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Whose Self-Determination? Conflicting Nationalisms and the Collapse of Somalia

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Self-determination, state-building and the national question have become major problems in Africa. In the early 1960s, when a majority of ex-colonies attained independent statehood, self-determination was broadly understood to be synonymous with decolonization. Rapidly, however, dissident groups claiming to be nationalities rose to question the legitimacy of either their incorporation into a particular state or their territorial partition among two or more states. These groups have not only grown in numbers in past decades, they have also become more and more insistent on invoking the right to self-determination to justify their disengagement from state-driven nation-state projects. By seeking some form of autonomy or even, in some cases, outright secession from relatively new states whose boundaries and *raison d'être* are part of the colonial legacy, an ever-growing list of territorial dissidences has challenged the whole political matrix of postcolonial Africa.

Whether ethnic groups and other forms of indigenous polities or communities should be acknowledged as peoples, nationalities or nations is the object of unending debate (Smith 1986; Kellas 1991; Parekh 1995). In this chapter, dissident demands for self-determination are simply considered as representing an alternative nationalism in competition with that of the states. The point is that dissident groups and the states from which they attempt to disengage bring up equally exclusive claims.

Given that the territorial state has become the dominant form of political organization in Africa, an investigation into the influence of state boundaries

upon indigenous peoples and their response to the placing of such boundaries through their ancestral territories deserves primary consideration. This chapter specifically discusses the case of Somalia. It is a particularly interesting case on a number of accounts:

• First, Somalia is generally regarded as one of the few culturally homogeneous countries in Africa, if not the world. Its cultural homogeneity admits some exceptions, to which this chapter will later return, but most Somalis, both in Somalia and neighbouring countries, speak the same language, organize communal life around similar social institutions, enjoy a rich oral literature centred on poetic forms, believe in their common descent from a founding ancestor and manifest a powerful devotion to Islam.

• Second, the Somali-speaking people form one of the largest single ethnic blocs in Africa. Though sparsely distributed on the ground, they live in continuous occupation of a great expanse of territory covering almost 400,000 square miles in the Horn of Africa.

• A third remarkable feature of the Somalis is their multiple colonization by three European powers and an African one. Boundaries 'arrangements' between Britain, France, Italy and Ethiopia led not only to the partition of a single people amongst a number of unevenly assembled colonies, but also to the creation of two self-contained and exclusively Somali territories: the British Somaliland Protectorate and Italian Somalia, of which merger at independence gave birth to the new state of Somalia.

• Fourth, the Somali sense of community differs from the state-centred nationalism of most nation-states projects in Africa. The traditional Somali consciousness of cultural exclusiveness and national identity was gradually transformed from a purely cultural phenomenon into a vigorous political force. Over the last hundred years, an indisputable shared sense of nationhood has prompted the Somalis 'to brave overwhelming odds repeatedly in an attempt, so far unrewarded, to re-unify what they regard as their 'dismembered nation' (Samatar 1985:161).

• Fifth, postcolonial Somalia is a country marked by a history of serious conflict with her neighbours. Somali reunification, as championed by Somalia, could only be achieved at the territorial expense of neighbouring states. Here might be an archetypal case of inter-state conflicts brought by colonial borders, but with an extremely high human cost.

• Sixth, Somalia served as an active arena of superpower antagonism during the Cold War. To say the least, Cold War politics have greatly contributed to intensify protracted warfare in the Horn of Africa, a region that has been dogged by separation, irredentism, and secessions based on absolute interpretation of the right to self-determination.

- Lastly, clanism in Somalia is deployed much more openly and programmatically than, perhaps, anywhere else in the world. Multiple colonization, the uneasy reunification of British and Italian Somalilands at independence and the personal dictatorship of Siyad Barre (1969-1991) have all contributed to transform the significance of clan ties, from loose expressions of relatively undemanding loyalties, into the dividing lines of political groupings and armed factions.

Against this background, and in the wake of violent and seemingly chaotic disintegration of Somalia, this chapter examines the connections between different understandings of self-determination, conflicting nationalisms, and the processes of state-building and fragmentation. It begins with a few necessary landmarks on Somali unity, colonial partition, and the evolving conceptual framework of self-determination in the twentieth century. Then, the central part of the study focuses on the changing uses and meanings of self-determination in recent Somali history. It discusses the role played by the state of Somalia in the production of state and clan nationalisms, of which contradictions have ultimately led to state collapse. The conclusion offers a few additional remarks on the inadequacy of state-centred approaches to self-determination in Somalia and, possibly, beyond.

Somali Unity and Partition in Historical Context

Many political dynamics in Africa can only be understood within the changing context of land accessibility. Prior to colonization, established polities were 'surrounded by large tracts of land that were open politically or physically or both' (Kopytoff 1987:10). Together, these tracts made up a continent-wide interstitial network of thousands of political local frontiers, allowing the earliest recorded form of indigenous self-determination. Whether discontent people sought to move away from unfriendly rulers or simply looked for better ecological resources, they could move into this internal African frontier and set up their own social order in the midst of what was effectively an institutional vacuum.

Millennial migrations on the one hand, intermarriages between the inhabitants of the Horn of Africa and Arab and Persian traders on the other hand, concurred in the formation of the Somali people. In addition to large-scale historic migrations, seasonal migrations provided a livelihood to Somali pastoralist communities. The social order that best expressed a shared ecological culture and, at the same time, most effectively organized the political processes of decision-making, developed as a clan-centred kinship system.

For centuries, this system conciliated Somali unity and spatial mobility. Both were considerably disrupted by the colonial partition of Africa. At the beginning of the 20th century, when externally defined borders were forced on the Somalis, their ecologically integrated area was severed into five different territories.

Then, as the international system of territorial states generalized worldwide, the avenues for Somali self-determination became increasingly intricate.

Mobility and the Kinship System

Historians differ regarding when the different Somali clans took up their modern name — Somali. Ancient Egyptians used to call present-day Somaliland the Land of Punt. Linguists consider that the Somalis form a sub-group of what they call the 'Eastern Cushites', a group that probably began to spread southwards from an original homeland in southern Ethiopia highlands and reached the plains of northern Kenya in the first millennium BC. Then the Samaale or Somalis as some of them came to be called, moved again northwards.

There is linguistic evidence that the Samaale first occupied the Haud (or Ogaden, part of present-day Somali Region of Ethiopia) before reaching the shores of the Gulf of Aden, that is the Land of Punt, by the middle of the 5th century AD. According to Bernd Heine (1979:29), 'by around 1000 AD, if not earlier, the entire Horn including what Arab writers had referred to as the [Berber] Coast had been occupied by the Samaale'.

The earliest coastal city-states — Zayla, Berbera, Mogadishu, Merca, Brava, as well as a series of smaller settlements — emerged after the 8th century with a distinctly Swahili and Arab influence. Coupled with Islamic proselytism, a rising interest in upland trade motivated another great migration, this time from northeast to southwest, which probably began in the 13th century. This new migration was still in progress in the 19th century, when the Europeans arrived at the Horn (Samatar 1985:156-64).

In the meantime, Somali clans had joined to realize a common cause for the first time by successfully capturing large parts of Abyssinia under the guidance of Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi, also called Ahmed Gran, in the first half of the 16th century. The subsequent and rapid evaporation of their highland conquests, which reached within 50 miles of present-day Addis Ababa, foreshadowed the implausibility of a strong state enduring within the realities of Somali social and ecological culture. It is nomadic pastoralism that provided a livelihood to the Somali people, through seasonal migrations from the coast to the Haud during the rainy season and back to the coast during the dry season.

Rather than state structures, and more relevant to a nomadic way of life, the kinship system flourished as the most significant representation of society. Membership in a variety of kin-based groups of diverse sizes is based on the claim of descent, through the male line, from a common male ancestor. The largest of these descent groups is what modern anthropologists refer to as the clan-family, a unit that many observers and most Somalis call a tribe.

According to some classifications, the major clan-families or 'tribes' that make up the Somali people are Darod, Hawiye, Isaq, Dir, Digil and Mirifle (or Rahanwein).[1] Each one comprises of a number of individual clans, which in

turn are subdivided into subclans and sub-subclans, all the way down to tertiary, secondary and primary lineages and extended families.

Within this 'series of concentric and interconnected circles, with kaleidoscopic and diffuse attachments', *diya*-paying groups are the most binding and most frequently mobilized subunits (Adam 1995:69-70). They consist of close kinsmen who are united by a contractual alliance stipulating that they should collectively pay or receive blood compensation (*diya*) if one of their members commits or is victim of a crime. However, loyalty to *diya*-paying groups does not preclude the formation of wider kinship alliances as occasion demands. Thus, within a clan, *diya*-paying group opposes its opposite group; but when the clan is attacked, its various sections unite in common cause to protect clan interests.

With populations ranging from ten thousand to over one hundred thousand people, the clans have long been the largest effective political units. They are formally led by sultans but this title ill accords with the actual position of Somali clan leaders, who are normally little more than convenient figureheads and lack any firmly institutionalized power. The position of sultan, though often hereditary, is hardly more than an honorific title dignifying a man whose effective power is often no greater, and sometimes less than that of other clan elders. It is the elders, meaning all adult men — *not* women — who 'traditionally' control clan affairs.[2]

For their part, the clan-families or 'tribes' are generally too large, too widely scattered, and too unwieldy to act as effective corporate political units. The political and social affairs of traditional Somali society, including conflict resolution, were managed rather by councils (*shir*) whose legal foundations were based on informal contracts (*heer*). Through participatory deliberations, the clans usually managed to solve legal and political disputes amicably. With a few exceptions, a hierarchical pattern of authority is foreign to pastoral Somali society, which in its customary processes of decision-making is democratic almost to the point of anarchy (Lewis 1961).

