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Inheriting failure: an exploratory study of post-colonial Somalia

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NAVAL
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MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

INHERITING FAILURE: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF POST-COLONIAL SOMALIA

by

Joseph T. Simmons

December 2014

Thesis Co-Advisors: Glenn Robinson
                                                    Douglas Borer

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1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	2. REPORT DATE December 2014	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE INHERITING FAILURE: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF POST-COLONIAL SOMALIA		**5. FUNDING NUMBERS**
6. AUTHOR(S) Joseph T. Simmons		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000		**8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER**
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A		**10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER**

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. IRB protocol number ____N/A____.

12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited	12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE A

13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)]

Throughout its history, Somalia has experienced varying degrees of instability that has created an environment of chaos, war-induced famine, and given birth to terrorist groups like Al Shabaab. The legacy of colonization by Great Britain and Italy adversely affected the development of a functioning Somali state following its independence, subsequent military dictatorship, and the eventual collapse of central government in 1991.

This thesis uses historical case studies, with a theoretical model proposed by Joel S. Migdal, to explain why post-colonial states (such as Somalia) often have had difficulty in establishing stability and the rule of law. Migdal's model holds that success hinges on the distribution of social control between state institutions and civil society as they compete to create the rules that govern behavior.

The northern region of Somaliland, drawing on the British approach of indirect rule, was able to reestablish stability by fostering cooperation between clan leaders and state institutions. The southern region of Somalia, influenced by the Italian authoritarian approach of direct rule, has repeatedly failed to establish cooperation between clan society and the state. This thesis provides recommendations for U.S. intervention and military operations based on the patterns and variations in stability often found in post-colonial states.

14. SUBJECT TERMS Somalia; Somaliland; Britain; Italy; colonialism; indirect rule; direct rule; Al Shabaab; post-colonial states	15. NUMBER OF PAGES 75
	16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU

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INHERITING FAILURE: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF POST-COLONIAL SOMALIA

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS

from the

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AU	African Union
BMA	British Military Administration
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
HDMS	*Hizbia Dastur Mustaqil Somali* (Somali Independent Constitutional Party)
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
JSOC	Joint Special Operations Center
NSC	National Security Courts
NSS	National Security Service
SEAL	Sea, Air, and Land; acronym for a Special Operations commando in the U.S. Navy
SNM	Somali National Movement
SNS	Somali National Society
SNSA	Somali National Security Agency
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SRC	Supreme Revolutionary Council
SSDF	Somali Salvation Democratic Front
SYL	Somali Youth League
TNC	Transitional National Council
UN	United Nations
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
USC	United Somali Congress
WSLF	Western Somali Independence Liberation Front

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank my wife, Elicia, for the loving support, advice, and encouragement over the countless days and nights spent completing this thesis.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisors, Doug Borer and Glenn Robinson, for their insight, guidance, and above all patience throughout this process. I am also thankful to the many incredible professors at the Naval Postgraduate School who have contributed to this substantial milestone in my career. The education I have received from this institution will serve me well in my future endeavors.

And a final thanks to all of the warriors I have served with throughout my military career, without whom this achievement and my own personal and professional success would not have been possible.

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I.   INTRODUCTION

Me and my nation against the world.
Me and my clan against my nation.
Me and my family against the clan.
Me and my brother against the family.
Me against my brother.

–Somali Proverb[1]

By most accounts, the current state of affairs in southern Somalia has all the attributes of a failed state: massive unemployment, corruption, terrorist militias, ongoing violence, ineffective governance, and more. However, this image of widespread chaos is not the entire story. The northern region of Somaliland, a secessionist "state within a state," has achieved a significant level of stability not only in greater Somalia, but also relative to its peers in Eastern Africa (See Figure 1). Somaliland's government has progressed despite the fact that the majority of the southern portion of the country has been entrenched in a constant state of warfare since 1991. That year is a pivotal time in Somali history because it marks the failed unification of the British Protectorate of northern Somaliland with the former Italian colony of central and southern Somalia. According to Brons, before the colonial period, there were no signs of the formation of a Somali state uniting the various populations under one political authority.[2] In order to understand the complicated history of the greater Republic of Somalia, it is necessary to revisit the country's colonial history. In it we find that the British colonial occupiers contributed key components to Somali society that have enabled the citizens of northern Somaliland to stand apart from the rest of the country. Somaliland still faces trials and tribulations in reaching its security and economic goals; but there are specific elements of the British legacy that have enabled stability, shielded Somaliland from a crippling long-term civil war, and inoculated it from Islamist terrorist groups such as Al Shabaab.

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[1] Mark Mazzetti, *The Way of the Knife: The CIA, a Secret Army, and a War at the Ends of the Earth* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2013), 137.

[2] Maria H. Brons, *Society, Security, Sovereignty and the State in Somalia* (Utrecht, The Netherlands: International Books, 2001), 119.
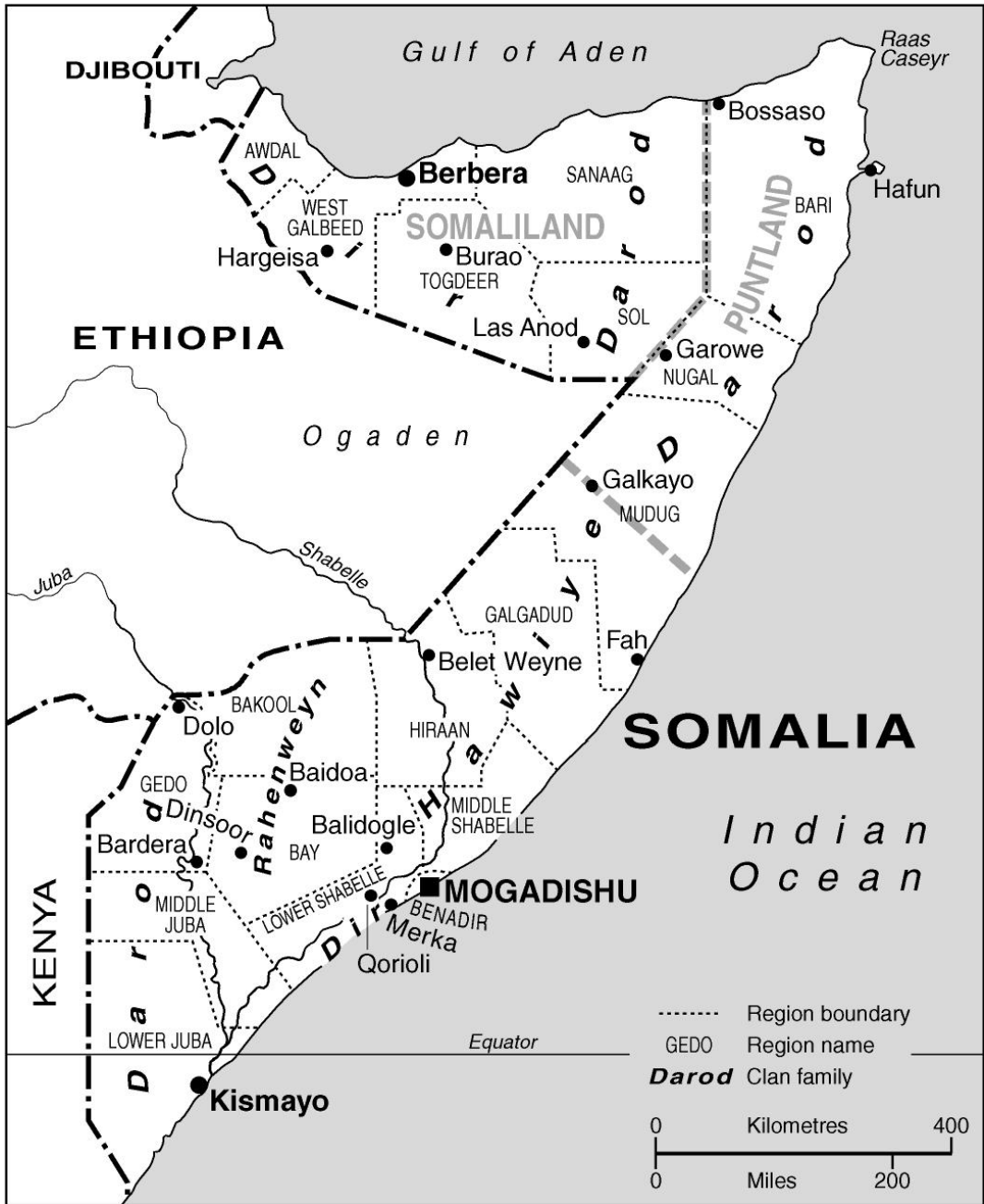
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Figure 1.   Map depicting the three regions of Somalia: Somaliland, Puntland, and Somalia[3]

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[3] "Somalia Map," accessed November 3, 2014, http://www.africa-confidential.com/uploads/content/99-09_Somalia_map.jpg

2

A.   STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS

The dynamic relationship between the formal state and societal elements has long been a point of contention among many scholars of post-colonialism.[4] Joel S. Migdal has proposed a model for explaining success and failure in these newly formed states. Migdal's model hinges on how the state tries to maintain social control, but often decides to distribute state-like powers among competing organizations within a polity. These organizations often compete with each other to create and enforce the rules governing how people behave.[5] These social organizations may include ethnic groups, villages, religious groups, families, corporations, or any organization that can influence or exert control over society.[6] He reasons that relatively weak post-colonial states, such as Somalia, have had difficulty establishing rules of behavior due to this "outsourcing" of control to non-state elements, which he categorizes as "society." Migdal's model looks inward toward the balance of power between the state capital and the non-state clan leaders (society), of whom he refers to as "strongmen," that compete for the deciding factor of social control in newly independent governments. Migdal also emphasizes the importance of three main indicators of successful social control: compliance, participation, and legitimacy.[7] The more of these three indicators that a government is able to instill in its people, the higher level of social control afforded toward achieving state goals.[8]

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[4] See, for example, Su-hoon Lee, *State-Building in the Contemporary Third World* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1989); Aristide R. Zolberg, *One-Party Government in the Ivory* Coast, rev. ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969); Benjamin Neuberger, "The Western Nation-State in African Perceptions of Nation-Building." *Asian and African Studies* 11 (1976): 241–61; Donald Rothchild and Naomi Chazan, eds., *The Precarious Balance: State and Society in Africa* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987); and Victor Azarya and Naomi Chazan, "Disengagement from the State in Africa: Reflections on the Experience of Ghana and Guinea," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29 (January 1987): 106–31.

[5] Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), xx.

[6] York W. Bradshaw, "Review of Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World. by Joel S. Migdal,." *American Journal of Sociology* 95, no. 4 (January 1, 1990): 1061.

[7] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, 32.

[8] Ibid.

However, often the government has to be willing to share power with non-state organizations and civil institutions in order to be viewed as legitimate in the eyes of the people. This paradoxical relationship for sharing power and control between state and society is prevalent in most forms of governance. Dictatorships do not necessarily denote strong state-society relationships being that they nearly universally outlaw the right of their citizens to organize social groups or express any dissatisfaction or dissent against the regime. A strong economy also fails to denote state strength when only state leaders and upper-class elites enjoy the benefits. However, once the new state system has won the trust of the population through a legitimate and thorough inclusion in the goals of their government, they will adopt the state's desired rules of behavior. Failing this, the majority of fledgling states eventually collapse into corruption, disarray, and revolution.

In his book, *Strong Societies and Weak States,* Migdal cites several cases that outline both strong and weak states in the post-colonial era. He uses Israel as an example of a strong state that evolved after gaining independence from the British Mandate in Palestine. In Israel's case, the majority of Jewish settlers were subject to rapid relocation from Europe and effectively abandoned their previous life, or as Migdal would refer to as their "strategies of survival."[9] A strong state emerged after the Jewish leadership (most notably Ben-Gurion) gave incoming settlers new strategies of survival that allowed the state to capitalize on the primary indicators of social control. Migdal's two necessary conditions for a strong state, rapid dislocation, and the channeling of resources to state-controlled organizations (or favorable to the state) enabled Israel to consolidate central power and social control very quickly.

