



Report No 3

Somali Refugees in the Horn of Africa

State of the art literature review

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and
Naima A. Hasci

Refugees Studies Programme
Queen Elizabeth House
University of Oxford

STUDIES ON EMERGENCIES AND DISASTER RELIEF
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CONTENTS

PREFACE	iv
Note on the Spelling of Somali Words	v
Acknowledgements	v
1 INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES	1
(a) The epistemology of the event	1
(b) The organization of this report	3
2 THE CAUSES OF THE SOMALI REFUGEE PROBLEM	4
(a) Nation states and border communities: the Somali/Ethiopian War of 1977–78	4
(i) The colonial legacy	4
(ii) The escalation of the conflict	5
(iii) Ethnic conflict and clan manipulation	5
(iv) Divide and rule	6
(v) A Somali Machiavelli	7
(b) Overthrow of Siyaad, anarchy and disintegration of values	7
(i) The bombing of Hargeisa: The beginning of the end	7
(ii) Somali refugees in eastern Ethiopia: Harshin , Hartisheikh, aware	8
(iii) Fission instead of fusion	8
(iv) Traditionalists versus transformationists	9
(v) Reconstruction, peace-seeking and grassroots institutions	10
(vi) Powerful proverbs for explaining Somalia's catastrophe	11
(vii) Clans and lineages: necessary but not sufficient knowledge	12
(c) Somali refugees in Kenya: victims of violence	13
3 RELIEF ASSISTANCE NATURE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES	16
(a) Alleviating ethnocentrism, appreciating Somali culture	16
(b) The complexity of events	16
(i) 1978: Ogadeeni flee Ethiopia	17
(ii) The international refugee regime arrives	18
(iii) Somali Government: 'In an uncomfortable corner'	18
(iv) A lost opportunity	19
(v) No one likes refugee camps	19
(vi) The dependency syndrome	19
(c) Donor food and refugees	20
(i) Food for refugees only	21
(ii) Refugees trade donor food	21
(iii) Markets closed, scurvy erupts	21

(d)	Theft or redistribution?	22
(i)	'Positions of opportunity'	22
(ii)	Nutrition in the refugee camps: access to food and food trade	23
(iii)	Differential access to food within refugee camps populations?	23
(iv)	No follow-up was ever done	24
(v)	Direct delivery, food and numbers	25
(vi)	Death and malnutrition in Somali refugee camps	25
(vii)	World Food Programme consumption figures were specious	26
(e)	The numbers game	26
(i)	Census and nonsenses	27
(ii)	Somali cooperation and census techniques	27
(iii)	The other side of 'refugee participation'	27
(iv)	Numbers: a planning necessity or a mandate artefact?	28
(v)	Institutional reform and refugee studies	29
4	REFUGEES AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOMALIA	30
(a)	Government policy and refugee development	30
(i)	Somali resources and the flow of aid funds	31
(ii)	Consultants' reports	32
(iii)	Qoriooley: a good place to do development	32
(iv)	For whose benefit? Assessing the firewood project	34
(v)	Women's needs were ignored	36
(vi)	Maximising women's capabilities, reducing their vulnerability	36
(vii)	The model projects approach	37
(viii)	High costs, few beneficiaries	38
(ix)	Better to light one candle?	39
(b)	The Government of Somalia: perspectives of its own	39
(c)	Somalia's self-settled refugees: unknown and unaided	40
(i)	Urban refugees	41
(d)	Hidden winners? refugee-host relationships	43
(i)	Qoriooley: refugee labour expands local agricultural economy	44
(ii)	Food for the hungry	44
(iii)	Development in spite of development projects	45
(iv)	Cessation of aid and economic collapse: unpredictable predictable	45
(v)	Economic mutuality, social exclusivity	46
(e)	The Somali Refugee Health Unit: success against all odds	46
(i)	RHU: a truly participatory organization	47
(ii)	RHU professionals in exile	48
5	1988–1994: REFUGEE FLOWS AND REPATRIATION POLICIES	50
(a)	Villagization in Ethiopia, civil war in Somalia	50
(i)	'Miracle' needed to solve the Somali refugee problem	51
(ii)	Peace on Earth, but little good will towards refugees	51
(iii)	From refugee camps to reception centres	52

(b)	SNM attacks Hargeisa; Ogadeni refugees killed	53
(i)	US arms shipment arrives: 'Lethal aid'	53
(ii)	Armed refugees lose refugee status	54
(iii)	The quality of mercy becomes strained	54
(c)	Repatriation from south and central Somalia	55
(i)	Things fall apart	56
(ii)	Riverine populations of the Shebelli: Not 'Bantu'	56
(iii)	Donor support for repatriation minimal	57
(iv)	Cross mandate at cross purposes	57
(v)	UN official killed, Ogaden off limits	58
(vi)	Bureaucratic disputes cost lives	59
(d)	What happened to refugees who stayed in Somalia?	60
(i)	The fate of refugees from central and southern Somalia camps	61
(e)	The flight from Hargeisa	62
(i)	Regional conditions deteriorate with the collapse of governments	63
(ii)	Repatriation II: Hargeisa refugees and cross-border mandates	64
(iii)	Repatriated and rehabilitated — or dumped in the desert?	64
(iv)	UNHCR's repatriation package	64
(v)	Reduction of rations: pushing refugees out of camps	66
(vi)	Reception resources: what awaits returnees in Somaliland?	67
(vii)	Mine clearance and Project Rimfire	67
(f)	Repatriation III: is this trip necessary?	68
(g)	Reviewing repatriation in Somalia	69
6	RECOMMENDATIONS	70
(a)	Research issues	70
(b)	Dissemination of information	70
(c)	Sponsorship of research	71
(d)	Preservation of, and access to, research materials	71
(e)	Recommendations for Somali sources	72
(f)	Policy suggestions	73
(g)	Field research needed in crisis situations	73
(h)	Refugee participation	74
	REFERENCES	75

PREFACE

Emergencies are more and more prevalent in the third world. In addition to the many natural emergencies that occur from time to time man made disasters have become an often common feature. The recent avalanche in Eastern and Central Europe as well as Rwanda has added to this tendency.

A considerable share of Swedish assistance is channelled to meet the immediate needs from all sorts of emergencies. In recent years the contributions for disaster relief has increased considerably and amounts today up to more than one and a half billion SEK.

One such man made disaster which has been in focus for Swedish assistance for many years is the serious refugee situation in the horn of Africa following the internal strife of Somalia. SIDA has, in collaboration with the Nordic Africa Institute, commissioned the Refugee Studies Programme at the University of Oxford to summarize available information from research, studies and evaluations with reference to this particular area.

The result is presented in this third issue of "Studies on Emergencies and Disaster Relief". It is an invaluable source of information from a very difficult and complex field. The conclusions and recommendation of the study will be discussed thoroughly within SIDA and be referred to in the dialogue with other concerned parties of the international community.

It is of extreme importance that experiences drawn from assistance also in areas such as emergencies and disaster relief are disseminated and taken into account. It is therefore the intention of SIDA and the Nordic Africa Institute to continue to do so and to publish the results in this form.

Stockholm, December 1994

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NOTE ON THE SPELLING OF SOMALI WORDS

The spelling of Somali words was codified in 1972 and is now used in publications in the Somali language. (Non-Somali authors and publications use phonetic representations which vary considerably).

The official transcription contains some usages which should be explained to those unfamiliar with it since they appear in the text.

Vowel length, a phonetic feature not found in English, is represented by a double vowel, as in the transliteration of (Arabic) salaam.

'X' is used to represent the voiceless pharyngeal, as in *xeer*. The *xeer* would find its closest approximation, for an English speaker, as 'hare'. In the transcription of Arabic words, this sound is often represented as an 'h' with a dot under it.

'C' is used to represent the voiced pharyngeal, as in 'Abdi, which in the Somali orthography is Cabdi. English speakers would be advised to ignore this 'c', since its sound does not appear in English.

' is used for a glottal stop.

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We are particularly grateful for the editorial contributions of Abigail Cooke. To her fell the thankless task of harmoniously unifying the stylistic idiosyncrasies of the co-authors.

This report could not have been accomplished without the cooperation of the librarians of the Documentation Centre of the Refugee Studies Programme, especially Sarah Rhodes and Richard Jalowik, for their daily assistance and for the major task of assembling the bibliographical holdings of the Refugee Studies Programme.

Finally, we are most grateful for the professional cooperation of many individuals and organizations, most certainly including Mary Dines of Rights and Justice and Dr John Seaman of Save the Children among many others.

1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

(a) The epistemology of the event

The literature which addresses forced migrants in Somalia and its neighbours involves an exceedingly complex body of events. Refugees who fled from Ethiopia in 1978, and who have lived in organized settlements in Somalia for a decade and a half, shared a fate with the internally displaced victims of war in Ethiopia, famine victims and refugees fleeing civil war in Somalia. We also deal with later waves of refugees, first those who fled the policies of collectivization in Ethiopia and the battles there in the mid-1980s. Civil war in Somalia, by 1990 had led to the destruction of the northern city of Hargeisa and the flight of hundreds of thousands across the Ethiopian border. The internal chaos and warfare in Somalia, as the 1990s proceed, continue to drive hundreds of thousands more into Kenya and Ethiopia.

The body of literature we are charged with analysing has another crucial dimension. The policies and actions of the vast international aid system affect each facet of all of the events just mentioned, even as one flow of force migrants melds into another. Policies determining which agency acts with what category of refugee, displaced or simply impoverished group, vary, are debated, and sometimes seem to be applied with little sense of humanity, even when addressing the concept of humanitarian aid. That literature also deals with or is evidence of, the relative wisdom or futility of these administrative episodes. Since these have been, individually and in their totality, life or death issues for those they are intended to serve, and since they will provide the corpus of materials whose evaluation may provide better ways of doing things in the future, there is a great responsibility to begin the assembly and analysis of this body of information.

Our literature is also concerned with the history and experience of those who truly deserve understanding and recognition — the victims themselves and their experiences which otherwise may be lost from sight. The lives of the poor are too often lost in the perspective of history.

The evidence for all this, in its full complexity, is the material we are charged with critically evaluating. It is itself highly diverse in nature and variable in quality. Our sources range from analytic books and journal articles by independent observers to accounts which are little more than apologia for mismanagement. We deal with United Nations documents and reports; Somali and neighbouring government documents; NGO archival and contemporaneous material, itself varied in value and purpose; journalistic accounts; and conference and seminar discussions which analyse problems and discuss improvements in administration.

This literature is, as one might expect, of a great variety of value and relevance. Throughout the pages that follow, accessibility is a topic with which we are concerned. Some potential sources of information are closed at present to researchers like ourselves; others were surprisingly accessible. Much of the data we have used is very rare and will be very difficult for later researchers to find. We were told, for instance, by Dr Gaim Kibreab, who has provided one of the most important sources for our understanding of refugee camp life (Kibreab 1990), that the Documentation Centre of the Oxford University Refugee Studies Programme, our home base for this project, has the only extant copy of his crucial report aside from his own. The invaluable body of information potentially available from the former Governments of Somalia's National Refugee Commission (NRC) is represented by only a few documents. The rest must be presumed lost until shown otherwise.

All of the factors mentioned have led to our developing a format of presentation and discussion which we did not expect to use when we first took on the task of presenting SIDA with a state-of-the-art critical evaluation of this literature. As the reader will see in the pages which follow, we have adopted a form which emphasizes context, narrative and interpretation, and this requires comment.

The following analysis of the causes of the Somali refugee problem provides the backdrop for the organization of the subjects which follow. However, we found that even that did not allow us to simply list bibliographical items with a commentary on each, as an orthodox bibliography might. In almost every case, the item made little sense without a topical, or at times chronological, context of reference. We felt it important to establish the contextual framework which implicitly explained why a piece of information was of importance, in order to explain the value of the contents of that item. The second purpose depended upon the accomplishment of the first, and this generated the narrative.

The organization of commentary, we felt, should also be addressed to the dominant themes in refugee studies, which focus on the types of events and problems of administration which the Somali materials address. Their utility, we felt, would be to be part of an initial attempt to use them in a framework of analysis. This beginning of an analytic effort, to which our literature is employed, then, becomes the dominant format of the following pages. In the process of documenting what happened to Somali refugees, we found that some of the rarest materials also were the least likely to stand independently, and that if communiques, agency reports, interviews with refugees, and so forth were not assembled in a commentary, the critically evaluation of them as partial pieces of evidence would be futile, and that their value would be lost.

The rarest items are not likely to be easily obtained by others. We felt it necessary to explore them rather fully, to show what they contained and how they were enlightening. Thus we were faced with using the literature at hand to build an initial picture of the events so that the people concerned, their historians and those concerned with administration would have something to work with, to challenge and to carry further. In the end, we found that the quest to establish the beginnings of an epistemology of the Somali forced migration, their administration and their outcomes to be analogous to connecting an interrupted series of dots, trying to delineate the major outlines of form, and appreciating the finer shadings which elucidate the totality, as these exist, as best we could.

Our narrative begins the critical analysis of the issues which will help explain what happened in Somalia and what went wrong in humanitarian terms. This, used constructively, may help solve some of the dilemmas of the present approach to humanitarian aid. However, the questions are open, and will, we hope, be addressed with further serious analysis, especially as more materials are forthcoming.

For the reasons we have discussed, our approach to the state-of-the-art of the literature on the Somali events under consideration is as much concerned with establishing a context and framework for analysis as it is with the items themselves. The critical evaluation of the literature lies in its ability to shed light on the questions which arise. As this literature is used, it is thus appreciated. We are certain that we have not assembled all the pertinent literature; much indeed was not accessible to us, but may be to others. We have used what we did have, and as thoroughly as we possibly could to begin the process of understanding this complex set of events.

We initially approached this task with the hope of dealing comprehensively with events within Somalia during the most recent period, 1991–94, involving the collapse of government, the arrival of UNITAF, followed by UNISON, up to the present. We have commented on the political backgrounds of this period in the following section. We have also found materials on the refugees who fled to Kenya and to eastern Ethiopia from the Hargeisa region, and these are discussed. However, with a few cited exceptions, we have not found enough yet available on the deeply distressed and disturbed populations within Somalia, the aid directed to them, and its outcomes during this period to examine them systematically in this work. Certainly, as literature is forthcoming on these recent events, they will warrant separate and full treatment.

(b)The organization of this report

As the table of contents indicates, this report is divided into six sections, followed by references cited. Section 2, which follows these introductory comments, provides an historical review and a discussion of the political and economic factors which predicated and directed the force migrations into and out of Somalia since 1978.

Sections **3** to **5** examine the literature concerned with the emerging themes of refugee studies as they have been manifested in Somalia. Section 4 concentrates of events within Somalia since 1991.

Although no two refugee events are identical, those who are concerned with the administration of humanitarian aid must learn lessons from each experience if the errors and lapses of the past are not to be inexcusably duplicated in those of the future. Since the complex of forced migrations in and around Somalia (which is the subject of this report) has been among the largest in numbers, longest in duration, and most controversial of all those of recent decades, we have developed a comprehensive set of recommendations in Section **6**. We hope that these will begin a much-needed debate on the significance of these events. As this report will establish, the state-of-the-art of the understanding of these events is in a formative period. Perhaps the greatest contribution that this report can make is to underline the need for further collection of literature, for further appraisal of these recent events and for further analysis of the lessons to be learned from the attempts to provide humanitarian aid to those most greatly in need during these tragic years in the history of the Horn of Africa.

