

*I. M. Lewis*

**From Nomadism to Cultivation**  
The Expansion of Political Solidarity in  
Southern Somalia

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

The southern cultivating Somali, with whose social structure this paper is concerned, derive to a very considerable extent from immigrant waves of northern nomadic pastoral Somali who have settled on the land and adopted cultivation in the most fertile region of southern Somalia. As well as adopting many new elements of culture, in the process these northern settlers have become absorbed in the distinctive social structure of the south, which differs in a number of important respects from that characteristic of the northern pastoralists. These differences, I shall argue, follow from the contrasting economic and historical circumstances of these two great fractions of the Somali nation. The particular southern structural features for which I shall thus try to account are: the formation of large, stable politico-legal groups in the south; the associated development of a hierarchical, though far from strongly centralized, authority system; and the widespread adoption of foreign clients in group formation. These are all characteristics that are either rare or absent in northern pastoral Somali social structure (cf. Lewis 1961a), and which seem to be closely interrelated in southern Somali social organization.<sup>1</sup>

Although the influence of some of the factors which I discuss can already be seen among neighbouring northern Somali who have recently adopted some cultivation in the vicinity of the Shebelle River (e.g. some Hawiye clans), I shall confine my argument here to the southern cultivating Somali proper. By this useful but arbitrary designation I mean those tribes of the

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Rahanwin and Digil clan-families<sup>2</sup> which inhabit the vast wedge of fertile land, almost 200,000 square kilometres in extent, running from the Juba River in the south to the Shebelle in the north-west and bounded to the east by the Indian Ocean. This region, which contains the principal agricultural resources of the Somali Republic and includes the plantation banana-farming industry along the rivers, provides two forms of traditional cultivation: dry-farming on the upland soils of the hinterland (known as *adableh*), and wet-farming in the irrigated rich alluvial soils (*doobay* and *doollo*) of the river basins. The principal traditional crop in the former areas is sorghum millets, while in the better-watered conditions of the latter maize takes precedence. At the same time, there are large wide areas of plain with a lighter red soil (*doi*) which though unfit for cultivation supply excellent pasturage.

These conditions give rise to striking variations in modes of livelihood and degrees of settlement and encourage a degree of economic diversity which is fully paralleled in the ethnic and tribal heterogeneity of the region. The present Digil and Rahanwin populations are in large measure the outcome of a long, disjointed series of migrations and expansionary movements by Somali nomads from the north and north-west, their conflicts and agreements with earlier Galla and Bantu communities, and the blending of these elements in a variety of patterns of mutual accommodation (cf. Colucci 1924: 55). In no other part of the Somali culture area is there evidence of such admixture and diversity.

#### SOUTHERN SOMALI SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

In this historical setting which spans some three or four centuries in time (cf. Lewis 1960), the Digil and Rahanwin clans are largely but not exclusively cultivators. Some groups live in sedentary cultivating villages and though often keeping cattle and small stock have no nomadic patrimony, while others participate in both the cultivating and nomadic economies. Others again are solely pastoralists, although most of the nomads who move through this area, pasturing their herds of camels and cattle on the stubble in harvested fields as well as in the grassy plains, are not actually of Digil and Rahanwin

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affiliation. These are described as visiting graziers (*daaqsiita*) and have merely a relationship of economic interdependence with the settled cultivators. They exchange milk and dung, and sometimes also money, for rights of access to stubble grazing and wells and water-ponds in the dry seasons.

Within the Somali Republic as a whole, the Digil and Rahanwin who speak a separate dialect of Somali constitute a distinct subculture, but in this paper we shall only be concerned with particular aspects of this in so far as they relate to the structural distinctions associated with the southern practice of cultivation. Those Digil and Rahanwin who live as nomads move similarly to their northern nomadic kinsmen in small groups of close kin with their nomadic hut, or tent, loaded on burden camels, their flocks of sheep and goats and herds of cattle, settling temporarily wherever grazing conditions and water resources are suitable. The camels on the other hand, again as in the north, form a separate herding unit in the charge of young men, although wherever possible some milch camels are attached to the other less widely moving domestic unit based on the husbandry of sheep, goats, and cattle.