In Sierra Leone's case, Migdal contends that the post-colonial state achieved the first objective of population dislocation but failed to channel resources and social control away from existing tribal leaders, or strongmen.[10] British colonialism brought the era of industrialization to places like Sierra Leone resulting in a migration or abrupt dislocation of the population from rural pastures to urban centers.[11] Unfortunately, once Sierra

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[9] Ibid., 172.

[10] Ibid., 173.

[11] Ibid., 83.

Leone gained independence from the British authority, the mobilization of people necessary for the extraction of resources was never fully wrested from the local strongmen (tribal or clan chiefs). The strongmen retained social control throughout large sections of society in Sierra Leone whereas the newly formed state leadership floundered in corruption, nepotism, and arrogance.[12] The example of Sierra Leone demonstrates how a weak state can struggle to achieve the three key indicators of social control (compliance, participation, and legitimacy) when an existing strong tribal society continues to command the population's strategies of survival, even in a post-colonial and independent state.

In this thesis, I apply Migdal's model to both the northern British Somaliland Protectorate and the southern Italian colony of Somalia in order to show that, after state collapse in 1991, the foundation of state-society relations established by the British administration gave Somaliland the ability to recover and stabilize the northern region. The approaches of each colonial power were quite different prior to unification following World War II. Less than a decade after unification, Somalia would be relegated to over twenty years of authoritarian dictatorship that eventually resulted in the collapse of the state system throughout the country. However, northern Somaliland, drawing on its British experience with what Migdal would classify as a weak state-strong society legacy, was able to stave off civil war and reestablish governance and the rule of law. The southern region, entrenched in the Italian strong state-weak society relationship was doomed to languish in clan warfare once the rule of the state evaporated from the collapse of the Siad Barre dictatorship in 1991. The northern clans of Somaliland found success and stability by returning to their strong strategy of survival combining cooperation among clan leaders with state institutions, just as the British practiced during their administration. The clans in the southern region of Somalia, never having a background in fostering true cooperation with the Italian colonial administration, proceeded to spiral into civil war eventually producing Islamic terrorist organizations such as Al Shabaab.

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[12] Ibid., 138.

The initial sections of this thesis will provide the historical background to the colonial past of both Somaliland and Somalia. The understanding of the evolution of the country provides a historical perspective of the western colonial policies. The critical time windows were in the post-World War II unification of Somalia in 1960 and the subsequent ousting of military dictator Siad Barre in 1991. The former gave Somaliland the freedom from its colonial past, while the latter provided them with the impetus to ensure that their fate would not be left to another dictatorship. The historical analysis throughout the thesis will be heavily based in the application of Migdal's model for state success. The policy recommendation derived from the analysis will also be guided by the different types of international responses to conflict in Africa, as outlined by Williams.[13]

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[13] Paul Williams, *War & Conflict in Africa* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2011), 149.

II. THE COLONIAL HISTORY OF SOMALIA

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the major European powers of Britain, France, and Italy expanded their respective empires throughout the Horn of Africa. Each country had a different agenda for achieving a greater influence in East Africa, but it was primarily Britain and Italy that had the greatest impact on the territories that comprises modern day Somalia. By 1897, the partition of Somaliland as a British Protectorate was virtually complete.[14]

Prior to colonization, the Somali people existed as a culture living in a virtually stateless society.[15] They had never been exposed to an institutionalized system of government; although they had been subject to the traditional authority of the clan elders and respected the consensus of the "shir" (an assembly of all male members of the clan).[16] Britain's initial involvement in Somalia did not stem from a desire to colonize the northern Somali coast, but rather to safeguard the supply of meat to their garrison located in Aden.[17] In fact, Britain had no intention of emplacing a lasting occupation in Somali until Egyptian forces evacuated in 1884. The threat of continued French expansion into the Horn was a secondary motivation for direct involvement in the safeguarding of these trade routes, being that colonization throughout Africa was a point of pride and income for the major European empires of the day. The Somali clans accepted the British offer of "protection" after having grown tired of the Egyptian forces. In 1886, the clan elders did not sell the land to the British, but rather signed a treaty that allowed the emplacement of a British "agent" or resident force to keep the peace. Three British vice-consuls were established along the coast working directly under the authority of the British garrison in Aden.[18] Additionally, the clans agreed to not enter into relations

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[14] Ioan M. Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*, 4th ed. (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2002), 40.

[15] Mark Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland* (London: Progressio, 2008), 23.

[16] Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism: International Politics and the Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 61.

[17] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 40.

[18] Ibid., 47.

with any foreign power without the knowledge and consent of Britain.[19] This aspect was especially important in that it solidified the British footprint within the territory as the sole European power along that section of coastline. In 1888, the British signed an agreement with France recognizing Djibouti as a French colony thus solidifying the frontier for their respective areas of interest. Even at the outset, the British intervention into Somalia was not intended to form a true colony or establish a strong state presence in the north. Conversely, the Italians set out with quite a different model of implementing a strong state power in the south.

Within that same year, Italy laid claim to the territory east of the British Protectorate and over the course of the next several years, Italy continued to negotiate with local clans in order to bring the whole of the Somali eastern coastline into the Italian Empire. This division of the Horn of Africa by the colonial powers marks the beginning of a dramatic change to the mechanisms of social control that up until this point had been solely based on traditional clan rules of behavior. As Migdal states, the societies of Africa turned from being strong societies with viable strategies of survival into weak societies where modernization and new urban centers pushed the population into a search for new strategies.[20]

In the beginning, not to be completely subjugated by the colonists, the Somali clans sought to profit from the ensuing competition for social control between the European powers and their neighboring rivals Ethiopia and Kenya. However, the effect would prove to only allow the invading powers to become more entrenched in their lands reducing their ability to govern themselves. Britain's negotiated treaty of 1897 with King Menelik of Ethiopia solidified the Protectorate's southern border.[21] This particular treaty has proven to be a point of contention between Somalia and Ethiopia since its inception due to Britain's failure to consult with the local Somali population when drawing up the boundary. This marks one of Britain's most critical mistakes in long-term Somali relations, yet served to disrupt the old strategy of survival regarding the pastoral clan

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, 55.

[21] Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*, 25.

property rights. This disruption of the clans' hold on social power through dislocation is a prime example of Migdal's necessary conditions for the formation of a strong state. By the turn of the century Britain and Italy had come to an agreement with Ethiopia, and each other, in terms of the borders of their respective territories. This prevented an unwelcome dispute with Ethiopia but would completely upset the clan way of life and created deadly conflicts that echoed throughout the twentieth century and beyond.

The Italian approach to Somalia was to establish a permanent colony completely subjugated to the rule of the Italian government. It was never a question of the Italian aim to quickly form a colonial regime, a strong state, and the ensuing weakening of the clan structure through subjugation. By 1920, Italy had acquired the Somali coast through various treaties, extravagant gifts, and a moderate amount of military force with the ultimate goal of establishing a colony that would be economically profitable and whose agricultural potential would attract Italian settlers.[22] Italian Somalia was to be a true colony, filling the coffers of the Italian government, providing an additional outlet of food supply, and acting as an expansion of the empire suited for Italy's surplus population.[23] The Italian approach sought the formation of a strong state under Italian rule while striving to foster a very weak society by minimizing, or completely ignoring, the clan system. The strong state-weak society model seemed to be a familiar tactic throughout Africa so long as the colonial authorities remained in power and the population continued to be dependent on the administration's given strategy of survival.

In 1899, an Islamic militant, infamously known as the "Mad Mullah," started an uprising against the British Protectorate that would last for 20 years in an attempt to reverse the perceived western disruption to the Somali way of life. Sheikh Sayyid Mohammad 'Abdille Hassan believed that the British and Ethiopian "colonizers" were destroying the faith of the Muslim people and formally declared a holy war. His movement originates in Sayyid's grievances against the Ethiopian encroachment into Somali pastoral territory as much as the British, but it was the ensuing twenty-year war

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[22] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 90–91.

[23] David Laitin and Said Samatar, *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), 59.

against the colonial British forces that is most remembered in history.[24] Initially, Sayyid maintained a good relationship with the British administration due to the fact that his preaching was conducted primarily further inland from the major coastal cities and had not, up to that point, become an issue. In fact, his authority was welcomed by the British and fell in line with their strategy of indirect rule and empowering local clan leadership.[25] The ability for Sayyid to penetrate the local clans in a manner that ran counter to the meager British Somali agenda was not initially considered a problem. The relationship soon soured when Sayyid became enraged that the British authority had refused to expel a Catholic mission in Berbera for homeless children.[26] His followers were referred to as Dervishes.[27]

Sayyid recruited primarily from his Somali lineage tribe, the Ogaden clan. His ability to influence and mobilize his local clan population soon disrupted not only the newly formed relationship between the British and the clan leaders but also the relationship between the northern clans themselves. Sayyid often organized raids on the neighboring Isaaq clan over disputed grazing rights, which drew the ire of the British authorities. This would be the Protectorate's first opportunity to show the Somali people that it was capable of keeping order and peace within the territory. The legitimacy of any state government, even a colonial administration, hinges on its ability to provide essential services like security and a stable economy. If organizations can devise such strategies, the chances of a strong state emerging with significant capabilities increase dramatically.[28] However, this conflict would rise and swell over the next two decades with the British being unable to completely vanquish Sayyid's forces when the Great War began in Europe. There was a brief four-year respite starting in 1905 when Sayyid was

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[24] Anna Simons, *Networks of Dissolution: Somalia Undone* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc., 1995), 35–36.

[25] Touval, *Somali Nationalism*, 52.

[26] John Drysdale, *Stoics without Pillows: A Way Forward for the Somalilands* (London: HAAN Associates Publishing, 2000), 5.

[27] Not to be confused with the modern day mystic "whirling dervishes." Sayyid and his men belonged to the Salihiya Order of Islam. At that time in Somalia, practitioners of that order were referred to as dervishes in Somalia. Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 69.

[28] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, 105.

granted authority from the Italian and British administrations to grazing areas within the Protectorate.[29] Unfortunately, he later resumed his harassment of Protectorate tribes forcing the British to take action. Following the end of the war in Europe, the British were finally able to win a decisive victory in 1920 through a final attack on Sayyid's Dervish headquarters in the Ogaden region. Sayyid and a few of his men were able to escape, but nearly the entirety of his movement were either killed or captured. Sayyid died shortly thereafter from influenza on December 21, 1920.[30]

The story of the Mad Mullah is significant because while Sayyid failed to complete his vision of a strong Islamic theocratic state, his legacy remains in the mind of the Somali people as a heroic image of a Somali that was able to transcend clan divisions, and he is viewed as a forerunner of Somali nationalism.[31] Despite his long campaign against the British authorities, Sayyid had gone against his own people's long-standing tradition that no clan should have dominion over another; nor should power be vested in a single man.[32] However, an unexpected outcome of the war was that the regional partition between northern British Protectorate and Italian Somalia would be solidified.[33] This partition as it pertains to land lost to Ethiopia would continue to be a point of contention between Somalia and the British years after achieving independence, yet it did serve to establish the eastern edge of Somaliland; a border that would later be recognized by the independent state of Somaliland in 1991.

The Dervish uprising was still the first challenge to Britain's influence in the Protectorate. After 20 years of war the British continued to follow their approach of "indirect rule" and were wary to invest much more into the administration and infrastructure of the Protectorate. The conclusion of the war had resulted in an atmosphere of distrust and hostility between the British authorities and the local clans. The British has to reestablish their ability to command social control of the population

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[29] Touval, *Somali Nationalism*, 54.

[30] Ibid., 80.

[31] Ibid., 84.

[32] Drysdale, *Stoics without Pillows*, 5.

