THE HISTORICAL IMPACT OF WESTERN COLONIAL AND IMPERIAL POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS ON CONFLICT AND INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN SOMALIA

Melissa Fellin, PhD[1]

Abstract

This article uses a historical analysis to examine the effects of geopolitics on population displacement within Somalia and Somali-inhabited territories over time, specifically focusing on colonialism (1897—1960), Syiad Barre's presidency (1969—1991), famine and the United Nations humanitarian operations in Somalia (1991—1993), and America's "War on Terror" (2001—2012). Drawing on an extensive review of the historical literature on Somalia and based on fieldwork in North America (2008—2011) that included participation in Somali political meetings and events, such as meetings of the Somali Cause and Somali Canadian Diaspora Alliance (2008, 2009) and research during Somalia's Independence Day commemorations (2011), this article builds upon the arguments put forth by Chimni (1998) who suggests that internalist explanations place the blame of conflict in countries in the global South and the resulting displacements solely on the refugee producing state, which obfuscates the responsibility of external interventions that contribute to conflicts. Through linking colonialism and imperialism, I show the effects of imperialist policies on the dislocation of individuals, families, and groups within Somalia's borders. Using Mamdani's (2004) argument and concept "Culture Talk," I deconstruct Cold War narratives of premodern Africans and post-Cold War narratives of antimodern Muslims are both generally used to explain the ongoing civil war in Somalia and argue that Western historical narratives ignore the role of colonial and neocolonial policies in shaping local and global Somali societies and politics.

Keywords: Somalia, internal displacement, history, geopolitics, colonialism, imperialism

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AUTHOR'S AFFILIATION:
[1]Post-Doctoral Fellow, Centre for Research on Migration and Ethnic Relations, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada
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CORRESPONDENCE: Address correspondence to Melissa Fellin at mstachel@uwo.ca
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Introduction: The Effects of Geopolitics on Internal Population Displacement in Somalia

This article uses a historical analysis to examine the effects of geopolitics on population displacement within Somalia and Somali-inhabited territories over time, specifically focusing on colonialism (1897—1960), Syiad Barre's presidency (1969—1991), famine and the United Nations humanitarian operations in Somalia (1991—1993), and America's "War on Terror" (2001—2012). The following is by no means a comprehensive history of Somalia, which is impossible to cover in a single article. Instead, the paper provides the reader with a concise background of the major historical turning points in Somalia's history in order to emphasize how internal and external factors are interlinked, or how external processes and forces contributed to the dislocation of families and communities from their homes, villages, and livelihoods over time.

The relations between development, environmental and conflict-induced displacements are often overlooked in refugee studies; however, in the case of Somalia there have been four frequently interrelated factors leading to population displacement, including armed conflict, persecution based on ethnicity and race, "natural disasters" such as drought, floods, and famine, and development projects that caused major changes to land use and ownership (see Cernea 1990). Although the first three types have historically caused both cross border and internal displacement and the fourth mainly internal dislocation, for the purposes of this article the focus will be on internal displacement. The lack of analysis of the interrelations between the different factors that lead to uprooting and movement of populations is usually a result of the neglect of a historical analysis of population dislocations and movements over time. For instance, it is common for refugee studies to make the assumption that displacement and the "refugee experience" is a relatively new phenomenon, frequently citing the construction and institutionalization of the term "refugee," the standardization of the management of refugees and of the institutions to meet refugee needs, such as the administration of refugee camps and refugee law following the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and it's 1967 *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*. The political category of refugee, however, emerged within a specific geopolitical context and historical moment (Harrell-Bond 1999, Malkki 1996). Noor (2007) makes this mistake when he states that in Somalia "displacement was first experienced in the mid 1970s and 1980s." Evidence shows, however, that Somalis have experienced multiple ruptures causing uprooting and movement before this time, most notably during colonialism (for a history of refugee flows globally see Chimni 1998). With the neglect of history there is also an undermining of global political factors that contribute to dislocation and movement.

This article draws on an extensive review of the historical and ethnographic literature on Somalia spanning from pre-colonialism until the time of research (2012). It also draws from United Nations and human rights reports, newspaper articles, and reports from Somali civic and political organizations. For this research, international refugee and humanitarian policies and laws were analyzed. It is also based on fieldwork in Toronto and Kitchener-Waterloo, Canada and Minneapolis-Saint Paul, United States (2008—2011). Ethnographic fieldwork included participation in Somali political meetings and events, such as meetings of the Somali Cause and Somali Canadian Diaspora Alliance (2008, 2009) and participation, observation and interviews

during Somalia's Independence Day commemorations (2011). This study received ethics approval from the Research Ethics Board at The University of Western Ontario.

In this article, I build upon the arguments put forth by Chimni (1998:356) who suggests that internalist explanations, the view that individuals and groups are uprooted due to internal rather than international conflicts, place the blame of conflict in countries in the global South, which obfuscates the responsibility of external interventions that contribute to conflicts. Through linking colonialism and imperialism, I show the effects of imperialist policies on the dislocation of individuals, families, and groups within Somalia's borders.

Deconstructing Internal Explanations and Western Historical Narratives of the Ongoing Conflict in Somalia

Somalia has been referred to as a "failed state" in academic discourse. There is a plethora of research that examines the reasons for its failure (see Touval 1963, Laitin and Samatar 1987, Samatar 1994). Many analyses of states remove the state from its construction and context, viewing states as disconnected social facts based on a functionalist approach. A functionalist[1] and synchronic[2] approach ignores the historical formation of states, how they came into being, and the transnational dynamics that influence their construction and transformation (Sharma and Gupta 2006). Researchers who view states as social facts hold Western states as the ideal type according to which other states are ranked (Sharma and Gupta 2006). Consequently, if a state is absent or weak by comparison it is considered a failure. Critics of this approach point out that a number of scholars[3] who regard the Somali state as a failure adopt an internalist explanation and suggest that the Somali clan system of politics is to blame for the collapse of the state. A complex history is oversimplified by attributing the state's demise to "tribalism" and the continuity of the armed conflict to Muslim fundamentalism. Based on such a static and localized perspective, warlords and ethnic nationalisms are perceived as internal products, rather than byproducts of larger processes and histories that include the West as colonizers (Razack 2004:16).

Western modernity narratives developed from social Darwinism that informed colonialism, conceptualized by Mamdani (2004) as "Culture Talk," are used by the West to separate those cultures that they regard as "peaceful," "civil," and thus modern from those cultures they regard as predisposed to violence or terror and thus premodern and/or antimodern (Mamdani 2004). Mamdani (2004:20-21) distinguishes between two "Culture Talk" narratives. The first narrative views premodern peoples as not yet modern due to their late progression or inability to reach modernity. In the Somali case, the Cold War narrative of the civil war views Somalis, and Africans in general, as having no history and no politics as well as no creative ability (see also Fanon 2004[1963]) and is represented as the reason for clan warfare (Besteman 1999, Cassanelli 1996, de Waal 1998). The post-Cold War narrative is associated with the post-9/11 political environment that represents Muslims as premodern and also antimodern. The narrative represents Muslims as having a history, that is ruled by customs and traditions, which predisposes them to violence (Mamdani 2004, Said 1997). The narrative also represents Muslims as threatened by Western freedoms that is that "culture (modernity) is the dividing line between

[1] Functionalism originated in Sociology in the works of Emile Durkheim. Functionalist theory was based on the idea that society has various parts that work with one another to maintain stability. The theory was criticized for not recognizing that power is not equally distributed among all segments of society, including ethnicity, class, region, and gender (Henslin and Nelson 1996).
[2] A synchronic analysis examines an event or phenomenon in one point in time (Levi-Strauss 1963).
[3] Some scholars regard the Somali state as a failure but also include the role of imperialism in its failure that is why I added a number of scholars as opposed to all scholars (see Cassanelli 1996; de Waal 1998).

those in favor of peaceful, civic existence and those inclined to terror" (Mamdani 2004:18). Following this line of thinking, Muslim fundamentalism is blamed for continuing the armed conflict in Somalia (see Harper 2007, Marchal 2004, 2007). In this article, I deconstruct these two narratives that are generally used to explain the ongoing civil war in Somalia and argue that Western historical narratives ignore the role of colonial and neocolonial policies in shaping local and global Somali societies and politics.