No single Digil or Rahanwin clan is wholly devoted to nomadism, however, and throughout this area where people of these groups do practise pastoralism it is ancillary to their fundamental concern with cultivation. Thus here, in contrast to the north, the primary focus of Digil and Rahanwin social organization is the maintenance of territorial solidarity in relation to arable land, water-ponds, and wells. The basic local unit is the village community consisting of several, and sometimes as many as a few hundred, nuclear families living in round mud-and-wattle huts (sg. *mundille*) surrounded by a patchwork of fields and gardens. Unlike the situation among those northern nomads who have recently adopted cultivation in the north-west (see Lewis 1961a: 114) each village here has a distinct local name, and some of the larger villages have a history going back several generations. Although some villages are in their male population based essentially on a small patrilineal segment of the clan to which they belong, more typically villages contain men of several different lineages and are therefore heterogeneous in agnatic composition. Their inhabitants, moreover, are well aware of this scattering of kinsmen and state explicitly that

it serves to promote overall clan unity (cf. Colucci 1924: 57). Thus, although, as will presently be shown, lineages are the foci of social and political identity and of heritable rights in land and water, they seldom appear as distinct territorial divisions within a clan. Unlike the position among such peoples as the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1940) or the Bedouin of Cyrenaica (Peters 1960), territorial divisions within the clan do not generally mirror the clan's lineage segmentation.

Villages are based on artificially excavated water-ponds in the dry-farming areas, and on stretches of river with associated irrigation canal systems among the wet-farmers. Every village has of necessity rights of access to at least one such source of water both for domestic use and for the watering of sheep and goats and cattle. Camels are watered along the rivers and at deep wells especially constructed for this purpose. Whatever their lineage affiliation, all the members of a village are regularly associated in the construction and maintenance of water-ponds, the actual watering of stock, and similarly in any aspect of cultivation which requires collective endeavour. There is thus a distinct sense of village unity and autonomy, although this may be cut across by the various lineage and other external ties of village members. Notwithstanding the identity of the village, however, and unlike the position in so many other African cultivating societies, there is no office of village headman as such. Village affairs are organized by the elders of the various lineage fractions living together, and collective work in cultivation, water-management, hunting, recreation, and ceremonial are assigned to parties of young men under the leadership of a youth of appropriate character dignified with the title of 'head of the youngmen' (*Aw barbar*). Within the total territory claimed by the clan, constituent villages are not regularly grouped in an ever-widening series of territorial divisions. Indeed, between the clan in its role as a sovereign territorial entity and the village there is no intervening category of territorial unit. Except where contiguous villages share the same lineage segment affiliation, there is therefore little sense of any wider territorial solidarity outside the village until the clan as a totality of villages is reached.

In keeping with this lack of any clearly defined hierarchy of territorial divisions, the clan's internal politico-administrative

system is not territorially defined but is based on lineage segments. The clan has a fixed skeletal structure of segments and each lineage has an office of headman (with usually several assistants) whose importance decreases with decreasing segment size. Thus, although as with the northern nomads, at every level of grouping all adult males have a right to speak in the group's council, there is here a definite and permanent administrative organization paralleling the internal segmentation of the clan. Today, the largest primary segments of a clan each have at least one officially recognized and stipended headman, known traditionally as *Gob*, but in the Italian-inspired administrative jargon now generally styled 'Capo'; and a large clan with a strength of several tens of thousands of people may have half a dozen such offices vested in it. These segment leaders traditionally exercise informal judicial as well as political functions, but did not possess formal courts such as those presided over by chiefs in more centralized African societies. Overall clan policy is decided by meetings of the headmen of component segments acting as representatives for their kinsmen, and some clans have a final single titular head ('*Capo qabila*') representing the clan as a whole on a similar basis in its external relations.