[33] Simons, *Networks of Dissolution*, 36.

and tailor the indigenous strategy of survival to the goals of the Protectorate. Some programs were instituted to build up the educational system, but there was controversy over the encroachment of western education versus traditional Islamic schools run by Somali sheikhs. On the opening of the Second World War in Africa, any further attempts to improve the education system for the general public would have to wait until after the defeat of the Italians in 1941.[34] The revenue used to promote these programs depended primarily on import and export duties combined with profits from the sale of licenses. The principal exports of the northern Protectorate remained in the traditional market of hides, skins, and livestock.[35] The British were successful in creating an urbanized class of bureaucrats comprised of civil servants and traders resulting in a small segment of the educated elite.[36] Migdal suggests that colonization, even to a lesser extent in this case of the British authority, involves the formal appropriation of key decision-making posts within the society.[37] The creation of this smaller educated elite worked well for the indirect rule of the British while not completely disregarding the clan leadership, who were entrusted with making decisions at a local level.

The primary concern of the British authority was not the creation of a strong Somali state, but to continue to keep the peace with the least amount of investment possible. They were able to enact this indirect rule with a small group of expatriate officials supported with the assistance of Indian and Arab clerks. Before the conclusion of World War II, this method was facilitated by the homogeneity and relative compactness of the three primary clans in the north (i.e. Dir, Isaaq, and Darod clans).[38] Anything more ambitious than this would have required a much larger and stronger presence on the part of the British government.

The clan leaders, or elders, played a pivotal role in the administration of local government by being a link between the appointed District Commissioner and the

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[34] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 103.

[35] Ibid., 104.

[36] Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*, 30–31.

[37] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, 102.

[38] Ibid., 104.

population. According to Simons, the indirect rule by colonial administrations established a variety of positions in order to quell traditional tribal disputes (e.g., clearly defining which grazing grounds and water sources belonged to which clan).[39] This inclusion of local leadership enabled the clan system to remain a strong functional society, while not weakening the British administration to the point where they were fully responsible for the welfare of the population. Not surprisingly, this Western practice of drawing lines in the sand would lead to competition among the clans to gain favor among the British officials. These elders were paid a stipend for their cooperation and were granted limited judicial power, which provided a rudimentary system of local courts keeping much in the traditional system of resolving clan disputes.[40] The authority of the elders remained small in comparison to the Islamic magistrates, or "Kadis," that resolved religious issues and matters of personal status involving Islamic Shariah law. From the British point of view, all of these roles in local politics and administration by the indigenous leadership largely enabled indirect rule, but also had the added benefit of providing local clan leaders with a valuable experience in governance between western powers and the pervasive clan structure. The citizens of the Somaliland Protectorate were being afforded a lesson in governance not so readily available in the authoritarian fascist system of the southern Italian colony.

An important testament to the political agility of the clan elders was their ability to play one British administrative official off another. This aspect of Somali opportunism evolved from the harsh pastoral environment that necessitated that a man did not pass up a chance to gain power or profit. As John Drysdale states, "A strong Somali appetite for power does not go unfulfilled if the opportunity presents itself."[41] This survivalist aspect of Somali clan culture was apparent in the bloody campaign of Sayyid and would show itself again in the latter half of the twentieth century. Migdal would refer to the clan elders as "strongmen" that often played a recurring role throughout colonial Africa.[42]

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[39] Simons, *Networks of Dissolution*, 33.

[40] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 105.

[41] Drysdale, *Stoics without Pillows*, 14.

[42] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States,* 33.

Through various social organizations such as ethnic or kinship groups, these strongmen had the ability to undermine the centralized social control of the state centers. Colonial powers would have to grant just enough power to the clan elders to meet their objectives, but fragment the overall society creating a dependence on the state's provided strategies of survival.

The fascist bureaucracy of Italian Somalia allowed the colony to be relatively successful until the events of World War II but was starkly different from the British approach. The bureaucracy was doubly inefficient and failed to directly include the local population in the actual system of governance. Many of the tenets of fascist social life prevalent in Italy as the time such as clubs and organizations had been imported along with the Italian settlers.[43] However, these same rights were not extended to the indigenous Somali population who were subject to discriminatory laws specifically designed to uphold the racial status of the colonists (e.g., the locals were officially referred to as "Somalis" or "Natives").[44] There was almost no local political participation in the Italian administration by the clan elders except at the lowest level and within their own clan system.[45] The establishment of the strong state by the Italians aimed to disrupt the Somali strategies of survival and replace them with a weakened colonial was of life.

As opposed to Britain, the Italian government had a much more heavy-handed approach to governance, yet it believed that it had the additional responsibility of bringing civilization to its "subjects." Prior to the Second World War, the Italian administration instituted harsh practices such as instituted forced labor and a humiliating racial policy.[46] The Italians saw Somalia as a colony in the true sense of the word and were more active about investing in the local economy and infrastructure so long as it was on their own terms. Often the goal of the colonial powers in Africa was to weaken indigenous strategies of survival were through policies of subjugation and exercising

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[43] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 110.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., 112.

[46] Touval, *Somali Nationalism*, 62.

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social control through centralized state institutions.[47] There was a larger amount of modernization invested into the roads, police and security forces, and urban areas than in the British north. This presented a wider respect of law and order and a modern attitude toward a centralized government that would benefit the southern Somali politicians after they gained independence following the war.[48] However, initially, the Italian authorities were not well received by the clan leadership in the southern region. The idea of subjugation to a Christian authority was not lost on the clan and religious leadership.[49] The Italian language also proved to be easier to learn for the Somali locals as opposed to English with all of its quirks and intricacies. Thus, the Italian tongue was more pervasive through the southern territory than the English language in the north.

As was the first initiation of Somali nationalism introduced by the war with Sheikh Sayyid, this modernization introduced the Somalis to a new view of their place in the world. In both the north and south, greater interaction with the outside world coupled with the spread of western education led to stirrings of organized Somali nationalist groups. The community leaders with western education and those few that worked for the administration were holding secret meetings in Italian Somalia. The fascist Italian government promptly stopped the formation of these nationalist groups. The survival of the Italian authority rested on its ability to monopolize social control, especially over social groups like the clans. The Italian administration was not about to allow yet another mechanism for mobilization to form in its midst. Not until after the defeat of the Italian regime in World War II would the southern region truly be able to organize its community in any modern fashion.

In the British Protectorate, the Somali National Society (SNS) emerged in 1935 from local merchants and educated civil service workers to encourage the spread of modern education and aspired to overcome the traditional clan rivalries the divided Somali society.[50] In 1937, the Somali Officials Union was formed to promote Somali

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[47] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, 125.

[48] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 112.

[49] Touval, *Somali Nationalism*, 71.

[50] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 114.

inclusion within the civil service as opposed to the practice of largely employing Arab and Indian clerks instead of trained local Somalis.[51] This early process of Somalization within the Somaliland bureaucracy was aligned with Britain's indirect rule strategy. This produced a lower level Somali bureaucracy of competent officials as the British tended to aim for quality personnel as opposed to sheer quantity like the Italian administration.[52] Any economic success, however small, in Somaliland relied heavily on the emerging bureaucracy combined with the local support of the clan elders. The inclusion of clan elders appeared to mitigate any nationalist movements of opposition in the north, but soon the British authority would be stepping down, as the age of colonial independence would soon take hold throughout Africa.

Oddly enough, as the British authority followed their model of forming a smaller, weaker state presence among the local clan leadership, their indirect approach had all of the merits of successful social control. After the defeat of Sayyid, the northern population was largely compliant with the British administration. The participation of local clan leadership was an integral part of Somaliland from the beginning, an aspect that inspired legitimacy to the comparatively weaker state in the north. The Italian plan of subjugation and suppression of the clan structure formed a strong colonial state but never achieved the critical attributes of successful social control in the long-term. After the Italian defeat in World War II, the southern clans would quickly learn to mobilize their fellow citizens toward unification and statehood.

A.   THE UNIFICATION OF A POST-COLONIAL SOMALIA

World War II ushered in a new era of independence throughout much of the African colonies. At the end of the war, regardless of whether the British or Italians accomplished their goals of statehood in East Africa, the unified state of Somalia would soon be responsible for its own strategies of survival. The campaign of Italian forces in August of 1940 led briefly to the capture and incorporation of the British Protectorate

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Paolo Tripodi, *The Colonial Legacy in Somalia: Rome and Mogadishu: From Colonial Administration to Operation Restore Hope* (London, Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 55.

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into their East African Empire, but seven months later the British (and a few Ethiopian forces) won control of Somaliland and the Ogaden region.[53] It was in early 1941 that control of the Horn of Africa would be brought under British control and would remain that way until the independence and unification of northern and southern Somalia. The Italian forces surrendered much quicker than anyone had expected and the responsibility for administering the former Italian colony was placed in a small contingent of British Civil Affairs officers.[54] The economy throughout the country was in a shambles. The British forces who had to refocus on the front in the war in Europe and who had never had any true aspirations for direct rule, had to govern the newly acquired region as best they could.

Fortunately, the British officers proved to be very capable and up to the task as they quickly rebuilt state services and provided the greater population with essential strategies of survival; i.e., state-provided security, employment, and representation. The British Military Administration (BMA) disbanded the Italian police force and as a testament to the British method of securing social control through local inclusion and education of the population, a Somali police force was equipped and trained under the tutelage of the British officers. Security was promptly reestablished allowing local labor forces to return to work. The production of crops such as sugar and wheat were restored to meet the sustainment of the local population. Italian provincial and district government administration was completely replaced by British Civil Affairs officers. In a pivotal step toward future autonomy and self-rule, where vacancies could not be readily filled with British personnel, tribal assemblies were encouraged to act as a liaison with the BMA, elections for assembly leaders were held, and district and provincial advisory councils were created in 1946. This inclusion of the Somali population, never allowed under the Italian administration, quickly instilled legitimacy in the new system and gained compliance from the citizens. These councils discussed any number of problems such as the sustainment of water supplies, pastoral and agricultural improvement, unemployment, and pervasive food scarcities. These early actions taken by the British administration are

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[53] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 116.

[54] Ibid., 117.

a direct reflection of their indirect approach to empowering the local leadership through participation in state matters. Italy's authoritarian regime did little to actually promote Italian interests over their own colonial aspirations.

In contrast to the fascist Italian government, the British officers were well received in southern Somalia and quickly established a mutual respect among the locals in the south. The enforcement of the British system of law, while deemed strict, was enforced using collective punishment to stem the outbreak of clan and tribal warfare, which earned respect and cooperation from the tribal elders who valued the British system for its impartiality.[55] This did much to recover any lost credibility from the legend of the Sayyid rebellion 20 years prior. Over the next decade and under the direction of the BMA, western education (primarily for men) was expanded and more readily accepted causing the student population to nearly double.[56]

The liberalizing actions taken by the BMA resulted in a small number of junior Somali officials and a more senior, capable police force. The British were able to replicate their successful process of Somalization lifting much of the suppressive practices of the Italian fascist administration. The strength of the Italian administration rested in suppression of the people, not empowerment. In the eyes of the clans, Italian administration was perceived as powerful in its ability to command the extraction of resources from the land and its people, but it was never viewed as having a truly legitimate right to govern in Somalia. This method of governance demands compliance from a weakened society and fails to foster any true loyalty toward the state. Now that the international community had decided that colonial Somalia would be free and independent, the British authorities would take even greater steps to empower local leaders. Most importantly, they abolished the restrictions emplaced by the Italian regime on the formation of local political associations and clubs. The first and most important group, the Somali Youth Club, was founded on May 13, 1943, initially having 13 members representing all of the main Somali clans in the southern region.[57] This new

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[55] Ibid., 120.

[56] Ibid., 119.