2. THE CAUSES OF THE SOMALI REFUGEE PROBLEM

Little of the scholarly work on Somalia focuses specifically on refugee issues, but concentrates rather on the broader political problems leading up to forced displacement. While refugee flows can be related to certain discrete events such as the 1977–78 war between Somalia and Ethiopia, the bombing of Hargeisa in 1988, and the overthrow of Siyaad in 1991, three writers place the causes for flight in a broader historical and political context (Lewis 1980; Hapte-Selassie 1980; A. Samatar 1987). Other scholars have extended their analyses to include social, economic and environmental factors (Laitin and Samatar 1987; Kibreab 1990; Hasci 1991; Samatar 1992). An excellent synthesis of the complex processes causing refugee flight is Kibreab's summary analysis of African refugee studies (1991).

(a) Nation states and border communities: the **1977–78 Somali/Ethiopian War**

(i) The colonial legacy

Nearly a century ago Lord Curzon anticipated the plight of Somali pastoralists in the Ogaden in his poignant statement about frontiers being 'the razor's edge on which hang suspended the modern issues of war or peace, of death or life to nations' (quoted in Asiwaju 1993 p. 2). For the last 25 years, Somalia has questioned the legitimacy of her borders as determined by the colonial powers. In particular, the problem of border communities, dealt with by Asiwaju (*ibid*) in a wider African context¹ has been central to Somalia's foreign policy towards its neighbours in the Horn of Africa. The country's foreign policy was dominated by the Somali unification issue (Lewis 1980).

Laitin and Samatar (1987) give an account of the dynamic socio-economic relations across the Ethiopian–Somali border as an integrated ecological zone, which links pastoral land with the water sources. A different aspect of border communities was analysed by Hasci. This study of the refugee policy of the government of the Democratic Republic of Somalia deals with the relationship between the modern nation-state and border communities, whereby the foreign policy of a specific country towards its neighbours may contribute to the causes and consequences of migration (Hasci 1991). This research also looks at the role of border communities in a particular conflict, and the reception and protection that refugees received on each side of the border (*ibid*, pp. 77–93).

In order to shed some light on the complex and confusing conflicts regarding boundary claims and counterclaims made by states and border communities in the Horn of Africa, Reisman (1983) investigated the legal issues surrounding the Ethiopian–Somali conflict and the reasons the views of the contending parties on self-determination and territorial integrity differed so drastically. He shows in an earlier publication how the Ogaden region is, in most respects, more integral to Somalia than it is to Ethiopia (Reisman 1978). The fact that Somalis living in the Ogaden use the Somali shilling rather than the official Ethiopian *birr* as the currency of trade gives a strong indication about the people's socio-economic networks, despite the artificial boundaries (Holt and Lawrence 1991). Equally compelling evidence of the integrity of these networks is the fact that Ogadeni Somalis have moved across the boundary, working as high government officials in Somalia and Ethiopia at different phases of their political careers (Hasci 1991). Future

¹ Asiwaju defined partitioned cultures as 'culturally coherent territories where people of definite cultural identities have had to be split into two or more units, each faction placed in the area of jurisdiction of distinct state, which functions to integrate such a pre-existing culture area into a new socio-economic system removed from the whole original culture.' (1985:5)

research should explore this interesting trend of interstate civil service migration, since it provides evidence for the resilience of a border community in that it challenges not only an artificial state boundary, but the very nature of the modern state system.

In considering the legal aspects of the boundary between Ethiopia and Somalia, **Reisman** followed writers like Melander, who provided a legal perspective on the refugee crisis in this region (Melander 1980). In his more detailed account, **Reisman** pursues this line of inquiry by 'tracing the lines of authority to their source: the will of the indigenous people inhabiting the region in question' (**Reisman** 1978). For **Reisman** 'the western Somali case is not, at heart, a boundary dispute [. . .] an aspect of the case which is quite unique in the context of African politics is the absence of legal borders between Somalia and Ethiopia' (ibid, p. 13). Kibreab re-affirms this point by reminding us of the fact that, although the key protagonists of the 1977–78 Ogaden war were the governments of Somalia and Ethiopia, 'the conflict was essentially an expression of the problem created by the Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1897' (Kibreab 1990, pp. 15–16). Lewis (1957) had already emphasized the Somali consciousness of nationalism and the sense of belonging to a distinct community with a common heritage and destiny. Here, Lewis provided the basis for an anthropological understanding of how local tensions in the Ogaden can escalate into international conflicts.

(ii) The escalation of the conflict

Selassie (1980) describes the growing militarization of the conflict. He analyses in particular the Somali government's political and military support of the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF). Sivard (1985) considers the international dimension of the problem, particularly the massive influx of modern weaponry and its devastating consequences.

The WSLF almost succeeded in its quest for self-determination of the Ogaden, with the support of the Somali army. In 1977, the joint effort made deep incursions into Ethiopia and appeared to accomplish its goal of acquiring the Ogaden. This apparent victory, however, was short-lived because of the dramatic shift in superpower alliances. In 1978, the superpowers traded places, with the US transferring its support to the Somali side and the USSR opting for Ethiopia (Hapte-Selassie 1980). This dramatic shift of alliances was followed by a massive injection of Soviet military aid into Ethiopia. Soviet military hardware valued at one billion US dollars was accompanied by Soviet advisers and Cuban specialists, and this resulted in Ethiopia recapturing the Ogaden (Tucker, cited in Kibreab 1991, p. 16; Henze 1982).

Farer (1976) discusses the strategic and geo-political motivation behind the US and Soviet involvement in the Horn. Makinda (1985) and Hasci (1991) describe the way in which the massive human displacement created by these conflicts was exacerbated by the vast input of foreign armaments. In a more recent publication, Makinda raises such questions as,

'Does the Somali tragedy stem from internal or external factors? How crucial is the segmented nature of Somali society to national instability? How instrumental was **Barre's** rule in the disintegration of society? Did the end of the Cold War and the subsequent indifference of western powers play any role? How should external assistance be made to help Somalis themselves rebuild their society?' (Makinda 1993, p. 15–16).

(iii) Ethnic conflict, clan manipulation and the state

Ethnic conflict, manipulation of clans, and associated sources of strife have been identified as powerful factors in creating refugee flows in the Somali-inhabited region (Adelman 1992; Lewis 1993). Yet ethnicity as an analytical concept in conflict situations compounds confusions. As Fukui and Markakis have pointed out, 'its fluid chameleon-like character defies precise definition and limits its value as a category for analysis' (Fukui and Markakis 1994, p. 4). While their analysis, *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, is timely, it glosses over the Somali case. Nevertheless, the variety of cases discussed and the coverage of Somalia, albeit cursory, in Markakis's chapter 'Ethnicity, Conflict and the State in the Horn of Africa' provides food for thought on the role of the state, civil society and 'the complex pattern of fusion and fission among groups as they compete for survival' (ibid, pp. 4–11).

There are those (for example, Hyden 1987; Doornbos 1990; Asiwaju 1993) who believe that, since not all is well with the African state, the time may have come to gain a better understanding of the evolution of social processes and search for alternative forms of social and political organization. For some political scientists the focus of the African state debate lies in 'the predominant nature and role of new political formations, institutional arrangements, and patterns of domination and participation emerging in the non-state sphere, and on the quality of society-state relations that may result from them — neo-corporatist, anarchic, or civic' (Doornbos 1990, pp. 197–98). Others, like Lemarchand, citing Clifford Geertz's caveat that 'all the social sciences suffer from the notion that to have named something is to have understood it' recognized the need for conceptual renewal, and question 'whether it can bring political renewal to the continent' (Lemarchand 1992, pp. 177–191).

(iv) Divide and rule

The Somali case must also be understood in the context of the wider African historical experience of ethnic manipulation and its role in kindling ethnic conflict. The literature on ethnic conflict in Africa reveals the strategies of divide and rule used by the colonialists to subjugate Africans (Barth and Noel 1964). During the colonial period, ethnic differences were emphasized, which, in the context of competition for colonial administrative resources, typically placed one ethnic group in conflict with others in the same colony. The rulers, who considered ethnic relations as essentially and primordially antagonistic, had, in fact, done much to create these conditions. The resulting ethnic competition facilitated the colonial policy of divide and rule, which in turn permitted the colonists to stay in power (Nnoli 1989, p. 21).

The literature of the post-colonial period describes how African politicians have continued this tradition. They have often tried to achieve political support by reinforcing the patterns of ethnic politicisation and mobilization of the majority of the population through the 'economies of affection' (Hyden 1987). Writers like Nnoli (1989) demonstrated how patterns of political support in Africa followed predominantly kinship lines, galvanizing loyalties, commitments and identities into ethnic consciousness and action.

In this context, Somali leaders, most notably Siyaad Barre, mastered the art of manipulating clan loyalties by practising this established strategy of divide and rule, rewarding allegiance and suppressing resistance. In a recently published book, a Somali civil servant, Mohamed Osman Omar (1992) investigates Siyaad's manipulation of 'tribalism'.¹

¹ The use of the colonial terms tribe or tribalism is misleading in reference to the Somali social structure. Sometimes writers use the terms 'tribe' and 'clan' interchangeably. The term clan is a more appropriate term to

(v) *A Somali Machiavelli*

Omar's work is to be celebrated because it pioneers a new area of social historiography by Somali policy makers, diplomats and politicians whose wealth of information has thus far been relegated to the chronicles of traditional oral history. Their wisdom and experience concerning Somali society and politics have not been used to good advantage by those claiming to seek solutions for the Somali crises. In his rich anecdotal account, Omar details how Siyaad maintained a high-risk balancing act by giving money to some clans, guns to others and, all the while, giving the most liberal rewards to his own clansmen.

Writing about Siyaad's political dexterity during the 1980s, Ahmed Samatar (1987, p. 885) points to the President's success in 'nipping in the bud any political discontent inside the country'. In another study, Lewis (1988, p. 250) has described him as a Somali Machiavelli 'adept at selecting token figures' from minority social groups and presenting them as clan representatives.

Siyaad's exploitation of the clan and sub-clan power structure was cleverly executed through a calculated system of carrots and sticks. Lewis (1991, p. 11) discusses how the regime slid from a 'one-party to one-man state'. He goes on to describe the period when Siyaad's political insecurity was greatest as being dominated by heavy reliance on his closest clan affiliates. This was paralleled by an increasing use of force against those who were less closely allied to him (Lewis 1991, p. 12).

The literature about this period also highlights, however perfunctorily, the manipulation of refugee ethnicity as a factor which ignited the fire of ethnic conflict in Somalia, and in turn contributed to further refugee flows (Lewis 1989; Makinda 1991). Abdi Samatar (1992) shows how Siyaad's methods of control were adopted by the opposition, which used them to further undermine the country's political and social fabric.

(b) The overthrow of Siyaad, anarchy and disintegration of social values

(i) *The bombing of Hargeisa: the beginning of the end*

Siyaad's policy culminated in the 1988 persecution of the Isaacs, one of the major clan-families of Somali society, and the bombardment of Hargeisa. This resulted in the displacement of some 300,000 civilians who fled to Ethiopia, and the subsequent involvement of the Ogadeeni refugees in the conflict. Markakis (1989) provides a good socio-historical study of the conflict over economic resources between the Isaacs and the Ogadeenis in the Haud region. These tensions were exploited at national level both by Siyaad and the Isaacs in their struggle for political dominance. Unfortunately, accounts of the actual events are unbalanced, emotive and highly polemical. As noted earlier, while these reports have been described as partisan accounts of Siyaad's campaigns against the Isaacs (Lewis 1993) they have, nonetheless, been quoted widely by analysts of the Somali crisis. The danger in such one-sided accounts is that they re-write history, not through mere partisanship, but by becoming the starting point for subsequent studies. Thus, analysis of today's crisis is too frequently based on yesterday's biases and partisanship (AfricaMatch 1990; Human Rights Watch 1993, p. 110).

So far, Gersony's account, based on field interviews, is one of the very few exceptions that provides objective evidence on the events which led to the 1988 refugee crisis. With detachment, objectivity and clarity this report documents the complex issues surround-

describe the segmentary character of the Somali society. For a detailed study of some groups in the Somali society and its intricate lineage system, internal schisms, conflict and cooperation see Lewis (1957).

ing the reasons why Somalis fled from the Hargeisa region. Gersony interviewed several hundred residents and former residents of northern Somalia, including Isaaqs and non-Isaaqs, who have been affected by the war since 1988. In his findings, he reported how both parties to the conflict systematically engaged in grave violations of the internationally protected status of the refugees in the camps (Gersony 1989, pp. 60–62).

(ii) Somali refugees in eastern Ethiopia: Harshin, Hartisheikh, aware

Following the bombardment of Hargeisa, a new wave of refugees fled to eastern Ethiopia. These were the civilians who fled from Hargeisa and the surrounding areas. As a consequence of the war this new group of refugees was joined by the Ethiopian/Somali refugees who had previously sought asylum in camps across the border in Somalia. Information on the various flows of displaced people and refugees within Somalia and across the border into Ethiopia at this time is scanty.

(iii) Fission instead of fusion

Following the conflict in the region of Hargeisa, self-interested and power-starved clan movements began to mushroom inside and outside the country (Lewis 1993). In May 1990, the Manifesto Group, a group of 115 prominent Somali politicians, businessmen and professionals from different clans, circulated a set of political demands as a last attempt to convince Siyaad to return to the barracks. This was the end of any hopes for a peaceful political reconciliation, since, after Siyaad's rejection, the various factions intensified their attack on his weak government. The narrow clan-based interests of these factions, however, undermined their credibility as coherent political bodies with serious national leadership qualities (Abdi Samatar 1992). Each was blinded by the pursuit of clan hegemony. Ironically, as the names of the various groups suggest, none wanted to abandon their Somali identity.¹ Lewis (1993a) provides an updated list of these clan-based military movements with genealogical referents.

Despite the proliferation of clan factions, none could rally national support. Ahmed Samatar reported that the only two externally based opposition groups during the 1980s — the Somali National Front (SNM) and the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) — had suffered from serious internal squabbles and were unable to unite and 'mobilize national participation in the making of a different history' (Ahmed Samatar 1987, p. 887). This led him to the conclusion that both movements lacked credibility, democratic leadership and national public support (see also Abdi Samatar 1992). In his assessment of the Somali tragedy, Saeed Sheikh Mohamed also noted how, other than toppling the regime, these opposition movements had neither a political agenda nor a national vision. Mohamed underscores how their inability to engender national solidarity and cooperation in the 1980s led to the present crisis (Mohamed 1992). It is within this context that insurgency movements, like their enemy — the state under the leadership of Siyaad — contributed to refugee flows.

In January 1991 Siyaad was ousted. The struggle for power between Siyaad and the various factions and the subsequent war between interim-President Ali Mahdi and General Mohamed Farah Aideed (both from the Hawiye clan-based United Somali Congress (USC)) wreaked havoc on Mogadishu and the surrounding region, resulting in the torture, displacement and death of many innocent civilians. Abdi Samatar's comments on the degree of devastation in this struggle for power echoes the feelings of many

¹ For example, the following are names of some of these groups: Somali National Movement (SNM), United Somali Congress (USC), Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM).

Somalis: 'The real tragedy of recent Somali history is not the dictatorship of Siyad but the legacy left behind' by the failed leadership of USC (Abdi Samatar in Doornbos et al. (eds.) 1992, p. 214). 'The Congress's policy of arming the population during the final days of the old regime, without proper leadership and a programme for securing peace and order, has catapulted the country and the capital into a reign of mindless terror' (ibid). Following the overthrow of Siyaad, the riverine areas of Shebelli and Juba became a battleground between the Hawiye's USC and the various Darood-dominated factions like the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SDDF) and the Somali National Front (SNF) (Menkhaus 1991).