In light of the above, knowledge of the history of Somalia is critical in order to understand the ongoing conflict, the factors that lead to internal displacement and to challenge preconceived notions about their causes, not least a presumed tribalism, an old colonial concept that is generally used when examining political life in African societies. In fact, a Somali intellectual insisted I learn the history of Somalia from pre-colonialism to the present, so I could see the problems that result when terms such as "tribe" are used to describe the contemporary conflict. As a result of my extensive research into the literature of Somalia's history, I agree with scholars who challenge the proposition that "tribalism" or the Somali clan system of politics is to blame for the collapse of the state, and instead examine the war within its regional and international contexts (see Cassanelli 1996, Besteman 1999, de Waal 1998).

Overview of Somali Clan-Families

In the following section, I will introduce the six main Somali clan-families, their territories, and the clan structure prior to colonialism. I will also offer an overview of the bases of clan divisions in Somali society. The outline is intended to provide the reader with a basic understanding of Somali kinship systems in order to comprehend the analysis of colonial policies that tribalized and racialized Somali society leading to the persecution of specific clan-families and marginalized groups, discussed later.

Somalis are related to the Cushitic-speaking family, which includes the Afar of Djibouti,[4] Eritrea, and the Awash Valley, and the Oromo and Borana of Ethiopia and northern Kenya (Lewis 2008:1). The Somali trace their ancestry to either *Samaale* or *Saab* and although they are believed to have been antagonistic to one another, both are believed to have Arab origins and are descendants of the Prophet Mohammad (Lewis 2008:2-3).

The descendants of *Samaale* constitute the majority of the population and are predominantly nomadic pastoralists. The word Somali (*Soomaali*) comes from the *Samaale*, the name of the mythical ancestor of the four pastoral clan-families. The word *Samaale* emerges from *Soo maal* meaning "go and milk," stressing pastoralism as the root of the culture (Samatar 1982:10). *Samaale* clan-families are *Dir*, *Isaaq*, *Hawiye*, *and Daarood* (Lewis 2008:4). These four clan-families have similar kinship systems. Counting approximately twenty generations to their common ancestor, a smaller unit of the clan-family is the clan. In pre-colonial Somalia, the clan acted as a corporate political unit and had a degree of localization, meaning they were connected with certain territories (Lewis 1999[1961]:4). The most distinct group within the clans was the primary lineage. A person usually first identified his or herself to be a member of his or her primary lineage. An individual could count six to ten generations to the founding ancestor of his or her primary lineage (Lewis 1999[1961]:6). At the lowest level of the system was the *dia*-paying group that Somalis called *jilib*. The group consisted of a few small lineages ranging from hundreds to thousands of members and could trace descent of four to eight generations to a common founder (Lewis 1999[1961]:6). In pre-colonial Somalia the *dia*-paying group was the

[4] Djibouti is home to Somalis who were part of the French colony. Today, it is a sovereign country (Lewis 2008:42-43).

most important corporate political group and was the level of segmentation where the clan and social contract met (Mohamed 2007:227), discussed in more detail below.

In the past, the *Dir* clans inhabited the areas of Harar, Borama, and Zeila as well as the territory around Merca in southern Somalia. The *Isaaq* lived mainly in the northwest and central parts of Somalia, contemporary Somaliland. The *Daarood* were the largest Somali clan-family and occupied northeastern Somalia or Puntland,[5] northeastern Kenya, and the Ogadeen region of Ethiopia (Lewis 2008:5). The *Hawiye* inhabited the Hiran and Mudug regions of Somalia and part of Benaadir where Mogadishu is located, in between the *Daarood* to the north and the *Digil* and *Rahanweyn* to the south. They also occupied the areas across the Jubba River and in northeastern Kenya. The descendants of *Samaale* were considered "nobles," enjoying high status. Other clan-families, including *Saab* descendants were placed into the category of "commoners" or "low-caste" (Lewis 2008:4-7).

The other two main clan-families, *Digil* and *Rahanweyn*, are known collectively as *Digil-Mirifle*, and traced their ancestry to *Saab*. They were predominantly agriculturalists or pastro-agriculturalists (Samatar 1982:10). The *Saab* were not considered by noble Somali clans to have lineal purity as they were of mixed origin that included Somali, Oromo, and East African Bantu (Besteman 1999:113, Lewis 2008:4-6).

Minority clan-families, captured as slaves, were absorbed into the *Digil* and *Rahanweyn* clan-families. During the Arab slave trade, dozens of East African groups were enslaved in Somalia, including the *Yao*, *Zigula*, *and Makhuwa,* from the area between Kenya and Mozambique to work in Somali owned plantations (Besteman 1999:51, Declich 1995:95). After escaping from the plantations or being freed for converting to Islam they settled in the forests in the Jubba River Valley (Besteman 1999:113). Another group that were descendents of slaves were the *Boni*, who were hunting and fishing people that lived along the Shabelle and Jubba Rivers. Also inhabiting the area between the rivers near Baidoa, was the *Eyle* of Bur Heibe, a hunting group known for their pottery (Lewis 2008:6). There were also indigenous Cushitic peoples, such as the *Shebelle* and *Gabwing* (de Waal 1997:162).

Other minority clans, *Midgaan*, *Tumaal*, and *Yibir* were also known as *Saab*, but they had no connection with *Digil* and *Rahanweyn* clan-families. These clan-families had small populations and were located in northern Somalia. They were distinguished from the four main clan-families in the north because of their specialist trades in hunting, shoemaking, and metal craftsmanship, practices that were considered "unclean" to the noble Somalis (Lewis 2008:7).

Somalia's Geopolitical Significance and Colonial History

Somalia's location on the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean had geopolitical significance for European empires and local Ethiopian expansion. Towards the end of the 19th century Somalia was the stage for colonial conquests by Britain, France, and Italy as well as Egypt and later Ethiopia (Lewis 1988[1965]:40).

