they are involved in a more legal occupation than piracy.”¹⁵⁰

Piracy is arguably the international community’s greatest concern in Puntland. Increased patrolling by foreign navies may be helping on the margins, but the only real solution is in addressing the problems in Puntland. Although fishing is not a common Somali vocation, illegal trawler fishing within Puntland’s 200-mile exclusive economic zone depletes Puntland’s marine resources and angers its people. There is also strong evidence that several European firms have illegally dumped toxic waste off Puntland’s coast since the late 1980s, and that it has proven harmful to health in many of Puntland’s coastal towns.¹⁵¹ Though fishing and dumping practices are not the main cause of piracy, they should be addressed by the international community. Claims of illegal activity and exploitation should be investigated, and violators should be punished and forced to pay compensation to Puntland. Taking strong action will send a signal to Puntland’s people and leaders that the international community is not indifferent to Puntland’s concerns. It will also reduce perceptions of hypocrisy. This would likely make Puntland more amenable to cooperating on the biggest causes of piracy: corruption and lawlessness. Of course, poverty is also a major cause, but most poor coastal nations do not produce pirates because they have stronger systems of law and order than Puntland does.

In addition to addressing corruption and strengthening the rule of law, the repressive security forces in Puntland must be reined in. This is a very sensitive issue; Puntland’s leadership should be urged to reform its security apparatus, no longer using it as a tool of political power. Puntland should be given positive incentives to do so, and the international community should offer professional training for security forces that are pledged to protect the people and enforce the rule of law. The international community must be careful not to intrude too directly in Puntland’s internal affairs, offering suggestions, guidance, and enticements instead of dictates. These measures, along with efforts to strengthen civil society would go a long way to improving Puntland’s development and to curtailing piracy in the Gulf of Aden.

Somaliland

Given Somaliland’s successful peacebuilding and statebuilding project, no special attention is required by the international community. However, Somaliland needs to address internally the problems in the eastern provinces of Sool and Sanaag, perhaps in consultation with Puntland. The best solution would be for Somaliland to finish the process of decentralization, as envisioned by its constitution. Following its own peacebuilding formula, Somaliland’s leadership should engage Dulbahante and Warsangeli leaders to build consensus on a solution that provides enough autonomy for them to drop their support of Puntland and to commit to Somaliland. Talks should be conducted with Puntland to ensure that any final solution does not lead to warfare between the two states.

¹⁵⁰ Santiago Iglesias Baniela, “Piracy at Sea: Somalia an Area of Great Concern,” *The Journal of Navigation* 63, no. 2 (2010): 196-197.

¹⁵¹ Iglesias Baniela, 196, fn 19.

Aside from Sool and Sanaag, one of Somaliland's biggest problems is lack of international recognition as an independent state. In general, it confronts problems similar to those of any developing country. However, it has been handicapped by its lack of recognition, which makes it much more difficult to secure international loans and to attract foreign investment, among other things. For example, it cannot borrow from the World Bank or IMF because that privilege is reserved for the governments of internationally recognized states. Private entities are also reluctant to invest in Somaliland due to its complicated political situation arising out of its dubious international status. Seth Kaplan also notes that "many diaspora professionals—whose return would help to invigorate Somaliland's legal, accounting, health, and educational systems—are reluctant to come home for fear of Somaliland's uncertain legal status."¹⁵² With recognition, many problems would disappear and other opportunities would become available. Of course, offering bilateral assistance, whether or not Somaliland is recognized, would also help with its development.

The case for recognition of Somaliland is very strong. It possesses the four qualities that define states under the Montevideo Convention of 1933: "a) a permanent population, b) a defined territory, c) government, d) and the capacity to enter into relations with the other states."¹⁵³ Using Stephen Krasner's taxonomy, Somaliland possesses three of the four types of sovereignty: domestic sovereignty, interdependence sovereignty, and Westphalian sovereignty.¹⁵⁴ All it lacks is international legal sovereignty. Somaliland demonstrates effective control over its territory and it clearly has legitimate authority given its democratic elections and a constitution adopted by popular referendum. Krasner would argue that Somaliland's lack of recognition is a purely political calculation, following the "logic of consequences" rather than the "logic of appropriateness."¹⁵⁵ The logic of appropriateness would mean acknowledging that Somaliland possesses all of the qualities of an independent state and it would therefore dictate that recognition be extended. By contrast, the logic of consequences means that other states are afraid of the political repercussions of offering recognition and they do not think it is worth doing so.