No one really knows the exact figures of the casualties of this war. However, by October 1991, the Special Emergency Programme for the Horn of Africa estimated that of Somalia's 7 million people, 2.5 million were affected by food shortages, another 2.5 million were displaced and 100,000 were returnees (SEPHA 1991). In the following two years alone, it was reported that 510,000 people died (Hansch 1993). In subsequent years, UNHCR provided estimates of various Somali refugee and returnee groups scattered throughout the Horn of Africa, including 530,000 Somali refugees in Djibouti and 300,000 Somali refugees in Kenya (UNHCR 1993a).

Annual and cumulative figures on the movements of particular groups of people or the actual number of casualties are difficult to obtain and unreliable when available. UNHCR's annual reports provide estimates of displaced groups which depend on that year's particular programme and its target group. Thus the 1993 statistics on Somalia do not update the previous year's figures because the focus has shifted to a new emergency which may or may not refer to the previous year's target group or may be addressing a new group. (See UNHCR Activities Reports 1990–91, 1991–92, and 1992–93.)

Other agencies' statistics are more narrowly focused, confined to their own particular area of operation and their target group. Having said this, these figures do nonetheless provide a glimpse of the degree of devastation and suffering that the so-called warlords have inflicted on the very people they are supposed to represent.

(iv) Traditionalists versus transformationists

As discussed above, clan politics contributed to the disintegration of Somali traditional values and norms, known as *xeer* in the Somali cultural context (S. Samatar 1991). There is no direct translation of the Somali word *xeer*: it denotes communally binding treaties, and, in some contexts, connotes the concept of social contract. Although not yet studied in much detail, the breakdown of the principles of *xeer* have been identified as one of the sources of the Somali crisis. Said Samatar (1991), in a report commissioned by the Minority Rights Group, describes how Somali society was reduced to its smallest common denominator — its sub-clan associations. Ahmed Samatar (1987) and Abdi Samatar (1992) also address this issue. They attempt to transcend the generalizations associated with the notion of ethnic conflict and clan politics in Somalia to explain further the processes which create politically and economically marginalized groups, including refugees.

These scholars sought plausible answers to the origins and nature of the tragic collapse of the Somali state and the breakdown of a society. Deploring the inadequate literature on this subject, Abdi Samatar (ibid) sought to go beyond the 'tribal convention' in the analysis of 'what went wrong and why such a seemingly homogeneous society has descended into the abyss', and divided the perspectives of researchers on the above ques-

tion into two groups, the 'traditionalists' and the 'transformationalists' (Abdi Samatar 1992a, pp. 626–631).

The traditionalists, as he terms them, have concluded that Somalia's trouble lies in its 'innately bellicose culture,[. . .] and an evil individual like Siyaad' (ibid, p. 629) and they reduce Somali social relations to clan membership and its politics. In this view, the traditionalists have failed to take into account the development of the Somali state economy, the monetization of the rural pastoral economy and the consequent effects on the nomadic culture. In our opinion, they also ignored the effects of the structural adjustment policies of international financial institutions, the 1975 land tenure laws and the 1977–78 post-war socio-economic and political backlash on Somalia.

The transformationalists, on the other hand, emphasize the broader social, political, religious and economic changes of basic institutions through which state structures are articulated. For the transformationalists, an analysis of the causes of the Somali crisis must consider the dynamic social relations based on the complex traditional rules and social norms as embodied in the triad of *xeer*, Islam, and *dia-paying* principles. (*Dia-paying* refers to a complex set of traditional fines and compensations which permit the settlement of inter-group infringements in a relatively peaceful manner (Lewis 1957).) Refuting the simplistic kinship explanations which tend to equate Somali politics with 'clan' relationships, the 'transformationalists' place more weight on political-economic changes in Somalia. These include the commercialism of the subsistence economy (particularly livestock and land distribution), the imposition of a colonial state on a decentralized social structure, and the resulting anti-traditional, bureaucratic social order and market-oriented economic relations, as responsible for Somalia's breakdown (Abdi Samatar 1992, p. 631).

(v) Reconstruction, peace-seeking and grassroots institutions

Several NGOs are currently exploring the possibilities of peace formation in Somalia through the revival and encouragement of traditional institutions of negotiation. Oxfam and Actionaid are among those who are supporting indigenous processes of peace-making. They have separately sponsored studies on grassroots peace conferences, highlighting the effectiveness of low-level, grassroots peace conferences' (Farah and Lewis 1993, p. 6). Bradbury's Oxfam report should also be consulted (Bradbury 1993).

Although these attempts to build upon local and traditional institutions for negotiation and reconciliation offer promise in the process of reconstruction, there are also several problems. The first of these has to do with the direct utility of pre-colonial institutions in the present context. The efforts of NGOs to recognize the social contractual principles of *xeer*, which in the past have served to resolve inter-group tensions which fall outside of clan domains, may appear commendable. However, the relevance of *xeer* in the current context of reconstruction of a state and society greatly changed by post-colonial political and economic influences remains very uncertain.

Another problem is raised by the role of outside, non-Somali groups in the reconstruction process. Here the experiences of NOVIB, a Dutch NGO, are noteworthy. This organization, working in northern Somalia, concluded that regional harmony will only be achieved through a genuine representation of all the clans of the area. However, an unexpected consequence of its reconstruction efforts was that it was accused by the Somaliland government (the self-declared government of the Hargeisa region) of having 'interfered in the internal affairs of its country' (Somalia News Update 3(7), 1 March 1994). This statement again raises the related question: what is the connection between

revived, externally supported grassroots peace-seeking institutions and the state within which they exist?

Farah and Lewis are highly optimistic for the potential of local and traditional institutions. They state: '[the appointment of peace elders] is a remarkable climax of these local-level peace-initiatives and proof of the vitality of the "pastoral democracy" which, in effect, replaces "modern" political activity as our findings testify' (Farah and Lewis 1993, p. 64).

Another issue related to this grassroots approach to political and social reconstruction lies in its regional applicability. Will these processes, which have been reported as reasonably successful in the Hargeisa area in the north (Farah and Lewis 1993), and the Kismayo region in the south (Bradbury 1993), work in Somalia's major urban area, Mogadishu? Mogadishu is not only the most desperately disturbed area of the country, but it is probably the region where traditional forms of representation and negotiation have undergone the greatest change. Although the UN appears to have facilitated some local peace initiatives outside Mogadishu and is currently promoting the formation of local and district councils, we do not know to what extent these are genuinely representative of local clan interests. The question remains concerning how effectively these can form part of a wider, popularly supported governmental organization.

(vi) Powerful proverbs for explaining Somalia's catastrophe

Although many commentators have tried to epitomize Somalia's intricate system of clan politics by selectively citing one or another Somali proverb, we have not gone beyond the most widely quoted Somali saying: 'War and famine; peace and milk' (Lewis 1993, p. 1).

In this traditionally oral society, verbal artistry often provides a means of settling potential disputes peacefully (S. Samatar 1981). Indeed, its rich supply of proverbs constitutes one of Somalia's great cultural heritages. For the learned Somali, well-versed in nomadic-pastoral imagery, poetic symbolism, culture and history, the use of poetic style and rich alliterative proverbs is not only 'the principal medium of mass communication but also the vehicle of politics and the acquisition of power' (Laitin 1977, p. 42). Several authors have shown that proverbs, poetry and oral discourse all have important roles in Somali culture, most especially in its political culture (Andrzejewski and Galaal 1963; Andrzejewski and Lewis 1964, S. Samatar, 1991).

In the recent literature which addresses the collapse of the Somali state and the ensuing conflicts, however, Somali proverbs have been selectively cited to accentuate what has been paraphrased by Abdi Samatar as the Somalis' 'divisive and innately bellicose culture' (Abdi Samatar 1992a, p. 269). An example of this is Lewis's attempt to illustrate the clan basis of the crisis in Somalia by quoting a famous Arab Bedouin political axiom (which also has its Somali counterpart): 'Myself against my brother; my brother and I against my cousins; my cousins and I against the world'. Lewis explains:

In this region of scarce resources, where exploration for petrol has proceeded apparently unsuccessfully since the 1940s, Somalis are accustomed to fight for access to pasture and water. Prior to European colonisation, they did not constitute a state and their uncentralized political organization was based on what anthropologists call a 'segmentary lineage system' in which political identity and loyalty were determined by genealogical proximity or remoteness (Lewis 1993b, p. 12).

(uii) Clans and lineages: necessary but not sufficient knowledge

While the 'segmentary lineage system' is a necessary starting point for explaining the social organization and political loyalties in Somali life, it is not a sufficient explanation in itself of either an individual's personal loyalties or the complex and shifting pattern of social movements currently taking place in Somalia. Unfortunately, many outside observers have reduced the intricacies of Somali politics to a sole-cause, 'clan politics' explanation. In doing so they have misled their readers and have done a disservice to the Somali people.

Many important factors, apart from clan rivalries, must be brought to account in order to begin to understand the Somali catastrophe. These include:

the failure of the state to create a civil society;

the role that bilateral aid plays in creating and supporting repressive regimes, and thus contributing to the outbreak of civil wars;

the legacy of superpower rivalry, especially the heavy infusion of Soviet and US military hardware in Somalia during the cold-war era (Sivard **1985**);

attempts to control new forms of economic resources directly associated with the growing importance of the global economy.

None of these factors created the present civil war on its own, but together they have played a determining role in its intensity, direction and outcome. Given the true complexity of the factors underlying the present crisis in Somalia, it is very unfortunate that many authorities have concentrated on the single and overly simplistic issue of clan rivalry to explain it to an unsophisticated outside world.

In attempting to explain the Somali crisis and the emergence of clan factions, Abdi Samatar notes:

Those who wish to demonstrate that Somali tradition is the main source of **the present** calamity must unearth the complexity and causal relationships within the **traditional** ensemble, in order to establish the logic and tendency of that process. Citing lineage structure and its politicized contemporary form, **clanism**, as the cause of the prevailing havoc and then repeating these claims many times, does not provide an adequate explanation of the Somali catastrophe (Abdi Samatar 1987, p. 639).

In a forthcoming publication, Hasci has discussed the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of Somali society institutions (Hasci **1994**). As factors leading to conflict and displacement, and the notions of nation-state building, clan politics and resource distribution have been discussed separately by anthropologists, political scientists and economists. Much contemporary literature emphasizes a dominant idea from a single discipline, often to the exclusion of other information. The exclusive and simplistic use of an anthropological model of clan politics based on lineage genealogies is one important example. Another is the theme from political science which emphasizes Somali nationalism and promotes the idea that Somalia was a nation before it developed statehood (Laitin **1977**; Laitin and Samatar **1987**). If such single-perspective approaches were integrated in a truly multi-disciplinary manner, one would get a more accurate understanding of the dynamics of the social, political and economic development of Somalia. Such a multi-disciplinary approach would permit the consideration of the unifying tendencies of Somali nationalism in the same framework of analysis as the supposedly schismatic tendencies of clan politics, for instance. This would begin the formation of a more accurate and more sophisticated view of the processes in action in Somalia.

(c) Somali refugees in Kenya — victims of violence

Following the fall of Siyaad in 1991 and the subsequent power struggle in central and southern Somalia, an estimated 300,000 Somali refugees fled to Kenya. Many of these refugees experienced severe trauma during their flight. Resentment and prejudice based on historical animosities divided non-Somali Kenyans from those seeking sanctuary, thus worsening the trauma of flight. The Kenyan region which the refugees fled to, formerly called the Northern Frontier District, is predominantly inhabited by ethnic Somalis, and the region, regarded as part of 'Greater Somalia' by the Somali Youth League, had been a battleground between the forces of Kenya and Somali guerrillas in the 1960s. Given this background, Somali refugees have received little 'African hospitality'.

Although ethnic Somalis in the northern region of Kenya have shown great compassion towards the refugees and have made sacrifices to aid them, the general attitude of the Kenyan public has been inhospitable and unaccommodating, and the Kenyan government has practised a systematic beleaguering of these refugees that is tantamount to a policy of aggravating their already catastrophic condition. For example, in 1992 the expulsion of a shipload of Somali refugees by the Kenyan navy resulted in the drowning of hundreds of refugees (Omar and DeWaal 1993, p. 5).

An unpublished paper by Ahmednasier Abdullahi, 'Protection of refugees under international law and Kenya's treatment of Somali refugees: Compliance or contrary?', shows how the historical animosity towards ethnic Somalis has affected the mental outlook of Kenyans who are expected to act as 'hosts' for their former enemies, the Somali. In this new relationship, Kenyans, overwhelmed by the influx of refugees, do not understand how their government could welcome their former antagonists in such a way. With these old hostilities surfacing again, 'Somali of Kenyan citizenship are not even spared this prejudice and bigotry' (Abdullahi 1993, p. 11). Although the treatment of Somali refugees in Kenya has puzzled outside observers and international aid agencies, Abdullahi makes the case that this mistreatment is based on official Kenyan policy (Abdullahi 1993, p. 3).

These comments are underscored by the preliminary findings of Enoch Opondo. His research suggests that the refugees were used as pawns in negotiation for the continuation of international aid. On the one hand, the presence of large numbers of Somali refugees in Kenya was held as evidence of Kenya's improving human rights record. On the other, Kenyan authorities threatened to return these refugees forcibly if a renewal of aid was not forthcoming. Opondo states that refugees have been used to focus attention away from pressing internal problems, and, every time the government deems it necessary to enhance internal security, attempts are made to *refouler* the refugees (Opondo 1994).

Interviews by Hasci with Somali refugees who had recently been granted asylum in France, Switzerland and the UK revealed that the refugees' ordeal in Kenya was compounded by the absence of the international aid regime in the camps and the 'sinking feeling of not having anyone to turn to' (Hasci, interview with Somali refugee, 1994).

International aid agencies lamented the fact that, even eight months into the refugee emergency in Kenya, not one NGO had received a contract to provide any health services in any of the Somali camps. A confidential UNHCR document reported that as early as August 1991, the international community knew about the deteriorating health

conditions of refugee women and children in several Kenyan camps, including Utange, Liboi and Ifo, from which many of the refugees interviewed by Hasci had come. Even at that time a high proportion of households was conventionally labelled as most vulnerable: physically handicapped, female-headed families and unaccompanied children. At that time, the UNHCR document recommended that NGOs be allowed to operate in these Kenyan camps .

As recently as May 1993, the US Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, which visited several camps along the Somali–Kenyan border, sent a letter to the Kenyan government voicing their concern about violations of the international conventions of refugee protection. The delegation reported that Kenyan police and soldiers had committed gross violations of the refugees' human rights. In April 1993, Abdullahi described how the refugees were, on one hand, being blamed for the economic problems that Kenya was facing as a result of the withholding of aid by the World Bank and the IMF; on the other hand, the refugees were being used as 'bargaining chips in its [Kenya's] tussle with foreign donors' (Abdullahi 1993, pp. 8–9).

In September of that year, Africa Rights documented these human rights abuses. Refugees were subject to 'killing, rape, robbery, torture, arbitrary detention, extortion and deportation' (Omar and DeWaal *op. cit.*, p. i). These horrendous crimes were also documented by Africa Watch (1993). Kenyan police and bandits were terrorizing the refugees at night, especially refugee women and children. UNHCR commissioned a second report on the situation of women (Musse 1993). Despite the different scope and length of the missions, the reports substantiate the atrocities in the Kenyan camps.

Despite the publicity about the plight of the refugees in Kenya, the literature we have examined shows very little follow-up by either the United Nations or individual countries who have important bilateral agreements with Kenya. This raises some serious questions about the present state of international human rights covenants which are designed to protect refugees such as those in Kenya. It further calls into question both the ability of the international community to enforce them and the willingness of host countries like Kenya to adhere to them. UNHCR's guidelines on the protection of refugee women provides a long list of international conventions some of which Kenya is a signatory to (MacDonald 1991).