By 1827, Britain had taken control of Aden (contemporary Yemen) and wanted to control one of Somalia's port towns, Berbera. Britain sought to maintain control of the Somali coast to supply Aden with meats and other commodities that were considered important to supply Aden's British army with food and commodities to defend British India (Samatar 1982:91). Although Egypt and Britain both had interests in Zeila and Berbera, the British gained control of the towns. A combination of the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 and the Mahdist uprising (1881)

[5] Puntland is a region located in northeastern Somalia. Its leaders declared it an autonomous region in 1998, but it does not seek independence from the Federal Republic of Somalia (Lewis 2008:100).

against the Anglo-Egyptian occupation in Sudan led to Egypt's withdrawal from Somalia. As a result, both Britain and Ethiopia started claiming the territory. Soon thereafter, in 1887, the British signed a protectorate for northwest Somalia or British Somaliland (Brons 2001:132). Even though the British had signed protection treaties with individual Somali clans, some of them were incorporated in the Ethiopian claimed territory. The territory included Ogadeen,[6] a region that would become disputed for years to come. Other Somalis became a part of British Kenyan territory or the Northern Frontier District (NFD) (Lewis 2008:29).

The French also had trading interests in Somalia. In particular, they wanted to construct a coaling station in the Red Sea to supply naval communication with Indochina. They also wanted to connect the Gulf of Aden to their colonies in equatorial Africa (Samatar 1982:91). They had acquired the port of Obok in 1859 in northwest Somalia and constructed a trading company with Ethiopia in 1881. After the trading company was established, a rivalry between the British and the French ensued. In 1888 imperialist competitiveness between Britain and France led to an agreement to divide northern Somalia between Zeila and Djibouti (Brons 2001:132). The Franco-Ethiopian railway was constructed to link Djibouti with Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's main port (Lewis 2008:29).

Prior to the partition of Somali territory, Italy had imperial interests in Ethiopia, but after much diplomatic fighting over Italy's protectorate over the country the Ethiopian Emperor, Menelik II, wrote the *Circular Letter* in which he asserted Ethiopian claims to the territory and Ethiopia as a unified Ethiopian state. However, the Italians continued to claim their protectorate over Ethiopia, which led to the battle of Adwa in 1896. Ethiopia won the battle and expelled Italian rule, although Italy kept Eritrea as a colony. Britain, France, and Italy came to recognize Ethiopia as a superpower in the region and began to negotiate with Emperor Menelik II who was seeking imperial expansion over the Cushitic-speaking Oromo and Somali peoples around Harar and to the southeast (Lewis 2008:29). By 1900 the Emperor had seized Ogadeen region in west Somalia (Brons 2001:134). According to Brons (2001:134), it was Italy's defeat that made the occupation of Somalia more important to the colonial government that had a vision of shipping through the Suez Canal and Red Sea to India (Lewis 1988[1965]:41). As a consequence, in 1905, Italy started its direct administration of Italian Somaliland (Brons 2001:136). The demarcation of borders was carried out without taking into consideration Somali aspirations, livelihoods, or territorial distinctions, and separated Somalis into five different territories, including French Somaliland, British Somaliland, the Ethiopian Haud or Reserved Areas (RA) and Ogadeen, Italian Somaliland, and the NFD in Kenya (Lewis 1963:148). The division of clan territory constructed international boundaries that cut through pastoral lands, dislocating populations from their lands and cutting them off from other Somali territories. The partitions between protectorates caused pastoral groups to fight over smaller amounts of resources (Brons 2001).

In the early Italian colonial period, two trading companies were the basis for Italian interest in Somalia; however, in 1923 when Benito Mussolini came into power the Italians looked to Somalia to build its military and establish a colonial armed force, *corpo zaptie* (Brons 2001:142). This was in part due to Italy's over-reaching goal of occupying Ethiopia. In the early phases of World War I, the Italian colonial army began invading Ethiopian-Somali Ogadeen. A confrontation between Ethiopian and Italian Somali troops in 1935 at Walwal, located in eastern

[6] *Ogadeen* is a sub-lineage of the *Daarood* clan-family and claims territory that was demarcated as part of Ethiopian territory. Even though Somalis largely inhabit the territory from the *Ogadeen* lineage, other Somali clan-families also live in the area. Today, the main actors in the Ogadeen conflict are the Ogadeen National Liberation Front (ONLF) and the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF). The ONLF is a national organization that seeks the freedom of its people in the region (Seid 2009).

Somali Ogadeen, was used as an opportunity to occupy Ethiopia. In 1936 Italy's vision became a reality and it merged Italian Somaliland with Eritrea and Ethiopia, and drove the British out of their Somaliland protectorate to form Italian East Africa (Brons 2001:144-145, Lewis 2008:31). After the defeat of the Italians by Britain and its allies in 1941, Italian, British, and Ethiopian Somali territories came under British rule with the exception of Djibouti for eight years (1941—1949). At the end of WWII the British decided they could not maintain the East African Empire and the "Big Four Powers," Britain, France, the US, and the USSR began to negotiate Italy's ex-colonies. Britain proposed a united Somali state under UN Trusteeship and British administration; however, the proposal, known as the Bevin Plan, was rejected and Somalia was repartitioned. The British Somaliland protectorate was reinstated, Italy returned to administer its former colony in 1950 under UN Trusteeship, and the Ogadeen region was returned to Ethiopia (Lewis 2008:32).

Similar to the British colonial policies that retribalized and reordered the social map of Sudan (Mamdani 2009), colonial policies tribalized and racialized Somali clans. Mamdani (1996:3-4) argues that the colonial state everywhere in Africa shared essential features that sought to respond to "the native question," that is, how a small foreign minority can rule over an indigenous majority. This was accomplished, he argues, through direct and indirect rule. Direct rule was the initial response and was characterized by unmediated, centralized, and absolute power. Natives were to follow European laws and only civilized natives had access to European rights. It transformed economic institutions by appropriating land, destroying collective independence, and defeating and dispersing tribal populations (Mamdani 1996:17-18). Indirect rule was mediated, decentralized, and absolute. Land remained communal and indirect ways to control the natives were used. Depending on the context, tribal leadership was either reconstituted or imposed where it never before existed. While native authority was imposed in the rural areas, urban-based natives were neither subject to custom nor considered citizens with rights (Mamdani 1996:17-18). In the Somali case, in the north the British imposed a tribal authority where one never existed, undermining Somali political and economic institutions, described in detail below. In the south, a similar form of indirect rule was instituted. Both the Italians and the British imposed European notions of race onto the populations that reinscribed the master—slave distinction, distinguishing clans, and reinforcing the pastoral—agriculture divides (Besteman 1999:120-121).

Pre-colonial Somali politics were governed by two related and interacting principles of kinship that included both clanship *and* social contract, known as *Xeer* and translated as compact, contract, agreement or treaty. Agnates bound by treaty (*tol heerleh*) were political groups made up of men who were not based merely on a shared common ancestor, but on treaties that defined their collective political and jural responsibility. These political groups settled conflicts between individuals and groups through payment or collection of compensation for transgressions committed by or against the group (Samatar 1992:631, Mohamed 2007:227). Contractual agreements were most often made at the level of the *dia*-paying group, but they could be made at any level of segmentation. Mohamed (2007:228) suggests that there was a distinction between the political council (*shir*) and the law council (*xeerbeegti*). The former was held at the level of the *dia*-paying group or the clan to meet and discuss such issues as recognizing a new *dia*-paying group, adopting a peace treaty, or planning a war. The latter council resolved conflicts between *dia*-paying groups, lineages, clans, and individuals, for example, murder, theft, injury, insult, divorce, and inheritance (Mohamed 2007:228). There was no centralized administration or government and no single leader of the councils, but it was the responsibility of the elders to

ensure that contracts were honored (Lewis 1999[1961]:162, Mohamed 2007:228). Abdi Ismail Samatar (1992:632) argues that the *Xeer* was a necessity in pre-colonial Somalia since there was no centralized state and the household was the basic unit of livelihood and production with pastoralism at its base. *Xeer* was voluntary and was a necessity to rely on one's own labor and livestock and, in this context, no household or lineage could get enough of a surplus of resources to dominate or exploit other families or groups.