Somalia Torn Apart: One Nation, Four Empires

About mid-nineteenth century, Somalia became the focus of inter-imperial rivalry involving Britain, France, Italy, and Ethiopia. After meeting in Berlin in 1884, the European powers issued the Berlin Act in 1885, which promoted the doctrine of effective occupation of claimed territories. Its hinterland clause stated that whichever power occupied a coastal area was entitled to claim exclusive rights to exercise political influence for an indefinite distance inland. In the wake of the rush to apply this clause, European powers began to declare spheres of influence.

Between 1884 and 1886, the British succeeded in formalizing their influence on the northern Somali coast by declaring the area a British protectorate, to which were added, in the south, the Jubaland Province and the Northern Frontier

District (NFD) of Kenya. The French, who had acquired Obock on the Dana-kil coast in 1862, signed an agreement with Britain in 1886 delineating their boundaries between Zayla and Djibouti. Italy took possession of the Eritrean coast from Assab to Massawa and the Benadir coast along the Indian Ocean.

In 1889, Italy and Ethiopia signed the Treaty of Wuchale. This treaty formally recognized Italy's protectorate over Eritrea but Article XVII was litigious: its Amharic version stated that Ethiopia *may* rely upon Italy for her relations with Europe, while in Italian it said that Ethiopia *would* do it. Emperor Menelik denounced the Treaty and Ethiopia defeated Italy at the famous battle of Adowa in 1896. French and British envoys immediately rushed to Addis Ababa and made pacts with Menelik which recognized their colonial boundaries, while placing the Ogaden under Ethiopian suzerainty (Samatar 1985:167-70).

The ensuing Ethiopian occupation of Ogaden was harsh. Livestock raids, taxation and repression brought the reaction of the poet Sayyid Mahammad 'Abdille Hasan, precursor of modern Somali nationalism, between the late 1890s and 1920. The Dervish resistance movement he led had a strong religious di-mension embodied in the prominent role played by the popular Salihiyya brotherhood, one of the militant wings of the Sudan's Mahdist movement. Insofar as Britain and, to a lesser extent, Italy, offered Ethiopia their assistance to suppress the Dervish movement, it became apparent to the Somali Dervishes that a Christian alliance was fighting an Islamic people. At least 200,000 Somalis — or one third of the population of British Somaliland — lost their life in what was one of the earliest anti-colonial guerrilla movements in Africa. The movement was only ended by air-bombing in 1920 (Beachey 1990).

Somalia was then officially 'pacified' by the occupation of four empires: Ethiopia, Britain, France, and Italy. As Britain hoisted her flag over two Somali territories — the Somaliland Protectorate and the NFD in Kenya — the single Somali nation was indeed severed into five pieces. Britain ceded part of the Jubaland Province, including the town and port of Kismayu, to Italy in the mid-1920s.

Inter-imperial boundaries made seasonal migrations singularly arduous. Depending on where they happened to be at a given time, nomads were answerable to competing and conflicting regulations and liable to multiple taxa-tion. Yet, seasonal migrations remained a crucial necessity, if only because water sources were scattered under different European jurisdictions while most grazing areas were on the Ethiopian side. As will be argued later, it is not simply a coincidence that the strongest opposition to the centralizing trends of postcolonial Somalia has come from the north, where nomadic pastoralism is still predominant.

Early in World War II, the British were forced out of the Somaliland Protectorate by Italians troops but they recaptured it in 1941, along with Italian Somalia. The same year, British East and West African troops dislodged the Italians from Ethiopia, which they had invaded in 1935. Thereafter, all the

Somali territories, with the exception of French Somaliland, were for a while united under British military administration. In the Four-Power Commission and later UN debates concerning disposal of Italy's former colonies, the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, proposed that all the Somalilands should be placed under a single administration, preferably British, but the three other Allies — France, USSR and the United States — accused Britain of seeking imperial gains and the idea had to be abandoned. In 1948, Britain turned the Ogaden and additional Somali areas over to Ethiopia. The UN General Assembly voted in November 1949 to make ex-Italian Somalia a trusteeship territory for ten years, with Italy as the administering authority.

Like in many other parts of partitioned Africa, colonial administrations shared little more than a commitment to colonial business and an ambition to change the behaviour of colonized peoples. Beyond this common denominator, many significant differences existed in terms of legal status, taxation, communication networks, spread of official languages and western medicine, and other colonial policies. Each colonial administration shaped its models of subservience and methods of coercion according to the peculiarities of its own imperial centre, including political history and values, strategic agenda, economic wealth and demands. Although colonial rule typically relied on the institutionalization of a number of regimental techniques, some of which were said to be customary while others were more directly borrowed from the traditions of the modern state in Europe, many elements varied and so did their overall configuration (Young 1994). Both the British and the Italians, for instance, stipulated that the Somalis be governed by customary law but they fixed distinct versions of Somali custom. Both managed anyway to set up a rudimentary apparatus of native authorities, in which they differed from the Ethiopians who also tried to appoint Somali chiefs but failed to counterbalance the clan assemblies and other legitimate social institutions. As Said S. Samatar points out:

> The key difference between European and Ethiopian methods of colonization seems to have hinged on the difference between their technical and economic resources. Unlike the Europeans, the Ethiopians possessed neither an industrial home base nor a vast accumulation of monopoly capital to finance their colonial enterprises [...]. Theirs was a subsistence economy and this meant that the army of conquest had to live off the land (Samatar 1985:171-72).

Multiple colonization meant a great variety of stratification processes, all of them classically based (by colonial standards) on descent groups, but within different colonial frameworks and at different rates. Over a period of sixty to seventy years, the significance of Somali descent groups was considerably expanded into the strengthening of clan lines, the sharpening of clan rivalries and the emergence of clan-based forms of political 'ethnicity', so to speak. It was during the colonial era that clanism evolved as 'the Somali version of the generic problem of ethnicity or tribalism' (Adam 1995:70).

However, despite colonial policies of divide and rule, some of the many side effects of World War II were to stimulate a new conception of Somali nationalism, to foster the nationalist aim of unifying the several Somali territories, and to provide conditions under which this aim could have been realized (Laitin and Samatar 1987). The United Nations Organization was three years old when it received the petition below:

> Whereas we, the undersigned Somali Sultans, members of the Somali Youth League, Central Committee and deputations from various parts of the Somali territories stated under have held an All Somali Conference in Mogadishu on 1 February 1948, where it has been unanimously decided to address the following petition to the UN Assembly.
>
> That as we Somalis are all Muslims of the same race and language and have the same mode of living and culture, and are all known by the same name 'Somali', we do hereby resolve that it is against the true interests of our people to remain separated by *de facto* frontiers; that in as much as we have the natural urge for national self-determination and for the preservation of human rights, we wish to live as one with our brother Somalis; that we do hereby record the deeply rooted desire of the Somali peoples that all the Somali territories, namely Ex-Italian Somaliland, French Somaliland, NFD (Northern Frontier District of Kenya), British Somaliland and Ethiopian Somaliland be united into one political, administrative, cultural and economic unit.
>
> We earnestly appeal for the sympathy and support of the UN to help us put an end to the unnatural situation of one race being divided by external influences into five enclosures against its true interest and welfare (cited in Fitzgibbon 1982:96).

In Mogadishu again, Somali delegates from political groups and parties in the British Protectorate and the Italian Trusteeship Territory launched a National Pan-Somali Movement in 1959. This new organization embraced in its Charter the twin aims of campaigns by peaceful means for the independence and unification of all the Somali territories, and of creating firm ties with other African and Asian states.

At that time, Pan-Somalism was indeed in line with Pan-Africanism. The All-African People's Conference (AAPC), holding its constituent meeting in Accra in December 1958, had called for 'the abolition or adjustment of [...] artificial frontiers drawn by imperialists [...], particularly those which cut across ethnic groups and divide people of the same stock' (cited in Mutiso and Rohio 1975:365). The second AAPC meeting, at Tunis in January 1960, passed a resolution on Somaliland 'artificially divided', in which it 'hail[ed] and support[ed] the struggle of the people of Somaliland for independence and unity in order to give birth to a bigger Somaliland' (ibid., p.373). Significantly, the AAPC did not refer to one particular Somaliland, whether British or Italian, but to Somaliland in general, just as Pan-Somali nationalists did.

Matters worsened rapidly from 1961 onwards, when the Monrovia meeting of some African heads of state adopted the principles of respect for the sovereignty of all states and non-interference in their internal affairs. Two years later, preoccupation with sovereignty was strongly evident in the OAU Charter, emphatically affirming the inviolability of African ex-colonial boundaries. The OAU again reinforced the dogma of territorial integrity at its 1964 Cairo Summit. But how could Somalia and the Somali people in other territories pursue their self-determination goal of achieving and belonging to a Greater Somalia without violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states? And how could the states of Ethiopia, Kenya and later on Djibouti forbid aggression from Somalia and legitimate action against Somali populations that claimed a right to self-determination?