The human rights of refugee women finds its basic definition in the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol. Other international instruments refine this definition and the rights which accrue from it.¹ While individual states may not be party to all of these instruments, they provide a framework of international human rights standards for carrying out protection and assistance activities to refugee women (UNHCR July 1991).

The plight of the Somali refugees in Kenya will enter the annals of humanitarian aid as testimony to the fact that international legal instruments are not enough if the host government, for political, economic or national security reasons cannot or will not conform to them. Whatever reasons Kenya may have for ignoring its human rights obligations towards the Somali refugees, UNHCR's guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women explicitly state that:

¹ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the two Additional Protocols of 1977; the 1966 Human Rights Covenants; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict; the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages; the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

International protection goes beyond adherence to legal principles. Equally important, the protection of refugee women requires planning and a great deal of common sense in establishing programmes and enforcing priorities that support their safety and well-being (UNHCR 1991, p. 9).

A review of UNHCR reports carried out in 1994 confirms the 1991 accounts and provides figures that show the number of rapes, abductions, extortions and general violence has increased in the Kenyan camps. The further plight of these Somali refugees, who are now facing a potentially life-threatening 'voluntary' repatriation, is considered later in this work (see pp.76–83).

This report now turns to the questions raised by the manner in which humanitarian aid was administered to the forced migrants of Somalia during the long period 1978–1994.

3. **RELIEF** ASSISTANCE: NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES

(a) Alleviating ethnocentrism, appreciating Somali culture

In Somalia, a major problem permeating expatriate policy formation, the administration of aid, and even interactions on the street, has been the fact that outsiders dealing with Somali are

usually ignorant of Somali culture and the realities of Somali life. Important background information, beyond the scope of this work, is essential for newcomers. See, for instance, Lewis (1961) for a classic introduction to Somali social organization; Cassanelli for a lucid discussion of the historical development of Somali society (Cassanelli 1982), and Lewis for the modern history of Somalia (Lewis 1988). See Drysdale (1994); Laitin and Samatar (1987); Lewis (1981); and Touval (1963), for discussions of the political and economic background. Also highly recommended is S. Samatar for *insights* into the role of oratory and poetry in Somali culture (S. Samatar 1982). Each of these, of course, recapitulates relevant sources on more specialized topics in its bibliography. Any newcomer to Somalia is urged to read enough of this material to gain the beginnings of an empathetic insight into Somali culture. The ethnocentrism of expatriates has coloured much of the administration of aid in Somalia and reflects a basic ignorance of this literature. Reading some of these works would be a beginning.

(b) The complexity of events

Conceptualizing the complexity of forced migrations within, to and from Somalia in the period 1978–1994, particularly for the newcomer to this literature, is a formidable task. The foregoing discussion of these events and the political and economic forces underlying them, is supplemented here by a very schematic organizational outline (see Table 1) which is designed only for ease of reference as the ensuing discussion proceeds. However, this is a drastic oversimplification of the forces of displacement and the population movements throughout the Horn of Africa during this period.

Refugees, with and without UN mandate protection, are part of the forced migrations of concern, but we will encounter others, labelled with other rubrics in the literature: internally displaced, repatriants, returnees, etc. Each of these is part of a total, interacting population which includes the local, non-migrating people ('hosts'), who in turn may be suffering from varying degrees of poverty (Haaland and Keddeman 1984; Hapte-Selassie 1985), long-term food deprivation, and sometimes famine. (See Sen 1982, and Dreze and Sen for theoretical discussions of famine and famine relief which provide the basis for much current theoretical discussion.)

Table 1: Forced migrations, Somalia 1978–1994

- 1 First Exodus: The Ogaden refugees from Ethiopia
[1978–3 April 1988 — present]
- 2 Second Exodus: Oromo and Somali refugees from Ethiopia
[1984–1991 — present]
 - A. Ogaden refugees
 - B. Oromo ‘villagization’ refugees
- 3 Third Exodus: Anti-Siyaad Somali refugees to Ethiopia
 - A. Hargeisa-area refugees
[1988–1991 — present]
 - B. Southern Border refugees
[1981–1991 — present]
- 4 Fourth Exodus: Displaced and refugees post-Siyaad
[1991 — present]
 - A. Internally displaced
 - B. Refugees in Kenya
 - C. Refugees in Ethiopia
 - D. Overseas exiles

(i) 1978: Ogadeni flee Ethiopia

The events surrounding the collapse of the Somali invasion of Hararge Province in 1977, Ethiopia, prompted by the massive and sudden influx of Soviet military aid to Ethiopia, began the erosion of support for the Siyaad Barre government, as the previous section indicated. It also began a campaign of retribution against all ethnic Somali inside Ethiopia, thus resulting in the first-massive waves of refugees from Ethiopia. Crossing the border in numbers reported at one to two thousand per day, at first these refugees were received in local populations in the Somali version of 'African hospitality'. (See Karadawi 1983, for a analytic discussion of this term and many of the other rubrics of relief.)

The capacity of border villages to absorb these refugees was rapidly exhausted. Many of the Ogadeni forced migrants moved into rural areas in the interior as 'self-settled refugees'; others moved into the major cities, particularly Hargeisa and Mogadishu. Both rural self-settlers and their urban counterparts were, for better or worse, outside' the aid umbrella. They also represented a demand on the weak Somali economy whose needs were not addressed by the international aid regime, to the continuing distress of the Somali Government. We will see that the literature on these self-settling refugees in Somalia is virtually non-existent, and their numbers, certainly in the hundreds of thousands, will never be known.

(ii) The international refugee regime arrives

In 1978, the Somali government appealed for international aid. By 1980, 33 refugee camps were established. They were administered through a tripartite agreement connecting the National Refugee Commission (later a ministry) of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Somalia; the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (and thus the panoply of UN agencies), and the NGOs, which served to put this agreement into action. By 1980, there were dozens of NGOs in Somalia from some thirteen countries, hundreds of expatriates, a World Food Programme (WFP) food ration of 120,000 metric tons a year, and, as the years passed, an infusion of hundreds of millions of dollars of relief-associated salaries, equipment, house rentals, and other expenditures and material. CARE/ELU managed a food delivery system which evolved into one of the largest trucking organizations in Africa. Health services, organized by the Somali government's Refugee Health Unit, in-camp food distribution, controlled by government-appointed camp commanders, and Somali assistants and translators were all part of the vast and suddenly mobilized aid apparatus.

What Loescher has called 'the international refugee regime' (Loescher 1993) had arrived with lasting consequences for the Republic of Somalia and for the Ogadeni refugees themselves. By 1980, there were hundreds of thousands in refugee camps. Some of these, such as Jalalaqsi, formed population concentrations greater than all but the largest two urban centres in Somalia. Thus began the fourteen-year saga of refugee camps in Somalia.

(iii) The Somali Government: 'in an uncomfortable corner'

Interviews with some expatriate officials showed the dilemmas that the government faced:

The Somali government finds itself in an uncomfortable corner whereby it has emptied its granaries and taken food away from its local people who desperately need it to give it to the refugees who are even in more dire need. It is like taking from Paul to give to Peter. (Hasci 1991, p. 164)

Cabdi Moxamed Tarrax, the Somali Extraordinary Commissioner for refugees, lamented that the donor community was accusing the Somalis, when in fact they had shared everything they had with the refugees, stating, 'Somalia has exhausted its food reserves, while the world was waiting for pictures of emaciated refugee babies before they moved' (Hasci, fieldnotes 1989). Somalia felt that the international community was unfairly condemning them at a time when they showed hospitality to the refugees:

After all, according to the international refugee laws, the refugees are an international problem. The burden of the refugee must be shared internationally and not left to Somalia alone. [...] Frankly, this business of refugee figures and food diversion is a game that the donors are playing. They know very well that Somalia is a very poor country and does not have the means to support all those refugees' (anonymous official, quoted in Hasci 1991:165).

Yusuf Shirdon, Somali Commissioner for Refugees, who has since joined the unknown numbers of Somali who drowned seeking refuge at the Kenyan coastline, cited a Somali proverb: '*Nin Qaron hela, nin Qar dheer Kora, nin Isba Qada, Halla Qalafsado!*' The approximate translation is 'Everyone for himself; Allah for everyone'. He used this to indicate that, if donors keep reducing food rations with the excuse that food is being diverted, a situation will develop where refugees will be left with no food and be forced to fend for themselves (Hasci 1991, p. 173).

(iv) A lost opportunity

Kibreab, whose consideration of these events is exceptionally thorough, notes that the rapid institutionalization of refugee camps, towards which this aid apparatus was directed, may be viewed as a lost opportunity. He suggests that, had regional economic aid been provided to the regions of influx and settlement, organized camps might have been unnecessary, and 'consequently the huge amount of manpower and financial resources that have been spent on the running and management [. . .] of the refugee camps in the whole decade would have been saved. More importantly, however, the independent lifestyle of the former subsistence producers would not have been destroyed' (Kibreab 1991, p. 19).

(v) No one likes refugee camps

The UNHCR *Handbook for Emergencies* states that 'the establishment of refugee camps must be only a last resort. A solution that maintains and fosters the self-reliance of the refugees is always preferable' (UNHCR 1982, p. 57). Lurking just below the surface of the last phrase is the much bruited dependency syndrome. Analysis of the symptoms of dependency, its use by planners and practitioners in Somalia, and the theoretical and empirical bases for its existence will take us into many other problems in the literature of refugee camps in Somalia.

(vi) The dependency syndrome

The central principle of the dependency syndrome is that refugees who receive emergency support become accustomed to free handouts and give up all self-initiative. A moral breach is also implied: they would rather be beggars than take care of themselves. This thus encapsulates the disdain that some relatively privileged expatriates had for the Somali and Oromo who were categorized and administered as refugees (Waldron 1987).

Rogge, a experienced consultant and analyst of refugee events, espouses the idea of refugee dependency. Writing in 1985, he says that 'the international press has recently become aware of Africa's refugee problem, and particularly so with respect to the Somalian situation. What most of these writings have stressed is the almost total dependence that Africa's refugees have upon locally-derived solutions to their dilemma' (Rogge 1985, p. 68). In 1992, concerning the lingering refugee population of Qoriooley, Lower Shebelli region, about whom we will say more later, Rogge states: 'It appears that these refugees have been in a state of near total dependency since the late 1970s [. . .] interventions which will make them more self-reliant are needed' (Rogge 1992, p. 27). A World Food Programme communique, continues the theme: 'There's a tendency for a heavy dependency syndrome. The UNHCR programmes to encourage self-reliance [. . .] to counter the dependency syndrome' (WFPNNHCR 1985).

Serious questions have been raised about the dependency syndrome, however. In a brief but perceptive paper, Clark suggests that the apparent dependency of refugees derives from their removal from their social, political and economic coping systems. Significantly, his paper was written in reaction to the ill-informed observations of visiting journalists that 'perhaps most refugees had become refugees because they found being a welfare recipient easier than their former nomadic life' (Clark 1985, pp. 1–3).

Waldron rejects any simple acceptance of a dependency syndrome, relating it to the structure of the camps as 'total institutions' (Goffman 1961). These are interpreted as enclosed and artificial pseudo-societies, where authoritarian leadership by expatriates is characteristic, where power and food are monopolized by administrators, and the

refugees are viewed simplistically as clients. In this context, the accusation of refugee dependency was discussed as one of several negative stereotypes derived from the structure of the institutional society of the refugee camp. He says that the misnomer of dependency derives from the expatriate administrators' failure 'to understand the camp economy as it functions, to understand the refugees' problems of coping, or even the refugees' attitude toward accepting donor food' (Waldron 1987).

Kibreab bases his conclusions about the veracity and expression of the dependency syndrome on empirical studies, concluding 'there is no evidence which supports the widely-held view among aid agencies, government authorities and academics that the refugees have developed "welfare mentality" or dependency syndrome. [. . .] Our findings reveal that the able-bodied refugees including the female household heads in the camps, while defending jealously the benefits accruing from the international refugee support systems, leave no stone unturned in order to engage in diverse income-generating activities' (Kibreab 1990, p. 185).

Indeed, as we turn to another administrative principle — that refugees violate an assumed moral contract because they 'steal' food and trade in it with non-refugees — we find further evidence of a misunderstanding of refugee lives and their economic survival strategies.

(c) Donor food and refugees

Food in the refugee camps of Somalia was provided by direct delivery (Dreze and Sen 1991). Donor food imported from abroad was trucked to the camps and then distributed under the control of Somali camp commanders and staff. This system was used for the Ogadeni refugees, the 'First Exodus' of Table 1; the 'Second Exodus', those who fled to the Hargeisa region after 1984; and for the 'Third Exodus' refugees, who fled from Hargeisa into Ethiopia after 1988.

Christensen's study, one of the very few funded by the UN, summarizes the system:

Food aid to the refugees in Somalia is organized on a tripartite agreement basis between the WFP, the Somali Government and CARE. WFP pledges the food from donors and handles the shipment of food to Somalia. The Government ensures its legal entry into the country and CARE dispatches the food to the camps. [. . .] Food **was** reported to have been dispatched and distributed to 500,000 refugees as regular rations and for 50,000 refugees under supplementary feeding programmes (Christensen 1982, p. 20).

In 1980, the world press reported that much of the food delivered to Somalia was being stolen before it reached the camps. With firm backing from WFP and UNHCR, CARE attempted to tighten its logistical system, so that it controlled the supplies of food until they reached the camps. The specific demand was that an auditing system be established at the end of the trucking route, to assure that food leaving Mogadishu arrived in the camps.

In the autumn of 1981, this system became a source of intense contention between CARE and the government's National Refugee Commission (NRC). The NRC viewed the extension of CARE's powers as an incursion on its sovereignty. (In other contexts, the NRC had emphasized that Somalia's food reserves had been exhausted in the government's early attempts to provide for the refugees, and that the international aid apparatus was not reaching self-settled refugees. Unfortunately, NRC records are to be presumed lost.) Matters came to a head when CARE threatened to pull out of Somalia, and had actually packed its bags before an acceptable agreement was reached. In time,

under the conditions of the agreement, professional food monitors from India's famine relief system were established outside camp regions. The inner distribution was in the hands of Somali camp commanders. This degree of accountability helped satisfy outside donors who had reacted to media accusations of theft. The problem, however, further eroded a tenuous relationship between the international aid agencies and the Government of Somalia. CARE's archives and those of WFP would be valuable, if accessible, to the future analysis of emergency relief as well as the serious study of the Somali refugee phenomena.

(i) Food for refugees only

One important characteristic of this system is that the food distribution was limited to refugees by WFP policy. The qualification for access to food, then, was refugee status as defined by UNHCR's mandate. Although WFP had provisions in its non-emergency budget to use food as an economy-stimulating trade item (Reutlinger 1983), this was not allowed in its emergency budget. Thus, only refugees were to receive food, and could not trade it.

(ii) Refugees trade donor food

Refugees, who probably did not know of UNHCR's mandate restrictions and the policies which derived from them, saw food as many development economists do, as a commodity which could be traded as well as eaten. Many expatriates observed refugee food moving out of camps and into local markets. They concluded that refugees were using food for their own profit, and were thus cynically misusing the aid from abroad. Christensen, however, had identified the existence of this trade and analysed its economic significance as early as 1982, stating that, 'The exchange of surplus food appears to be a reasonable action', adding that the trade provides essential nutrients lacking from the donor 'food basket', and permits some much-needed variety to the diet. She emphasized,

It links the refugee population and the local people in a relationship of mutual benefit. [. . .] It prevents antagonism between highly subsidized non-food-producing poor groups and less, or non-subsidized food-producing poor groups residing in the same localities' (op.cit, p. 27).