Colonial policies, Abdi Ismail Samatar (1992) argues, led to the commoditization of livestock and changed the relationship between pastoralists, merchants, and the state. The former social order based in livestock production, governed by the rules of the *Xeer*, and the needs of the household were transformed as competition over commodities increased and there was accumulation of wealth in urban centers. Abdi Ismail Samatar (1992) suggests that kinship without contract turned into clannism. Clannism was encouraged by British colonial policies of indirect rule, which aimed to tribalize and reestablish clans, and to construct boundaries to divide and conquer. To do this, for example, they granted power and authority to elders of *dia*-paying groups, giving them the title of *Aqils* (chiefs), constructing a hierarchy within clan-families, lineages, and territories where one never before existed. The British colonial administrators identified the "tribes" and the "chiefs" that ruled each of the clans or "tribes," so the "chiefs" could act as mediators between the colonial administration and the "tribes" as a measure to begin indirect rule (Mohamed 2007:229). Mohamed (2007:230) argues that the colonial administration tried to transform *Aqils* into rulers, but they were not men of influence and credibility. Those men who did have influence did not want to identify themselves with the colonial government.

In Italian Somaliland, indirect rule was also established. The Italian District and Provincial Commissioners identified local leaders who were labeled by the Italian-Arab hybrid, *capo-qabilah* or "chiefs." These chiefs were advisors to the colonial administration. Nevertheless, when Benito Mussolini came into power in Italy in 1922, Somalia began to be ruled by a strong differentiation between the "natives" and the Italian colonizers. In contrast to the few British settlers in British Somaliland, there were thousands of Italian settlers in Italian Somaliland (Lewis 2008:30).

Along with chiefs' artificial positions of leadership, divisions were made based in European notions of race. Mamdani (1996:24) argues that in many colonial states throughout Africa the town and country or rural areas were divided along ethnic lines. In Italian Somaliland, colonial administrators' categorization of race and the use of "tribe" constructed a hierarchy that separated people of slave ancestry from other Somalis as a separate race, engendering a division between the pastoral, nomadic *Samaale* and the agricultural, sedentary *Saab*, particularly the Somali Bantu as racially distinct (Besteman 1999:119-120).

Theories of race and racial purity shaped Italian and British colonial policies that determined the rights to public education and facilities based on race categories of European, Asian, or African, with the best resources and rights for Europeans and the worst for Africans (Akou 2011:41). Colonial administrators were confused as to where to place Somalis in their constructed racial hierarchies; therefore, they imposed their own racial categories onto local constructions of difference (Besteman 1999:120). Emphasizing their difference from the Bantu ancestry of the Gosha villagers and the Boni, the pastoral Somalis obtained status by promoting their Arab ancestry (Besteman 1999:120-122, Akou 2011:38-39).

Both the British and the Italians categorized the Somali Bantu as inferior to other Somalis and territorialized them in the Jubba Valley. The term "tribe" was applied to the Bantu, a classification that helped to reconstitute them as a unified group with a distinct territory and as

separate from pastoral Somali clans. As a consequence of constructing the valley as a space inhabited by ex-slaves, in the 1930s the Italian administration saw the area as a place for agricultural exploitation. They believed the "ex-slaves and their descendants" would be "suitable" for forced labor campaigns and conscripted them as banana plantation laborers (Besteman 1999:120-121). Before their re-enslavement, Somali Bantu had thriving agricultural communities, some exporting the surplus of their goods in the Indian Ocean trade (Besteman 1999:120). As a result, colonial development projects stripped the Somali Bantu of their lands and livelihoods, while forced to work on them as slave laborers. As evidenced later in the article by Besteman (1999), the separation of slave descendants from other Somalis was reinforced with Barre's policies, which strove to establish a unified Somali state, but excluded the Bantu from the nation. Later, during the war, racialized populations were marginalized making them subject to gross violations throughout the war.

On June 26, 1960, British Somaliland was declared an independent state, and on July 1, 1960, Italian Somaliland was also granted sovereignty. On the same day that Italian Somaliland became independent the north and the south joined together to form the Somali Republic (Brons 2001:157). The Somali flag was hoisted and the colonial flags were taken down. The flag symbolized the aspiration for unity of the Somali territories: it is blue with a white five point star representing the unification of Somalis who were divided as a result of colonialism in the five territories, including the NFD in Kenya, Italian Somaliland, British Somaliland, the Somali region of Ethiopia (Ogadeen and the Reserved Areas), and Djibouti (formerly French Somaliland) (Akou 2011:68, Besteman 1999:128).

Following independence the effects of colonial economic policies became apparent. Abdi Ismail Samatar (1992) argues that at this time, the leadership had little experience or interest in developing the traditional major sources of the economy, pastoralism and agriculture. Without being able to produce a surplus to be reinvested and expand the economy, resources had to be obtained from outside the country. In the 1960s, during the Cold War, loans and grant programs poured in from overseas making Somalia the highest recipient of aid per capita than any other country in Africa (Samatar 1992:634, Akou 2011:70). Pastoralism and agriculture that the majority of Somalis depended on were not the sectors of the economy that received loans (Samatar 1992:633). Furthermore, the money was not invested into new productive enterprises or infrastructure such as, schools or hospitals. Instead, the money went to the increasing numbers of bureaucrats and parliamentarians and to the Somali military (Akou 2011:70). Consequently, there was competition among the elite for state offices because the main way to access state funds was through becoming an elected representative or a minister. As a result, there was an explosion of political parties who increasingly formed along clan lines, numbering more than 60 parties before the 1969 elections (Marchal 2004:120). The influence of the competition over state funds was obvious when in 1969 the Somali Youth League (SYL) won the elections and the majority of the opposition parties who ran against them in the election crossed the parliamentary floor to become part of the ruling SYL party (Samatar 1992:635).

In a review of Afyare Abdi Elmi's (2011) book entitled *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration: Identity, Political Islam and Peace-building,* world-renowned economist Samir Amiin (2011) observed that if one defines "democracy" as simply the practice of a multi-party electoral politics and relative freedom of expression, it would be appropriate to describe the period between 1960 and 1991 as such. Nevertheless, it was a "neo-colonial democracy" whereby Somalia was dominated by European colonial economic interests, especially Italy and

Great Britain. In fact, for the majority of the Somali people, the Somali Republic, which depended to the extreme on European aid, was a great disappointment.

Cold War Politics in Somalia: Siyad Barre (1969-1991) and the Modern State project, Factionalism, and the Collapse of the State

On October 15, 1969 after President Abdirashid Ali Shermarke was assassinated by one of his bodyguards, General Mohamed Siyad Barre staged a *coup d'etat*. Barre had been a police inspector for the British Military Administration (BMA) in southern Somalia and was trained in Italy where he also studied politics privately (Lewis 2008:38). In the beginning, the people supported the new regime that included the termination of the growing number of political parties by Barre's Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) and the privatization of public resources (Samatar 1992:636, Brons 2001:171). Barre embarked on building a modern unified Somali nation-state. His policies were anti-colonial and he declared himself a socialist on October 21, 1970, as had many African and national liberation movements in the colonial world (Lewis 2008:39). Amiin (2011) refers to the first period of Barre's presidency (1969—1982) as "popular nationalist." During this time, Barre's government largely succeeded in its programs and policies, while harnessing popular approval and credibility. Barre laid the foundation for the revival of Somalia as a nation by emphasizing its African belonging and its own language, and adopted Islam as its religion (Amiin 2011).