Self-Determination in the 20th Century

The doctrine of national self-determination was the compelling rationale of nationalism in the 20th century. Its history actually began around the time of the French Revolution, when self-determination was considered a democratic ideal, meaning that 'people were not to be any more a mere appurtenance of the land' (Sureda 1973:17). If governments were to be based on the will of the people, not that of the feudal monarch, a radical strain of political thought advanced that discontent people should be able to secede and organize themselves as they wish — a principle which could compare with the exit option in precolonial Africa. From its inception in the Enlightment era, therefore, self-determination represented a threat to the legitimacy of the established order (Starovoitova 1997). However, it was still to become a principle of international law.

Despite many demands in Europe, self-determination was long met with extreme suspicion by kings and rulers. Only after 1918, when the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires began to disintegrate, did it receive prominent sympathizers. International figures as ideologically diverse as Lenin and US president Wilson championed a conception of self-determination that saw it as an autonomy granted to nationalities or minorities within a state. Even so, the League of Nations did not recognize self-determination as applicable to all humankind. The League's Covenant stipulated, under Article 22, that mandated territories were to be guided by 'advanced nations' — which essentially legitimized the colonial system. Beyond those territories that were placed under the League's mandate, most colonized peoples were definitely excluded from the scope of self-determination.

A much different conception emerged with the establishment of the UN in 1945. Difference was twofold. First, self-determination now applied to states rather than nationalities or minorities. In the aftermath of World War II and the early days of the Cold War, the state-centred conception was meant to protect the autonomy and sovereignty of UN members, so as to forbid international

aggressions and to legitimate, when necessary, state action against internal groups that locally happened to disrupt the universal peace project of the League's successor. Second, self-determination was selectively accepted as a basis for attaining independent statehood. In the decolonization context of the 1950s and 1960s, the right to self-determination was more or less regarded as a preserve of ex-colonies, now filling the ranks of the UN as newly-independent members. As indicated by the first article of the UN Charter, one purpose of the international organization was and remains:

> [...] to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace.

The UN nonetheless lacked a clear definition of what a people or a nation is. The use of these two terms raised many practical and political difficulties during work on the Charter. What was reached in the end was an implicit and ambiguous consensus:

> 'Nations' is used in the sense of all political entities, states and non-states, whereas 'peoples' refers to groups of human beings who may, or may not, comprise states or nations (Sureda 1973:100).

In practice, the UN still had to decide on a case-by-case basis when claims to self-determination were applicable and when they were not. This was and remains so because international law provides no clear guidelines for determining exactly who or what the right to self-determination applies to (Starovoitova 1997). Conciliating people-centred and state-centred conceptions of self-determination has proved an uneasy task. That the two conceptions respectively threaten and protect the territorial integrity of existing states is the key contradiction. By way of compromise, most decolonization-related UN documents expressed both views. In December 1960, that was how the General Assembly adopted, after much debate, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The second article of this Declaration emphasized, on the one hand, that:

> All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Yet four articles later, the same Declaration warned:

> Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

From the mid 1960s onwards, as the decolonization era drew to a close, the UN juridical framework gave increasing precedence to territorial integrity (Shivji 1989:72-81). Throughout the 20th century, and in sharp contrast with the original

conception of self-determination, which, in the Enlightment era, allowed and even envisaged secession as a democratic right, the world has thus ordered its affairs within an international system increasingly based on the prominence of states whose borders, no matter how they were originally determined, are considered inviolable.

For all that, political boundaries do not always coincide with national groupings. Few, if any states have borders that unambiguously encompass one nation or people, or even several peoples who voluntarily agreed to become part of one state. In most parts of the world, dissident groups have been or felt sufficiently dominated or oppressed to protest their subjugation taking arms. In so doing, they have called attention to the shortcomings of the state-centred conception of self-determination, as far as the UN project of universal peace was concerned. An apparent paradox, in this regard, is that many of them have claimed a right to a state of their own. But the paradox is largely explained by a twofold fact: modern states are generally 'unwilling to provide secure spaces of growth to their cultural minorities' and international bodies 'pay little attention to the needs of non-states' (Parekh 1995:46). Accordingly, demands for independent statehood have increased rather than decreased since the end of decolonization.

Dissident groups worldwide have collectively contributed to the emergence of one more conception of self-determination, so far the latest, of which the implicit slogan is 'one nation, one state'. Its proponents actually fuse the ethnic and cultural rights of the inter-war years with the territorial absolutism of decolonization. Though not accepted as such in international law, this newest trend of thinking was indisputably given impetus by the collapse of the former Eastern bloc and the redrawing of borders in Eastern and Central Europe.

A globalizing ethnonationalist discourse tends to result in the biased statement that every distinctive nation should be entitled to its own state. What makes this trend of thinking disputable, is the underlying assertion that all nations seek to become states. Not only is the assertion over-simplistic, it may indeed run counterproductive, in many instances, to the aspirations of the very nation one seeks to 'liberate'. As Bhikhu Parekh correctly argues (ibid., p.45) and the Somali case illustrates, 'nation and state have very different structures and are created and preserved in very different ways'. Running a state under the current international system involves a central bureaucracy, rigid boundaries, a minimum homogenization of ways of life and modes of production, all sorts of requirements that may disorientate a nation away from its cherished culture and values.

What Does Self-Determination Mean for Partitioned Somalis?

Whatever conception of self-determination is theoretically dominant at a given point in time, the term always encompasses several more meanings under concrete circumstances. In former Yugoslavia, for instance, Vesna Pesic identified three

fundamental types of claims that Serbian nationalists have simultaneously associated with self-determination. These are:

> (1) the right of a nation [...] to create its own state; (2) the right of a national homeland (whether sovereign state or republic within a federation) acting through its diaspora either to monitor the relative status of its conationals elsewhere, or to demand national unification and the redrawing of borders; and (3) the rights of members of national minorities to resist the majority's formation of a new nation-state either by seeking cultural or political autonomy or by seceding in order to unite with their own national homeland (Pesic 1996:v).

In the Somali case, four overlapping meanings of self-determination may be distinguished as: the reunification of British and Italian Somalilands at independence; Somali irredentism in Somalia's neighbouring states; regional autonomy in Ethiopia; and the fragmentation of Somalia herself.

Self-Determination as Partial Reunification

On June 26, 1960, the British Somaliland Protectorate achieved full independence and five days later, when the Italian Trusteeship Territory on its turn became independent, merged with it to form a unitary Republic with northern and southern regions. Though the Act of Union was never legally ratified (Adam 1998:363), the cultural unity of the new country, tied by a common ancestor, language, religion, and Pan-Somali ideal was regarded as an outstanding asset towards the construction of a nation-state. By Pan-Somali standards, however, the birth of Somalia established a state that was inherently incomplete. It left outside the goal of Somali nationalist aspirations the remaining Somali communities then under foreign rule in French Somaliland, the Ogaden, and the Northern Frontier District of Kenya. Moreover, the north and the south remained separate in many respects.

The Legacy of Dual Colonization

The two regions had almost no economic relations. The long experience of partition had left them with separate infrastructures and institutions, whose merger raised considerable difficulties. Britain and Italy had set up different education, health, and fiscal systems that were retained for a while, as well as different currencies, police and administrative frameworks. Public affairs as a whole were conducted according to different procedures in different languages.[3] An international, UN-sponsored Consultative Commission for Legislation was set up at independence. A national Consultative Commission for Integration, composed of Somalis, took over in 1964. Both worked at a slow pace (Contini 1969).

A popular assertion among southern, Italian-speaking Somalis was that the experience gained under the Italian Trusteeship had granted them a 'natural

leadership' on self-government. Apart from Mogadishu being the capital and seat of parliament, southern Somalis also held major posts in the government, and a majority of parliamentary seats. That the northern premier, Muhammad Ibrahim Egal, became minister of Defence in Somalia's first cabinet and later on, in 1967-69, Prime minister of the Republic, was not enough to appease northern Somalis who, in their majority, were quite reluctant to admit the binding nature of decisions taken in Mogadishu.

Northerners were not the only ones disillusioned with the way of the Union, but also the Rahanwein, who grappled with language problems and systematic discrimination in both the educational and governmental sectors. Opposing the mainstream vision of a centralist Republic, their party, the Hizb al-Dastuur Mustagil al-Somal (HDMS), advocated that 'the only method of unifying the Somalis [...] is through a federal constitution which accords full regional autonomy' (cited in Touval 1963:96-97). The desirable form of government, whether unitary or federal, indeed was a key issue but HDMS was only a minority party in southern Somalia and even more so in the re-united Republic.

It was in the interest of unity, the Northerners said, that they initially accepted the conditions demanded by southern leaders. One year after independence, the June 1961 referendum on the constitution clearly revealed their dissatisfaction. Over 60 per cent of the northern electorate voted against the draft, while the majority of southern voters approved it (Bulhan 1999:14). Everyone in the north could agree to the three basic principles the constitution sought to guarantee, namely the unity of the two regions, pursuit of the Pan-Somali ideal and, much banally at that time, adherence to European standards of democracy. But Northerners felt 'southernized' and sent an alarm signal.

The Anglo-Italian border, though suppressed, had all-pervading repercussions on clan politics and political alliances. The borderline roughly corresponded to the southern limit of Dir presence and Isaq demographic preponderance, while separating the northern part of the Darod clan-family from its greatest part down south. The Isaqs, who constituted a numerical majority in the British Protectorate but only a small minority in the new unitary Republic, largely supported a party called the Somali National League (SNL). In the north, the hegemony of this party was only challenged by the United Somali Party (USP), which the Dirs and Darods jointly supported. With the suppression of the border, most northern Darods chose to join their southern kinsmen in the ruling Somali Youth League (SYL). At independence, the main opposition party was the Greater Somalia League (GSL) and it too was southern-based. The SNL and what remained of the USP became its northern allies against the SYL (Samatar 1993).