By means of this trade, refugees obtained non-food essentials such as matches and kerosene, rubber sandals and cloth which were not provided by the aid system (Waldron, pers. comm.). A serious firewood problem, which will be discussed below, appeared in many areas. In Sigaalow Camp, 'A day's firewood in Sigaalow Camp in January 1982 cost 1,000cc of unground grain, a significant proportion of the daily allotment' (Waldron 1988, p. 158). Certain essential nutrients, particularly vitamins A and C were typically deficient from the 'food basket' (Tarrax 1984, p. xix).

(iii) Markets closed, scurvy erupts

The effects of research and publication often have political overtones. In the case at hand, Christensen's report was available in Mogadishu. Instead of explaining the necessity of the refugees' trading food, reports such as these ran the danger of alerting those who saw the behaviour as 'illegal', or at least immoral. Whatever the rationale might have been, the markets in Gedo at which refugees traded were shut down in 1983, and, when refugees could no longer obtain fruit as a source of vitamin C, scurvy broke out (Dean 1983; Magan *et al* 1983). As Seaman and Rivers stated later regarding this outbreak, 'If there is a case for maintaining an expensive international bureaucracy for

the welfare of refugees then there can be no case for depriving them of that margin of support required for survival' (Seaman and Rivers 1989).

.(d) Theft or redistribution?

As Christensen confirms, food was easily observed moving out of refugee camps. 'It took various forms. In Adi Addeys the local bus and taxis were loaded with food sacks (mainly corn) and private cars were loaded with maize directly in the sections with food being handed over by the section leaders, as well as by individual refugees' (Christensen 1982:21). Camp staff, certainly involving some camp commanders who had access to bulk food, were probably the basic source of the donor food reaching markets. This was an extremely sensitive issue.

The movement of food from the camps to the markets was considered to be theft and corruption in the eyes of the aid agencies, UNHCR and the donors. Without intending to condone this practice, it can partly be explained by the poor finances of the Somali government. Salaries for camp commanders were extremely low, reportedly the equivalent of \$100/£67 per month, \$1,200/£800 per year. This could be contrasted with the reported salary of a UN public relations officer resident in Mogadishu, whose salary, with hardship and living allowances, was close to \$US70,000/£46,600 per year in 1982 (Waldron, personal communication, sources request anonymity). 'Corruption' is too simple a term here.

(i) 'Positions of Opportunity'

Posts such as camp commander were sometimes referred to as 'positions of opportunity' in the highest ranks of Siyaad's government. In one of the few memoirs which have as yet appeared from former Somali officials, Mohamed Osman Omar supports this, saying:

Many of those employed to manage the assistance given by international organizations for development projects embezzled the funds with the knowledge of influential leaders. Some were even allowed to choose the institution in which they wished to work. Certain appointments amounted to a *carte blanche* to make money. A person who failed to get rich on such an opportunity within a short period was described as stupid (Osman 1992, p. 147).

Memoirs such as his will become an important source of knowledge concerning the workings of government and society, and should take on added significance since official records may have been destroyed.

From a humanitarian perspective, as well as an economic perspective, an interpretation other than 'theft' might be more constructive here. Did not such misallocated food reach Somali consumers? If enough food, still, was entering the system to provide dietary necessities for the refugees who were its intended beneficiaries, could the marketing of food by camp staff and other officials — as well as refugees — be construed as a kind of redistribution which subsidized the Somali economy by transcending UNHCR/WFP mandate restrictions?

Once again the memoirs of Mohamed Osman Omar are insightful:

After the Ogaden War, the country faced severe food shortages. People with low incomes and the salaried class suffered most. They could not cope with the soaring prices of food-stuffs and other essentials. Decent folk were forced to become corrupt for the sake of their family's survival (p.148).

[...]

It was only a massive refugee presence from neighbouring countries that prevented many Somalis from dying of hunger. Food assistance for the refugees was used to keep the whole country afloat. [...] A huge black market trade **sprung up around** the refugee camps, involving merchants, speculators and refugees alike in **redistribution** (p. 151).

Kibreab discusses the impact of this trade upon local villagers in camp areas, stating, 'The establishment of the camps has not only led to the rapid expansion of the regional markets, but has also eliminated food supply deficits in the regions'. He further notes the corresponding drop in food prices, which in turn benefited the poorest (Kibreab 1990:109). This effect should be considered in supplement to the conclusions suggested by Chambers' *Hidden Losers*, where the presence of refugees is interpreted as often worsening the lot of the poorest local people, particularly by depressing wages for unskilled labour (Chambers 1984).

Could this effective redistributive mechanism be employed, rather than suppressed, by the international aid community? Holt and Lawrence, in their major research on the economic and nutritional needs of the Ethiopian Ogaden, suggest that it might (see Seaman and Holt for a background discussion of this idea; see Holt 1990 for more comments on the case at hand.) They note that the Ogaden is a region which supports former refugees who have returned from Somalia, refugees from Hargeisa, internally displaced people, and local residents. They recommend trying regional food aid which uses market mechanisms and which does not attempt to employ category-specific restrictions. After documenting that all the wheat in the area 'comes via the deliveries for free rations to registered returnees, refugees and drought victims', they establish that wheat thus obtained is extremely important in the nutrition of the entire region (Holt and Lawrence 1991, p. 31). After further economic analysis, they recommend that the most appropriate food aid possible would be 'subsidized grain sales operation in the Ogaden', adding, 'There is no universal or immutable law that food aid must always be handed out free' (Holt and Lawrence 1991, p. 45). This carefully documented study deserves serious consideration. Save the Children (UK) which sponsored it should be encouraged to publish it and any other studies of similar sophistication and quality.

(ii) Nutrition in the refugee camps: access to food and food trade

The massive scale of trade in refugee food raises the possibility that some, or many, refugees were not getting sufficient allocations. Another possibility is that the amount of food, planned by the WFP on a *per capita* (refugee) basis was based on an overestimate of refugee populations. Each explanation leads in quite different directions. The one raises questions about differential access to food supplies within the refugee population, and the other will bring to bear the thorny issues of refugee numbers in Somalia.

(iii) Differential access to food within refugee camp populations?

Access to food in refugee camps seems to be characterized by inequality, despite the planning figures scrutinized below, which are reckoned on the assumption of egalitarian access. Kibreab's study of the Qal al-Nahal refugee settlement in the eastern Sudan clearly records internal economic differentiation in that population, and he fully discusses the implication of these differences (Kibreab 1987). The scant relevant information — once again — in Somalia gives strong suggestions that there were parallel differences there.

Christensen's study identifies such differences and relates them to food trade. In her six-week study of three camp areas, she suggests a three-fold division of refugees in terms of

access to food. This categorization was based on observations of the number of bags of grain on hand during visits to households. Thus estimated, the divisions were:

- (1) 10–15 per cent had 5–10 bags;
- (2) 70 per cent had 1–3 bags;
- (3) 10–15 per cent had 'no food available at all'.

She states that the deprived group is made up of fathers with children, grandfathers with grandchildren, and households with infirm adults. Access to food was not, in her study, related to time of delivery. She comments that the groups with stockpiled food engage in regular trade with non-refugees, and the deprived do not (Christensen 1982:23)

The last point may seem obvious, that households without food cannot engage in trade, but it also has serious implications. The first, of course, is that certain households, probably hidden from the casual observer, might suffer serious food deficits, while the overall condition of the camp shows active trading of an apparent surplus. The second is that the deprived could not have access to nutritional necessities (especially sources of vitamin A and C) which might be obtained solely by trade. Of course they could not obtain any of the other trade items either. One can only be shocked that the agencies, most especially the UN, did not follow up on this significant study. However there were comments regarding the stockpiled food as evidence of 'hoarding' in Lugh Jeelow camp, mentioned below.

(iv) No follow-up was ever done

None of the literature available indicates that *any* further attempt was ever made to assess the internal differentiation of Somali refugee camps and its relationship to differential access to food. (An article published in Mogadishu by Hitchcock (1983), a development anthropologist, is cited by Kibreab (1990:194), but was not available for this consideration.) Although thorough studies have been done of **weight/height** ratios in the documentation of nutritional conditions by Toole and others (e.g. Toole 1989, 1991) these are used to make conclusions about camp populations as a whole. Although they do set standards for eligibility for supplementary feeding of the most malnourished and identify the incidence of malnutrition in a population — extremely important information indeed — they are not intended to answer the questions raised by Christensen's report.

Returning to the question of trade and its effect on refugee consumption, a tentative conclusion is that trade took place where the majority of refugees had adequate access to food, but some did not. However, Christensen's study could not take long-term variations in supply into account. One of the camps she studied, Lugh Jeelow, had endured three weeks without significant food deliveries in April 1981 because unusually heavy rains had cut the lines of supply. As Clark has written about this population, 'some refugees actually starved to death in the refugee camps due to the immense logistical obstacles in getting food to them' (Clark 1985, p. 3). Although we do not want to lose sight of the trade issue, the discussion must now turn to the delivery system, and the role the question of refugee numbers played in calculating food requirements. Only then will the unanswered question of whether or not trade in food was ultimately to be explained by an allocation based on inflated refugee population numbers.

(v) Direct delivery, food and numbers

The food supply system in Somali refugee contexts, 'direct delivery', is deemed by Dreze and Sen to be, 'the way of doing this that taxes the imagination least' (Dreze and Sen 1989, p. 85). In criticizing reliance on this technique of supplying aid, they emphasize that, 'The disruption of relief efforts as a result of the failed or delayed arrival of food is one of the most widely observed (and predictable) defects of the strategy of direct delivery' (ibid.).

A joint UNHCR/WFP assessment report providing recommendations for the food needs of Somalia for 1986, based on estimates of deliveries and nutrition over the previous three years, state that, '[This] suggests that there is no correlation between rates of malnutrition and food aid deliveries over this period' (WFP/UNHCR 1985, p. 14). Food surpluses, based on inflated estimates of the refugee population, permitting trade and refugee employment, were held to safeguard the irregularity of deliveries (Waldron 1988, p. 158). NRC Minister Tarrax offered figures which disagreed, citing overall shortfalls and specific nutritional deficiencies in WFP deliveries:

All available medical reports indicate that unless urgent remedial steps are taken, the situation may soon escalate out of hand (Tarrax 1984, p. xix).

Toole has provided conclusive statistical evidence, based on the shocking death rates in Hartisheikh camp (Third Exodus), that morbidity in refugee camp populations is directly related to severe nutritional deficits, and is the single most important factor when food deliveries fall short as they did in that tragic instance (Toole 1989).

(vi) Death and malnutrition in refugee camps

Death rates in newly established organized settlements are often extremely high. Death rates, measured in deaths per thousand per month, in three camps in the Northwestern region of Somali in 1988 were, respectively, 14.2 (Las Dhure), 23.3 (Bur Dhobo) and 33.8 (Ali Matan). Contrasted with the death rate for the non-refugee population in the region, 1.8, these statistics are shocking (Toole and Waldman 1988). Toole and Waldman suggest that these death rates, up to 40 times higher than normal, are the product of many causes during the early period of refugee camps: respiratory infections, diarrhoeal diseases and measles. Cholera and tuberculosis contributed to the high death rate in the Northwest camps, but these were not the basic causes of the extremely high rates during the 1989 period. Normally, as emergency services are established, and as inoculations, clean water and access to health care are established, such extremely high death rates drop. However, during the first year of their establishment, the death rates in the camps in the Northwest remained high, and actually rose for a period.

Toole and his colleagues from the Centres for Disease Control determined in later research that death in refugee camps might be directly related to a large number of specific causes, but the single most important underlying cause was malnutrition.

Having identified strong hints about the existence of a malnutrition-mortality relationship both in individuals and in populations, we then attempted to quantify this relationship in refugee populations. [...] We found progressive increases in mortality rates with increasing ranges of child malnutrition rates, indicating, for example, that populations with malnutrition rates in the 20 - 39.9% range had mortality rates more than 12 times that of populations with malnutrition rates less than 5%. This data suggested that mortality rates in refugee groups could be roughly predicted — or assumed — based on their prevailing malnutrition rates (Nieburg et al. 1992, p. 251)

The conclusion of the study was that 'Preventable excess mortality among refugees has been associated with malnutrition by many data sets and by several lines of reasoning.

[. . .] There is good reason to believe that the association is causal' (Nieburget al. 1992, p. 255).

The conclusions were firmly founded and unambiguous. Although mortality figures would certainly be affected by specific bacterial and viral epidemics, the basic and underlying correlation between death rates and malnutrition was firmly and scientifically established.

(vii) World Food Programme consumption figures were specious
Consumption figures per capita were specious (WFP/UNHCR 1985; Waldron 1988). Planning figures and delivery assessments were represented as being accurate to the last kilo-calorie provided per person, (In the case described above, allocations were said to be 1860 kilo-calories/per adult/day, to be provided by 577g/adult/day of grain.) Such calculations are invalid, since both planning and delivery estimates were reckoned by dividing the tonnage of food by the estimated population. Neither of these figures was accurately known. As far as the amount of food delivered was concerned, there was no idea of how much was eaten compared with how much was traded. Consequently this, as a consumption statistic, was useless. None the less, it was used, and the refugee population figure became a major centre of controversy. Although the 'numbers game', as it came to be known, provided a central focus for the growing alienation between the NRC and the UNHCR, the figures referring to the First Exodus refugees in Somalia were the product of negotiation between UNHCR and the NRC. The government had consistently claimed that there were 1.3 million refugees in Somalia, a figure which included self-settling refugees, which the UNHCR did not address. The negotiations finally resulted in the official figure of 700,000 refugees.

(e)The numbers game

UNCHR and WFP believed that 450,000 refugees was a more accurate figure. However, in the 1986 assessment UNHCR addressed the official number, albeit with open scepticism (WFP/UNHCR 1986, p. 3). The report mentioned that a more accurate counting was being planned 'under the direction of Professor J. W. Lewis [sic], a well known expert on Somalia' (ibid, p. 5). Accuracy was not a strong point of the report, nor was in-depth knowledge of Somalia and its analytic literature.

The WFP addressed the official figure in its plan for 1986, but reduced its allocation per person by using formulae developed by the FAO to account for the energy requirements of children and women, which, in effect, reduced the tonnage required to 'feed' the estimated (but not believed) 700,000 refugees. Despite the absurdity of the exercise, the final figure for the allocation per (male) adult per day was announced as 1850 kilo-calories. This was released without any statistical statement of magnitude of probable errors or other qualifications (WFP/UNHCR 1985).

Consideration of the vicissitudes in deliveries and incomplete 'food baskets' resulting in the types of vitamin deficiencies already noted were glossed over, although they were emphasized in the government's report. The amount of food delivered during the period covered by the WFP/UNHCR report was only 59 per cent of that required to feed 700,000 persons. A cynical analyst might be tempted to conclude that this was a bureaucratic exercise, and that any sense of moral responsibility was brushed aside with the tacit assumption that, since much of the food was traded anyway, it didn't matter.

(The open question of the effect of trade in food upon the availability of food in the camps, however, remains inconclusive, a gap in the presently available literature.)

Waldron's analysis of this controversy is based on WFP and NRC documentation (Waldron 1988). Future analysts and researchers should be encouraged to use **WFP** files more fully. They should also be warned that these may present a self-justifying record of performance. Where possible, other sources of documentation, particularly NRC records, if they still exist, must be sought out. In the virtual absence of published research on many important topics, such as this, archival research is the only alternative.

(i) Census and nonsenses

An initial census was attempted in late 1981. It met with resistance in the camps and was not completed. Whether the resistance of refugees was orchestrated, as many participants stated, or whether the refugees understood that the enumeration would curtail their trade economy, vital to their survival, is not documented.