In this Cold War and anti-colonial context, it is thus not surprising that the army depended on the Soviet Union for support and from 1969 to 1974 the government focused on local development and strengthening its authority. One of the most impressive policies was the establishment of a Somali script (1972) and mass literacy campaigns and education (1973—1974) throughout the country to overcome the educational and language barriers introduced during colonialism (Brons 2001:17). In addition, Somalia's first university was established (Akou 2011:72). Other positive developments were funding for health care and a campaign for rural development that included health and veterinary components (Lewis 2008: 40-41, Akou 2011:72). Barre's government also gave more rights to women, including the right to own property, equal division of assets upon divorce, and participation in politics (Brons 2001). In 1974, the Barre government looked to secure a place in global politics by joining the Arab League and by acting as host and chair for the Organization of African Unity Heads of State meeting (Lewis 2008:42). Somalia's relationship with the Arab League gave students more opportunities to attend universities in the Middle East. In addition, as oil prices increased, Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) countries hired tens of thousands of Somalis for both short and long term employment (Akou 2011:74).

The reunification of Somalia was one of the main rallying points for Somali nationalism. As part of the effort, in 1977 Barre looked to regain control of the Somali inhabited Ogadeen territory in Ethiopia. The Somali National Army (SNA) had been receiving military aid from the Soviet Union and Egypt. They used this aid to supply military aid to the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) operating in the Ogadeen region. In the meantime, the Soviet Union became more interested in Ethiopia with its increasing dedication to revolutionary socialism after the overthrow of Haile Selassie and Ethiopia-US relations worsened (Lewis 2008:43). Vying for power, the US began to give aid to Somalia and also established three military bases to challenge the Soviets who already had their own military bases in the north (de Waal 1997:162). Meanwhile, the WSLF started to expel Ethiopians from the Somali region of Ethiopia (Lewis 2008:43-44). In September 1977, the WSLF was able to advance to Harar, but the Soviet Union

came to Ethiopia's defense. On March 9, 1978, following international exchanges between the US and the Soviet Union, President Barre announced Somalia's withdrawal from the Ogadeen region and it was promised that Soviet and Cuban forces would back down as well, leading to Ethiopian victory. Even though Somalia and Ethiopia had come to a peace agreement, there was considerable anxiety that Ethiopia would not stop at the border and would advance into Somalia. Consequently, arms were widely distributed in the north. As promised, Ethiopia's advance stopped at the border, but had gradually reimposed Ethiopian rule on Ogadeen. The WSLF did not give up their struggle and continued to fight in Ethiopia until they were defeated in 1981 (Lewis 1988[1965]:238-239).

As Amin (2011) observed, the Ogadeen War (1977—1978) was a turning point for the Barre regime, initiating a second phase of his government. The second phase (1982—1991) differed in significant ways from the first phase. Barre's abandonment of socialism was accompanied by the replacement of Soviet support with the backing of Saudi Arabia and the US. Henceforth, the Barre regime opted for 'openness' of its markets, including Saudi capital, a move much appreciated by imperialist powers, who unsurprisingly ceased to reproach him for his repressive policies (Amiin 2011).

During and following the Ogadeen War (1977—1978), ethnic Somalis and Oromos from western Somalia and eastern Ethiopia were displaced to Somalia. There were approximately 400,000 refugees registered in the camps in December 1979 and by the next year this number doubled as the number of camps reached over 30. Another 500,000 refugees were thought to have found refuge with relatives. Barre's government supported Ogadeen refugees, setting up transit camps where they were given emergency relief by military and Somali civilians (de Waal 1997:161). Weakened by the Ogadeen War, Barre viewed Ogadeen refugees as sources for building his political power base (Kibreab 1993:322). In 1980 emergency relief aid for Somali refugees was flooding the country, following Barre's 1979 and UNHCR's 1980 appeals for international aid. Distribution centers were constructed; but, the problem was that people who traditionally received assistance from their kin were moving into camps and, in time, camps became permanent communities (Kibreab 1993:322-323). Following Ethiopia's victory, promises of national unity, development, and socialism were renounced and Barre's government increased its dictatorial rule, oppressing any kind of opposition to the point of near genocidal destruction of the northern capital Hargeisa in 1988 leading to the flight of much of the northern population (de Waal 1997:161).

Under Barre, repression worsened and those who were excluded from power waged an armed rebellion mobilized along clan lines. As a result of his repression of northern clan-families, the Somali National Movement (SNM) was created with the *Isaaq* clan-family as its base. The other resistance fronts included the Hawiye based United Somali Congress (USC) and the *Ogadeen* based Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) (de Waal 1997:162). These were not the only resistances. At this time, there were many movements that sought to replace Barre and his government.

For his part, Barre also used clan affiliations for what de Waal (1997:161) termed his "divide and rule" tactics. These tactics served to reinforce and intensify older clan rivalries. Lewis argues that while Barre publicly renounced clan affiliations he drew his own support through clans related to himself and his kin, stating:

> Three groups in particular exercised special power, a trinity known *sotto voce* as MOD after the initial letters of the corresponding clan names: M (*Marehan*) represented the president's own clan, O (*Ogaadeen*) that of his mother, and D (*Dulbahante*) that of his most prominent son-in-law, head of the sinister National Security Service (NSS) (2004:501).

Barre's "divide and rule" tactics involved his government befriending certain groups and distributing arms and money to them so they would attack his enemies who were accused of tribalism (Lewis 2008:76).

The aid given to the Barre government through humanitarian assistance in the late 1980s sustained the government. The government used its aid to sharpen the conflict and to assist in land grabbing. Aid, given to heads of sovereign states, continued to fuel the war after the fall of Barre's regime. As a result, between 1991 and 1992 there was a struggle to control Mogadishu, which can also be seen as a struggle to control foreign aid. Factional leaders mobilized support by promising future rewards once they had control over the city. Although during much of 1992 there was little foreign aid in Somalia, the imagining of these resources continued to influence factions (de Waal 1997:162). By destroying Somalia's economy with corruption and inefficiency, Barre also promoted competition over scarce resources. This resulted in increased clan solidarity as a strategy of survival (Lewis 2008:76).

Land Grabbing and Famine (1975-1992)

Some Somali scholars (Cassanelli 1996, de Waal 2007) have argued that a focus on clan rivalry in the history of Somalia causes us to overlook the creation of the rivalry and the centrality of resources in the civil war. In examining the centrality of resources in the conflict in Somalia, the interrelations between armed conflicts, persecution of marginalized clans based on ethnicity and race, and "natural disasters" such as drought and famine that cause populations to be uprooted and dislocated are evident.