Beyond regional cleavages, there was also substantial antagonism between 'pro-Arab' parties, as the most radical militants of a Greater Somalia came to be known, and the 'modernists' who sought to favour economic development and

to improve relations with other African countries. As the 1960s went by, problems of national integration, growing nepotism, corruption and unequal development led to many shifts in alliances and encouraged a proliferation of political parties to the point where Somalia had more parties per capita than any other country except Israel (Laitin and Samatar 1987:69):

> During elections, parties multiplied, as organizations and clans splintered; and following elections, there was a rush to join the leading party in order to obtain ministerial positions and other official perquisites. The parliamentary edifice, built on sand, was bound to collapse (Adam 1995:69).

In the country's last multi-party elections, held in March 1969, more than 60 parties contested but very little civil governance or service delivery existed. Adding to the unfulfilled devotion to Pan-Somalism, the 'growing suspicion that civil electoral politics had become a nauseating swindle' made the liberal Somali state 'the object of widespread ridicule and popular execration' (Samatar 1994:115). It is against this background that president Abdirashid Ali Shermarke was assassinated by one of his bodyguards on 15 October 1969. The National Assembly was supposed to choose his successor but failed. Parliamentary democracy came to an abrupt end in the early hours of the 21 October, when the army seized power in a bloodless coup.

From 'Clan Burial' to Clankatura

Major General Muhammad Siyad Barre, a former policeman, immediately suspended the constitution, banned all forms of political and professional associations, and proclaimed a new 'revolutionary' government. Promising to cure all of the country's ills, he decreed in the following year the adoption of scientific socialism, an ideology that he claimed was fully compatible with Islam and the reality of the nomadic society (Lewis 1994:150).

Under the slogan 'socialism unites, tribalism divides', nepotism, corruption, lineage genealogies and their use to identify people in terms of clan and kinship ties were officially banned. Any reference, verbal or written, to clanship was prohibited. New provinces, cutting across traditional clan boundaries, were established. The universal term of address 'Cousin', implying clansmen, was replaced by the term *Jaalte* (comrade). Staging a 'burial of clanism', the Head of State became 'Father' of the nation, whose 'Mother' was the Revolution (Ibid., p.152). To consolidate power, Siyad Barre established a formidable propaganda machinery that published and broadcast revolutionary rhetoric through countless posters, poems, songs of praise and speeches.

According to Basil Davidson (1992:309-10), efforts to build a modern, socialist-oriented Somali Democratic Republic based on self-consciousness, self-help and self-initiative had 'promising aspects' in the early 1970s. Perhaps the

most impressive achievement was the introduction of an effective alphabet, utilising a modified version of the Latin script, for the Somali language (Adam 1980). The writing of the Somali language for the first time in history went together with declaring it the official medium of communication in 1972. This in turn was made to serve the cause of widespread urban (1973) and rural (1974) adult literacy campaigns; the promotion of national self-development through labour-intensive projects, including the construction of schools, hospitals and roads where none had existed before; and, at the family level, the promotion of women's rights through the application of new marriage and family laws banning polygamy.

Somalia's brand of socialism was short-lived, however. A treaty of friendship and cooperation with the USSR was concluded in 1974 then abrogated in 1977 during the Ogaden war (see next section), when the Soviet Union switched its support to Ethiopia and Siyad looked to the West. More constant in Siyad Barre's twenty-two years of power, was a form of political control that Hussein M. Adam defines as 'clankatura':

> Nomenklatura involves appointing loyal political agents to guide and control civil and military institutions. The introduction of nomenklatura to Somalia by the Soviets involved politicization of institutions that were beginning to function well, relying on education and training, technical competence, specialization and experience [...]. Siyad soon substituted clanism for ideology as criteria for such appointments. Clankatura involved placing trusted clansmen and other loyalists in positions of power, wealth, control/espionage (Adam 1995:71-72).

While the measures directed at eliminating clan divisions and establishing robust bonds of national solidarity were vigorously promoted in state propaganda, Barre himself was covertly relying on older, time-honoured ties of loyalty (Adam 1998:377-83). He constructed his inner power circle of members from three related clans, all of which belong at a higher level of segmentary grouping to the Darod clan-family. Hence the clandestine code name MOD given to his regime:

> M (Marehan) stood for the patrilineage of the President, O (Ogaden) for that of his mother, and D (Dulbahante) for that of his principal son-in-law, head of the National Security Service. [Although] no one could utter the secret symbol of General Siyad's power openly, the MOD basis of his rule was public knowledge and discussed and criticized in private (Lewis 1988:222).

The Somali state as fashioned by Siyad Barre proved inherently incapable of coping with the economic, political and security demands of the modern era. Only the clans that supported his regime became beneficiaries of a wave of nationalizations of all medium-sized business, including the utilities. This resulted in the creation of many new state-owned agencies maintaining absolute monopolies, with the exception of the livestock and transport sectors, within which the regime refrained from nationalizations.

Many observers noticed that livestock exports to Arab countries and Italy, being the mainstay of the Republic's economy, might have been worth some form of state control, had the regime been serious about economic planning; but Siyad Barre found it wiser to conciliate large livestock merchants, many of whom belonged to his own clan (Samatar 1988). In time, pastoralism came to be 'treated less as a distinct way of life and more as an economic resource to be tapped' (Doornbos and Markakis 1994:84).

The second source of export value, commercial agriculture in the inter-riverine region, was targeted for large irrigation projects that disregarded the existing land tenure systems and property rights of the Rahanwein and other small-scale farmers. In fact, the regime continued a deprivation policy that had started under Italian rule but it accelerated it to the extent that, 'by the mid-1980s, there was not a single piece of arable land along the two rivers that remained unclaimed by state-sponsored projects' (Mukhtar 1996:550).

One good illustration of the ruthlessness of the MOD system was the resettlement scheme of about 120,000 drought-stricken nomads in the mid-1970s. The drought crisis provided Barre with an outstanding opportunity, both to transform nomadic society and to reward supportive clans at the expense of the inter-riverine peasantry. Darod groups were resettled in the most fertile parts of the Shabelle and Juba valleys in the place of previous landowners, who were expropriated without any compensation (ibid.).

As long as the state was a colonial one, its mismatch with society was patent and, in a sense, unproblematic. The colonial state remained an artificial power suspended above a society that would never have produced it and did not demand it (Luling 1997:287). That the successor, postcolonial state, retained the same authoritarian pattern and even strengthened it was much more disturbing. By way of self-determination, only the ruling elite felt free to determine what hardships should be imposed on what segments of society.

Self-Determination in Pursuit of Greater Somalia

Despite Somalia's problems of national integration, the unification of all areas populated by Somalis into one country — a Greater Somalia — long remained a central issue in post-independence politics. A Pan-Somali symbol, the five-pointed star on the national flag was said to represent the five colonial territories that the newly-born Republic strove to bring together: the ex-British and ex-Italian Somalilands (now northern and southern Somalia), the Ogaden, NFD and Djibouti. The constitution adopted in 1961 stated prominently in its preamble that 'the Somali Republic promotes by legal and peaceful means the union of the territories'. It also provided that all ethnic Somalis, wherever they resided, were citizens of Somalia. Accordingly, the exact size of the National Assembly remained unspecified, to facilitate the future inclusion of representatives of the contested areas (Samatar 1993).

However, Somalia did not directly claim sovereignty over adjacent Somali territories. It rather consistently demanded that alienated Somali communities living in neighbouring countries be granted the right to decide by themselves what their status would be (ibid.). Pan-Somali activists, both in Somalia and abroad, actually stuck to a conception of self-determination that became increasingly outdated as decolonization progressed. Up to the late 1950s, no one seriously doubted that Ethiopian and Kenyan Somalis, were they given an opportunity to freely determine their political status, would opt for secession in order to join a Pan-Somali state. As early as 1963, however, when Kenya became independent, it had became equally doubtless that the emerging practice of the OAU was to uphold the intangibility of colonial borders at any cost. While Somalia and her neighbours selectively appealed to contradictory provisions of the same juridical framework and official pronouncements, it was quite clear that the OAU and the UN had both chosen to favour the territorial integrity of their member states.

Somali Irredentism in Kenya

The Northern Frontier District had a long history of separate administration under Kenya's colonial and postcolonial governments. Since the early part of the twentieth century, movement into and out of the NFD had been carefully controlled, primarily to prevent any further Somali migration southward. Colonial legislation resulted in the creation of ethnic reserves, without enough resources to support all the people. Geographical concentration and isolation shielded the communities from the anti-colonial struggles that were going on in other parts of Kenya.

Because of colonial policies, by 1960 the NFD remained the most isolated portion of Kenya and indeed, with the exception only of the Ogaden, the most poverty-stricken of all the Somali territories. Kenyan Somalis, who made up about two thirds of NFD's population, almost unanimously favoured secession from Kenya with the object of ultimately joining the Somali Republic.[4] They announced their intention of seeking self-determination independently of the rest of Kenya in order that they could unite with their kinsmen in Somalia. The British government rather envisaged a federal constitution, arguing that the federal format would provide an alternative to secession through the degree of autonomy it allowed the predominantly Somali NFD. Be that as it may, the modicum of federalism disappeared when the new Kenya government opted for a centralized constitution in 1964.