As already indicated, segments within the clan vary in size and consequently in their political importance. Usually, however, one particular segment, often the smallest, has a special ritual status to be discussed presently. And there is regularly also a group of religious leaders who, as part of the clan structure, or external to it and then serving several clans, perform such specialist tasks as the ritual blessing of new villages and water-ponds and the protection of the crops from the unwelcome attentions of bird pests. They also officiate at marriages, deaths, and other ritual occasions: their duties thus to some extent often overlap with those of the ritual segment of the clan referred to earlier.

#### THE STRUCTURE OF CORPORATE GROUPS

We are now in a position to examine the structure of corporate groups as this is expressed throughout the Somali culture area in terms of the payment and receipt of compensation for injuries and death. Among the Digil and Rahanwin, participation

in these arrangements relates not merely to the maintenance of personal security and livestock interests, but also to land-holding and associated watering rights. For land titles are primarily vested in clans, and secondarily in their constituent segments. Each of the forty or so Digil and Rahanwin clans, with populations varying between 5,000 and 100,000, are thus essentially land-holding corporations. They also act as units in the payment and receipt of compensation and thus participate in the nation-wide systems of indemnification.

As with the northern pastoral nomads, here also there is a general correlation between the structural proximity (or remoteness) of groups and the amounts of blood-money which they customarily offer as compensation for a killing or lesser injuries. Thus, Digil or Rahanwin clans that are territorially and socially in close contact and consequently on friendly terms pay smaller amounts of damages than those which are more distant. For example, the Elai of Bur Hacaba, who are the largest single Rahanwin clan (some 100,000 strong), their smaller neighbours the Helleda, and the neighbouring and formerly subject Eyle clan, all occupy adjacent lands round the three hills of Hacaba, Jegis, and Heibe. These are striking granite outcrops in an otherwise level plain and the three clans are often referred to collectively, both by themselves and others, as the 'People of the Three Hills'. They jointly observe a single tariff of blood-compensation according to which any killing among them requires payment of blood-money at the rate of sixty camels (or £900) in the case of a man's death, and half that figure for a murdered woman. With more distant groups who stand outside this tripartite agreement rates are correspondingly higher. Similarly, among the Bay Hargan territorial cluster of six contiguous clans round the wells and religious centre of Saraman, forty camels (or £200) is the normal rate of compensation for the homicide of a man (and half that figure in the case of a woman). Again, externally a higher tariff applies.

Likewise, at a higher level of grouping, all those clans which fall within the Siyeed (or 'Eight') moiety of the Rahanwin confederacy exchange smaller rates of payment than those obtaining between members of this group and the other half of the clan-family, the Sagaal (or 'Nine'). And between the Rahanwin and the related but structurally more remote Digil clan-family,

higher rates still are normally applied. Within the seven-clan-strong Digil group itself, there is a pronounced sense of overall unity and the usual tariff of indemnification is 2,500 shillings for the killing of a man.

Although these gradations are more systematized among these contiguous southern cultivators than they are among their northern counterparts, there is a much more striking and important difference to note. In the north, whole clans never act as single compensation-groups except temporarily in the short-lived circumstances of protracted inter-clan war. Here, however, most Digil and Rahanwin clans exhibit this characteristic as a permanent feature, and not as something which is only evoked fleetingly in special circumstances. Thus, the solidarity of these southern clans as land-holding units is paralleled in their unity as indemnification-groups; and their internal segments, although incipiently political and capable of splitting off, are more typically internal administrative divisions of a permanent political structure.

This is evident in the internal arrangements for paying and distributing compensation within a clan. While the clan is in almost all cases a single unit in external transactions, its internal segmentation determines the arrangements which obtain in the collection and distribution of dues in which it is involved. Among the Elai, for example, an incoming blood-wealth of 6,000 shillings is divided into two parts valued at 1,000 shillings each, and a third portion of 4,000 shillings. The first is allotted to the immediate kin of the deceased - brothers, a father, or sons - while the second is paid to agnatic cousins within the minimal lineage. The remaining sum of 4,000 shillings is divided into three equal parts and distributed among the three primary segments of the clan. In outgoing dues, the murderer and his immediate patrilineal kin are responsible for providing the expenses of the deceased's funeral, while the remainder is paid by the clan as a whole on the same principle as that applied in distributing incoming awards.