One major concern is about offending African states by violating the AU's axiom of not altering the borders that African countries inherited upon independence from colonial rule. Somaliland is unique, however, in that it was an independent state for five days in 1960 before forming a union with Italian Somalia. Thus, as Somalilanders and others argue, its declaration of independence in 1991 merely dissolved the post-independence union of two states instead of splitting up a state that had existed since independence. There is precedent for such an action. Senegal and Gambia formed the confederation of Senegambia in 1980, but they dissolved it in 1989.¹⁵⁶ Krasner would say that Somaliland's situation is just another example of the "organized hypocrisy" that has always characterized the international recognition of states. As he explains, "recognition has been accorded to entities that lack either formal juridical autonomy or territory, and it has been denied to states that possess these attributes."¹⁵⁷ Therefore, recognizing Somaliland would not abrogate any inviolable maxims. Deon Geldenhuys is particularly critical of African countries for impeding Somaliland's recognition. He argues that "among existing

¹⁵² Kaplan, 257.

¹⁵³ Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, Article I.

¹⁵⁴ Stephen Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 9.

¹⁵⁵ Krasner, 5.

¹⁵⁶ Srebrnik, 225.

¹⁵⁷ Krasner, 220.

contested states, Somaliland probably has the strongest historical and legal claims to full statehood. Recognition is, however, a political act and those who could give a positive lead in elevating Somaliland to confirmed statehood—the African countries—remained trapped by their self-imposed taboos.”¹⁵⁸

In addition to the simple truth that Somaliland has functioned as a de facto state for 20 years while no Somalia-wide state has existed, many have argued that the persecution faced by Somalilanders during the civil war gives Somaliland the right to self-determination. Henry Srebrnik explains that “even theorists dubious about the morality of secession have accepted the principle of a ‘remedial’ right to self-determination, that is, allowing a group ‘subject to persecution or systematic discrimination’ the right to independence if this is ‘their best prospect for escaping these injustices.’”¹⁵⁹ Although Somaliland has been independent since 1991, its lack of international recognition poses a constant threat to its autonomy and its right to self-determination.

Given fears about Al-Qaeda and international terrorism, it makes little sense for the United States and others not to recognize Somaliland. Some of southern Somalia’s Islamist groups, such as Al-Shabaab, have ties to Al-Qaeda. Al-Shabaab has engaged in international terrorism as recently as July 12, 2010, when it carried out bombings in Kampala, Uganda. In February 2011, Al-Shabaab threatened to attack Kenya, and it has also threatened Burundi and Ethiopia.¹⁶⁰ Somaliland has served as a bulwark against this kind of extremism, and every effort should be made to strengthen a democratic, moderate, Muslim state which abuts anarchic territory inhabited by terrorist groups. The United States, United Kingdom, and others went to war in Iraq in 2003 and occupied the country in part because they hoped to create a democratic, moderate, Muslim state in the Middle East. It was hoped that Iraq would serve as an example to those around it and that it would act as a moderating force in a volatile region. Yet, those same states are not willing to take the significantly lesser step of offering international recognition to Somaliland for a similar reason.

Nevertheless, many states are starting to rethink their policies toward Somaliland and are engaging it more directly. China, the United Kingdom, and Italy are just some that have increased aid and commercial ties in recent years. In September 2010, the United States began a “dual-track” policy toward Somalia, in which it would engage the TFG and the governments in Puntland and Somaliland. These are positive developments. However, taking the step of full international recognition does not appear to be on the horizon. The African Union and its member states should be consulted with the goal of addressing their concerns and paving the way for Somaliland’s recognition. If progress cannot be made, the United States, China, the European Union, and other states concerned primarily with stability in the Horn of Africa should simply recognize Somaliland and deal with any political repercussions as they arise.