The denial of Somali claims led to hostility between the Kenyan military and armed Somalis in the NFD. Confrontations multiplied. Radio Mogadishu showered propaganda praise on the self-determination cause of the NFD. Although Kenya and Somalia signed a peace pact in the mid 1960s, their common

border experienced just a fragile peace. Barre's government in Somalia never formally renounced its claim to the NFD, later Northeastern Province (NEP) of Kenya. Pan-Somali dissidents in Kenya continued their battles with Kenyan security forces, with incidents of cattle rustling, arson, and general banditry characterizing the border situation. Unwarranted arms build-up beyond Somalia's internal defence needs convinced Kenya that Somalia was bent on territorial expansion. A joint Kenya-Somalia Border Commission was established in 1976 to restore tranquillity and peace between the communities living in the area but it failed to address unambiguously the issue of Somali irredentism.

Somali Irredentism in Ethiopia

The letter 'O' in Barre's MOD system stood, as already mentioned, for the Ogaden clan of his mother. This connection gave him a privileged relationship with the Ogaden Pan-Somali activists in eastern Ethiopia — or western Somalia from a Somali point of view. Since Ethiopia imposed its effective rule on the Haud and its pasture land, in the late 1940s, Ogaden nationalists had invoked the principle of self-determination and attempted to secede.

Open conflict between Somalia-backed Ogaden Somalis and Ethiopia erupted in 1964. Throughout the 1960s, some 3,000 guerrillas grouped in the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) received support from Somalia. When Barre seized power in 1969, he formally disbanded the WSLF but cynically revived it in the mid-seventies. To 'liberate' the Somali-speaking peoples of Ethiopia, Somalia declared war and invaded the Ogaden area in July 1977. The WSLF, aided by troops from Somalia, began to push the Ethiopians out of the Ogaden. The intense fighting led thousands of Ethiopian Somalis to flee across the border into Somalia.

Behind Somalia's declaration of war were two main motives. First, Barre's popularity was vanishing and he needed to regain some form of Pan-Somali legitimacy. Second, Ethiopia was considerably weakened at that time. The overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in September 1974, followed by the abolition of monarchy and a definite decrease in US and other Western support, in the aftermath of massive drought, not to forget the escalating war between Ethiopia and Eritrean separatists, provided the perfect fault lines along which Barre expected a rapid victory.

What Barre failed to take into account was the opportunistic dimension of Cold War politics. Somalia could only be sure of USSR support as long as there was no other 'socialist' leadership in the Horn. Now, the uneasy and somewhat anarchic coalition of students, workers and soldiers who had just overthrown Haile Selassie was being replaced by the increasingly stiff rule of Mengistu Haile Mariam (the 'Red Negus'). The USSR chose to shift alliances and gave full political, diplomatic, and military support to Ethiopia in December 1977.

With the decisive help of some 16,000 Cuban troops operating Soviet weapons, the Ethiopians promptly pushed back Barre's forces. After Somalia's retreat in March 1978, the Ethiopian military began to forcibly relocate the Ogaden population in 'protected camps' and villages and staged punitive actions against those outside their control. Herds were machine-gunned, wells poisoned and villages bombed with napalm (Africa Watch 1991:81-100). Whereas the war itself had led an estimated 85,000 Ethiopian Somalis to seek refuge in Somalia, the counter-insurgency campaign swelled the number of refugees to 'perhaps 800,000 by the end of 1980' (Van Brabant 1994:11). An indeterminate but large proportion of Ogaden refugees stayed on in northern Somalia until the fall of Siyad Barre in 1991.

Declining Irredentism: The Case of Djibouti

Djibouti is a special case in many ways. This tiny state only became independent in June 1977 — that is, a few days before Somalia declared war on Ethiopia. It is inhabited by two groups who are about equal in numbers, the Issas, who are ethnically related to Somalis, and the Afars, who are related to communities in Ethiopia. Together with a Yemenite minority, these two groups make up a total population of less than a million. The first Djiboutian president, Hassan Gouled Aptidon, was born in British Somaliland and was Somali-related but he began to harass Pan-Somali activists immediately after independence. He later changed his mind, as Somali and non-Somali opponents alike took arms to oppose his increasingly repressive government. Gouled ultimately attempted to attract Somali military support throughout the Horn, but the heyday of Pan-Somalism was gone.

As a succession of colonial names illustrates, the policy of manipulating one group against the other can be traced to French rule. The earliest colonial name of present-day Djibouti was 'Territory of Obock', referring to a forlorn port where French presence, though acknowledged by rival European empires, long remained unobtrusive. This initial name was changed into 'French Somali Coast' when the French struggled to subdue the Afars (also called Danakils at that time), then again into 'Territory of the Afars and the Issas' when they felt the need to keep Somali irredentism in check (Kadamy 1996:512). Only a couple of weeks into independence, in 1977, prominent Pan-Somali activists were imprisoned. Most leaders of the *Front de Libération de la Côte Somalie* (FLCS) — an organization that was kept in a tight grip by the Mogadishu-based Somali Youth League and could never develop its own dynamism — were assassinated (ibid., p.513). One could only speculate about French covert support to the assassinations, but the simple fact that Djibouti was — and still is — hosting France's main military base in Africa was enough to point out a neocolonial connivance.

Hassan Gouled quickly transformed his regime into a personal dictatorship and targeted the Afars as well, accusing them of plotting against the state, and even of seeking to establish a 'Greater Afar land' (ibid., p.518). Underground rebel groups joined forces and established a predominantly Afar military force in August 1991, the Front pour la Restauration de l'Unité et de la Démocratie (FRUD). At this point, Gouled tried to set up the Issas and Somalis against the Afars. He declared a 'general' mobilisation (of all the Issa men) and sent out a call to all Somalis outside Djibouti to join the government forces. A law was passed in October 1991, which provided for automatic acquisition of Djibouti nationality by any foreigner recruited in the army or the security force. An unknown number of Somali mercenaries were recruited but Pan-Somali support remained far below Gouled's expectations. Among the many factors that prevented his regime from playing the Pan-Somali card successfully, were of course the escalation of conflict in Somalia herself, and the inter-clan divisions it exacerbated (ibid., p.520). In this regard, the Djibouti case illustrates the decline of Somali irredentism from the late 1970s onwards and the limits of Pan-Somali solidarity in a troubled sub-region.

The Djibouti government and FRUD signed a peace accord in 1994 but civil war continued. In 1999, Hassan Gouled's Chief of Staff and key advisor for twenty years, Ismael Omar Guelleh, was elected to the presidency with FRUD support and 74 pour cent of the vote. Ironically, it is in Djibouti that some 2,000 Somalia delegates worked out a power-sharing agreement in mid-2000 and a national constitution to see their war-torn country through a three-year transitional period. At the invitation of Omar Guelleh, the Somalia delegates met in Arta, in eastern Djibouti, under the aegis of the Inter Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD). There, they appointed an interim president, Abdulkassim Salat Hassan — whose transitional government, since then, has hardly controlled more than parts of Mogadishu.

Self-Determination as Regional Autonomy in Ethiopia

Ethiopia and Somalia only reached a formal peace agreement in April 1988. Mengistu was hard pressed and took the initiative. The Soviet Union and Cuba were now withdrawing their support to his regime. Just two weeks before the peace agreement, the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) had overrun a government garrison in Afabet, putting 20,000 Ethiopian troops out of action. The agreement engaged Somalia and Ethiopia to stop harbouring, financing or otherwise supporting insurgent groups against each other. This enabled Mengistu to transfer troops from the Ogaden to Eritrea and other battlefronts, but he faced too many dissidences and was losing ground on all sides. After nearly two decades of armed struggle, the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition of ethnically-based movements, the core of which

was the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF), finally took control of Addis Ababa in May 1991.

The new rulers convened a national conference, which established the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) and adopted a National Charter. Focusing on the nationalities question and issues of regional development planning, the Charter went far beyond previous attempts at regional decentralization.[5] It definitely made a radical break, not only with Ethiopia's past but also with the broader and sacrosanct political principle whereby no African government could accede to a secessionist agenda, especially not on an ethnic basis (Young 1996). Challenging the continent-wide supremacy of the nation-state project, Article 2 of the Charter proclaimed:

> The right of nations, nationalities and peoples to self-determination is affirmed. To this end, each nation, nationality and people is guaranteed the right to:
>
> a/Preserve its identity and have it respected, promote its culture and history and use and develop its language;
>
> b/Administer its own affairs within its own defined territory and effectively participate in the central government on the basis of freedom, and fair and proper representation;
>
> c/Exercise its right to self-determination of independence, when the concerned nation/nationality and people is convinced that above rights are denied, abridged or abrogated (*Negarit Gazeta* 1991:2).

The Charter, being used as an interim constitution, allowed Eritrea to opt for independence after a referendum in April 1993. Other calls for referendums on secession were turned down, however, and many armed groups continued to fight the EPRDF troops. One such group in eastern Ethiopia was the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), formed in the 1980s by 'defectors from the veteran WSLF who had exchanged Somali irredentism for Ogaden nationalism and aspired to set up their own state' (Markakis 1996:567). The ONLF won an absolute majority in the first regional elections, held in 1992, but it soon proved to be riven with factionalism and this made it easier for the TGE to remove the more radical elements of the ONLF from the regional parliament (ibid.).