In cases of internal clan homicide, however, a much smaller rate of compensation is the rule. Where the murder occurs within one of its minimal segments only a few sheep are given, over and above the burial expenses. And between more remote segments this tariff is only slightly increased. This drastic re-

duction in the amounts paid and received reflects the high degree of unity which the clan exhibits as a single compensation-paying group. In the north, comparable features are only evinced at a much lower level of grouping, for among the nomads the most stable solidary units are not whole clans, but only small fragments of them.

#### THE ADOPTION OF CLIENTS

Politico-legal commitment in terms of payment and receipt of damages is, as I have said, intimately bound up with the distribution of rights to arable land and water among the Digil and Rahanwin. It is only by continuing to meet these legal responsibilities and liabilities that a person enjoys secure tenure of rights of access to these vital clan resources. If a stranger wishes to join a clan other than that of his birth he can only do so, and thus acquire rights to cultivable land and water, if he undertakes to make common cause with his hosts and to pay and receive compensation with them. This is graphically seen in the procedure for the adoption of clients, which is standard in form among all the Rahanwin and Digil clans.

Amongst the Hareyn clan of Molimud, for example, a would-be client approaches the clan elders and headmen with a gift of about 100 shillings and a camel, which is slaughtered for their benefit. In front of a formal assembly of elders, the client pledges his allegiance to the Hareyn as a whole and to the various internal segments of the clan to which he has been allocated. The formula runs as follows: 'I am now Hareyn, my segment is the Garaskunle lineage of the Warasile segment of the clan: my leader is Malak Alio. My blood is with Garaskunle. Whatever the Garaskunle undertake I shall participate in. If war breaks out I shall fight beside them; if they remain at peace I shall also be at peace as they are; if prosperity and plenty are their portion, I shall share these. But if drought and disaster overtake them, I shall endure these evils with them. Thus I renounce my birth place: my clan is now Hareyn and so it will be as long as I live.'

Having in this fashion undertaken to share the burdens as well as the joys of association with his patrons, the new client is allocated land for cultivation and his new holding is publicly demarcated by the elders of his segment. Such a newly installed

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client may not dispose of his land except to members of his patron group; nor can he immediately add to his holdings by buying further land. Should he leave his patrons, his rights automatically lapse; but if he stays on with them and dies among them, his heirs will inherit his fields. If, however, his heirs elect to leave their father's adopted group, they in turn will forfeit their inheritance, although they may claim compensation.

This institutionalized adoption of clients, which attaches strangers not to individual patrons but to groups and is extremely rare among the northern nomads (cf. Lewis 1961b) but very common among the southern cultivators, is crucial to any understanding of the differences in structure between the two Somali groups. Unlike their northern counterparts, the Digil and Rahanwin contain large numbers of adopted clients in various degrees of assimilation. Thus, in discussing the status of the members of their groups, both confederacies of clans draw a broad general distinction between those they call *deh*, or adventitious accretions, and those they call *dalad*, authentic lineal descendants. More specifically, three categories of local resident are usually recognized in terms of the formula: *dalad iyo duhun iyo shegaad*, authentic descendants, long-standing and assimilated clients, and recent client recruits. These last have less secure land rights than members of the other two categories, which in fact shade into each other to become virtually indistinguishable, save in a ritual context. The newest accretions are also often subject to such disabilities as not being considered fully eligible for appointment to the office of traditional battle leader or lineage headman; and, correspondingly, until their commitment with their protectors has ripened with the passage of years, they may not be treated as full members in terms of the payment and receipt of blood-compensation.

Thus, despite the formula for adoption quoted above, many new clients retain at least partial blood-compensation involvement with their own kin outside their hosts' group. Eventually, however, if a client wishes to identify himself completely with his hosts he must surrender his outside commitments. Only thus can he acquire full rights in his place of adoption and transmit these unfettered to his descendants. Most clients, consequently, go through a gradual process of assimilation which is fortified by endogamous marriage in the host clan, and which with the

passage of years and ultimately of generations eventually fully absorbs new accretions in what were originally host groups. An access of further new clients, of course, intensifies this merging and enhances the assimilated status of those who preceded them.