The second attempt, in 1987, was contracted to a wildlife surveyor, M. Watson. This inconclusive effort has become the subject of underground reports which are of great interest, but whose authors request they not be quoted or cited. However, Zitlemann, who was a member of the team for a period, discusses the perceptions and social processes active in the refugee population which led to the team being (falsely) accused of child molestation and having stones thrown at them. He states that for the refugees, 'the survey team was associated with a possible cut-back in the ration supplies for the camps', relevant to the point raised above (Zitelmann 1988, p. 5). He does not discuss the inner dynamics of the effort, although a note in his acknowledgements is interesting: 'Last, but not least I have to thank Dr. M. Watson, who became a never ending source for the study of venality' (Zitelmann 1988, p. 2). One hopes that future researchers may find relevant documents in UNHCR files.

(ii) Somali cooperation and census techniques

Aerial photography was employed by the second census attempt, and the use of this rather standard technique of assessing populations seems reasonable. The 1991 survey of the population of the Ethiopian Ogaden, carried out by Holt and Lawrence in 1991, relied on a methodologically meticulous series of helicopter routes, and aerial photography. This was combined with on-the-ground assessment of the number of people per dwelling in each village surveyed (Holt and Lawrence 1991, p. 16). The team, in its interviews, stayed overnight with the people visited.

The authors' comments regarding this are very important:

The villagers were very much more impressed by the fact that we wanted to pass the night with them, than by the fact that we arrived in a helicopter. Frequent comments were made by them that they could see we took our inquiry seriously. On one gratifying occasion, an elder in a village was overheard to remark to another, 'These educated people are surprising. How is it that they know the right questions to ask?' (Holt and Lawrence 1991, p. 24).

(iii) The other side of '*refugee* participation'

Refugee participation, that is the systematic inclusion of aid recipients in all phases of planning, instrumentation, and evaluation of the administration of aid, is a much discussed desideratum. The problem with refugee participation is that few attempts to carry

out the idea have been made, and these seldom seem to be clear about how this participation is accomplished.

The experience of Holt and Lawrence, as quoted above, suggests a practical approach to accomplishing some of the goals of 'refugee participation', by reversing who is participating with whom. Here, the researchers participated as guests with their Somali hosts, and by doing so respected their dignity. Rather than including aid recipients in their plans, these researchers allowed themselves to be included in their hosts' hospitality, and thus opened access to their hosts' knowledge and perception of problems with livestock, availability of grains, and the other vital economic concerns of the research. This is, indeed, an astute application of the long-established research strategy of cultural anthropologists, participant observation, as applied to Chambers' rapid rural survey technique (Chambers 1991). Demystified, it means spending time with people under their conditions, talking with them, and listening to them.

This approach to refugee participation should be contrasted with other uses of the concept in the literature. Mister, reporting on problems of eliciting participation on a agricultural project which was originally based upon food-for work, and then wage labour, said, 'the project was substantially more successful when the refugees were involved in the planning and management of their farm programmes' (Mister 1985, p. 17). Orr, reporting on a forestry project in Gedo, states, 'community involvement from the beginning of a project is not necessary. This should be good news given the large number of development projects that are designed without community input' (Orr 1985, p. 7). He does, however, recommend the later inclusion of community members. 'Refugee participation' is used in various ways, but should perhaps be restricted to approaches like that of Holt and Lawrence.

The open discussion and appreciative cooperation expressed above by Holt and Lawrence obviously stand in stark contrast to the aggressive resistance experienced in both abortive census attempts in the Somali refugee camps. It also gives the lie to stereotypes concerning a putative innate Somali tendency toward aggression, a misconception which not only appears in the press (Dowden 1993), but even in diplomatic circles as well.

(iv) Numbers: a planning necessity or a mandate artefact?

Dealing with food requests from donors and planning the amount necessary to provide life-sustaining essentials for hundreds of thousands of refugees requires an accurate evaluation of refugees — or does it? Assessing the numbers of a population within statistically determined orders of probability was rather routinely accomplished by Holt and Lawrence. This assessment could certainly have been duplicated by the competent use of aerial photography in the Somali refugee context, if there had been cooperation on the ground.

Only Zitelmann has discussed the complex factors which influenced the resistance to interviewers in the Somali camps, relating these to a complexity of factors ranging from the need to protect access to donor resources to the intersection of expatriate versus indigenous value systems (Zitelmann 1988, 1989, 1991). Certainly the tension between the UNHCR/WFP and the NRC pervaded the atmosphere and probably conditioned the refugees' desire to control the situation, rather than to be controlled. The total atmosphere of distrust, as stated above, centred upon the numbers game. Where the agencies saw these numbers as vital for planning for mandated refugees, the NRC was negotiating for food in Somalia.

(v) Institutional reform and refugee studies

The UNHCR mandate as applied in Somalia defined those eligible for food aid as refugees, and specifically those refugees registered in the camps. The implication of this was that UNHCR had to know not how many people in Somalia desperately needed food aid, but how many registered refugees there were. This logically and automatically structured the opposition between aid agencies and the Somali government. Could a reasonable system of assistance have been developed which protected and aided the neediest of refugees without the alienation and accusations which coloured the entire experience? Institutional reform is the most important topic in refugee aid administration and those concerned with refugee studies should include this in their agendas. As independent researchers together with practitioners, they must propose innovative, feasible methods which get away from a mandate which leads to camps, and which creates animosity and accusations, and which, in the long run, destroys the effort of providing humanitarian aid.

The particular advantage of the approach used by Holt and Lawrence was that they did not have the need to diagnose eligibility for aid, as defined by a bureaucratic mandate. Because their central concern was the food needs of the entire population, they employed theories and practices from established economic science, centred around investigations of supply and demand. That is to say, they were studying the economy of a population, rather than trying to decide who fit an imported legalistic category of eligibility for aid.

The influence of mandate eligibility is such an imperative that the literature of concern shows little or no attention to such basic economic conditions within the overall refugee-affected population of Somalia in the early 1980s. If such studies were done, they do not seem to have informed those concerned with refugees, as perhaps they could not.

In an important theoretical consideration of the issues centering around mandate-specific aid, which emphasizes the cost-benefit accountability which in turn make census necessary, Harrell-Bond, Voutira and Leopold conclude that:

What appears to be the greatest strength of the current approach to refugee assistance thus appears to be its major weakness. While the appeal of the counting system has been based on its claim to provide a value-free instrument for calculating the success or failure of the whole system of delivering aid packages, this appeal has turned out to be based either on ignorance or confusion regarding the situation at hand, or a total lack of moral sensitivity towards the very people whose needs were meant to be addressed (1992, p. 223).

4. REFUGEES AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOMALIA

Probably nothing remains of the various development projects and resettlement programs sponsored in the name of refugees in Somalia. The events associated with the collapse of the Somali Government in **1991** almost certainly meant the end of any remnants of these and the dispersal of their equipment. Our assessment of the extensive literature regarding these projects and programs will therefore concentrate for the most part on the lessons which can be learned from them and the way they affected the lives of refugees.

The body of relevant literature is immense, particularly if compared with the sparse number of research items dealing with overall social and economic conditions of the refugees in Somalia. An excellent early bibliography appears in Spooner's report, *Refugee Settlement in the Lower Shabelle Region* (Spooner **1984**). He identifies a major problem of this cryptic literature, most of which is project-related, that will haunt future researchers:

The limited circulation of many of these references is a constraint to researchers and planners and it is recommended that good library facilities are established with Government and major institutions to ensure that valuable materials are not lost. Such libraries are being developed at the Ministry of National Planning with the Specialist Support Unit of UNHCR and amongst some of the voluntary organizations (Spooner 1984, p. 111)

A reiterated plea, throughout this discussion is that, since Somali Ministry collections and other government documents have been disrupted or destroyed by the war, an organized and funded attempt must be made to salvage as much as possible, once conditions permit. For the literature on development, already difficult to locate and get access to, this is a particularly urgent matter. Agency files offer the other recourse.

(a) Government policy and refugee development

Government policy concerning the acceptable durable solutions for the refugees defined and limited the types of development which could be applied to refugee populations, (although drought resettlement projects had been established before the major refugee influxes and continued throughout the **1980s**). The government, of course, also controlled the resources potentially available for these purposes.

This policy evolved through three distinct phases. The first phase accepted repatriation of the refugees as the only durable solution. This ruled out any approaches which involved refugee settlement. No resources apart from the camp regions themselves were allocated for refugee use during this period. The second phase began in **1981** and represented a significant policy alteration. Although the government still regarded repatriation as the only acceptable long-term solution, it would now allow middle-range projects. In the words of the Extraordinary Commissioner of the National Refugee Commission,

The Somali Government believes that the introduction of development programs mainly in the agriculture, the setting up of small-scale industries, handicraft schemes, etc, are vital for the refugees so that they could be as much self-supporting as possible particularly in food production (Tarrax 1982, p. 2).

Such initiatives as agricultural 'self-sufficiency' projects were now possible, since some land was opened for refugee use. The third phase finally opened the door for refugee

settlement programs and projects, but was carefully phrased stipulating that, although the government would provide land for those who wished to settle,

[T]he integration of refugees into the general fabric of Somali society be conditional upon the attainment of a state of self-sufficiency by the refugees (Policy Statement JDX/XM B-4-2339183, cited in Kibreab 1990, p. 24).

Kibreab's documentation and consideration of this evolution of policy is far more comprehensive than appears here and should be consulted (Kibreab 1990, p. 22–37).

(i) Somali resources and *the* flow of aid funds

The refugee camps established in response to the influx from the Ogaden were often sited on economically valuable land in delicate ecological zones. This was particularly true in the riverine sites. Those on the banks of the Shebelle and the Juba, Somalia's only major rivers, occupied lands traditionally shared between agriculturalists and pastoralists. The concentration of large incoming populations displaced the local people and, at times did severe ecological damage. Although the refugees were blamed for such incursions and environmental damage (Nnoli, 1989), the location of the camps was, of course, not of their choosing.

The interim policy during 1981–1983 which permitted 'middle range' self-sufficiency projects was itself carefully stated:

Somalia, due to its meagre resources and with an economy already weakened by refugee burden, the biggest in Africa, cannot integrate or resettle refugees on its land. The economic and social fabric of our society militate against such notions (Tarrax 1982, p. 2).

The government was certainly responding to the needs of the encamped refugees. Pressures and promises of aid from USAID, the Italian government, and other bilateral donors, as well as UN and NGO sources, were also factors.

A large number of projects was facilitated by this policy. Researchers should consult the files of USAID and other bilateral donors as well as the UN agencies for further information. A problem associated with the policy of this time was that, although agricultural self-sufficiency was fundable, and although it addressed donor anxiety about feeding Somali refugees who were stereotyped as doing nothing for themselves, achieving the goal of self-sufficiency was impossible. The total allocation of land for refugee agriculture at this period was 2,975 hectares, and a limit of 10,000 hectares was established (Waldron and Waldron 1984, p. 55). On the one hand this represented an even greater incursion into the already restricted stock of arable land in Somalia. On the other, even if all the land were developed through refugee use, it could provide less than 10 per cent of refugee food needs (ibid.).

In 1983, a final policy, which permitted refugee resettlement projects began. This increased investment in, if not the fact of, development in Somalia. Spooner summarizes the underlying pressures, saying, 'This has come from international pressure, internal resolution and an inability of the international community to find the circumstances for a political solution or compromise which would allow the refugees to return home peacefully' (Spooner 1984, p. 4).

In both of the development phases, it is quite clear that, although model projects could be and were done, they could not pretend to be a solution for the problems of Somali refugees, or, as this was usually put, 'the long-standing Somali refugee problem'. Kibreab, addressing the resettlement phase, states, 'The total amount needed to settle 50

per cent [of an NRC estimated 116,667 families] will therefore be in the range of 174,999,000 US\$. This is a conservative estimate' (Kibreab 1990, p. 33). The quantity of land, water and firewood resources this implied was obviously immense.

(ii) Consultants' reports

Spurred by USAID and other bilateral support organizations, the generation of project proposals flourished from 1982 onward. The more extensive projects, which sought major funding, required professional consultants' reports as part of their elaborate logic. Kibreab, citing those 'limited to one or two technical problems' lists some 20 consultants reports and feasibility studies (Kibreab 1990, p. 4).

To discover the state of the art of project evaluation, we listed those entries in Spooner's bibliography which, from their title, seemed to be project proposals, consultants' reports and feasibility studies. Government reports were not included, nor were articles published in journals or health and water proposals. With allowances for interpretation, then, there were 49 reports dealing with settlement projects; 19 reports dealing generally with refugee projects and 14 dealing with refugee agriculture. The total is 82 project documents, most of which seem to have been done by expatriates not living in Somalia (Spooner 1984, p. 111–144). Although the list is not complete, it shows a frenzy of proposals and reports which accompanied the 1981 and 1983 shifts in government policy.

Kibreab's comments reflect a problem which was apparent on the scene — that expensive consultants' reports did not always result in development, even when projects were funded.

Many reconnaissance surveys and feasibility studies have [. . .] been conducted and some sites have even been identified as suitable for the establishment of refugee land settlements. [. . .] Two sites that we are aware of have been the objects of endless re-planning and fact-finding missions and, in one of the cases, half a decade has passed since a decision was taken by the concerned agencies to raise funds for its implementation. [. . .] In the other case, not only was a decision on implementation reached but machinery worth of 1 million US\$ was imported and is still rotting in the port of Mogadishu (Kibreab 1990, p. 30).

(iii) Qoriooley: a good place to do development

The literature in which the Somali refugee-related development projects is assessed is much less obvious than that which proposes them. We have discovered no accessible, comprehensive information on the accomplishment of project goals. The funding agencies, such as USAID which was very active in sponsoring development in Somalia in the mid- 1980s, will have this information but it is not available to researchers. However, to take advantage of what is accessible, we can make a short case study of literature from the Qoriooley refugee camps. Both Spooner's and Kibreab's excellent studies are based on work done in Qoriooley in the Lower Shebelli. A body of other information about Qoriooley also exists.

It is worth mentioning here an earlier cited comment of Rogge, who visited this camp region in August, 1992:

A few kilometres north of Corioli, two of the former UNHCR refugee camps still house some 10,000 Ethiopian refugees. [. . .] It appears that these refugees have been in a state of near dependency since the late 1970s. They were never given the resources to achieve any measure of self-support. [. . .] Clearly, there is need to address the needs of this population, and, in the absence of any repatriation, interventions which will make them more (s)elf reliant are needed (Rogge 1992, p. 27).

Without doubting Rogge's observation concerning the desperate state of affairs in these areas, this camp region had more development activity aimed at establishing refugee 'self-sufficiency' than any other in Somalia. In Spooner's bibliography, 'titles which have particular relevance to the Qoriooley area have been indicated with the uses of an asterisk notation in the margin' (op. cit, p. 111). Spooner thus identifies 21 development-related reports concerning Qoriooley. Using their titles to identify their contents, these further break down as follows: settlement (2), (Save the Children Fund USA [SCFNSA] 1983, UNHCR 1983); social survey (2), (Caffrey et al 1983p; Horton 1983); firewood, forestry and improved stoves,(4) (Savoie and Smale 1983; Clark 1982, Savoie and Smale 1984; Waldron 1982b); farming (6), including sub-topics, irrigation, animal traction, fodder, oil seed milling, (MacDonald 1982; MacDonald 1984; NRC 1981; Neubert 1981; Patterson 1984; SCF(USA) 1984); self-reliance (2), (Waldron 1982a; SCF/USA 1983); water (2), (Faillace 1983; Pra 1981); and one each for technological development, (McRobie 1983), education (Messi 1983) and community outreach (SCFNSA 1983). Since Spooner's compendium was done in 1984, it does not include a number of later reports including, most significantly, Kibreab (1990). Although this list is not complete — there were agencies other than those whose identity emerges from the previous references — it serves to indicate a considerable investment in the development projects of Qoriooley.