The 1992 famine was concentrated in the Shabelle and Jubba Valley and in the Bay Region. Consequently, the people who were most affected were the interriverine people who were mainly from minority clans, including the marginalized *Saab* Somali (*Rahanweyn* and *Digil* clan families), the indigenous *Shebelle* and *Gabwing*, and the Bantu. These regions are the most fertile for agriculture and the people were not accustomed to famine. Agricultural production boomed in the 1980s, but the farmers were not the ones who received the rewards. As discussed earlier, the land was taken from landowners by the Italian administration for banana plantations and the farmers were recruited as plantation laborers (de Waal 1997:162). Following independence, the government and national elites became more interested in local resources; therefore, land and water rights became part of state policies and programs. Cassanelli (1996) outlines the convergence of several trends and five interrelated processes that lead to the value of resources becoming national interest including,

1) Agricultural land became more valuable in relation to other sources of investment and speculation
2) New wealth in the form of foreign aid, overseas remittances, live-stock export earnings, military subsidies accelerated the process of class formation
3) The growing concentration of state power in the hands of one segment of the Somali population led other segments to seek alternative sources of wealth and power
4) The militarization of the Horn of Africa resulting from the Ogadeen War and the Cold War produced an environment in which transfer of resources by force became more common
5) The urbanization of Somali society (symbolized by the explosion of Mogadishu's population) intensified regional migration and placed new demands on the country's natural resources (Cassanelli 1996:19).

Agricultural land was becoming the resource that elites were competing for. The Land Act of 1975 took all of the land from its original landowners, making it state property. Barre then redistributed it to his friends and allies. For instance, *Ogadeen* refugees from the war against Ethiopia in 1977 were given arms to fight the northern *Isaaq* for their agricultural and pastoral

land. In addition, Barre's kin was given valuable irrigated land along the Jubba (Cassanelli 1996:21). Control of land meant access to development aid loans (Cassanelli 1996:21-22).

As discussed earlier, the civil war following the fall of Barre's regime did have elements of clan warfare as clans that were oppressed during the regime engaged in armed conflict with Barre's government forces, but underneath clan militarization was a struggle to secure resources in an increasing resource poor country (Cassanelli 1996:23). After the collapse of the regime in January 1991, the interriverine peoples suffered because of five interrelated factors: 1) The Shabelle and Jubba Valley were a battlefield during 1991 and 1992 as competing factions or "warlords" battled for territorial control; 2) identified as descendants of slave ancestry they held weak ties to Somali clans and as such were not defended and the last to receive aid; 3) they were sedentary agriculturalists; therefore, they were easily targeted and armies were drawn to these fertile lands which could sustain them during the civil war; 4) militias presented themselves as "liberators" from the elite "landowners" promising farmers the return of their lands, but these promises were not kept; and 5) the local people were not well armed (de Waal 1997:166-167, Besteman 2007).

The *Hawiye*-based, USC led by General Mohamed Farah Aidid who were fighting against the *Daarood* "landowners" of Barre's government overran most of the interriverine areas and presented themselves as "liberators." Yet, they only intended to replace "landowners" and not return the land to the original owners (de Waal 2007). When the "liberators" were pushed out by the *Daarood* forces ("landowners") the reprisals against the Bantu were brutal. The *Daarood* militia turned the Shabelle and Jubba Valley into a battleground where militiamen looted and exacted taxes at checkpoints on roads and villages (de Waal 1997:164). Besteman (2007) argues that genocidal acts occurred in the valley at this time. Militias massacred groups of villagers who tried to maintain control over their land and they forcibly divorced Somali Bantu women from their husbands to marry them involuntarily for the purpose of ensuring their children were members of the clan militia rather than the Bantu. These women and other farmers were subject to rape, torture, murder, looting, and forced labor (Besteman 2007).

In the Bay Region famine was slower to develop than in the valley. In February 1991 battles between USC and SPM led to the near destruction of Baidoa. Barre set up his headquarters here where he dispatched 300,000 militiamen, mostly *Mareehaan* clansmen (a sub-clan of the *Daarood* clan-family), towards Mogadishu. Barre's men fed themselves through looting. The *Rahanweyn* who inhabited this region were seen as USC supporters, so the *Mareehaan* militia targeted them. In Baidoa, they hunted down people suspected of supporting the USC, killed them and placed their bodies on display (de Waal 1997:165). The *Rahanweyn* were also targets because they lay on the frontlines between contending factions and were located on the road from the Ethiopian border to Mogadishu (de Waal 2007).

The famine in the Bay Region was one of the most devastating on record. Some villagers paid *Mareehaan* forces to be left in peace, which impoverished them. The refugees who fled to southern Somalia died in countless numbers. They also overwhelmed the host populations by bringing destruction, hunger, and epidemic disease. By the second half of 1992 the famine began to fade as maize prices began to drop and the lower Shabelle was starting to gather good harvests (de Waal 1997).

It becomes clear that the legacy of the second phase of the Barre regime paradoxically reinforced clan affiliations even when it sought to erase them to build a modern nation-state. Under Barre, resources were redistributed to his own clansmen who also got rich through development aid. It is no surprise that with depleting resources, clan militias were created to

secure their own clan-family's future. The most affected were the historically marginalized groups of the interriverine areas. The famine of 1992, a product of political rivalries and partition efforts at securing resources, was localized to this population. The interriverine people's location and history as "outsiders" made these groups the targets (Besteman 1999, 2007, de Waal 2007).

Neo-Colonial Policies in Somalia: Canadian, American, and UN Humanitarian Interventions in Somalia 1991-1993 and America's "War on Terror"

Western colonial narratives underpin many colonial and "development" projects where "natives" were believed to be in need of being "civilized" and assisted (see also Mamdani 2004). This racist and ethnocentric ideology and discourse informed the 1992 humanitarian intervention in Somalia. Razack (2004) argues that modern peacekeeping is part of the imperial project pitting "civilized" white nations on one side and "uncivilized" Third World nations on the other. Peacekeeping, in the New World Order, is built upon the notion that the global North is to mediate and solve the problems created by tribalisms and warlords in the South. Razack (2004:10) argues, "Empire is a structure of feeling," that the global North has a right to dominate others for their own best interests and that the others should be grateful (see also Said 1993).

The US, together with the UN, launched *Operation Restore Hope* in Somalia in December 1992, camouflaged as a peaceful non-military operation, by which the US State Department set a precedent where imperial interventions are disguised under the humanitarian label. The US chose Somalia as a test case during the famine, although at the time of the intervention there were signs of political optimism and the famine was waning. The US government, nonetheless, through the media and other channels propagated a distorted image of the famine and the civil war to justify the intervention (de Waal 1998:132, see also Marchal 2004:114).

Two US policies and incidents led to the explicit violence in Somalia that is remembered in the North American imagination and also show that humanitarianism was not the focus of the intervention. First, the amount of aid for the operation was US$2 billion (Somalia's gross domestic product at the time was less than US$1 billion), which transformed Somalia's politics by creating an atmosphere that caused deadly competition over the control of the state and thus the aid (de Waal 1997:172). Second, the mandate of the United Task Force (UNITAF) was to protect those who were distributing the humanitarian relief; therefore, their focus was on protecting relief workers rather than those receiving aid. To this end, US Special Envoy Robert Oakley began a working relationship with General Aidid, the military leader who removed the Barre regime, and now controlled the majority of Mogadishu. Later, the US plans changed to instead marginalize Aidid and was met by strong resistance (de Waal 1998:132). Third, General Mohammed Sayed Hersi[7], known as "Morgan," took over the town of Kismayo, controlled by an Aidid ally. The news that the Belgian troops sat back while General Morgan took over Kismayo was announced on the BBC and met with protest by the people of Mogadishu who believed that the UN and the US had a secret deal to hand over the town to Morgan. As a result of the protests, UNITAF troops opened fire on the demonstrators (de Waal 1997:132-133). The turning point was when a UN raid on Radio Mogadishu, which was targeted as a weapons storage site ended in the death of 23 Pakistani soldiers. The UN Security Council blamed General Aidid for the

[7] General Mohammed Sayed Hersi or 'Morgan' was also known as the "butcher of Hargeisa" for his role in the 1988 near destruction of the city when he was the senior commander for Siyad Barre who was his father-in-law. Morgan was trained in the US and he received arms from Kenya in 1991-1992 (de Waal 1998:144).

ambush and passed UNSC Resolution 837 that stated to take any means necessary to apprehend those involved in the attack (de Waal 1998:133).