Also in response to the ONLF, which they said represented only one clan, other Somali clans formed their own political parties and set up the Ethiopian Somali Democratic League (ESDL) in February 1994. The ESDL wanted the possibility of secession retained in the constitution but recognized that the devolution of full political powers to regional governments had promising aspects and that this process was not an opportune time for secession. A third, major grouping emerged shortly after the formation of the ESDL when surviving elements of the WSLF merged with an Islamic party, Tadamun, to form the Western Somali Democratic Party (WSDP). The notion of a 'Greater Somalia' was conspicuously revived at their founding meeting (Van Brabant 1994:16).

As the end of the transitional period was nearing, these three parties thus promoted very different visions of Somali self-determination. The ONLF fought for an independent state dominated by the Ogaden clan. The ESDL supported the legal decentralization process in Ethiopia as a whole. And though the neighbouring state of Somalia had already collapsed (see below), the WSDP still pursued a Pan-Somali agenda.

The transitional period came to a gradual end in 1994-95 with a new series of elections. The election of a national, constituent assembly came first. Most opposition parties chose to boycott this election, ensuring a landslide victory for the ruling EPRDF. The newly-elected assembly confirmed the EPRDF policy of ethnic federalism. It adopted the national constitution under which the autonomous regions of Ethiopia now have their own constitutions, their own flags, and their regional governments are empowered to decide policy and planning issues, to raise and spend their own revenues, and to safeguard law and order. The new constitution also confirmed the right to secession — at least in theory. Article 39 proclaims: 'every nation, nationality and people in Ethiopia has an unconditional right to self-determination, including the right to secession'. In practice, secession requires a two-thirds vote of the regional parliament, followed by a majority vote in a referendum organised by the federal government and a mutually agreed division of assets.

At the regional level, the ESDL took electoral advantage of both the financial backing of the EPRDF and an ONLF split on the issue of participation. In the run-up to the regional election, one splinter group registered as the 'legal ONLF' while the rest of the party opposed participation. Of the 139 seats in the regional parliament, the ESDL won 75, the 'legal ONLF' 18, the WSDP 15, and 31 seats went to smaller parties and independents. At the Founding Congress of the Somali Region, the task of the ESDL was once again made easier by the absence of the (minority) ONLF and WSDP representatives. The Founding Congress adopted the region's name, Somali National Administrative Region; it retained Somali as the official language; and more importantly, it shifted the regional capital from Gode, inside Ogaden clan territory, to Jijiga, near Isaq grounds — which was widely understood as the emergence of an Isaq rule (Markakis 1996:569-70).

Following the Founding Congress, the ESDL, WSDP, and ONLF announced on several occasions the conclusion of an agreement to work towards unification. One faction of the ONLF actually joined the ESDL, while another remained opposed both to ESDL rule and the unity of Ethiopia, declaring an 'holy war' on the Ethiopian government. The military command of the ONLF has since that time concluded alliances with other armed movements in the Somali Region, notably al-Ittihad al-Islam — a fundamentalist movement that is closely linked to its homonymous group in Somalia — as well as the Oromo Liberation Front

(OLF) and the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromiya (IFLO) in the neighbouring Oromo Region.

As a result, low-intensity warfare, rather than economic and social development, continued to characterize the Somali Region. Yet, there is no doubt that the Somalis in Ethiopia now have a level of autonomy unprecedented in this country's history. 'Opposition to the threat of Ogaden dominance is what brought the other clans together in the ESDL', John Markakis commented, adding that 'it was also inevitable that Isaq prominence would make it the target of other clans' (ibid., p.570). Endemic conflict between competing clans may well be seen as a Somali way of doing politics — what the same author calls a 'characteristic Somali fashion' (ibid., p.567). However, the political marginalization of the Ogaden clan in the 1990s should be viewed in the context of Barre's overthrow in Somalia, state collapse, and deep-seated resentment against his ousted MOD regime.

Self-Determination as Fragmentation of Somalia

Somalia's defeat in the Ogaden war of 1977-78 had serious and far-reaching consequences. It brought about unparalleled levels of state violence, which in turn precipitated the outbreak of civil war in Somalia, the fall of Siyad Barre and the disintegration of post-Barre Somalia.

In March 1978, when Barre ordered his troops to pull out, many wounded soldiers had to be abandoned in Ethiopia for lack of transport, vehicles or fuel, and this was very demoralizing for both the army and the general public (Mohamed 1996:5). Rather than acknowledging his responsibility for the defeat, Barre chose to put the blame on military officers and powerless soldiers, many of whom were executed under the supervision of his Minister of Defence (ibid., p.6). Then, in April 1978, when a group of officers attempted an unsuccessful coup d'etat, Barre responded by imprisoning hundreds of soldiers and civilians alike. Seventeen army officers were executed in Mogadishu. Twelve of them belonged to the Majerteen clan, a sublineage of the Darod clan-family in northeast Somalia, and this provoked a large number of Majerteen officers and soldiers to flee to Ethiopia — the very country they were still fighting only weeks ago. In Ethiopia, they were given military support and recruitment bases to fight Barre's regime. It was not long before their rebel group, the Somali Salvation Front (SSF, later renamed SSDF), started armed incursions inside Somalia.

The Somali National Movement (SNM), predominantly of the Isaq clan, was founded three years after the SSF in northwestern Somalia, corresponding to the area that once was the British Somaliland Protectorate and would later on become the self-declared Republic of Somaliland. The Isaqs had long been disenchanted with the way of the Union and southern politics. Nomadic

pastoralism remained their main source of livelihood and the defeat in the Ogaden war complicated their access to the grazing lands in Ethiopia. Furthermore, the defeat had provoked a large influx of refugees belonging to the Ogaden clan, which they associated with Barre's MOD system. The SNM too, like the SSF, established military bases in Ethiopia and got military support from it.

SNM incursions inside Somalia increased gradually until 1988, when Mengistu and Barre, as mentioned above, struck a peace agreement. In fact, the peace deal between the two dictators led directly to an escalation in the intensity of Somalia's civil war. The SNM, fearful of being forced to withdraw from the border, deeper in Ethiopia, moved its troops within northwestern Somalia. In a surprise attack, they captured the headquarters of government forces in Burao and Hargeysa. The government's response was a wholesale indiscriminate aerial and ground bombardment of all major Isaq towns and villages, coupled with the persecution of all members of the Isaq clan throughout the whole of Somalia. Such brutality, amounting to genocidal violence, only succeeded in uniting 'a mixture of Isaq nationalists, northern separatists and Islamists' behind the SNM (Van Brabant 1994:11; Gilkes 1993).

Further south, the bloody suppression of a mutiny of Hawiye soldiers in 1989 led to another clan-based insurgency. The Hawiye-based United Somali Congress (USC) appeared in late 1989. The death of its leader Ismael Jumale, in 1990, left a bitter conflict between the USC's military leader, General Muhammad Farah Aydid (a Hawiye of Habra Gedir clan) and its Mogadishu 'Manifesto'[6] representative, Ali Mahdi (a Hawiye of the Abgak clan). An all-out popular uprising of USC supporters in Mogadishu finally overthrew Siyad Barre in January 1991 — but his fall marked the start of a new phase of civil war. The only principle that united rebel groups in Somalia was their determination to oust Barre. With the dictator out of the way, no clan or subclan-based faction had the necessary legitimacy to claim a nationwide, political leadership (Mohamed 2001). Thus, when USC political leaders, only two days after the fall of Siyad Barre, unilaterally proclaimed the formation of a national government headed by Ali Mahdi, they angered all other groups, including the supporters of Aydid within the USC itself.

It is against this background that Somaliland declared its independence from the rest of Somalia on 18 May 1991. The former British Protectorate remained the one and only separatist entity during most of the 1990s. Nevertheless, many other regions were actually ruled as independent territories. The fragmentation process acquired new momentum in 1998, when the northeastern part of Somalia renamed itself the Puntland State, and again in 2002 when Southwestern Somalia declared its independence.

Together, these three breakaway states — Somaliland, Puntland, and Southwestern Somalia — amount to more than half the territory of fragmented Somalia. In contrast, the UN-backed Transitional National Government (TNG) that was put in place in 2000, following the aforementioned Arta conference in Djibouti, controls only part of the capital Mogadishu and pockets of the rest of the country.

The Rebirth of Somaliland

The decision to renounce the union with southern Somalia was taken at a grand *shir* — an inter-clan, consultative process of peace-making (Menkhaus 2000) — in Burao. Clan elders emphasized that the union treaty was never ratified. They recalled that Somaliland had gained independence from Britain a couple of days before Italians granted the same to the South, and had joined the union voluntarily in pursuit of Greater Somalia. Since southern politics not only failed to advance the Pan-Somali project but indeed led to the collapse of Somalia herself, they argued, Somaliland was betrayed and had to restore its sovereignty.

According to this line of reasoning, the rebirth of Somaliland ought not to be seen as illegal in international law but, instead, as the expression of an inalienable right to self-determination. The argument proved insufficient, however, to win international recognition. A few countries, including Djibouti and Saudi Arabia, have since developed trade links with the self-styled republic but no one, so far, has recognized Somaliland as an independent state.

Despite a few bouts of civil strife, Somaliland, over the past decade, has by and large managed to move away from conflict (Bulhan 1999:19-21; Menkhaus 2000:188-90), while the rest of Somalia has been locked in extensive warfare. Somaliland also managed to establish a functional administration over most of its territory, including police and defence forces, a judiciary, and a parliament incorporating the elders as an upper house. The economy, mainly based on livestock exports to Saudi Arabia and other — undisclosed — destinations, has been surprisingly buoyant (IRIN 1999:2).