[57] Ibid., 121.

society was also a representation of the majority of the clan divisions within the Somali nation. Comprised of religious leaders as well as laymen, they were united to finally abolish the traditional clan rivalries and establish a new concept of Somali nationalism and statehood. The British authorities approved this movement because it was a step toward modernization, fostered cooperation with the British government, and as a bonus measure it was anti-Italian. By the end of 1947, the club had changed its name to the Somali Youth League (SYL) and laid out an agenda for social change and the future of their soon-to-be independent nation.[58] According to Tripodi, the SYL would quickly become the most powerful political party in Somalia, leading the formation of the new government despite a strong anti-Italian stance during the post-war administration.[59] The SYL program sought to accomplish the following: Unite all Somalis (youth especially), educate the youth in modern civilization by means of new schools and cultural propaganda, eliminate and existing or future prejudicial situation using constitutional and legal means, and develop the Somali language while putting into official use the Osmaniya Somali script.[60] However, a true detribalized Somali is very rare in the Horn of Africa. Even with a western education, unless they have severed all connection with his clan and lives abroad, will a Somali ever choose to abandon their clan ties and responsibilities.[61]

In 1949, the United Nations General Assembly voted to entrust Somalia to Italian administration for a period of ten years under the tutelage of United Nations (UN) representatives.[62] Despite the tumultuous history between Italy and southern Somalia, this Somali population received this outcome calmly and without incident. The independence and unification of a Somali nation was within grasp. This target date for

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[58] Touval, *Somali Nationalism*, 86–87.

[59] Tripodi, *Colonial Legacy in Somalia*, 45.

[60] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 123.

[61] Drysdale, *Stoics without Pillows*, 65.

[62] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 128.

securing independence within a decade encouraged true feelings of nationalism throughout the Horn of Africa.[63]

During the same period the British Somaliland Protectorate needed to recover from the effects of the Italian occupation and the World War. Somaliland was in a different social and economic situation than that of southern Somalia. The British model of indirect rule was a double-edged sword when it came time to rebuild the infrastructure and prepare the northern region for unification. While the British had instilled some positive aspects by allowing the local clan leadership to take on a majority of daily judicial and tribal conflict decisions, the general population itself had been uprooted and would need to literally and figuratively rebuild their society. Unlike the former Italian administration in the south, the BMA faced little inquisition from the international community as to its governance after the war.[64] The BMA's ability to reestablish successful strategies of survival in the north was challenging. The culture of cooperation and loyalty between the British and the northern clans was a testament to the recognized legitimacy founded within the Somali society by the early British administration.

Following the 1941 occupation, the process of rebuilding the north to its pre-war state was the priority for the British. The colonial government incorporated progressive policies in light of the fact that population was more open to secular progress and social change following the upheaval of the war. The government headquarters in northern capital of Hargeisa was rebuilt in 1941 and by the end of that year, trade and commerce returned to normal. In July 1946, the Protectorate Advisory Council was assembled in order to discuss formal changes such as the development of agricultural programs, addressing poverty and juvenile delinquency, and grazing control. During this time the Somaliland National League was also founded with the aims of ensuring Somali unification, expansion of educational programs, and the abolition of clan particularism.[65] By 1950, the British had taken additional steps toward the "Somalization" of the civil

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[63] Touval, *Somali Nationalism*, 81.

[64] Ibid., 102.

[65] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 134.

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service. This process would be crucial to ensuring that the population in the northern region would be able to remain stable and functioning following the unification process.

Unfortunately, prior to relinquishing the Protectorate, the British abandoned the Ogaden territory to Ethiopia; a decision of convenience that would later become an enduring point of conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia. This British decision to relinquish the Ogaden region was a truly lost opportunity to meld the two colonial regions. The divisive effects of the partition of Somalia and Somaliland in the nineteenth century did nothing to promote a nationalist campaign and the legacy of fragmentation permeated the country.[66] To this day, these internationally recognized borders that were responsible for cutting off large portions of Somali society remains a point of contention within the Somali national identity.[67]

As the British administered the rebuilding of the state and government services in the north, the Italian approach for preparing the southern region for independence did not exactly follow the same strategy. During the 10 years prior to the final unification in 1960, the role of the Italian Trust Administration, responsible for the development of Somalia's political institutions, was closely defined by the United Nations (UN). Somalis were given increased responsibility for the political and administrative control of their country. A UN advisory Council reporting directly from the capital city of Mogadishu left little room for maneuver on Italy's part. The Italian administration opened the school of politics and administration in Mogadishu as a professional training center for Somali officials and political leaders. This expansion of western style education would provide benefits for the fledgling Somali bureaucracy as members of the civil service were encouraged to stand as candidates for election in the legislation.[68] Educational initiatives such as this dissipated Somali skepticism over the intentions of the Italian administration and by 1956 all districts and provinces were in direct charge of Somali administrative officers. Additionally, the Italians invested in restoring infrastructure and expanding

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[66] Ibid., 137.

[67] Laitin and Samatar, *Nation in Search of a State*, 34.

[68] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 141.

agricultural programs.[69] Governance in the southern region was solidifying due to the formation of a territorial council that addressed both traditional and modern interests. Governance at the local level broke into two types: district councils in the rural areas and municipal councils in the towns and urban centers.[70] In 1956, this territorial council was transformed into a legislative assembly complete with candidates being required to be literate in both Arabic and Italian.[71] Contrary to their original machinations of direct rule and subjugation, the Italian Trust Administration was attempting to recover whatever little influence and power they might retain in a post-independence Somalia. These steps toward building a strong state (modeled primarily after the Italian system of government) were an attempt to solidify future cooperation between Italy and Somalia.

The Italian administration acted with a sense of urgency during this period, due to the 10-year time limit required by the UN. The British Protectorate in the north was under no such deadline and progressed at a much slower pace, much to the later detriment of its soon-to-be governing officials. The results of which led to a scramble in the last few years of British administration to bring the northern Somali officials up to a sufficient level of professionalism and governance that would allow them to compete with their Italian counterparts in Mogadishu. In 1950, the local clan chiefs in the north, who had previously provided a crucial link between the district commissioners and the population, were officially authorized as local authorities.[72] This provided the chiefs with limited judicial powers and strengthened their traditional role, but it was really more of a change in title rather than a promotion in local governance. As the British began to gradually withdraw, the pace of the Somalization of the government was accelerated throughout the 1950s. In 1957, the Protectorate's first Somali legislative council was established with six candidates, appointed by the governor, representing the interests of the major clans in Somaliland, who in turn were expected to represent the clan interests. The continued inclusion of establishing a balance of power between a representative state government

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69 Ibid., 142.

70 Ibid., 144.

71 Ibid., 145.

72 Ibid., 149.

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and clan interests would later serve as the basis for the establishment of the Somaliland state decades later.

This process of forming an independent and unified government faced all of the standard challenges of a democracy in its infancy such as appeasing the interests of the many clans throughout the prospective nation in respect to employment opportunities, educational and legal reform, and severe administrative problems in communicating between several different languages (i.e. Italian, English, and various dialects of the Somali language). In the midst of all of the preparation from the sponsor states, the British and Italian authorities had very little contact and cooperation prior to the final unification. As the legislative body was being formed in Mogadishu, steps were taken to weaken the authority of the chiefs. This serves as a prime example of Migdal's proposed necessary conditions for the formation of a strong state in that the power and resources must be channeled to state-controlled organizations rather than non-state actors. The state must also disrupt the strategies of survival from the strongmen, in this case local clan leaders, in order to gain the upper hand in the balance of power.

One such measure was in the form of punitive approaches to addressing inter-clan feuds. Traditionally, tribal chiefs practiced a system of collective punishment when judging tribal disputes. However, political parties like the SYL seeking to form a more unified state with a centralized government in Mogadishu, reduced the legal authority of the chiefs in an attempt to weaken clan solidarity. The result of which was more of a focus on the individual criminal in passing sentences, rather than the collective punishment. As political parties formed to support tribal interests, legislation was passed making it illegal for political parties to bear tribal names.[73] Opposition parties like the HDMS (Somali Independent Constitutional Party) sought a federal approach allowing more regional autonomy.[74] In hindsight, this approach may have been a more prudent view based on the state of affairs today where a federal system remains a plausible outlet for reunification.

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[73] Ibid., 156.

[74] HDMS is the acronym for *Hizbia Dastur Mustaqil Somali*, which translated means Somali Independent Constitutional Party. Ibid., 157.

Throughout the transition process, Italy struggled with its own post-war economic recovery. The Italians catered to political clans who allowed them to retain their once powerful hold on Somalia. In this tactic, they simply failed to understand the clan system that permeated the new Somali government. Their failure to properly engage the SYL and stem the anti-Italian sentiment tarnished the transition process as the Italians were either unwilling, or unable, to accept that they were no longer the colonial masters of the region.[75] Italy's years of disregard for the complexities of the clan structure was only matched by the Somali people's misunderstanding of the western form of democracy being pushed upon them during this time. The root cause of the eventual collapse of the new Somali government was practically written into their new constitution as the government was designed, from a western viewpoint, to eradicate clanism.[76] This anti-clan rhetoric would later be taken to a new level by the authoritarian regime of Siad Barre.

In December of 1959, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution that the Italian trusteeship should end on July 1, 1960. An unanticipated move that shortened the deadline by several months and would have devastating effects on the union of the two former colonies. The officials in the Somaliland Protectorate remained behind in many aspects of government and administrative progress when compared to their Italian trained counterparts. The prevailing thought was that these differences would be settled after the unification and that the two regions should be joined as soon as possible to prevent any loss in momentum.

In April 1960, the drafting of Somalia's constitution was complete with all parties agreeing to join in a unitary state, with an elected president as the head of state, and to be governed by a prime minister and council of ministers working within a single legislative assembly. In the meantime, until the two regions could be fully integrated, the administrative, judicial, and economic systems of the two territories would function separately.[77] Shortly thereafter, on May 2, the British government officially relinquished

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[75] Tripodi, *Colonial Legacy in Somalia*, 49–59.

[76] Ibid., 84.

[77] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 163.

responsibility for the Somaliland to the Somali Protectorate officials it had worked so hard to prepare for independence. Five days later, on July 1, 1960, the former Italian colony of Somalia and the British Protectorate were united into the Somali Republic. The Somali Republic was to begin with two different sets of judicial systems, different currencies, and different government institutions at both the central and local level.[78] The yoke of western colonialism had finally been lifted from the Somali people, but the challenges of independence were far from over.

Political representation between the northern and southern territories appeared to have been balanced based on political and economic interests, but loyalty within the population continued to follow traditional tribalism and clan ties. Political leaders viewed clanism as a premier threat to an effective national unity in their newly formed state. This may have been an echo of the Italian strategy of non-inclusion in the southern region. Traditionally, a Somali's place in society was largely determined by clan identification and genealogy. The newly elected elite either refused to reveal their clan identity or adopted the term "ex-tribe." Thus, clan differences allowed the Western powers to set the Somali people against each other in the past.

Within the first year of independence the differences in the British and Italian approaches to many aspects of government began to create divides within the Somali government. The British desire for indirect rule and a focus on quality training over quantity in educational and social advancement and a separation of politics from the administrative bureaucracy clashed with the Italian system of bureaucracy. In contrast to the more traditional Somali officials in the north, the Italian-trained officials penetrated throughout southern society to a much higher degree. The Italians had initially set up a system that would rule the Somalis as subjects, leading to a much more pervasive administration with a much more modern agenda over the prevailing traditionalism that continued in the north under the British tutelage. The British granted the clan chiefs far more power than the Italian administration, keeping in line with Somali concepts of pastoral government. Simply put, the British aimed for a small cadre of well-trained

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[78] Paolo Contini, "Integration of Legal Systems in the Somali Republic." *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (1967): 1088.

individuals while the Italians enacted a widespread campaign that reached a much larger percentage of the southern population. All of which is understandable being that the Italian model was initially designed to create a bureaucracy of subjects, not necessarily a system of governance that appealed to the traditions of the indigenous people. The British retained the intrinsic loyalty and legitimacy coupled with the clan system, while the Italians brought a modern system that disregarded traditional clan ties based on a more western concept of governance. Even after the official unification was enacted, the remaining British and Italian officials were naturally inclined to promote their respective country's separate system of administration. This created yet another barrier to full integration between the territories.