Such processes of client adoption are not peripheral, but quite central to any proper understanding of the constitution of the Digil and Rahanwin clans in their present form. The vast majority of the members of these clans today are, in fact, of client origin. Although in the course of collecting and investigating hundreds of genealogies in this area, I encountered a few individuals and small groups that had become clients within the present generation, the great majority of the present Digil and Rahanwin peoples appear to be the descendants of much older foreign accretions, some certainly going back as far as ten generations. Many, indeed, are of such long standing that their present representatives have lost count of the number of generations that have elapsed since their original act of adoption and no longer retain precise knowledge of their former origins and provenance.

More than this, according to their own clan histories and other evidence, these southern Somali clans have in nearly every case developed from an original act of alliance (*balan*, promise) among disparate clusters of other clan fragments and fractions. They are thus essentially federative associations, although they have a genealogical structure, and I know of no single major Somali clan of whatever grouping or provenance that is not represented among them today and that has not in some measure participated in this federative and adoptive process. Indeed, so many layers of foreign settlement have been deposited by successive waves of immigrants that in a great many clans the original founding nucleus of authentic Digil and Rahanwin has not only been vastly outnumbered but has eventually withered away altogether. This situation of which they are well aware, although they try to conceal it from outsiders, the peoples of the region themselves compare to that of an old tree whose life has ultimately been sapped by an over-luxuriant parasitic creeper. This image is peculiarly appropriate. Not only is it couched in the common idiom of plant growth in which all Somali describe group formation and decay, but also the word used for such a

climbing plant (*saar*) is in fact applied equally to designate adopted clients.

Thus, for example, of the large Elai clan with a total population of some 100,000 persons, none of the twenty-two official salaried headmen in 1962 were authentic descendants of the clan ancestor Elai. And if any genuine descendants of this ancestor survive today I did not meet them. Instead those who now call themselves Elai, own fields within the clan lands, and participate in its compensation-paying arrangements are in fact drawn from every conceivable Somali clan, and a large proportion are of northern nomadic provenance. To varying extents these circumstances of heterogeneous clan composition are paralleled among all Digil and Rahanwin clans, although the Elai probably represent the extreme limit of this process of admixture, federation, and client adoption (cf. Colucci 1924; 51).

Yet despite the fact that the present population is largely descended from alien clients and includes such ethnically diverse elements as remnant Galla and Bantu communities in various stages of assimilation, it is the dialect and in large measure the culture of the original Digil and Rahanwin founding settlers that has survived. The culture of this original core community has, apparently, been accepted by all subsequent immigrants and thus perpetuated at the expense of the dialects and cultures of succeeding generations of northern clients. First-generation settlers who have come from the north usually speak both dialects of Somali, but their children born and reared among the Digil and Rahanwin speak the dialect of the latter. These features of Digil and Rahanwin history support the general evidence of tribal tradition to the effect that the process of clan formation in this area has been a gradual one extending over several centuries.

Hence the great majority of the Digil and Rahanwin tribesmen live today in clans which are not those of their original ancestors, and their contemporary functional genealogies are those of these new clans to which they are currently affiliated. These southern clans have typically much shorter genealogies than those of the northern nomads. A person normally counts some five or six named generations to the ancestor of his minimal segment, and another four or five supervene between this point and that of the name representing the clan as a whole. These latter names significantly correspond exactly to the in-

ternal segmentation of the clan. This is very different from the genealogical structure of northern Somali clans, where adoption and federation on this scale do not occur, and political mergers are not represented genealogically save in exceptional circumstances (cf. Lewis 1961a: 189 ff.).