Along with peace and stability, perceptible signs of economic recovery confirmed Somalilanders that their secession was the right path (World Bank 1999; Bulhan 1999). Conversely, the continued failure of recognition by the international community provoked their indignation. The international isolation of Somaliland steadily emerged as a burning issue in Somaliland internal politics — with critics of the government claiming that the failure to establish internationally is deliberate. Somaliland president Muhammad Ibrahim Egal was until his death in 2002 suspected of being ambivalent over independence.

It is plausible that Egal, who was Prime Minister of Somalia under Shermarke before being imprisoned when Barre climbed into power, became an icon of Somaliland nationalism against his own will (IRIN 1999:1; IRIN 2001:5).

Somaliland elders appointed Abdurahman Ali Tur, the first president, in 1991, then Egal in 1993 and again in 1997. A former SNM leader, ex-president Abdurahman Tur eventually allied himself to south Mogadishu warlord Hussein Aydid, a former US Marine and son of General Farah Aydid, the USC military leader, and he explicitly called for the reunification of Somalia (*Middle East Times*, 13 August 1999). Remarkably enough, separation from the rest of Somalia was not the initial aim of the SNM but was forced on its leadership by broad-based popular opinion. In this respect, the secession of Somaliland stands as one rare instance, in the modern history of Somali society, of people-driven self-determination.

More Breakaway States and the Building Blocks Theory

The Puntland State of Somalia proclaimed its establishment in May 1998; that is, seven years after Somaliland. In the meantime, the UN intervention in Somalia had 'become synonymous with the prevailing mood in many quarters against international intervention in far-flung civil conflicts [...] and against the United Nations in general' (Jan 1996:1); the US-led Operation Restore Hope suffered military humiliation and withdrew hastily (Hirsch and Oakley 1995); and a dozen peace initiatives were held, all to no avail (Mohamed 2001). At a 'constitutional conference' in the northeastern town of Garowe, about six hundred delegates, most of them from Majerteen and other Darod clans, ascribed this stalemate to a top-down approach, meaning that too much emphasis was laid on the dubious restoration of a central government. Accordingly, they justified the formation of Puntland as a first step in a reverse, bottom-up approach to national reconciliation. Unlike Somaliland, they did not see Puntland as secessionist. Its independence, they stressed, was only 'temporary':

> The Puntland State is not [...] seceding from the rest of Somalia. But, instead, the Puntland State will champion for Somali unity and territorial integrity. This State is committed to work tirelessly for the speedy restoration of a Central Somali Government as it will always remain a part and parcel of a future Federal Somali Republic [...]. The Puntland State of Somalia is convinced [...] that any future Somali National Reconciliation Talks shall be conducted on Bottom Up Approach: the creation of Regional States leading to negotiations between them on the formation of a Federal State. This approach is not only practical, it is the only way to establish legitimate representative leadership with a mandate to negotiate on the national level (Puntland 1998a).

At that time, the UN, IGAD, and the Somali Aid Co-ordination Body (SACB) were also looking for a decentralized approach. The idea of using 'building blocks' to restore the unity of Somalia arose from the SACB's identification of some local administrative bodies as more 'responsible' and 'responsive' than others, and the UN's identification of zones of 'recovery', 'transition', and 'crisis':

> The appeal of 'building blocks' lies in the realisation that any unitary Somali state is improbable for the indefinite future. It allows for other alternatives, a loose federal structure, even a confederal alternative modelled on the United Arabic Emirates. It also allows for greater participation and accountability [and] suggests that Somali factions are being replaced by responsible and responsive local administrations arising out of genuine consultative process. [...] The possible units are frequently identified with the major clan-families, which would allow for five or six territories [albeit most of these] regions have yet to make any significant progress in providing structures which have public support or realistic alternatives to the warlords (IRIN 1999:1-4).

In September 1998, the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), predominantly of the Ogaden clan, and elders of the Digil and Rahanwein clans announced the establishment of one more state, Jubaland, in the Juba Valley around Kismayu. Consistent with the new trend of thinking in favour of regional 'building blocks', SPM leader Mohamed Siyad Hersi, also known as General Morgan and Siyad Barre's son-in-law, took great care to declare that the new breakaway state was 'part of his effort to find a bottom-up approach to Somalia's problem' (*Kenya Times*, 4 September 1998). Before he could organise his administration, however, General Morgan was driven out of Kismayu by supporters of Hussein Aydid, who themselves were later on ousted by the Ethiopian-backed Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA).

Jubaland became integrated in yet another self-proclaimed state in April 2002, when the 52 members of the Central Committee of the RRA and a council of 70 elders set up the Southwestern State of Somalia. The assembly opted for a 'temporary independence', paralleling the status of Puntland. The RRA leader, Colonel Hassan Mohamed Nur, who had been one of the founders of the UN-backed transitional government in 2000, was sworn in as president for a four-year term. A spokesman of the new state explained that the Southwestern State would 'reconnect with any credible Somali national government if this came into existence within four years' (*Afrol News,* 2 April 2002). Only six months later, Colonel Nur lost control of his stronghold Baidoa. Actually, the very existence of the Southwestern State remains as uncertain as was that of Jubaland.

The reason why southern 'building blocks' appear more fragile than Somaliland and Puntland in the north lies in the 'issue of invasion' (Menkhaus 2000:191). We have already mentioned that the appropriation of land from the agro-pastoral society in the inter-riverine region started under Italian rule and was ruthlessly accelerated under Barre's dictatorship. When Barre was overthrown and fled Mogadishu, the struggle for control of land and water in and around the inter-riverine region made it one of the most war-torn areas. Up to the late 1990s, the inter-riverine region was the only one controlled by armed forces that were not indigenous to it (Mukhtar 1996; Besteman and Cassanelli 1997). So, when the

RRA managed to recapture part of the alienated land, its proclamation of a Southwestern State was totally unacceptable to contending exogenous factions. The latter, while fighting each other, have since proven capable, through occasional alliances and combined blows, of disrupting the self-declared independence of their mutual battlefield. This state of affairs comes very much against the establishment of a stable and peaceful 'building block'.

In effect, the building blocks theory remains fragile almost anywhere. Somaliland is widely acknowledged as the most successful breakaway state and the cornerstone of a future, bottom-up rebuilding process — notwithstanding, obviously, its broad-based public opinion in favour of 'permanent' independence. Yet, its own administrative rebuilding is still characterized by poor quality of social services, low coverage, and endemic corruption (Bulhan 1999:62-82). Furthermore, in April 2003, the main opposition party, Kulmiye (Solidarity), rejected the results of Somaliland's first multiparty presidential election, which the incumbent president, Dahir Riyale Kahin (Egal's constitutional successor) officially won with a difference of only 80 votes. A new round of civil strife in the short or medium term is a possibility that cannot be ruled out.

In neighbouring Puntland, heavy fighting flared up in August 2002 between the forces of Colonel Yusuf Ahmed and Jama Ali Jama, who had been at each other's throat for the presidency of Puntland since its establishment. Adding fuel to an already volatile situation, the authorities in Puntland have accused Somaliland of supporting and arming dissident forces, in the context of a territorial dispute over the ownership of Sool and Sanaag regions at their common border. The two disputed regions clearly fell within the borders of the former British Somaliland... but most of their inhabitants are associated with Puntland-based clans. Here again, territorial vs. cultural understandings of self-determination lead to political stiffness and conflict.

Besides conflicting brands of nationalism, the building blocks theory raises one crucial question: what should be built or rebuilt? In other words, what might or should a future Somalia look like? To what kind of (re)building can the so-called 'building blocks' legitimately — and effectively — contribute? Or are they just stumbling blocks?

The agro-pastoral communities in the inter-riverine region have called for a federal arrangement since Italian rule. Being the most subaltern level in the Somali hierarchy of clans, they view federalism as a prerequisite for their own social emancipation and group protection. In a much more ephemeral manner, the draft constitution of Puntland also supported the idea of Puntland being a regional state in a future federation. In the final version, however, the federal option was replaced by references to the restoration of a more unitary and centralized state of Somalia (Puntland 1998a; Puntland 1998b). This shift in agenda lent credence to the suspicion that Puntland leaders have their eyes

more on Mogadishu and the leadership of a reunited Somalia than just local constituencies (IRIN 1999:2). Perhaps one of the most influential — though unavowed — advocates of federalism was Somaliland's president Egal. Up to his death in 2002, an ever-growing body of opinion believed he could renounce the independence of Somaliland in exchange for the leadership of a federal Somalia. Indications are that his successors may be more intransigent on Somaliland's independence — but will still advocate a federal option for the rest of ex-Somalia.

The strongest opposition to federalism comes from faction leaders and warlords in and around Mogadishu and the central regions. Competing leaders in these areas reject not only the federal option but also the building blocks and bottom-up approach as a whole. Their ambitions clearly lay with the control of a centralized Somalia. Can this be restored? No clan, coalition of clans, or alliance of factions has won control of Somalia since 1991. As Abdirahman Mohamed underscores, the remaking of a centralized state is all the more unrealistic when its toughest supporters organize along clan and subclan lines: 'clanism is not a unitary-rational entity; it breaks down into anarchic and divisive smaller and smaller cellular entities, hence a clannish political leader is unlikely to be endowed with a national loyalty above his group' (Mohamed 2001:21).