In North America, many remember the images produced by the media following the US Rangers assaults near Olympic Hotel on October 3, 1993. "Black Hawk Down," a 2001 Hollywood movie directed by Ridley Scott that was an adaptation of Mark Bowden's book of the same name, helped popularize the "Battle for Mogadishu" and more specifically the images of a dead US pilot being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu (Fishman and Marvin 2003). Others remember the capture of a US prisoner of war that forced the US to withdraw from Somalia (Razack 2004). What are conveniently forgotten are the scandals and the war crimes that were committed against the Somali people.

In 1993, the peacekeeping operation ended in scandal and revealed for a brief moment its colonial origins (Razack 2004:4). Two incidents known as the "Somalia Affair" are highlighted even though many more official and unofficial peacekeeping incidents have occurred. On March 4 1993, Canadian soldiers, who said that they were protecting the base from theft, shot two Somalis in the back, one fatally. Only a couple of weeks later, on March 16, Shidane Abkur Arone, a 16-year-old Somali prisoner, was tortured to death by Canadian soldiers. Dozens of men knew of or witnessed the torture. Trophy photos of Arone's torture were also taken and kept by the soldiers. Soon videotapes of soldiers making racist remarks and then another of racist violent hazing rituals against black soldiers surfaced. Later, other trophy photos were found that included photographs of Somali youth bounded and hooded (Razack 2004:4-5).

While the Canadians took every official crime to court, other countries did not prosecute their troops for the war crimes committed in Somalia. The Belgians who were stationed in Kismayo harassed, beat, tortured, and killed Somalis, many unarmed. There were also reported cases of children locked in metal containers, throwing children in the Jubba River, and dragging people behind tanks. The Italian troops looted internally displaced persons' camps, and committed rape and assaults. The Malaysian soldiers looted soldiers and assaulted hospital staff. The Pakistanis and Nigerians opened fire into mainly unarmed crowds. Tunisians shot civilians in a university compound and the French opened fire on a truck sitting at a checkpoint. The US attacked Digfer hospital when they suspected Aidid has taken refuge there although no evidence was ever shown to prove this. The attack included the use of artillery shells and helicopter rockets. French troops later returned to the hospital to loot whatever was left. In another incident, the US shot ten tow rockets into a building where supporters of Aidid were holding a meeting, although it was primarily a civilian meeting with elders and religious leaders present (de Waal 1998:133).

The war crimes committed by UN troops reveal the racism and the colonialism of peacekeeping (see Razack 2004). Razack (2004) shows that racial violence that occurs in the global South disappears in the global North when the narrative transforms to blame the incidents of violence on the trauma Canadian troops endure as a consequence of helping the Third World reach modernity. Also missing in the narrative is the geopolitical interests of imperial states that are behind the intervention – not humanitarianism.

Until the 1980s, granting of asylum was the privileged solution and the core principal of UNHCR's international protection mandate (Chimni 1998). Since the Cold War, however, the global North shifted their emphasis from the "right to seek asylum" to the "right to remain" in one's own country (Hyndman 1999). National measures were adopted in the global North to deter asylum seekers, including the creation of detention centers, carrier sanctions, and policies around safe third countries (Ferris 2008:83). Within this context the internal flight alternative

(IFA) emerged (Ferris 2008:83) and populations uprooted from their homes for various reasons were encouraged to stay in their countries and in an area of the country considered safe where international assistance is provided to them. These practices gave rise to the discourse and practices of constructing "safe havens," "safe areas," and "protection zones" where refugee needs would be managed (Hyndman 1999:107). Although IFA is considered a durable solution, it is not supposed to undermine an individual's right to seek asylum. The IFA alternative, however, has frequently eroded Somali refugees right to seek asylum, particularly with Kenya closing its borders to refugees fleeing Somalia.

During the intervention, in the south of Somalia, "prevention zones" were established along the Somalia-Kenya border in order to keep Somali refugees from crossing the border and to encourage those living in refugee camps in Kenya to return. The "Cross-Border Operation" consisted of four camps set up to manage refugees. Approximately 300,000 Somalis returned home from Kenya by June 1993; however, the majority stayed in the camps (Hyndman 1999:110). This is evidence that populations become IDPs when they return to the home country, but they cannot return to their homes, villages, towns, or cities (Ferris 2008:83). According to Hyndman (1999:111) these localized strategies for managing refugees show the ways in which geopolitical processes affect the movement of people.

America's 'War on Terror:' The Ethiopian Invasion of Somalia (2006-2009), Al-Shabab, and the 2011 Famine

Mahmood Mamdani (2004) argues that national identities shift and histories are revised under the pressure of changing political agendas and geopolitical processes. This is evident in the new imperialist agendas carried out in Somalia, which currently blame Muslim fundamentalism for prolonging the civil war. In reality, international political agendas continue to be furthered in vulnerable countries, such as Somalia, one of fronts for the American's "War on Terror" (Abdi 2007, de Waal 2007, Harper 2007). Marchal (2007) suggests that we may be witnessing a new military doctrine similar to the Cold War where the US is getting regional powers to be its allies in order to reach its own war objectives.

Americans had very little interest in Somalia following the failed 1992 *Operation Restore Hope*. Nevertheless, both the terrorist attacks on the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam in August 1998 and the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US served to legitimize America's direct and indirect involvement in Somali politics (Abdi 2007, Marchal 2007). The Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) was put on the US government list of terrorist organizations even though they were initially local responses to insecurity led by clan elders and had very little extremist elements. As of 2006 there were fewer than ten of these courts and they improved security in the areas they controlled (Harper 2007, Marchal 2007). According to the Somali Cause (2010:3), the era of the UIC was significant because from it emerged a "Somali solution to a Somali problem without external assistance in contrast to past failed efforts of the international community." The American interest in Somalia coincided with the formation of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), which attempted to govern from Jawhar and Baidoa because Mogadishu was controlled by warlords. Yet, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) initially funded and worked with the warlords in Mogadishu who formed the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-terrorism. Conflict soon ensued between the Alliance and the UIC (Abdi 2007:76, Marchal 2007).