Where in the south longer and more detailed genealogies do occur, as is sometimes the case, these are mainly of two types. People of authentic *dalad* founding stock, who form a minority in any clan, tend to possess longer and more diversified genealogies. Where, on the other hand, ordinary affiliates of a clan who cannot trace such connexion produce long genealogies of northern Somali type, these reveal their original clan identity and do not relate to their current, adoptive affiliation. This, frequently, they only know in terms of their attachment to the hierarchy of clan segments and associated headmen which represents their contemporary politico-legal identity. Hence, for the majority of the Digil and Rahanwin, clan pedigrees are at best 'genealogical charters' (cf. Bohannan 1952), rather than true genealogies of northern Somali type. And for many even this description exaggerates their genealogical character, which might be better described as little more than a schema of political divisions cast in the form of a genealogy (which will be discussed further in a forthcoming work).

Despite this high degree of clan heterogeneity and the absence of a widely ramifying genealogical structure recording the various proliferation of ancestors and descendants over the generations in northern Somali style, in each Digil and Rahanwin clan there is usually one segment which is especially singled out and given the term *urad* (first-born, in northern Somali), or more expressively *mindihay* (knife-bearer). This segment has traditionally the privilege of initiating all joint clan occasions, of, for example, entering battle first. But at the present time it is its ritual role that is most significant. Among the northern pastoralists the characteristic pattern of tribal ritual life within Islam is the annual commemoration of lineage ancestors, each order of lineage segmentation up to and including that of the clan celebrating its eponym's rites separately. Among the Digil and Rahanwin, however, where a precise and tightly drawn genealogical structure is lacking, this is generally replaced by an annual collective rain-making ceremony (*roobdoon*) performed

by the clan as a whole. On these occasions the ritual slaughtering of livestock in sacrifice to God is initiated by the 'knife-bearing' segment (cf. Lewis 1966: 260).

The segment that plays this important role is considered to represent the most authentic settler stock of the clan: indeed, it is often directly referred to as *dalad*, a term that, as we have seen, ideally designates authentic lineal descent from an ancestor. The implication is thus that in every Digil and Rahanwin clan there is normally at least one segment (often the smallest) which either in fact contains some true descendants of the original clan founder (or founders), or successfully maintains this pretension. The members of such ritually dominant segments are not typically scattered throughout the villages of a clan and do not therefore provide an articulating thread uniting the clan genealogically in the way that the members of dominant clans and segments do among the Nuer or the Lugbara. At the level of the clan, they are simply one, though a special one, of the various constituent segments. Nevertheless, in ritual contexts they represent the unity of the clan as a land-holding corporation, and thus symbolize the unity which Digil and Rahanwin clans exhibit despite their formal internal divisions and their extreme heterogeneity.

This unity, which rests fundamentally upon the defence of common land and water interests, is, as I have already suggested reinforced by the way in which village ties cut across those of segment membership. A further factor of importance here is the high degree of clan endogamy (indeed of classificatory patrilineal and matrilineal cousin marriage), which in direct contrast to northern Somali practice is the norm observed by both Digil and Rahanwin. When the patrilineal heterogeneity of these clans is taken into account, this form of marriage can be seen to have the effect of reinforcing weak or non-existent descent ties by a web of affinal and matrilineal links. It is also arguable that where people of the same original clan identity are scattered in different segments and villages of their adoptive clan, such ties as they continue to recognize on the basis of their true descent affiliation tend to provide further cross-cutting links making again for overall clan solidarity. For, despite the fact that all the members of these mixed clans have sworn solemnly to obliterate their former identity, in many cases this continues

as an at least potential basis for social interaction. This potentiality, as the history of the Digil and Rahanwin shows, may, however, also threaten clan unity. This is particularly the case where the members of a given clan segment largely derive from the same former clan origin, such common identity often serving indeed as the basis for further recruitment from the original clan home.