Paul Kingston and Ian Spears argue that, in many cases, “a formal and exclusive form of sovereignty does not reflect the reality of situations on the ground in many regions.” Thus, “instead of embracing a single approach to reforming the state system, there is a need for a more fluid system of norms that allow different types of units to exist simultaneously.”¹⁶¹ Somaliland is one such case. Full international recognition should be the long-term objective, but treating

¹⁵⁸ Deon Geldenhuys, *Contested States in World Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 146.

¹⁵⁹ Srebrnik, 224.

¹⁶⁰ Ibrahim Mohamed, “Somalia’s al Shabaab Threatens to Attack Kenya,” *Reuters*, February 27, 2011.

¹⁶¹ Paul Kingston and Ian Spears, “Conclusions and Policy Options,” in *States-Within-States: Incipient Political Entities in the Post-Cold War Era*, eds. Kingston and Spears (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 191.

Somaliland as its own quasi-sovereign entity in the short-term would be better than nothing. In particular, bestowing some kind of legal status that allows Somaliland to borrow from development institutions and to attract private investment should be pursued immediately.

The possibility of promising international recognition as incentive to resolve the turmoil in Sool and Sanaag should also be explored. Such a policy might consist of interested states agreeing to recognize Somaliland within a year or two after a deal has been brokered that satisfies majorities in Sool and Sanaag. If the deal falls apart before recognition is bestowed, recognition could be postponed until the situation has stabilized. From a logic-of-appropriateness perspective, Somaliland should simply be recognized. However, international recognition could be wielded as a powerful political tool to force Somaliland to resolve the dispute over Sool and Sanaag.

Even if states are unwilling to offer Somaliland legal recognition, they should continue to explore the sort of policies envisioned by the U.S. dual-track approach. As Kingston and Spears argue, “in rare cases where the state-within-a-state is viable and exists in an irreconcilable relationship with the formal state, or when it exists in situations of profound state collapse, the international community may have no choice but to consider some sort of recognition of states-within-states.”¹⁶²

¹⁶² Kingston and Spears, 191.

VII. Conclusion

This study has explored the differences in peacebuilding efforts between Somaliland, Puntland, and southern Somalia, utilizing Somaliland's lessons to inform the analysis. With regards to the five factors identified in Somaliland's peacebuilding process—shared identity, leadership, inclusiveness, local ownership, and innovation rooted in tradition—Puntland's peacebuilding process exhibited all five, but it suffered from leadership issues after its first three years of existence. Abdullahi Yusuf's desires for self-aggrandizement, as well as Puntland's general focus on a reconstituted Somali state have hindered its development since 2001. Southern Somalia has exhibited significantly lesser degrees of all five factors. Its relative homogeneity has meant that it has less of a sense of shared identity, whereas international interventions have weakened inclusiveness and local ownership while also hampering the emergence of good leaders. Both Italian colonial rule and subsequent international actions in southern Somalia have served to erode tradition as a potential source of conflict resolution and to create perverse incentives for individuals to engage in behavior that is ultimately detrimental to Somalia. This does not mean that traditional mechanisms do not exist; they are just weaker than they otherwise would have been. If the international community either disengages from Somalia or incorporates local solutions into its intervention efforts, the negative effects of many years of international intervention could be reduced.

In Somalia and elsewhere, the international community must be aware of its limitations whenever it seeks to intervene in the internal affairs of other countries. It can have a positive effect, but it can also exacerbate conflict. Peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts must be tailored to each specific situation based on the realities of that society. A plan based on a deep knowledge of the culture, traditions, and current political situation should be a prerequisite before such interventions are undertaken. It must always be kept in mind that peace agreements and state structures cannot be imposed top-down. The local community needs to identify with and accept any proposed solutions to its problems. Peace agreements and state structures are always better when they are primarily the result of indigenous processes. The international community can provide funding, security assistance, and advice. However, people must create their own agreements, frameworks, and systems if peace is to last.

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