Many government functions passed down from the British and Italian administrations appeared similar, but the discrepancy in conditions of service and pay rates became an especially difficult obstacle to unification. Discrepancies in compensation and training spread across all branches of government to include the police force and the military. The issues between the two separate legal traditions only compounded these types of issues with the north incorporating the British model of common law and the south using the Italian colonial law.[79] Additionally, the fact that the new government capital was centered in Mogadishu, far from the northern region, while the Protectorate's former capital in Hargeisa was essentially demoted to a provincial headquarters was viewed as a blow to the prestige of the northern officials. The sheer distance from Mogadishu only exacerbated the perceived political alienation in the north and did nothing to instill loyalty to the now unified systems of government.

The British influence, with all of its positive aspects of indirect rule, did not last long in the newly formed state following the independence of 1960. The northern region refused to recognize an Anglo-Ethiopian treaty from 1897 granting Ethiopia acquisition of the Haud pastoral region. Disputes over Somali populations in Kenya placed an even greater strain on British relations. Ultimately, the British supported the recognized borders of Ethiopia and Kenya causing an extreme blowback from not only the Somali

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[79] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 170.

government, but from the strong clan society as well. In retaliation for Britain's stance on the Somali borders, all of the clan chiefs and local authorities, once loyal to the British administration, resigned from their appointed positions in protest when Somalia officially broke off diplomatic relations with the British in 1963.[80]

This marked the end of British colonial involvement and influence in Somalia. The British had accomplished a great deal during their time as the administrators of the Somaliland Protectorate, but the loss of the Ogaden region remained a point of contention and has tarnished much of the good will garnered by the British in other aspects. The British would return later in providing some humanitarian support following the end of the brutal Barre regime. The Italians on the other hand continued to support their former colony, despite their loss of influence and in light of the atrocities of the Barre regime in later years.

The unification process put the two different colonial approaches on display and highlighted how the Italian desire for a strong state would highly influence the tendency to centralize power in Mogadishu. The political parties that rose to power after independence seemed to unify the two former colonial regions on paper, but in practice the Italian influence gravitated the majority of resources toward the capital city. The same mistakes that alienated the society, originally committed by the Italian regime, were being repeated by the Somalis themselves. The continued disregard by the newly formed state for clan recognition on a local level seemed to denote a return to the elitist Italian colonial system that was still fresh in the minds of many Somali citizens. As per Migdal's model, the sharing of power is a delicate balancing act that if done properly, will increase legitimacy leading to a strong state. However, the channeling of resources through Mogadishu, without the proper representation throughout the rest of the country, incited resentment for the new government and paved the road for a change in government in the form of a military coup.

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[80] Ibid., 193.

B.   THE REGIME OF GENERAL SIAD BARRE

Many newly formed states during the era of post-colonial independence were ushered in with supreme optimism only to collapse and reform under the guise of an authoritarian dictatorship. Weak states were often a result of post-colonial governments due to political inexperience, corruption related to newly appointed positions of power, and a lack of democratic participation and representation as some governments gravitated toward an unbalanced centralization of power in one facet of government or another. Somalia proved to be no exception. As the unified Somali Republic progressed in the 1960s, the Somali Youth League grew in power eventually forming a nearly one party government. This newly found independence and power brought with it a rampant increase in political corruption from members of the National Assembly. The ideology of a unified democratic state descended into a period of government inefficiency and authoritarian rule.

As a result, on October 15, 1969 President al-Rashid was assassinated by one of his personal guards. The Premier, Muhammad Haji Ibrahim Egal, was overseas at the time and quickly returned to Mogadishu to have the Assembly nominate a successor. However, Egal and his fellow politicians in the capital were not able to regain control before a group of Somali Army officers conducted a military coup taking over the government on October 21, 1969. The revolutionary officers quickly renamed the country as the Somali Democratic Republic and took steps to dissolve the former government body. The Somali Constitution was suspended, the Supreme Court was abolished, the National Assembly was closed, political parties were declared illegal, and the military declared themselves the ultimate ruling body as the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) with General Siad Barre as the new president. The era of the authoritarian "Scientific Socialism" had begun branding itself as the solution to the corruption and clan nepotism that had become rampant since the unification of the country. According to Simons, this approach must be viewed as a genuine response to rampant corruption while shrewdly concentrating state power in the hands of a select trusted few.[81]

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[81] Simons, *Networks of Dissolution*, 47.

Initially, the SRC as an organization enacted several reforms that served to benefit the unification and creation of a national Somali identity. However, in order for President Barre to accomplish his goal of a functioning socialist government, he would outlaw many of the clan traditions that had driven the tribal society for hundreds of years. The death sentence was reinstated in order to replace the age-old practice of "diya," or blood compensation normally paid for settling clan disputes. Clanism was completely denounced with any traditional tribal actions such as diya resulting in fines or imprisonment. These reforms were violently enforced by Barre's authoritarian government. Even the term "ex-clan," used primarily with the circles of the educated elite, was outlawed. The future of Somalia was envisioned as a socialist society embracing not a clan identity, but transcending into a national Somali identity. The rigid authoritarian regime of Barre that would span over the next two decades was poised to begin.

After seizing power, Barre formed two new government entities designed to eliminate the clan identity throughout Somali society. The National Security Service (NSS) and the National Security Courts (NSC) were created to enforce new laws that prosecuted traditional clan activities and influence such as nepotism, clanism, "lack of revolutionary zeal," and treason.[82] Falling in line with the socialist leanings, many manufactured goods were nationalized, resulting in periodic shortages. This tactic of redirecting industry by the state served to appropriate certain strategies of survival within the population, but this method is only valuable if the state-sponsored replacement remains productive, which was not always the case.

In contrast to the strong-arm tactics of the Barre government, other social developments became rather popular within Somali society. The Roman alphabet was adopted as the official script of the national Somali language. Progressive social programs focused on the pastoral nomads such as: literacy, hygiene, modern animal husbandry methods, basic civics and, of course, the political aims of Scientific Socialism. Literacy was viewed as a key component of eliminating the traditional clan tribalism that

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[82] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 212.

countered Barre's idea of a national Somali identity. These new Socialist ideas borrowed heavily from Marxist views and influences from Russian advisors. A particularly challenging aspect of the clan lineage system was the intertwining of Islam within the social traditions. Each clan itself claims its name by reaching back generations to the early years of Islam. For the Barre regime to erase hundreds of years of clan pride and tradition was a daunting task indeed.

During the initial years following the military coup d'état, 1969–1976, Siad Barre focused on internal issues such as government corruption and social ills while simultaneously attempting to create a valid national Somali identity that did not need or recognize clan traditions. In 1977, Barre focused his efforts outward in an effort to recover the Ogaden territory, an area that was still thought of as Somali pastoral territory in Ethiopia.[83] A large pastoral ethnically Somali population remained in this eastern portion of Ethiopia after the treaty and still thought of themselves as part of the Somali state. There was an Ogaden movement for independence known as the Western Somali Independence Liberation Front (WSLF). Barre's earlier measures to spread literacy throughout the Somali Republic began to pay dividends by raising awareness of national and international activities. This war in the Ogaden region quickly became a national phenomenon and joined the people in support of the fight to regain the Ogaden region for Somalia. The loss of which remained a source of contention for years since western forces such as Britain had drawn up the state lines. By creating a cause in which the entire Somali population could support, Barre was successful at cementing his regime's ability to mobilize the people and wrest even more aspects of social control from the traditional clan leaders.

Unfortunately, Somalia severely lacked support from a powerful benefactor in this struggle while Ethiopia retained the ear of the Russian government, a former ally of Barre that had switched sides to Ethiopia. With the backing of the superpower, Somali units supporting the WSLF were forced to retreat back to the their borders in defeat. In the eyes of the Somali people, this withdrawal was a source of embarrassment and drew

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[83] This area, known as the Ogaden region, was given to Ethiopia by the British in the Treaty of 1897. Ibid., 59–61.

ire for the Barre regime. Had Barre articulated the British involvement in the claim to the Ogaden, Somalia may have been able to present a legitimate argument to the international community and potentially gained sufficient support in its recovery attempt. His strategy to surreptitiously support the WSLF presented the Somalis more as invaders rather than a people reclaiming their rightful territory. Barre's strict ban on tribalism also made it impossible to publish the rightful tribal claims for the region. His own policies, coupled with an inferior Somali military force facing a well-supported Ethiopian army, had worked against him. Barre enjoyed all of the recognition within his own state up to this point. His ability to ensure compliance and support for his regime throughout Somalia would soon face a multitude of challenges.

The initial causes of this Ogaden conflict are firmly rooted in the actions of the former colonial powers. The decision to relinquish the Ogaden to Ethiopia is perhaps the most damaging mistake of the British administration. The Ogaden war was an extreme loss of prestige and stability for the Barre regime. As Barre's power weakened throughout the country, new political organizations like the Somali National Movement (SNM) were founded in the north and would rise against the authoritarian leader.[84] Where the people were united in a common cause against the "crimes" of their former colonial masters, they would later rally together against the common enemy in Siad Barre. Two of the main indicators of social control, compliance from the population and legitimacy for his socialist regime, were about to slip away from the dictator in a big way.

The fallout from the failed Ogaden War created a refugee crisis as Somali clansmen flooded across the border from Ethiopia. Fortunately for Barre, this humanitarian disaster renewed the interest of western powers like the United States and Britain in Somalia; support that was badly needed after falling out of favor with Russia. Barre also took internal measures such as releasing former Prime Minister Muhammad Egal, a political prisoner that had been imprisoned without a trial since the military coup in 1969.[85] The embattled regime was trying any by means necessary to retain its tenuous hold on power. Another rather bold step was to reconnect with clan representatives that

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[84] Tripodi, *Colonial Legacy in Somalia*, 126.

[85] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 249.

were loyal to the government and could be controlled. This remains a prime example of how an authoritarian dictatorship bent on retaining power will counteract his initial edicts in order to cater to local strongmen. Barre's earlier government measures afforded distinct advantages such as a loyal military force, internally controlled security services, and resources to incorporate and reward supporters. The bureaucracy that had begun under the tutelage of Britain and Italy became demoralized after years of being underpaid by the socialist government. Fear permeated all classes of people, but the bureaucratic work force was especially fearful of retaliation from the higher political echelons. The earlier ban on democratic institutions also meant that there was a lack of legitimate social organizations that could rally against the authoritarian leader. Once again, the clan identity in Somalia became the only remaining non-state social force that would bring the people together against the Barre government.

By 1981, a resistance group was organizing in the central and formerly British northern regions. The Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), an anti-Barre guerilla movement, operated out of the central areas of the republic. The SNM (the main anti-Barre opposition group in the north) was formed around the same time from the northern Isaaq clans in the former British Somaliland Protectorate. The SNM declared its support for the SSDF, but their primary grievances were grounded in the political issues of the Isaaq clan such as: inadequate political representation in Mogadishu, lack of support and development in the northern region, and Barre's socialist economic controls hindering trade. The northern regions once robust livestock trade was also severely affected in 1983 when the Saudi Arabian government banned Somali stock based due to a viral rinderpest epidemic. From his base of power in Mogadishu, Barre took an even stronger authoritarian stance against both organizations. Besides using military power, Barre attempted to discredit the groups by portraying them as an illegal rebellion that was clan-based and unpatriotic. The groups would survive despite Barre's attempt to eradicate them through brutal military operations. Protests against the authoritarian ruler increased throughout the remainder of the 1980s in response to severe poverty and an exceedingly weak economy. As Barre's militant repression of the traditional clan ties continued, the country itself was on the brink of civil war.