#### CURRENT DIVISIVE TENDENCIES

Today we are presented by new circumstances with what is virtually an experimental situation for testing how effectively these various contrary pushes and pulls make for solidary Digil and Rahanwin clan units capable of withstanding external fissile forces pressing upon their heterogeneous structure. These pressures emanate from the modern political scene. In its drive to replace tribal particularism by national solidarity, the Somali government in 1960 passed legislation officially abolishing the status of client and upholding the right of every Somali citizen to live and farm where he should choose, irrespective of his particular clan or lineage affiliation (Law of 2 March 1960). In similar vein and partly directly aimed at the local Digil and Rahanwin political party, more recent legislation forbade the use by political parties of tribal names. The Digil and Rahanwin party adroitly met this difficulty by adopting a new title the initials of which still corresponded to those of the former tribal organization. But there is no doubt that in the six years since independence this local party has lost ground to the major national parties. At the same time, the fuller political involvement of all Somalis in the wider arena of national politics, which are dominated by fluctuating alliances between various clan power-blocs, has generally led to a quickening of lineage political awareness. The effect of these and other factors has undoubtedly been to stimulate particularistic movements within the Digil and Rahanwin and to encourage those former clients of proud northern clan origin particularly to assert their independent status. The consequent fluidity in imputed group affiliation among the Digil and Rahanwin which this has undoubtedly promoted has, however, been countered by the continuing need for individuals to belong to viable compensation-

groups which will effectively protect the security of their lives and property and those of their dependants. Some conception of the interplay of these rival forces in a situation where the final outcome cannot yet be predicted can be seen in the following case-history.

A man of Hadama origin came and settled among the Hareyn about 1940 and was given land to cultivate and was allocated to a segment of his protecting clan. Some years later, his son was involved in a quarrel about a married woman in the course of which he was killed by the husband. The husband belonged to another segment of the Hareyn, and after the fight fled to a town where he was arrested by the police and eventually sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment. The segment of which the dead man was a client claimed blood-wealth, and eventually received a few sheep and a camel from the lineage of the assailant. After all this trouble, the father of the deceased decided to leave the Hareyn and return home to his natal clan, the Hadama, to whom he naturally related the circumstances of the affair. The Hadama quickly sent a delegation to the Hareyn claiming 6,000 shillings as blood-money for 'their deceased clansman' as they put it. The Hareyn countered this claim, saying that the man in question was one of their adopted clients and the matter had already been settled internally. The Hadama retaliated by going to court. After much litigation the high court ruled that the Hareyn should pay blood-money to the Hadama and that in the circumstances this should be valued at 8,000 shillings. The Hareyn responded to this judgement by declaring that in that case the man would have to leave their land permanently and forfeit his fields. The government, however, ruled, and this was given local effect by the District Commissioner, that the man concerned need not do so. Since the Hareyn had given him land, the status of client being no longer officially recognized, it did not matter what his tribal affiliation was. The man is now apparently back again with the Hareyn, but says he is Hadama. How long he will be able to stay is doubtful, however, since it seems that the local Hareyn are trying to send their unwelcome visitor to Coventry and to deny him normal watering facilities and help in cultivation.

I do not know the final outcome in this case. But as well as indicating the interaction of the new separatist trends among



the Digil and Rahanwin, which government action tends to support, this brief history illustrates very clearly how rights to land, access to water, and personal security (expressed in terms of indemnification) are traditionally conceived of as three inseparable aspects of group affiliation.

## CONCLUSIONS

In seeking to understand southern Somali social structure, we have been driven to refer repeatedly to their economic and historical circumstances; and, in underlining the effect of these factors, I have frequently invoked the northern pastoral nomads as a control in analysis. Northern Somali social structure here is all the more relevant, of course, since, as we have seen, a large proportion of those who today call themselves Digil and Rahanwin are in fact of northern nomadic provenance. So that in examining southern Somali structure we are also tracing, to an extent that would be difficult to measure exactly, the modification of the pastoral nomadic way of life in new ecological circumstances.

Let me now try to clinch my argument that without invoking the aid of these economic differences, in their particular historical settings, we could not properly understand the structural differences between these branches of the Somali nation. I refer again to the major distinguishing features of southern Somali structure with which we began: the expansion of politico-legal solidarity; the accompanying development of a more stable clan authority system; and the wholesale adoption of clients.