One unfortunate effect of the change in government policy in 1981 which began the massive turn to development by the agencies was that at times other useful agency activities were abandoned, representing a sort of 'opportunity cost'. For example, Save the Children (USA) had maintained a presence in Hiraan region, (as well as Qoriooley, where it already had started agricultural projects) until the end of 1981. There it was engaged in a number of roles, including community development, construction, and health (UNHCR 1982). By the end of 1981, it had encountered severe financial problems due to a shortfall in expected fund raising in the United States, and an inordinate delay in UNHCR's reimbursement in certain expenditures, as guaranteed by the Tripartite Agreement (Day-Thompson 1984).

When the NRC policy allowed an expansion of development in the refugee camps, Save the Children (USA) abruptly dropped its activities in the Hiraan region. The most unfortunate casualty of this was a massive inoculation campaign, which had involved thousands of refugees in the first two rounds of a three-phase inoculation program. It is, of course, medically dangerous to expose a person to an incomplete series of certain inoculations, including those involved in this campaign, since there is a danger of *increasing* sensitivity to diseases such as measles and tuberculosis. The imperative task of completing the inoculations was passed on to the excellent, but understaffed and under-equipped Refugee Health Unit, a ministry of the Government of Somalia. Although agency economics may have dictated the move, the ethical breach involved was serious (Waldron 1984, p. 10).

Qoriooley, which was served by several agencies, was a good place for development. Compared to other camp regions it had several advantages. Rainfall was higher than most camp regions, permitting some rain-fed agriculture, which would not have been the case in Hiraan, for instance. Qoriooley had direct access to the Shebelli River. A self-constructed, hand-dug irrigation system had already been established by the riverine population of Bender village. This was improved by later agency-sponsored, USAID-funded agricultural projects. Unfortunately, the villagers lost control of their own irrigation in the process (Clark, pers. comm 1989). Qoriooley had stable populations, and was among the longest established refugee camps. There were three camps, comprised of

Somali and Oromo residents, estimated by agency staff at some 20,000 people (Waldron 1983:184).

Qoriooley was also a good site for development in that it was accessible to visitors from Mogadishu. Located some 135 kilometres from Mogadishu, and connected at that time by excellent **tarmac** roads, consultants, UNHCR personnel, USAID staff, and other important visitors could make the trip to Qoriooley and return without undue hardship. Jalalaqsi, another large camp region with a large investment in development, could be reached in a day; but it was farther from Mogadishu, and the roads were much worse.

Robert Chambers has discussed the ways in which distance and accessibility affect the knowledge of rural poverty, which may also be related to the strategic placement of development projects:

Most learning about rural conditions is mediated by vehicles. This applies not only to rural tourism, but also to research. Starting, and ending in rural centres, visits follow networks of roads. With rural tourism, the hazards of dirt roads, the comfort of the tourist, the location of places for spending the night, the location of places to visit, and shortages alike of time and fuel dictate a preference for **tarmac** roads and for travel close to urban centres (Chambers 1980, p. 7)

In the practical process of development site selection, agencies need not be interpreted as being cynical. Funding is obtained by competitive grant application, part of which is addressed by the numerous consultants' reports, as we have seen. Another element, which might fit a Darwinian concept of natural selection in grant funding, is the choice of sites which make reviewers' access more advantageous.

(iv) For whose benefit? Assessing the firewood project

Assessing the success of the development projects in Qoriooley in total, is beyond the scope of this work, nor is the information available for most of the projects. In a somewhat optimistic view of future research possibilities, one hopes that agency files on this period in Somalia will become more accessible. However, some information is available concerning the **firewood** project in Qoriooley. The tentative conclusions reached, moreover, can be evaluated in comparison with similar projects in Gedo (Orr 1985) and in Hiraan (CARE 1987).

By 1981, when most of the refugee camps had been established for three years, a problem with the supply of **firewood** was increasingly apparent. In January 1982, Waldron, at the request of Dr Hussein Adam, director of the Somali Research Unit for Emergency and Refugee Development (SURERD), did a rapid rural survey of **firewood** collection problems in two regions, one of which was Qoriooley. The dimensions of the problem were easy to establish, although the full exploration of the problem and its statistical importance was to be documented by SURERD's research staff.

The results indicated that, in Qoriooley, women — both refugee women and residents of Bender village — were walking an average of 12 kilometres from the camp region to find relatively unexploited sources of **firewood**. Some women were walking a one-way distance of 17 kilometres. After a significant time spent collecting, women carried loads weighing an average of 60 pounds (27 kilogrammes), and one woman was carrying 90 pounds (41k) under the heat-stressful conditions of Somalia. Loads were carried on the back and partially supported by a tumpline (a rope connecting to a tie about the forehead).

All the women interviewed emphasized the rigours of this effort, complaining about severe pains in the diaphragm and stomach area; vomiting for two days after the collection trip; and, in one case a miscarriage. The **firewood** was required for cooking, and, in the case of the refugees, the food concerned was basically a heavy-hulled maize: without significant cooking, it passed virtually intact through the digestive tract — easily visible in faeces — and thus contributed little if anything to nutrition (Waldron 1982b; 1988).

Some comments are necessary regarding these findings. Here is an instance where nutritional assessments based on food delivered would be misleading, since the amount of food consumed (were this known) would not necessarily equate with the amount of food to which the body had metabolic access. In most camps, the heavy-hulled corn was not ground into flour because mills were not provided by aid and village mills were expensive. Moreover, the **WFP/UNHCR** report cited above did not take this into account, nor did it recognize the hard work that women were obliged to do in collecting firewood, carrying water, and so on. It considered women to require fewer rations because of an average lower body weight and, to the point at hand, 'The mission also assumed women to be "moderately active" as per **FAO/WHO** criteria' (WFP/UNHCR 1985, p. 29).

Other surveys had established the severity of the **firewood** problem, and, by 1981, **SCF/USA** had brought in a forestry consultant, applied for and received funds from **USAID**, hired an expatriate forestry project manager and Somali staff. Within two years, the funding for the project was approximately one million (US) dollars, which **USAID** records would confirm, were they accessible. An outside evaluation carried out in 1986 analysed the project in detail, and, since the report is accessible, selected comments are abstracted from it here (Harris 1986a).

While the out planting efforts and nursery efforts are considered a success by some, others raise questions about the program. **USAID** and **SCF** staff have differing ideas about the project's design and initial planning. Both groups agree to the need for **firewood** in **Qorioley**; they disagree, however on the approach to meet that need. [. . .] One forestry staff person explained that **SCF** had a contract with **USAID** for a certain number of trees — 'deliverables' — and that an organization is bound to uphold the conditions of a contract. He intended to meet those conditions but where possible, pursue a development approach he felt was more consistent with **SCF** and his own views (Harris 1986a, p. 11).

Further, again by design, the role of refugees is limited to that of menial labourer. A few refugees were trained in simple management techniques, but the vast majority were labourers neither directing their own work nor owning the fruits of it (ibid.)

Issues of the project's design came up with [Somali and expatriate extension workers]. One extensionist said that **SCF** is not usually involved in a project such as this one and expressed concern that community development and sustainability were not being sufficiently emphasized. She explained that the targets were too strict and that numbers of seedlings planted carried more weight than qualitative goals. More time she needed to plan, survey needs and provide training. Instead, most of her time was taken in production schedules (Harris 1986a, p. 12).

There are more trees growing in the camps and there is reportedly an increased awareness about the need for and care of trees, but the woodlot trees are concentrated in plantations and are owned by the **NRA** [National Range Authority], not by the refugees (Harris 1986a, p. 17).

Two other forestry projects are discussed in the literature (Orr 1985; CARE 1987). Both reports stress project design and plantings, but neither reports on firewood, either at the time of the report or in terms of prospects for the future. The **Gedo** project states, 'when the woodlots were planted, people were allowed into the woodlots to collect forage for their animals. A free permit was issued to people who wanted to forage' (Orr 1985, p. 7).

The Hiraan project findings state,

The responses of the interviewees in both refugee camps and villages indicated that the target population was aware of the forestry project. [. . .] In their responses respondents did not mention any mechanism (i.e. posters, meetings, films) used to educate them about the problems of desertification and how **planting trees could help them** solve such problems as soil erosion, and shortages of **fuelwood** and **building material** (CARE 1987, p. 26).

One conclusion to be drawn from this is that the expensive forestry projects did not provide any significant relief of the **firewood** crisis. Another is that the Somali projects indicate an inability to solve this serious problem. A third is that no significant progress has been made, based on these experiences, judging from the predictable reappearance of the same set of problems in the Rwandan refugee tragedy of 1994. Perhaps part of this syndrome derives from institutionalized amnesia. Project evaluations are the materials of assessment. If they remain the possession of agencies, in whose interests suppression lies, the ability to learn from the past will continue to be systematically thwarted. In order that they may serve the humanitarian goals of international aid, these reports must become available for independent scrutiny. Such access should be written into any contract derived from UN or national donors, and students of refugee studies must campaign for this.

(v) Women's needs were ignored

To conclude this sample assessment, it should be noted that the result of this project was not the creation of a new source of firewood, nor the restoration of Somali's slow-growing vegetation. According to a conversation with a former project director, the plantations produced very good construction poles, which became a cash crop. The dire need for a solution to the **firewood** problem was ignored as the project's goals were subverted.

(vi) Maximizing women's capabilities, reducing their vulnerability

That the needs of the refugee women both in the 1980s relief assistance programme and in the 1990s have not been adequately met is shown by the conspicuous absence of data on Somali refugee women. Anderson and Woodrow, writing about development strategies in times of disaster stress the necessity to identify capacities in order to know what strengths exist within a society, hence decreasing future vulnerabilities (Anderson and Woodrow 1989).

People in political conflicts suffer. They often need resources and assistance that outside **agencies can offer**. [. . .] Agencies who care about both the immediate and long-term needs of **these people** have a range of options. They can emphasize support of local capacities or **reduction of long-term** vulnerabilities (ibid, p. 41).

It is important to raise a critical issue here, 'How do we design and implement projects that integrate women and acknowledge the differences between men's and women's economic and social roles in ways that support the development of everyone's capacities?' (ibid, p. 66).

There are examples of projects directed towards the specific needs of refugee women. In Kenya, UNHCR's project for refugee women victims of violence deserves special mention. SIDA has also sponsored an income-generating activities project implemented by the International Development and Refugee Foundation (IDRF) and the Islamic African Relief Agency in northern Kenya. The United Nations Development Fund for Women

(UNIFEM) is planning to conduct a project feasibility study on Somali refugees under its umbrella programme for women in Crisis in Africa.

UNIFEM, with the cooperation of IRC, is currently implementing a project for Liberian refugees in Ghana following a participatory approach. This project aims to empower women and to help them to be more entrepreneurial by providing them with credit and management training in the running of small-scale businesses. The lessons learned here could be adapted and used in many parts of Africa, including Somalia, where the needs of refugee women are not being addressed adequately. As the strengths and vulnerabilities of women differ from those of men in situations of crisis and continued war, aid programmes ought to recognize the differences in their socio-economic roles, and support their respective skills and talents in order to promote development-oriented activities (Hasci 1994).

Among the very few gender-specific reports and surveys on Somali refugee women, the following deserve mention. UNHCR's recent study on Somali refugee women and violence provides an indication of the number of women raped in the camps (Mussa 1993). Radda Barnen (Swedish Save the Children) has conducted a survey on the psychological well-being of refugee mothers and their sense of competence to care for their children. This study stresses the importance of increasing community support through teacher training and identification of those within the refugee population best suited to provide social support for others — mothers as well as children (Segerstrom 1994, p. 8–9).

(vii) The model projects approach

Most of the problems addressed by the numerous development projects in Qoriooley found their parallels in the other refugee camps, both those resulting from the exodus of Ogadeni in 1978 (First Exodus) and the camps established to meet the needs of refugees fleeing Ethiopia in the mid-1980s (Second Exodus). Each of the camp regions had some development efforts addressed to them, and, in fact many of these were beneficial to those refugees who found employment, who received whatever benefits might have derived, or who even found activities associated with them which relieved the monotony and drabness of camp life. The literature contains some reference to relatively small projects, staffed by sincere and humane people, who cared deeply for the refugees, and who learned to listen to them (Mister 1985).

However, the dominant theme in the literature is established by the consultants' reports we have already surveyed. The quest for project funds and the writing of reports which, while not hiding failure, overemphasize the ways in which shifted goals and failed objectives, can, none the less, be encompassed by the term development. Zitelmann has warned that this literature 'presupposes, demonstrates and ascertains social anomy', and that, 'There is a strong tendency in consultancy reports and agency documents to follow the assumptions on which a program is based in a repetitive mode which [. . .] creates self-affirming concepts about refugees and their needs' (Zitelmann 1988, p. 3).

However, even if all the projects in Qoriooley and elsewhere had succeeded, the needs of refugees would still not have been reduced significantly. The basic problem was that, as the projects were conceived, and considering the funds they required, there it was simply impossible that they could have met the real and urgent needs of all the refugees, whether their numbers were taken to be 700,000, the official figure or 450,000, the expatriate working number. Qoriooley's agricultural project, for example, claims participation from 2,500 refugee households from a total of 7,000. Even if this number could be relied on — at one point 'participation' was reckoned by handing out free imple-

ments, and counting those who accepted them — all it shows is that the majority of those in the Qoriooley camps did not benefit. However, even if all the refugees in Qoriooley had benefitted, the project could not have been reproduced in all the refugee camps in Somalia: the project, like most, was capital intensive and required a high investment in expatriate salaries and administrative costs.

(viii) High costs, few beneficiaries

The high of cost such projects in relation to the low numbers of recipients was not unique to Qoriooley. Other final assessment reports which are available corroborate that development project costs were high and the number of recipients low, and that spending on expatriates was the largest part of the expenditure.

In the USAID-financed refugee self-reliance project carried out by Partnership for Productivity (PFP) based in Hargeisa, the 'approved financial inputs' came to US\$1,026,000 (Ferrera and LaTowsky 1987, p. 72). There was a total of 734 beneficiaries, which the report says, "is an impressive 147% of the target number of beneficiaries (500) called for" (ibid p. 3; their emphasis). The ratio of costs per beneficiary for this project is US\$1,643. The budget allocation indicates, in its line item breakdown into five sub-categories, three items ((a) personnel, [\$538,592]; (b) travel and per diem, [\$101,953]; and (c) consultant/evaluation, [\$8,000]) that totalled \$648,545 or 63 per cent of the budget. One cannot assume that all the personnel, for instance was expatriate. However, the \$141,145 for overhead, which presumably would include housing and meals for expatriates, was not counted in this figure. The occupational skills training which was the subject of this grant may well have contributed to both refugee self-sufficiency and to regional services. But the number served was a tiny percentage of the refugee population, the vast majority of whom were not affected by any project-specific development.

Another impressive report (Hall 1987) assesses efforts at income-generating projects mounted by ILO and financed by the Netherlands Government in the Hiraan area. With \$425,000, a total of 358 women were trained in making soap, farming, handicrafts, and so on. The finances of the project are difficult to abstract from the report, which is otherwise very well-expressed, and no use should be made of any specific figure here. The order of magnitude is correct, however. The ratio of cost per participant, as qualified, then is US\$1,187. No breakdown of line items is given. The only hard conclusion that can be drawn from this is that a few hundred refugees received benefit from the ILO income-generating project for women. Perhaps it is unnecessarily ironic to point out that several hundred thousand women did not so benefit.

The quote from Kibreab (1990, p. 33) has already introduced this problem of scale. The refugee settlement programs that he mentions, had they been addressed to all the refugees, would have taken 175 million dollars, an absurd amount to request from donors. See also Scudder's early report which anticipated many structural and cost problems of resettlement programs in Somalia (Scudder 1981).