The Barre regime of "scientific socialism" was initially met with optimism in all corners of Somali Republic. His plan to form a strong secular state immediately sought to weaken the many social organizations within Somali society, focusing primarily on suppressing the clan system. For a time he was successful in this endeavor, but the support he enjoyed in the beginning would soon dissipate with the defeat in the Ogaden and the subsequent natural disasters to follow. Barre's authoritarian government is an example of how a post-colonial state can appear strong, but this strength is often fleeting if the state cannot effectively command the rules of behavior. The Somali society remained weak due to the measures taken by the regime to outlaw social organizations that challenged the regime. The ban on clan identification, political parties, and the appointment of clan loyalists are all tricks used by dictators to remain in power. Migdal refers to these various techniques as the "politics of survival."[86] Barre's actions fragmented the traditional social control normally held within the local clan strongmen and for a time, replaced strategies of survival primarily through state agencies, all of which he controlled with an iron fist. As Migdal illustrates in other cases such as the collapse of the *ancient régime* in Ethiopia and Iran during the 1970s, when an authoritarian government relies on these harsh politics of survival, the strategy can often lead countries toward rebellion, regime change, and civil war.[87]

C.   1991: CIVIL WAR

The last few years of the 1980s were a period of continued government collapse and economic decline. Somalia and Ethiopia successfully signed a peace accord in 1988, but by that point the Barre regime and the country itself was already slipping into chaos.[88] International aid contributions were barely able to support the weakened Somali government institutions. Humanitarian groups protested the Barre regime's violent suppression of the rebellions in the former British Somaliland and central region. Near

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[86] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, 204–214.

[87] Ibid., 24.

[88] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 262.

the end, Siad Barre's reach barely extended beyond the city borders of the capital city Mogadishu.

As the former colonial power in the southern region, and having continued trade interests, Italy attempted to facilitate a transfer of power from the militant Barre government to a civilian government. But it was too late. A peaceful resolution was not possible as Barre was either ill prepared to enact change or reluctant to grant any concessions to the opposition. His reliance on the remaining loyalists in his regime was not enough to sway the balance of power back into his favor. The population reverted back to relying on the local strongmen for security. The weak state of the Barre regime would soon end in anarchy.

In 1991, the Somali Democratic Republic reached a tipping point amidst the rebellious factions and widespread poverty before finally collapsing into a brutal civil war. Siad Barre and his bodyguards were chased out of Mogadishu by the rebellion forces of the United Somali Congress (USC), a group that had originated surprisingly in Rome in 1989.[89] His ultimate undoing coming from the very clan dynamics that he attempted to eradicate. Despite being an avid critic of the clan structure in Somalia, Siad Barre traced his genealogy to the Darod clan. The head of the USC, General Muhammad Farah Aideed, had a power base in the competing Hawiye clan. In combination with commanding a large swath of the local population, General Aideed was a national career army officer, who for years was imprisoned under the reign of Siad Barre as he felt that Aideed was a threat to his position. Almost immediately after Barre's escape, the once illegal clan lines were redrawn in the embattled southern region of Somalia. Without the brutal authoritarian rule to keep the peace, the clan leaders rallied their supporters in an attempt to grab power in the vacuum of security and chaos erupting throughout the country.[90]

Barre's military and security forces were not able to quell the rebellion despite being thoroughly equipped with modern weaponry. This same arsenal soon fell into the

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[89] Ibid.

[90] Brons, *Society, Security, Sovereignty*, 211–213.

hands of the rival clan militias. The population's normal strategies of survival were devastated in the midst of this conflict and as a result, the common people were forced to choose sides amid the warring clans. Traveling required that one pay a fee to move from one small clan "kingship" to the next so as not to get robbed or attacked by their fellow countrymen. The city of Mogadishu became divided, split primarily into northern and southern halves ruled by Aideed and his clan rival, Ali Mahdi. This fierce competition for control of Mogadishu soon spread throughout the south.

With the complete absence of a governing state body, the local strongmen (clan warlords) seized and fought over any means of social control. Farmers were forced to abandon their fields as clan militias patrolled further and further into the countryside attempting to lay claim to wide swaths of property. The already weakened livestock and agricultural base of Somalia was devastated and the region was entrenched by famine. The UN estimates that nearly 300,000 Somali citizens perished while over a one million fled the conflict in the south.[91] Like Aideed, many of these clan leaders (dubbed "warlords" by the western media) were former military officers in Barre's regime. They recruited young male fighters with the promise of loot and the constant provision of the narcotic leaf, Qat, a widespread drug commodity in Somalia that was often chewed daily and always before battle. In the absence of tenable strategies of survival, the warlords offered the life of a militia soldier to the displaced youth of southern Somalia.

In the northern region, the former British Protectorate had suffered greatly at the hands of the Barre military with an estimated 60,000 deaths attributed to the attempt to suppress the uprising.[92] Following Siad's departure, the northeast region was liberated by the clan-based SSDF, who worked closely with the traditional clan elders to maintain the peace. In the northwest, the SNM guerrilla movement established a government in the former British Somaliland Protectorate declaring independence from the greater republic in 1991. Working with the regional clan leadership of the northern clans (Dir, Darod, and Isaaq), this interim government also relied heavily on traditional clan diplomacy and

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[91] Lewis, *History of the Somali*, 264–265.

[92] Ibid., 265.

tactics. Through a series of traditional peace conferences, or "shir," former Primer Minister Egal was appointed as the new president in May 1993.[93]

It was here in the north that the traditional clan diplomacy practices made a distinct difference between maintaining peace and descending into clan civil war. Since Mogadishu was internationally recognized as the hub of political power in Somalia, high-profile conferences were conducted in the southern region that ultimately accomplished very little in the way of mediating the violence and transcending clan divisions. Conversely, the northern clan leaders took an independent approach to mediation between the clans. Somaliland's ability to maintain the peace during their conferences was attributed to the fact that there was an absence of power hungry military leaders like General Aideed. As opposed to the south, politicians led the SNM (rather than former military officers) that quickly gained the trust of the northern clans by ensuring the formal participation of the clan elders in the peace process.[94] The ability of leaders like Egal to actually use the clan leaders to establish stable forms of social control in the north was a level of compliance and participation that neither the British nor the Italians were ever able to accomplish.

Muhammad Egal was a highly respected and well-known politician in the northern region. The population in the north identified with him as a man of the people. Egal continued to be a bridge between the clans displaying a deft ability to mediate clan conferences that would eventually create a peaceful transition to a stable Somaliland state. His expertise from a life in Somali politics, a high-level of education, and his status as a political prisoner under the Barre government gave him credibility in the north and lent a high degree of legitimacy to the new state. He would eventually become the leader of Somaliland until his death in 2002.

The north continues to retain a much higher level of peace and prosperity compared to the southern region. Today Somaliland can be considered as a relative successful state when contrasted against the twenty-first century conflict throughout the

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[93] Ibid., 266.

[94] Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*, 69.

majority of eastern Africa. The British legacy of creating a low-impact state Protectorate with the inclusion of local clan leadership was not lost in the formation of modern Somaliland. In fact, one could say that the northern region picked up where the British left off and created an environment that evolved from a weak state-strong society government to a strong state-strong society in a relatively short amount of time. The clans may not be quite as powerful as they once were, but the inclusion of the clan elders and interests continue to be an influential factor, especially in local politics.

D. THE FALL OF THE SOMALI REPUBLIC AND THE ORIGIN OF AL SHABAAB

By the spring of 1992, the warring clan factions in southern Somalia prevented much of the international humanitarian aid from reaching the starving population. The international response from the United States as well as the UN was viewed as being much too slow. By February 1993, Operation Restore Hope intervened with a force of over 33,000 UN personnel, of which over 28,000 were from the United States alone.[95] The objective of the UN peacekeeping force was to deliver much needed food and medicine to the most ravaged parts of the population in southern Somalia. At the same time, the UN coordinated the formation of a Transitional National Council (TNC) chartered with providing governance until peace was restored and a more permanent administration could be democratically selected. The delegation from Somaliland had abandoned the delegation in Mogadishu prior to the TNC agreement. The northern clans suffered the most from Barre's attempt to quell the rebellion through a harsh military response. They were not about to trust their fate to the political squabbling and growing clan conflict in Mogadishu.

Shortly thereafter, General Aideed's militia conducted attacks on the UN peacekeepers resulting in several devastating retaliatory direct action raids from the U.S. military forces stationed in Mogadishu. Then in October 1993, the most violent fighting between the clan militia and American forces resulted in the death of 18 American troops and reported Somali casualties in the hundreds. The horrific aftermath of this battle

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[95] Ibid., 268.

prompted the Clinton administration to announce that all U.S. forces would withdraw from Somalia by March of 1994.[96] As the final UN forces exited Mogadishu in 1995, extensive looting ravaged the city and General Aideed was subsequently appointed as the "interim president" on June 15. Aideed was killed in an attack the following year. The international forces had largely failed to shore up any remaining semblance of a functioning state system in southern Somalia. The clan society, as it stood at that time, had gained tremendous strength in the form of militia fighters and power hungry strongmen. These clan warlords had no intention of sharing power with a transitional state government in Mogadishu. Only in the northern Somaliland was the traditional clan system able to pull a victory from the jaws of abject state defeat. Southern Somalia would be entrenched in famine and warfare producing one of the most renowned terrorist organizations in Africa, Al Shabaab.

E.   AL SHABAAB AND EMIR AHMED ABDI GODANE

As the warlords of Somalia clashed over territory in Mogadishu and its surrounding areas, a group of Shariah courts gained notoriety in the early years of the new millennium. In the absence of a legitimate government, common people often turned to their local religious leaders to mediate conflicts and disagreements. In 2006, one of these Shariah courts, deemed Al Shabaab ("the Youth"), was able to transcend clan politics and quickly rise to a level of power in Mogadishu. The population was desperately in need of a governing body that could provide security and allow them to return to a productive and normal way of life. Al Shabaab was viewed as the most pious and religiously educated of the Shariah courts, which quickly garnered the most trust and compliance from the war-torn population. They used religion as a political ideology that provided the population with a stability that heralded to the traditional days of clan leadership; not the power hungry warlords that moved in after the Barre government collapsed in 1991.

However, Al Shabaab presented a redefined notion of Islam that the focused on religion from an instrumental point of view by using the common religious beliefs to

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[96] Ibid., 273.

achieve personal and political gain. It was essentially local strongmen operating under the guise of a religious order rather than a clan militia. Some of the tenets of this Islamic agenda included: a resurrection of the Islamic caliphate, a renewed war against western civilization, and an extreme focus on Shariah law.[97] Much like the authoritarian tactics of the Barre regime before it, Al Shabaab offered the population a different strategy of survival. In fact, most of the population at the time embraced the social control of Shariah law relatively quickly. This period of acceptance would be short-lived as again, just like Barre before them, Al Shabaab abused its easily gained power and rejected the clan social base from whence it came.

Ahmed Abdi Godane occupied a prominent position within the ranks of Al Shabaab and rose through the ranks to become the emir, or leader, of the terrorist organization. His image as a pious religious leader coupled with being a seasoned veteran of the war in Afghanistan tapped into many of the aspects of social power in Somalia. He was viewed as an expert in guerilla warfare and demonstrated this ability by leading attacks against the rival warlord factions that were suppressing the local population. By 2009, Al Shabaab was actually able to provide real security and stability for the population within Mogadishu; a feat that was largely overlooked by the western media.[98] This ability to provide normal citizens and people with the means to conduct their lives in relative safety garnered a great amount of trust and compliance. Al Shabaab essentially rewarded the population with its version of safety in exchange for loyalty to its organization.

However, the existing clan loyalties that permeated the traditional society were viewed as counterproductive to their to Islamist-based governance and proof that the people were insufficiently committed to Islam.[99] They delivered harsh punishments in accordance with their version of Shariah law that vastly increased their coercive power

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[97] Stig J. Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 5.

[98] Ibid., 84.