The UIC defeated the warlords, so the US turned to UIC enemies: the TFG and the Ethiopians. The TFG, under President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed (2004—2008), was formed with

international support in 2004 under a five-year transitional mandate that would be followed by national elections in 2009 (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor 2008). With American support, Ethiopia invaded Somalia in December 2006 (Abdi 2007:76). Ethiopia claimed to support the TFG and justified the invasion on the pretext that they were protecting themselves from terrorists. From December 2006 to 2009, the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) remained in south and central Somalia and as a result there was an influx of weapons and small arms that contributed to the conflict. Battles between TFG/ENDF forces and anti-government forces led to countless human rights abuses, such as the killing of over 1,000 civilians which included unlawful and politically motivated killings, kidnapping, rape, torture, official impunity, harsh and life threatening prison conditions, and arbitrary arrest and detention. During this time there were also restrictions on freedom of speech, press, association, religion, and movement. There were also accounts of violence against women and children, including rape, child abuse, the recruitment of child soldiers, trafficking of people, forced child labor, and abuses against clan and religious minorities (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor 2008). Ethiopia defeated the UIC by dropping air bombs on Mogadishu's air and sea ports (Harper 2007). Kenya closed its borders to civilians who sought asylum to escape the bombings. Kenya justified its treatment of refugees on the basis of national security (Abdi 2007:77). The result was that IDP camps were constructed on the Somalia side of the border (Ferris 2008:82). There were also bombardments on pastoral lands, which led to the death of countless civilians. In 2007, the conflict forced over 400,000 of Mogadishu's population of 1.3 million to leave their homes (Menkhaus 2008:3). In addition, at the same time as the armed conflict began, the interriverine areas in the south of the country experienced flooding that forced 300,00 people to flee their homes (Noor 2007:29). Human rights groups, including Amnesty International, called the closure of Kenya's borders during 2007 to the beginning of 2008, a violation of both Kenyan and international law (Ferris 2008:82).

Marchal (2007), Harper (2007), and the Somali Cause (2010) suggest that American involvement in Somalia mobilized Islamic movements that were united in their opposition to the US. The uprising against the US was popular. The absence of security following the defeat of the UIC and the risk of another Ethiopian invasion led to a radicalizing of the Islamic group, *Hizb Al-Shabab* (the Youth Party), the anti-government militia that were fighting the TFG in Somalia (2006—2011). It was the American initiated union of Ethiopia and TFG militia, however, that led to countless killings, the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, and the 2007 humanitarian crisis (Abdi 2007:76).

This work comes at a time when civil war in Somalia does not seem to abate. In fact, Somalia was recently in its worst humanitarian crisis in 18 years. Along with the armed conflict, in 2011 Somalia experienced the worst drought in 60 years, which coincided with hyperinflation leading to rapid increases in food prices and non-food prices. The drought and increase in food prices caused widespread famine to hit southern Somalia, affecting mainly the agriculturalists in Bay, Bakool, and Lower Shabelle regions (UNHCR 2012b). As of July 2011, there were 1.46 million IDPs in the country and 4 million people who lacked food security (UNHCR 2012b). Rural individuals and families were forced from their homes and moved to Mogadishu in search of relief. In Mogadishu, IDPs experience harassment and extortion. Morbitity, mainly through diarrhoel diseases caused by unclean water increased (Noor 2007:28). Noor (2007:31) suggests that aid was only getting to about one-third of the people who needed it, many living without food, water, and shelter.

One year after the famine, malnutrition rates are stabilized; however, Dollo Ado, an Ethiopian border town, has five camps that are housing 170,000 refugees with hundreds crossing the border in search of refuge every week (UNHCR 2012a). The number of IDPs has also been exacerbated with 21,000 people without homes and access to wells that were destroyed by heavy rains that flooded the Shabelle River (American Refugee Committee 2012). According to UNHCR (2012b), as of January 2012 there were 1,356,845 internally displaced persons in Somalia. As of October 16, 2012 there were 1,028,853 Somali individuals outside of Somalia registered as refugees (UNHCR 2012c).

Moreover, imperial policies aim to maintain and/or expand the domination of rich industrial countries, especially the US, Canada, and Western Europe over strategic locations, such as the Horn of Africa and the Middle East. These processes of domination result in vastly unequal distribution of global political and economic power and resources will continue to exacerbate conflicts and displacement. Somalia is no exception, and such policies will continue to have harmful effects on Somali individuals and families, despite the 2012 elections of a new President and changes in Somalia.

Conclusion

This article deconstructs larger historical narratives and discourses pertaining to Somalia and its history. I developed my arguments while drawing on the work of a number of scholars, namely: Chimni (1998) who proposed that internalist explanations blame conflicts and the uprooting of peoples on refugee producing states, rather than examining the roles and responsibilities of external states. He posited that the meddling of rich industrial states in poor countries in the global South more often than not instigate and prolong conflicts (see also Monsutti 2006). I also drew on Mamdani's (2004) argument captured in his phrase "Culture Talk" where he explains how Cold War narratives of premodern Africans and post-Cold War narratives of antimodern Muslims are both used in North America to explain the armed conflict in Somalia. Racist and Orientalist perceptions persist and ignore the colonial history and present policies in Somalia, which shaped Somali society, culture and politics in Somalia.

In drawing on these scholars, I challenge the assumption that the Somali clan system was solely to blame for the collapse of the state and examined the war within its regional and international contexts. This research, therefore, builds upon others who have shown that in pre-colonial Somali politics was governed by clanship; however, colonial policies caused further divisions in society through processes of racializing and tribalizing Somali clans, that created positions of leadership where they never before existed (see Mohamed 2007). Colonial economic policies led to the commodization of livestock, competition over commodities, and the accumulation of wealth (Samatar 1992). The economic policies of Somalia continued to be dominated by European economic interests even after independence (Amiin 2011). This article also builds upon Cassanelli's (1999) argument that even though clan rivalries were always present in Somali society, they became so deadly during the second phase of Barre's presidency because of the increase interest in land and water resources (also see de Waal 1997). The value was in part based on new wealth as related to foreign aid and urban expansion that increased the importance of the development of agricultural land and livestock exports. Foreign aid, given to Barre who was head of state, was used to sustain his government and sharpen the conflict (de Waal 1997). Finally, the level of violence was also affected by the militarization of the Horn of Africa as a result of the Ogadeen War (a dispute over Somali territory with Ethiopia as a result of colonial partition) and the Cold War (Cassanelli 1999).

In this article, I revealed the effects of colonial and imperial policies on internal population displacement and the prolonged armed conflict in Somalia. Through a historical analysis I have shown that internal uprooting and dislocation in Somalia is interlinked with colonial development policies, persecution on the basis of ethnicity and race as well as clan affiliation, "natural disasters" including floods, drought, and famine, and armed conflict. As a result, this research builds upon those who consider the politics of development and famine (de Waal 1997) and others that argue that refugee studies need to consider the linkages between the causes of population displacement (Cernea 1990). The research points to the significance of a historical analysis that considers the effects of global politics and policies on producing refugees (see also Chimni 1998, 2009), which deconstructs Western colonial and imperial narratives. Finally, this article builds upon others (Ferris 2008, Hyndman 1999) who show the ways that geopolitics influence the movement of people and transform refugee practices and policies. For instance, the undermining of an individual's right to seek asylum as was the case of Somalis seeking asylum in Kenya.

In conducting this research, I found there is a lack of literature on pre-colonial Somalia, with the exception of Akou's (2011) political and historical analysis of dress in Somali culture and others derived from European travel documents (Burton 1856[2006]). Although there is ethnographic literature on Somali refugees outside of Somalia (see, for example, Berns McGown 1999, Horst 2008, Stachel 2012), there are very few ethnographic accounts of internally displaced Somali individuals and families within Somalia's borders. As such these are areas for further development and investigation.

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