Consider first the circumstances of the northern nomads. With movable property as the focus of corporate interests, and in an environment where pasture and water, the two prime necessities of life, are in short supply and unequally and irregularly distributed in successive seasons, the pastoralists have developed a social system that permits the maximum deployment of the individual herder and his stock and militates against the formation of large stable corporate groups. There are few situations, save those of feud and war, when the security of the herder and his stock is threatened, which require sustained and intensive cooperation on any considerable scale. Authority likewise is minimal and fluid, for little is required of it. Underlying this essentially fluid arrangement of people and allegiances, the

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lineage system provides an enduring and unambiguous framework of grouping which is mobilized and given specific definition by contractual alliance as need arises. The security of the individual's person and mobile property is provided for by his membership, in every situation, of a specified blood-compensation group. This small association of agnatic equals only unites as an effective corporate entity when hostilities threaten or compensation has to be paid, or received. Wider alliances are evoked as occasion demands along the lines of agnatic connexion with the aid of contractual agreements of the same kind as those binding together the members of the minimal and most frequently mobilized compensation-paying group. Moreover, where disproportionate size forces groups to find security among distant allies, contrary to the theory of segmentary lineage opposition, such unions are not normally thought of as permanent and do not entail the sort of genealogical assimilation, and manipulation which is characteristic of Digil and Rahanwin clan structure.

In the south, on the other hand, the expansion of stable and effective, rather than merely *potential*, political solidarity, is facilitated by the advantages which population strength gives to groups in advancing claims to arable land and water-points and to maintaining their holdings against enemy incursion. For, traditionally, clan title to land is obtained and maintained only by effective occupancy, which in the past, if more rarely today, frequently entailed conquest and defence. Moreover, admittedly at a much lower level of association, cultivation requires a larger circle of sustained, regular cooperation – especially for water-pond excavation and maintenance – than is normally necessary in the nomadic economy. And since the units of land-holding are in principle here fixed and permanent, and not as in the north dispersed in a temporary and essentially transient pattern of distribution over pastureland and a multitude of different water-points, the incorporation of strangers implies a much more complete kind of social assimilation. The client, after all, acquires heritable rights to a fixed piece of land; and it is through this that he is strongly identified with the group that exercises traditional sovereignty over the land of which his holding is part. In contrast, among the northern nomads, temporary association for defence or aggression with remote agnates, or with those

who are not patrilineal kinsmen, carries with it no fixed heritable patrimony.

The very different southern pattern of client adoption would seem itself to have been reinforced as a permanent associative device by the great admixture of peoples which the region has witnessed over a long period of time and by the remoteness of many client fractions from their original kin. For in those rare cases where something approaching the southern pattern of client adoption occurs in the north, the assimilated group are usually so remote from their own kin that they can no longer maintain effective ties with them and thus cannot count on their support when it is needed. The resulting heterogeneity of southern Somali clan structure, especially where clients of the same origin are allocated to different clan fractions, tends to foster a wider and more diversified solidarity, which is further encouraged by clan endogamy and the dispersal of clan segments in different areas of settlement within the clan territory. These, I believe, are the factors which encourage the expansion of southern political solidarity to the level of the clan, which give the clan as a territorial and politico-legal unit a notable degree of solidarity, and which promote the development of a more hierarchical and more stable authority system within it.

## NOTES

1. This paper is based on field research in the south of the Somali Republic which began with a brief visit in 1957, and continued for three months in 1962 and a similar period in 1964. For these opportunities to study in this area I am indebted to the Colonial Social Science Research Council, the Carnegie Trust, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. I could not have carried out this research without the full and generous cooperation of the Somali Government.

2. The Somali nation as a whole is divided into six major agnatic divisions which I call 'clan-families'. These are the Dir, Isaq, Hawiye, Darod, and Digil and Rahanwin. The last two groups, which are the subject of this paper, are represented in the total national Somali genealogy as the children of Sab, while the others descend from an ultimate and opposed ancestor 'Samale', from whom the name of the Somali people may derive (cf. Lewis 1961a: 7 ff.).

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