[99] Williams, *War & Conflict in Africa*, 140.

and status within the population. By 2009, under the leadership of Godane, Al Shabaab had control of most of the southern region in Somalia.[100]

However, this "golden age" of Al Shabaab did not last, as the organization discovered that the actual daily governance of such a large area was not an easy task.[101] Additionally, international pressure and African military forces began to gain momentum in their campaign against Al Shabaab. Eventually, African Union forces would regain control of the majority of Mogadishu and begin to turn the tide against the terrorist group. With the assistance of western powers like the United States, prominent members of Al Shabaab have been targeted and killed. Godane himself was recently killed in a United States military drone strike on September 1, 2014.[102] His ability to transcend clan politics through religion gave him a legendary rise to prominence in Al Shabaab and within militant circles in Somalia; a feat that has not been repeated since the days of the Mad Mullah and his loyal following of Dervishes.

As a regional terrorist organization, Al Shabaab continues to be a weakened, yet relevant threat in southern Somalia and eastern Africa. However, their brief existence as a governing body hardly qualifies them as even a weak state when compared to previous iterations of government throughout Somalia's tumultuous history. They were able to gain control of large swaths of land, ensure compliance from the local population (dictating the rules of behavior primarily through violent and barbaric means), and created a perceived image of legitimacy by through their religious ideology. Regardless, these indicators of state success and social control (according to Migdal's model) were minimal and ultimately failed to translate into a lasting functional state.

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[100] Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*, 83.

[101] Ibid., 73.

[102] Farouk Chothia, "Al-Shabaab's Ahmed Abdi Godane." *BBC News*, September 9, 2014. accessed September 15, 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-29034409

III.   CONCLUSION

Influential Somali leaders were able to garner a great deal of trust and loyalty from their various followers, constituents, and fellow warriors because they often incorporated the social controls associated with the traditional clan system. Some like General Said Barre initially fought against political corruption, but eventually failed because they tried to eradicate the clan structure that has permeated Somali society for ages. Leaders Sheikh Hassan and Emir Godane created a powerful Islamist following by winning the trust of the people, only to ultimately fail to complete their vision of a modern day caliphate. And finally, former Somaliland President Egal was able to transcend clan conflict and unite the north in a relatively peaceful transition that provided a legacy of peace and trust among the northern clans that remains to this day.

Thus, I argue that Somaliland owes part of its success to the British approach of indirect rule as opposed to the Italian strategy of direct colonization. Migdal argues that the rapid and deep transformations of a century ago have had an impact on state-society relations today.[103] During its colonial administration, the British fostered a sense of shared identity among citizens of Somaliland that enabled it to rise up from the ashes of the failed unification experiment that resulted from the joining of the two colonial territories. The British, having had other lesser aims in forming the Somaliland Protectorate than the Italian authority had in buttressing its tiny empire, came the closest to capitalizing on the intricacies of the strong clan society. The British colonial administration incorporated three critical attributes: empowering clan chiefs, early and prudent Somalization of the colonial administration, and the concept indirect rule proved to be a successful formula for social control. These lessons learned from Somaliland's British colonial past, when compared against the original form factors of the Italian colony, give the international community direction and focus on how to rebuild and stabilize the violent southern region of greater Somalia. A successful Somali state cannot exist without recognizing and incorporating the traditional clan system. This key factor of

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[103] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, 54–55.

clan inclusion is a key factor to mobilizing the population toward a stronger state-society relationship.

Conversely, the Italian approach heavily disregarded the clan structure, enforced the inappropriate Italian model of government, leaned heavily on a system of direct rule that subjugated the population, and as Tripodi contends the Italian continuously supported the corrupt Siad Barre regime that pushed the precarious state over the edge into civil war.[104] The path leading toward destruction lies primarily in the hands of the Italian government. In Migdal's framework, the Italian authority essentially attempted to create an environment with a strong centralized state without enlisting the assistance of the existing clan structure. Their disregard for the clan system combined with state-sponsored support throughout the Barre military dictatorship did more to damage the stability of a unified Somalia than any measure enacted by the British colonial authority.

However, during the period following the end of the Barre dictatorship in 1991, the legacy components of the colonial powers dissipated and the tremendous struggle for power between the rival clans in the southern region of Somalia bears the bulk of the responsibility for the ensuing civil war and continuing instability of the past two decades. As Williams states, there is hardly any zone of conflict in Africa that cannot trace its violence back to colonization.[105] The problem with this argument being that colonialism itself is not a principal cause or trigger of many contemporary conflicts. The difference in Somalia's case is that when the government in Mogadishu collapsed, the local clan leaders were not accustomed to working with the authority. The Italian legacy of suppressing the Somali society was perpetuated when the aftermath of the Barre regime led to the creation of the deadly combination of a weak (essentially non-existent) state and weak clan society, which according to Migdal will produce the highest level of instability and set conditions for a failed state.

The key elements of the British method of indirect rule were both a positive and negative force behind the current state of Somaliland. According to Bradbury, the British

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[104] Tripodi, *Colonial Legacy in Somalia*, 129.

[105] Williams, *War & Conflict in Africa*, 7.

formed new political and bureaucratic institutions while reinforcing indigenous clan traditions of security, justice, and authority.[106] This was a critical change in elevating the clan elders to positions of state power and placing the responsibility of not just settling clan disputes but also to make state government decisions. The new element of a western judicial system emphasizing individual responsibility over clan responsibility for crimes committed challenged the traditional customary laws in Somaliland without completely dissolving local authority.[107] This introduction of establishing an elder in a leadership role that held sway over citizens other than his clan members was a pivotal shift in modernizing Somaliland governance. Traditionally, a key problem in Somali politics is that no clan wanted to be subordinate to another.[108] The British were able to avoid major clan issues by investing heavily in the majority Isaaq clan in the northern region. There were still minority clans in the area, but an identity of citizens as Somalilanders was born. The indirect approach of the British overcame local rules that operated counter to their goals, yet fulfilled that critical need for social control by getting the population to obey the rules of the state (British administration) rather than the informal traditions of the clan.

When the UN directed the unification of British Somaliland and Italian Somalia in 1960, the optimistic mission of transitioning the country into a fully independent and functioning state was not without its many challenges. The two colonies had many conflicting issues: different monetary systems, legal systems (common versus civil law), languages, education, militaries, and more.[109] This new Republic of Somalia inherited four distinct legal traditions alone: British common law, Italian civil law, Islamic Sharia law, and Somali customary law.[110] The period from 1960 to the military coup of 1969 was relatively stable, but largely non-productive in effective legislation and fair representation between the northern and southern regions. Rampant corruption within the

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[106] Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*, 25.

[107] Ibid., 28.

[108] Drysdale, *Stoics without Pillows*, 5.

[109] Ibid., 76.

[110] Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*, 32.

capital city of Mogadishu was especially damning to the legitimacy of the newly formed state (one of Migdal's key indicators of state success).

The bloodless military coup of Siad Barre was welcomed in some areas of Somaliland as a solution to their underrepresentation in government. In fact, Barre easily commanded a high degree of compliance from the population from the outset with his strategy of reform through Scientific Socialism. Eventually, the repressive regime collapsed under its own authoritative weight in 1991, and Somaliland used the chaos as a chance to secede and officially declare independence from the south.[111] According to Anna Simons, in regard to the post-1991 state of Somalia, "All that is evident now is that functioning state and functional nation were never coexistent for long enough (despite moments of political optimism and promise in the pre-Independence 1950s, democratic early 1960s, and benevolently ruled early 1970s)."[112]

A number of interest groups and clan warlords in the region of southern Somalia profited from the armed conflict and the humanitarian crisis initiated in 1991.[113] In the north, Somaliland largely retained the same borders as originally set forth in the British Protectorate. Despite having to overcome its own civil war (1994–1996), Somaliland held democratic elections and has progressed toward its relatively stable and successful state of affairs that we see today. It remains to be seen if Somaliland will ever be internationally recognized as truly independent, or if it may one day rejoin the south in the original 1960 concept of a harmonious Somalia.

However, the terrorist threat of Al Shabaab that continues in the south may be one of the greater obstacles to reunification. This thesis examines the origins of Al Shabaab, the largest modern Islamic terrorist organization in recent Somali history, and shows how the southern region's inability to recover from the civil war of the 1990s provided the group with the environment necessary to rise to a position of power. In deference to the

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[111] James Fergusson, *The World's Most Dangerous Place: Inside the Outlaw State of Somalia* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 2013), 217.

[112] Simons, *Networks of Dissolution*, 189.

[113] Ken Menkhaus, *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 40.

harsh Shariah law practiced by Al Shabaab, the formation of publicly accepted institutions of law has been crucial to the process of state-building in Somaliland.[114] According to Migdal, a strong state must be able to extract resources, penetrate the population, regulate state services, and appropriate funding at an acceptable level.[115] All functions that Somaliland achieved under the British administration and following secession after the collapse of the state. This is in stark comparison to southern Somalia where Islamic courts acting in conjunction with terrorist groups such as Al Shabaab have wreaked havoc with the establishment of a functioning government structure.

Following the ousting of the military dictator Siad Barre in 1991, Somaliland declared its independence from the greater nation of Somalia while southern Somalia collapsed into chaos and civil war between militant clan warlords. The local population in central and southern Somalia was in desperate need of functioning strategies of survival. The Islamic Courts Union (ICU) emerged in 2006 and slowly restored a semblance of order and provided the population with an ability to settle disputes. Traditionally, disputes were settled via clan elders, but with the ongoing power struggle between warring clans, this traditional system had failed. Al Shabaab became one of the rising affiliates of the ICU gaining international notoriety for ruthless and violent terrorist acts.

There are many aspects of Al Shabaab that make it stand out from your standard Al Qaeda affiliate. Al Shabaab is deeply entrenched in the subversive and clan-based society of Somalia, which is unlike any other country in Africa. The patriarchal bloodlines in Somalia run deep and have historically trumped many would-be conquerors and warlords. Al Shabaab has been able to put itself on the United States declared terrorist list via a few ventures across their border with the 2010 "retribution" attack in Ethiopia and the recent 2013 Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi, Kenya. They are proven players in the Islamic terrorist game.

The template used for counter-insurgency in Afghanistan will more than likely not be sufficient as a sufficient means for the destruction of Al Shabaab. In a perfect

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114 Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*, 229.

115 Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States,* 15.

world, the United States might be able to sit idle while the organization implodes, but Somalia's history is full of broken administrations and failed political systems, ranging from democracy to socialism, that have devolved into chaos and unchecked clanism.[116] A new strategy of combining African Union (AU) military efforts, U.S. surgical strikes, and covert intelligence operations may be the most effective course of action against the Islamist threat in Somalia.

In the end, the clan system that had existed for hundreds of years transcended any modern democratization, nationalist, or Somalization efforts of the colonial powers. The western powers, especially Italy, bear responsibility for state failure up to a point, but it is the role of the clan system (society) and its rivalry with the state for social control that continues to write the history of Somalia to this day. The future of the greater Somalia state may rest in the eventual reunification of Somaliland with the southern Somalia region. The continued commitment of the AU forces coupled with western security and intelligence assistance has made positive strides in eliminating Al Shabaab's hold on the southern territory. The successful small footprint approach of the United States should continue to weaken the threat of Al Shabaab while never presenting the image of a full-scale invasion that has bred insurgency and terrorist activity throughout the Middle East over the past decade. Following in the footsteps of British indirect approach, fostering a legitimate state government that has the ability to mobilize the clan society's population, offers the greatest chances of success in state-society relations throughout the whole of Somalia.

A.   POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Williams lays out four types of international responses to ongoing conflicts in Africa: organization building, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and foreign aid.[117] Only in the past few years has the newly formed Federal Government of Somalia made any positive strides towards stability with the assistance of the UN, the AU, and other international partnerships. The UN itself has taken years to effectively reengage Somalia

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[116] Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in* Somalia, 4.