So long as contending clannish leaders and warlords disregard a federal arrangement, there indeed cannot be any rebuilding of the collapsed state of Somalia. Their power appetites and the occasional alliances they entail can merely allow a *de facto* consociation of unstable entities. Of all possible configurations, this is the loosest one, and there is some irony in the fact that the quest for a centralized state is what makes it the likeliest outcome of conflict.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter endeavoured to account for the making and unmaking of one of the most highly homogeneous states in Africa — Somalia — and why its decomposition is characterised by protracted internecine wars. The descent of Siyad Barre into personal rule and tyranny took advantage, it was argued, of an international system that had raised state sovereignty above peoples' rights. State violence was significantly exacerbated by the financial support and military assistance of Western and Eastern powers alike, as their alternate patronage prolonged Barre's rulership. All this allowed his clankatura to wage wars against what were called 'rebel clans'. His regime utilized the military to bomb villages and cities, destroyed vital water sources in so-called 'enemy territories', relied on terror squads and assassination units to harass, jail and murder whoever dared to protest, and still enjoyed the 'international legitimacy' conferred by the OAU charter.

Clan-based persecutions backfired with the rise of clan-based opposition movements arming themselves in order to end years of repression and state violence. When Barre was finally overthrown in January 1991, Somalia virtually 'returned to its pre-colonial starting point, a 'stateless' society of autonomous clans, organised democratically for peace and war but today militarised in a manner alien even to the unusually warlike historical traditions of the country' (Adam 1998:362). Contending factions are still far from re-establishing a state that can meet the current standards of juridical statehood.

So great was Barre's malevolence and abuse of power that virtually all Somalis now hold a deep-seated fear and distrust of any centralized authority. In fact, some people hold the view that the old unitary Somalia state is dead and can never be resurrected (Dualeh 1994:2). From the beginning of the civil war, 'suspicion has mounted among the Somali communities due to fear of a clan-dominated regime, which might subjugate the rest' (Mohamed 2001:21).

As in many other parts of colonially-partitioned Africa, the bone of contention in Somalia is state power. The borders that colonial administrations erected for their administrative convenience have largely remained a factor of political mistrust and dissidence. At independence, their intangibilization raised crucial matters of citizenship, including rights provided by the state, duties expected of citizens, and identity politics. In their modern form, ethnicity or ethnic/clan nationalisms are partly a response to increased group interaction and competition for scarce resources. This kind of nationalism is notoriously reactive and infectious, running so deep and strong that it has appeared to possess a gravitational quality. Making things worse, the exit option is generally no longer available to groups of people who wish to move away from ill treatment from any other group and set up their own social order. Territorial partition and borders do not allow such free movement, which is actually viewed as a threat both to the losing state and the receiving one.

Neither the (partial) reunification of ex-Italian and ex-British Somalilands, nor the irredentist pursuit of Greater Somalia could acknowledge the fundamental fact that Somali communities and individuals are self-determining moral agents fully capable of regulating their personal and common affairs. Instead, these two state-centred understandings of self-determination contributed to fuel both intra- and inter-state conflict in the Horn of Africa. Another practice of self-determination emerged in post-Mengistu Ethiopia, where regional autonomy and self-rule, though not putting an end to guerrilla warfare, regave Somali communities a level of cultural and political autonomy they had not experienced since the 19th century.

In post-Barre Somalia, the rebirth of the ex-British Somaliland, forcefully encouraged by popular support, was one other example of state-centred self-determination. Seemingly, the rest of the collapsed country is now heading to an

Ethiopian-like situation, as much as regional self-rule is concerned. That the nominal, Transitional National Government of Somalia has no effective say in this evolution, surely makes a difference with the federal arrangement in Ethiopia's constitution, but one may wonder if Somalia's ongoing statelessness is not yet another form of self-determination.

This is not to deny that statelessness in post-Barre Somalia derives, to a very large extent, from the inability of any warring faction to win military control of the country, nor that the majority of ex-Somalians are deeply fatigued with the activities of warlords. However, the Somali society cannot be seen as purely passive spectators. Given their historical experience with colonial borders and postcolonial statehood, it cannot be ruled out that ex-Somalians are evolving a practice of self-determination where renewed possibilities of exit option, rather than state-making, are the central element.

In any case, the emergence of appropriate forms of self-determination is 'only plausible if it can operate without external interference, and can get a degree of sympathetic and careful international support, not yet apparent' (IRIN 1999:4). One question mark in this regard is getting increasingly big: the Islamic factor. A significant, though not dominant, element in the Somali political scene, are the fundamentalist movements — which have granted the collapsed state of Somalia the dubious honour of being considered an Al-Qaeda sanctuary, and an upcoming target for US strikes.

An early generation of Islamic movements actually started to flourish during Siyad Barre's time, in place of the banned political parties. Then, the power vacuum since 1991 led to a mushrooming of so-called 'sharia authorities', which performed basic governance tasks in a number of geographic areas, including the provision of basic social services and some policing functions. The International Peace Academy, an independent think-tank close to the UN General Secretariat, recommended in one of its reports a 'policy of constructive engagement with the emerging sharia authorities' (Jan 1996:19), arguing that 'unlike the centrifugal politics of clan division, [they] demonstrate a latent centripetal political tendency for integration' (ibid., p.8). However, state collapse also made room for some fundamentalist groups, the most well-known being Al-Ittihad with alleged links to Al-Qaeda, and they polarized attention.

While fundamentalism was not, up to recently, a central question in collapsed or self-remaking Somalia, it became one in the days following 11 September 2001. Within weeks, the US listed Al-Ittihad as a terrorist organization, the result being a notable increase in the number of anti-fundamentalist militias. Sadly enough, *The Estimate*, a US-based intelligence newsletter, is not very far from truth when it observes:

> If indeed Somalia is 'next' in line as a potential target for the US war against Al-
> Qaeda, its welter of competing clan leaders, warlords, secessionist leaders, and

> UN-backed government are all already competing to be the 'Northern Alliance'
> or Hamid Karzai of the next campaign. Several have openly proclaimed their
> willingness to help the United States rid the country of Usama bin Ladin's
> followers, but skeptics wonder if ridding the country of their rivals is not also
> part of their expectation (Dunn 2002).

Whether collapsed Somalia becomes the US' next Afghanistan or Iraq, or not, its demonisation has already become a regional issue. Ethiopia's Prime Minister Meles Zenawi made it clear on several occasions that he considered the transitional government in Mogadishu as pro-fundamentalist, and wanted to get rid of it. Ethiopian military raids against Al-Ittihad, both in Ethiopia and inside Somalia, particularly Puntland, are on the increase. Somalis crossing inside Ethiopia are routinely arrested. Historically, Somali communities in the Horn have always sought alliances when they were in conflict among themselves or with their neighbours. From colonial rule onwards, they were bitterly paid, however, to know that the responsibility for staging, managing and ending conflict lies primarily with themselves. Even if some of the causes of the crisis emanate from without, a legitimate solution can only be cultivated within.

Notes

1. The Digil and Mirifle are sometimes referred to as 'farming clans' in contrast with other, nomadic clans. They have settled in the relatively fertile area between the Shabelle and Juba rivers in southern Somalia, where their dominant mode of livelihood is agro-pastoralism. Living among fishermen, hunters and cultivators of Bantu origin, they have developed a language of their own, known as Mai, that combines Somali, Kiswahili and Bantu inputs and is used as the lingua franca in and around the inter-riverine region. Social, ecological and cultural peculiarities have resulted in a significantly lower status for the Digil and Mirifle on the Somali social scale of clan-families. This has gone a long way to fuel the ambition of nomadic clans to impose cultural and political hegemony on the sedentary groups (Mukhtar 1996). As will appear later in this chapter, the competition between distant clans, specifically the Darod and Hawiye, for the control of inter-riverine resources (land and water) is a major factor in the current Somali conflict.

2. The patriarchal — and gerontocratic — features of this control are central to all of Nuruddin Farah's novels. On the role of Somali women in peace efforts and the transformation of gender relations, see Bryden (1998).

3. Somali was still to become a written language. The search for a suitable script began a few months after independence, when a Somali Language Commission was instructed to compare the advantages and disadvantages of many possible scripts, most of them Latin- or Arabic-based plus some unique ones such as Osmaniya (named by its inventor, one Kenadid Osman in the early 1920s). Each possibility had factionalistic supporters and political implications. Political rulers refrained from

deciding on one, the result being that official documents were throughout the 1960s written in three foreign languages, namely Arabic, Italian and English.

4. The next chapter by Godwin Murunga will analyze Somali isolation in colonial Kenya and the ensuing Kenya-Somalia relations at greater length.

5. In 1987–1989, a cautious version of decentralization had involved the creation of two 'Autonomous Regions' in eastern Ethiopia, one around Dire Dawa (the second largest city after Addis Ababa, on the commercial lifeline with Djibouti) and the other the Ogaden. A Nationalities Institute drew up their boundaries. Being war zones for many years, the economic activities of both regions were not only weakened but destroyed. In the absence of a rehabilitation policy, their 'autonomy' meant very little (Van Brabant 1994:3).

6. In June 1990, a group of former politicians, high-ranking civilian and military officers of the Shermarke era in the 1960s, signed a petition known as 'Manifesto' in which they openly accused Siyad Barre of mismanagement and treason. The 'Manifesto group' was widely seen, however, as 'a powerless retired group wanting to grasp the momentum of Siyad's fall and steal the power' and indeed it 'contributed nothing to prevent the rampage and stop the already visible clan motivated bloodshed' (Mohamed 2001:8-9).

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