[117] Williams, *War & Conflict in Africa*, 149.

after the tragic peacekeeping mission during the early 1990s. With the continued support from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) combined with the surgical strike approach of the U.S. military, the threat of Al Shabaab has diminished considerably.[118] The success of the AMISOM forces is a testament to the idea that freedom within Africa is best achieved by, through, and with a pan-African military response from the African Union. By comparison, Western military intervention has achieved lackluster results in the past two major wars fought in Iraq and Afghanistan. That is not to say that the AU is capable of handling every crisis without Western assistance in some form of another. The challenge for both Africa and international responses will be to use the appropriate amount of force in the appropriate manner. Unfortunately, the ascension of the terrorist organization referred to as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has garnered the majority of international attention throughout 2014. For Somalia, this redirection of terrorist focus may grant a much-needed reprieve from resurgence in the diminished Al Shabaab organization. Regardless, this lighter footprint of military intervention must support a Somali government that is capable of becoming, in Migdal's words, the de facto organization that dictates the rules of behavior within the society. However, the Somali government would be well served to recognize that a balance of power must be struck between the new government and the clan system that continues to persevere in challenging times.

In the face of a diminished military presence in Afghanistan and the potential of a reengagement of greater military force in Iraq, the United States is in the process of rebuilding a military force that has been engaged in over a decade of combat, primarily in the Middle East. However, the current strategy of placing a comparatively small, highly trained Special Operations Force presence, either covert or overt, in and around Somalia should foster continued stability in the face of terrorist threats such as Al Shabaab. The decision to involve of U.S. forces must be carefully weighed. The increased exposure of covert operations in the media threatens to decrease the effectiveness of our ability to

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[118] Fergusson, *World's Most Dangerous Place*, 14–15.

counter terrorist threats such as Al Shabaab and ISIS. Lowenthal states that covert action makes sense only when specific policy goals cannot be achieved by other means.[119]

Especially in areas such as Somalia that have had a lasting negative impression in the psyche of the American public, the administration should consider the option to use covert operations in the face of certain terror threats. The lack of public support for a return of conventional combat troops to Iraq may push the president to exercise covert operations on a greater scale against groups such as ISIS. The Joint Special Operations Center (JSOC) that commands premier U.S. counter-terrorist Special Operations Forces (SOF) units, such as the U.S. Navy SEALs, continues to be effective in non-permissive environments such as the Horn of Africa and Yemen.

The most effective approach may be to execute a strategy much like the United States is practicing today. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has trained the legitimate Somali government's intelligence agency, the Somalia National Security Agency (SNSA), while JSOC conducts surgical strikes from small bases such in Kenya and Djibouti.[120] These counter-terrorist tactics of discriminate target selection executed by JSOC, coupled with the "clear and hold" offensives mounted by AMISOM and Somali police and military, and finally enhanced by the combined intelligence efforts of the CIA and the Somali National Security Agency form a comprehensive strategy that will garner the support of both the Somali people and international partners.[121] As our intelligence and security partnership with Somalia grows, our own capabilities and agency cooperation will undoubtedly be strengthened. With any luck, Al Shabaab and other Islamist terrorist organizations will continue to decline giving the people of Somalia a fighting chance to finally achieve stability and peace in this lifetime. The option to surgically strike deep into the ranks of ISIS without attributing the role of the United States may quickly disrupt the terrorist group while preventing the potential anti-United

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[119] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*. 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2006), 158.

[120] Jeremy Scahill. *Dirty Wars: The World Is a Battlefield* (New York, NY: Nation Books, 2013), 198.

[121] Andrew W. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism." *International Security* 31, no. 1 (Summer 2006), 49–80.

States blowback that has been associated with large occupying military forces since the attacks of September 11, 2001. This strategy is obviously not without inherent risk, but should considered as a realistic option as opposed to a conventional large-scale military operation.

Additionally, the increased reliance on drone strikes, while considered by many to be a successful tactic because the United States does not always openly acknowledge the existence, let alone the frequent use of drone strikes, is an ineffective and weak attempt at hiding the role of the United States in kinetic strikes beyond its borders. Using Somalia as an example, the head of Al Shabaab, Ahmed Abdi Godane, was confirmed as being killed in a drone strike.[122] A more prudent option may have been to attribute the strike to the existing African Union force, effectively putting an African face on the operation and thereby increasing the credibility of the weak Somali Transitional Federal Government. The other option of using SOF units to capture Godane may have led to a greater long-term intelligence coup rather than the short-lived victory of decapitation. Godane will surely be replaced in short order with perhaps an even more vicious leader at the helm of Al Shabaab. In the meantime, the United States runs the risk of perpetuating an image of meddling in foreign affairs that are often viewed as a continued assault against the Muslim world. Legitimacy has historically suffered in the post-colonial era when western states have overstepped their bounds in forming new governments. The largely Italian-based post-unification government in 1960 is a prime example of this lack of true legitimacy in propping up third-world states.

The current administration has the full right to continue to conduct drone strikes and other related operations that can be clearly attributed to the United States in the war against terrorism. However, just having the legal authority to conduct these operations does not guarantee positive results both on the battlefield and within diplomatic circles. The seemingly endless participation of the United States in Middle Eastern affairs may benefit from a more subdued public image, at least in the near term. The CIA and the

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[122] "US Troops Mount Attacks on Al-Shabaab in Somalia," *The Guardian*, September 2, 2014. Accessed September 4, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/02/us-attacks-al-shabaab-in-somalia

military have proven to be very efficient when given the proper direction to execute covert operations. This is not a choice to be taken lightly, but it very well could be a more effective option that could still generate strategic victories with a much smaller burden on the already strained American military forces.

B. THE FUTURE OF THE GREATER SOMALIA

In September of 2012, the Transitional Federal Government was replaced by the Federal Government of Somalia winning an increased amount of support and recognition from the international community.[123] On May 2, 2013, the UN Security Council passed resolution 2102 creating the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) that would deploy as an enabling body supporting an agenda of peace building and state building.[124] The UN's mandate for Somalia is focused on five specific areas: governance, security sector reform and rule of law (including the disengagement of combatants), development of a federal system (including preparations for elections in 2016), and coordination of international donor support.[125] As with many conflicts in the modern age, the conflict in Somalia does not fit the traditional mold of peace operations as conducted in the past. UN peacekeeping operations are designed to build an agreement-based peace following an intrastate conflict, while remaining impartial towards the signatories.[126] This approach is ideal and stands to support Migdal's three indicators of state success by working closely with indigenous Somali forces to restore legitimacy, co-opt public participation, and ensure compliance as the Somali state system is rebuilt.

However, violent terrorist groups like Al Shabaab are not inclined to broker a power-sharing agreement with the Somali state. Organizations bent on ruling the country based on a violent and strict adherence interpretation of Shariah law show little sign of

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[123] Matt Bryden, "Somalia Redux? Assessing the New Somali Federal Government," Center for Strategic & International Studies, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, August 2013, 1.

[124] "United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) Fact Sheets," accessed October 27, 2014, http://unsom.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=6383&language=en-US#

[125] "UNSOM Mandate: United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia." accessed October 25, 2014, http://unsom.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=6255&language=en-US

[126] Jair Van der Lijn, "If Only There Were a Blueprint! Factors for Success and Failure of UN Peace-Building Operations," *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 13 (2009): 46.

complying with the recognized state system of the international community. Rather than securing a peace accord, a robust and persistent counter-terrorism strategy as stated above will be the most-likely course of action toward ending the threat of Al Shabaab.

The heavy lifting for this counter-terrorism strategy in Somalia, to include keeping pressure on the remnants of Al Shabaab, will continue to be led by the AMISOM mission partnered with Somali security forces. Work still remains in fully lifting the arms embargo on Somalia, but the UN mission is working toward a functional weapons monitoring program so that supporting countries can supply the Somali forces with the equipment they so desperately need.[127] The UN's role in the new era of peace operations in Somalia will strictly be in advising and assisting in the mission objectives listed above, not repeating the mistakes of 1990s with a large intervention of western military force. This multi-tiered approach to establishing real security for the population of the Federal Republic of Somalia marks a critical return to peace operations in Somalia. However, many challenges still remain in the realm of governance and state-society relations.

The prospects of reaching an amicable reunification with the secessionist northern region of Somaliland will be a daunting task. Somaliland has essentially operated outside of the centralized government in Mogadishu for the past two decades and appears to be very reluctant to rejoining its former colonial partner in the south. The northeastern region of Puntland had also formed its own local system of government, but has not voiced a strong opinion about permanently breaking away from Mogadishu. The federal system plan seems to be the most attractive option for Somalia's future. International partners like UNSOM continue to engage the Somaliland leadership and hope to broker an agreement prior to the end of their mandate.

Foreign aid will also be a key component of the rebuilding of Somalia's state organizations, infrastructure, and economy. True legitimacy for the Federal Republic of Somali will be hard won not only in the eyes of the world and more importantly, in its own citizens. Over the course of the past century, the Somali population has evolved from a native clan system, to colonialism, to a brief stint in democracy, to a military

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[127] Ban Ki-moon, "The Secretary-General Letter on the Arms Embargo in Somalia," April 3, 2104, http://unsom.unmissions.org/Portals/UNSOM/SG%20letter%20arms%20embargo.pdf, 2.

socialist dictatorship, and finally into the chaotic statelessness of the past two decades. Only the northern region of Somaliland, and to a lesser degree north-central Puntland, has achieved a modicum of normalcy and stability.

Regardless of the outcome, winning the trust of the Somali clan-based society, for any type of government or organization, will not come easy. The former colonial powers may be blamed for many of the initial issues with the unification process, but eventually the people of Somalia must take responsibility for their own fate. The key to the social controls in Somalia lies within the inclusion, but not an overabundance, of the clan system. Throughout the history of Somalia's clan system, a genealogical account that applies to nearly every citizen, one does not truly belong to Somali society unless one belongs to a kinship group.[128] The ethnic Somali identity, the clan, is an unfaltering cultural singularity that has survived in the face of enormous challenges in Somalia over the past one hundred years and will surely continue into the future.

It should come as no surprise that foreign intervention might be judged by some parts of Somali society as somewhat alien and perhaps unwelcome. This is not to say that the concept of the nation-state has no place in Somalia or other ethnic territories throughout the world. A repatriation of educated members of the Somali diaspora could also be a critical factor to rebuilding of the Somali state.[129] Many Somali citizens fled the country in the turmoil of the war torn decades past. In Mogadishu, a full generation of young people has grown up in a constant state of conflict with very little guidance and concept of what could be considered a normal life, or in Migdal's terms a viable strategy of survival. They've inherited the failure of a country struggling to find its place in the world.

From Migdal's model for state success, the key insights to internal stability hinge upon this critical relationship between this newly formed state (and its institutions) and the Somali society. External investment and UN intervention remain important, but not nearly as important as the new government's ability to provide the population with viable

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[128] Laitin and Samatar, *Nation in Search of a State*, 31.

[129] Fergusson, *World's Most Dangerous Place*, 81–82.

strategies of survival not associated or owned by the clan strongmen that too often dominate the local political structure. The state must establish dominance while maintaining effective democratic representation, good governance, and the inclusion of aspects of the traditional clan system that continue to remain culturally important to a large majority of Somali citizens. To fail in this task of establishing strong state-society relations is to ensure failure in the overall stabilization and the eradication of terrorism and clan-based conflict. With new elections approaching in 2016, the president of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, stated that Somalia is beginning to unite as a nation, behind a vision that will see a federal and united Somalia.[130] As UN peace operations continue to make positive gains in support of a stable Somalia, for the sake of the unfortunate citizens who have lived for decades in conflict, poverty, and suppression, one hopes that his optimistic vision proves to be true.

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[130] United Nations News Service, "Somalia Will Be United by 2016, President Tells UN General Assembly." *UN News Service Section*, September 26, 2014, http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48888#.VEw5mb5ZvkY

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