These were in fact, if not in intent, model projects which could not be emulated without massive donor support, and which were not spontaneously adopted through observation and the diffusion of knowledge thus obtained by the refugees themselves. As Chambers has stated,

Project bias is most marked with the showpiece: the nicely groomed, pet project or model village, specially staffed and supported, with well briefed members who know what to say, a reasonable but not excessive distance from the urban headquarters. [. . .] Such projects

provide a quick and simple reflex to solve the problem of what to do with visitors or senior staff on inspection. Once again, they direct attention away from the rural poor (Chambers 1980, p. 11).

(ix) Better to light one candle?

It may be true that it is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness, but if that candle costs a million dollars, requires expensive administration, and thus exhausts the budget, and yet gives only a feeble light, alternative means of illumination must be sought. The Somali refugee development projects and later settlement programs were top-heavy with expatriate salaries, consultants' costs, and purchases of technology from overseas. Without questioning the motives of those who worked in the refugee camps, one must conclude that most of the investment in development in the Somali refugee context was a form of capital export, benefitting neither the Somali refugees nor the overall Somali economy.

Perhaps even more fundamental was the definition of the mandate which created a situation impossible to address through a projects-and-programmes approach to development. To receive international aid, and to be 'accountable' to donors, refugees were defined as and limited to those registered in the camps. The camps created in this way were population concentrations stripped of access to the economic strategies and social support systems which characterized their former way of life and their culture. When Stein says, 'Refugees are helped because they are helpless' (Stein 1981, p. 185), we must consider that they are 'helpless' primarily because they are in refugee camps (Waldron 1991). A better use of the funds expended in the name of development projects might have been directed to stimulating the Somali economy so that its overall ability to absorb refugees, and to allow them to support themselves, would have been increased. As Kibreab stated, an opportunity was lost when refugee camps were first established in Somalia (Kibreab 1991, p. 19).

(b) The Government of Somalia perspectives of its own

Hasci's dissertation on the Somali government's refugee policy shows how — despite the fact that the majority of the refugees had a common ethnic background with the Somali people, and despite Somalia's long-standing support for the Ogaden cause — the government had not been able to settle the refugees mainly for economic and political reasons (Hasci 1991).

The inability of the Somali leaders to achieve a durable solution was due not only to the intractable nature of the root causes of the conflict in the region, but also to the combination of limited domestic resources and the lack of long-term commitment on the part of the international donor community (ibid, pp. 127–141).

Hasci recommends viewing Somali refugee policy within the context of the internal and external pressures that shape policy formulation and implementation, since this focuses attention on the trade-offs between short and long-term goals that leaders had to make as they adopted strategies that maximize their interests (ibid, pp. 204–215).

In Somalia during the 1980s, the lack of creative solutions to the long-term needs of the refugees resulted in the further deterioration of the working relationship between the Somali government and some of the donor community representatives. As competition for preeminence in the control and management of the refugee camps continued between Somali leaders, UNHCR, USAID and others, conditions in these camps worsened. Hasci views the policy strategies and counter-strategies that the government and the agencies used as manifestations of politico-legal incompatibilities in their respective institutions (ibid, p. 244–270). Somali policy-makers found themselves walking a political tightrope, as they encountered local resistance to settlement plans while complying with the international donor community's directives which saw settlement as a means toward self-reliance, and thus as a way out of the need to continue supporting the Somali refugees (ibid, p. 185–190).

(c) Somalia's self-settled refugees: unknown and unaided

The rural and urban self-settled (or 'spontaneously settled') refugees in Somalia were not recognized by the international aid apparatus. Only those refugees who were registered in organized settlements were considered eligible for international aid. The rural and urban self-settled refugees were outside the aid 'umbrella', and no significant attempt was made to help them. This neglect of humanitarian aid is reflected in the absence of literature concerning them.

Somali government documents had always claimed that a large number of refugees were living outside the camps. The magnitude of the problems faced by these self-settling refugees, and the needs their presence implied, were consistently mentioned in government bulletins and negotiations with UNHCR. A statement made by Jama Mohamed Qalib, Minister of Local Government and Rural Development in 1981 is representative:

[In addition to those refugees in camps, there are] another 700,000 to 800,000 persons evicted from neighbouring areas who have often chosen to try to maintain their nomadic way of life, but who nevertheless have to be fed. They in many ways cause a further drain on Somalia's scarce resources. They are 'at large' in the cities, towns and countryside. Their herds are a strain on the available rangelands (Qalib 1981, p. xiv).

The presence of a sudden influx of impoverished people, whose dress often identified them as being rural in origin, was easily noticeable in the cities of Mogadishu and Hargeisa. They were not 'invisible refugees' so much as they were ignored, at least by the representatives of international aid. Somali citizens recognized them as refugees, however, referring to them as qaxooti keenty, 'someone brought by the bullet' (NRC 1985, p. 3). The term is translated poetically here. It might be better translated as 'forced migrant'.

Research and field reports are the sensory apparatus of the aid apparatus. The ignorance (or ignoring) of the self-settled refugees is all the more disturbing, since a thorough and systematic scrutiny of the available literature, and of the bibliographical references in that literature, make virtually no mention of research and reports which might have informed UNHCR about the self-settlers who surrounded their offices. The one exception to this institutional blindness was a short study by the Somali Academy (discussed later).

Even by 1980, information on self-settled (or 'spontaneously settled') refugees elsewhere in Africa was available, so that their presence in Somalia, even if this was only an abstract understanding of their existence, could have been no surprise. Chambers' lucid

presentation of the basic problems of the self-settled considered their predictable needs, problems in administration, and even discussed options in administrative institutions. It was circulated in 1976, and the preface is worthy of note in the context we are discussing:

This report is intended for internal UNHCR circulation. If its main arguments are incorrect, they should be refuted without delay. If, however, they are correct, the implications have to be faced. (Chambers 1976, p. i).

In 1979, Chambers published a version of his considerations in *Disasters*, a basic journal for professionals dealing with emergency relief (Chambers 1979a). In the same year, Hansen published the first of many articles on the social and economic experiences of self-settled refugees in Zambia (Hansen 1979, 1979a, 1994; Hansen and Oliver-Smith 1982). Betts, a pioneer in the study of forced migration, described an improvised but effective aid system developed in situ in Zaire. This appeared in a report commissioned by Euro Action-ACORD and should have been available to those addressing the problems in Somalia (Betts 1980; cited in Waldron 1989, p. 37). Why, then, were the self-settled refugees in Somalia ignored?

One reason, certainly, was the oversimplified concept of 'African hospitality'. Karadawi's comments here are elucidating:

It becomes a tragic **paradox** of African society — nurtured as Africans are with the idea that no individual **should** be sacrificed. At times of major influx, the society as a whole often tends to collapse. This traditional humanitarianism creates a convenient belief, as it absolves donor agencies from identifying and helping to solve the problems that are potentially so great (Karadawi 1983, p. 540).

Another reason which made it easier to ignore the self-settled refugees in Somalia was a facile assumption concerning role of the extensive kinship obligations defined by the Somali lineage system. In effect these misconceptions permitted the statement, 'They are taking care of themselves', to substitute for the more accurate 'We are doing nothing for them', regarding self-settlers.

The only study of self-settlers in Somalia our search unearthed is the 'Report of a Survey of Mogadishu and Hargeisa', carried out by the Somali Academy (SOMAC) commissioned by the National Refugee Commission and funded by USAID (NRC 1985). A draft copy is available in the Documentation Centre of the Refugee Studies Programme, Oxford University. Because this must be considered a rare document (outside of USAID archives), we will consider some of its major findings in depth here. To minimize repetitive citations, references will be given only for direct quotations. All of the following discussion is derived from the unique SOMAC report (NRC 1985), unless otherwise indicated.

(i) *Urban* refugees

According to the SOMAC report, 10–15 per cent of the total populations of Mogadishu and Hargeisa were refugees. Approximately 100,000 persons in Mogadishu were refugees. Fewer than 20 per cent of these were from urban backgrounds.

The report divides this population into three categories: the visible urban poor, including settlements of squatters; an equal number living as lodgers or staying with relatives; and those who have attained self-sufficiency, a relatively well-off component estimated as less than 10 per cent. The last group, the report mentions, was often difficult to determine because of the pejorative connotation of the term *qaxooti*, 'refugee' (op. cit, p. 5)

Waldron, who had worked with a minority ethnic group from Ethiopia, the Harari, was told that there were about one-thousand Harari in Mogadishu, 'But we are not refugees: we take care of ourselves' (Waldron, pers. comm.).

The study reports an interesting and significant study of origins and lifestyles (op. cit: 16). A large percentage (41 per cent) of Mogadishu's urban refugees were originally riverine farmers, a group discussed later in the report. Most of these were from regions on the Shebelli River, according to the report, not the Juba River. Of these, 19 per cent were agro-pastoralists and 22 per cent were identified as nomadic. Only 18 per cent had come from other urban regions, such as Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, Harar, and Negelli — all in Ethiopia, of course.

The report emphasizes the extended family system and the traditional concept of *marti* (guest) as basic factors underlying the accommodation of most urban refugees. It also emphasizes, in contrast to the previous mention of a misuse of the concept of African hospitality that this relationship implies a severe strain on accepting families, and that, unlike the normal reciprocity of these obligations; refugees were in a very poor position to contribute to the households accepting them, and that they had no option to return to their previous lives. 'They must thus accept the terms of "spontaneous settlement" they find in their new urban environment' (NRC 1985, p. 23). Moreover, these institutions did not take all urban refugees into account¹ the report emphasizes.

Those not accommodated by families or received as guests, were squatters among the urban poor. They are cited as being the most visible group of concern to the study. One squatter community on the fringes of Mogadishu contained an estimated 10,000 people. 'A high proportion of these are refugees, particularly agro-pastoralists and former farmers whose main concern was access to a plot and the means to build their own dwellings' (NRC 1985, p. 30).

The report ends by making a number of suggestions: a call for more research; for a greater appreciation of the problems of the refugees, of their hosts, and of the urban centres in which they had settled. It calls for land tenure studies to advise planners of settlement projects, to avoid conflict between settlers and residents, and it calls for income generating projects. Relevant to the previous discussion of such projects in the camp area, it states,

One such [income-generating] pro gram currently being planned by an NGO (Action-aid) is a small scale project funded by the UNHCR with selection of refugee candidates being jointly decided upon by HCR and NRC. Initially this involves the training of *one hundred* refugees in basic skills (op.cit, p. 37 — emphasis added).

The overall problem presented by the self-settling refugees to the cities of Somalia, which was never adequately addressed by UNHCR, is summarized in this final quotation from the SOMAC report:

This invisible refugee population has probably been absorbed at considerable cost to the Somali economy and to their kinsmen. As the economy is growing more or less at the rate of population increase, and is generating an estimated annual per capita income of less than \$300, it is hardly capable of providing additional productive work-places for this considerable influx (NRC 1985, p. 34)

Those who want to learn from the mistakes of the past must regret the absence of literature on urban and rural self-settlers in Somalia. The unanswered questions raised by the SOMAC study must be anticipated in future events. How can aid be provided to self-settlers? Is economic aid which provides more absorptive capacity to the national econ-

omy more appropriate than trying to single out refugees in camps as the sole eligible category for aid? How could such economic aid be provided without, itself, interfering with local market conditions and the productive efforts of those who might be brought into competition with aid-subsidized food and other commodities? Would the health needs of the most vulnerable be addressed in such a context? How could donors and the public opinion influencing them be convinced that strengthening national economy is better than isolating refugees in camps? And for those concerned with refugee studies, where can an intensive discussion of these topics take place, and how can the entrenched practices of aid be altered constructively?

(d) Hidden winners? The refugee–host relationship

The background literature on the inter-relationships between refugees and the local population, which is often referred to as the 'host', establishes some expectations and propositions which inform analysis of the Somali experience. The early literature on self-settling refugees, reasonably enough, also discussed their relationship with local population~.

Hansen and Oliver (1982) emphasizes that this relationship is an extension of kinship reciprocity. These exchanges both distribute goods and services and strengthen the social ties which define them. Within this context, it is both reasonable and true that hospitality is strongest between close kinsmen and weakest between unrelated strangers. 'Villagers do not believe in charity to strangers, but they recognize and practice obligations and responsibility among relatives' (Hansen and Oliver 1982, p. 19). Closeness in kinship and, at the other extreme, differences in ethnicity are thus predicted to affect relationships between refugees and hosts.

Chambers warned of economic competition between the refugees and the poorest and least skilled of the recipient population, referring to the latter as 'hidden losers' (Chambers, 1984). Citing a case from Zaire, he stated:

The reason why local children as well as refugee children had kwashiorkor was precisely because the presence of a cheap and desperate refugee labour force had depressed their levels of living, reducing the work available and lowering the wages. The final cruel cut for the poor local people is if refugees receive free food and they do not; for refugees' labour is then subsidized and refugees may be able to work for low wages on which local persons cannot survive (Chambers 1976, p. 12).

Harrell-Bond's major work with Ugandan refugees in the southern Sudan showed the complexity of the economic inter-relationships involved (Harrell-Bond 1986 p. 22). Sudanese landholders were able to expand their food production, some of which were cash crops, because of the increase in available cheap wage labour (see also McGregor 1985, 1986; Black 1986). However, the economic impact of the presence of refugees was more complex than Chambers suggests, because the agricultural sector was expanded by the refugee labour. To the extent that the agricultural sector is not a zero-sum game, the simple logic of competition doesn't apply. If the economy is stimulated, there may be more employment available. If the food produced is directed at local markets, food prices may be stable, and if refugee food reaches local markets as well, prices could even drop. Each refugee event thus presents a different range of social and economic variables, and it is for this reason scrutiny of past events, such as the Somali case discussed here, remains important.

The literature mentioned here is the result of the few studies of self-settlers and their hosts. There was very little information available on the relationship between refugees in

organized settlements and their neighbours at the beginning of the Somali influx, and the topic remains poorly documented. The significance of studying the Somali case further is thus reiterated. Once again, however, we note a scarcity of sources, and, once again, we are fortunate to have Kibreab's excellent study of the social and economic interactions between the refugees in Qoriooley (with some reference to conditions in Jalalaqsi) and their neighbours. In the recommendations which conclude this report, we will urge publication of certain key documents crucial for the analysis of the Somali refugee events. Kibreab (1990) is the most important of these. His report is now available only in loose-leaf binding in limited circulation. We will summarize his most important findings as briefly as possible here. Unless otherwise indicated, all references below will be from Kibreab (1990).

(i) *Qoriooley: refugee labour expands local agricultural economy*

Kibreab first establishes that, 'the relationship between the communities is characterized by [a] symbiotic and mutually beneficial relationship' (op cit, p. 103). Local farmers were able to overcome a bottleneck in labour supply with the arrival of refugees. This expanded the local agricultural economy. Apropos of Chambers' 'hidden losers', Kibreab concludes:

The demand for labour at least during the first years enabled a sizable proportion of the poor section of the local population in the surrounding area to earn an income with which they could buy commodities from the market. [. . .]

The arrival of refugees was [. . .] accompanied by increased opportunities for employment [. . .] the number of people from the local population taking part in wage employment is small and most of the jobs would not have been available if there were no refugees in the areas (op cit, p. 111).

(ii) *Food for the hungry*

The trade in refugee food in local market was at the core of the overall stimulation of the economy of the area. Kibreab's unjudgemental approach to this central phenomenon, it should be noted, allowed him to study the effects of this trade. Those who regarded this trade as theft, or, at best, a violation of some concept of a 'moral economy' did not understand its reality or its importance (Waldron 1987, p. 4). Kibreab points out that, because refugees had to trade to obtain a balanced diet and certain essentials,

The two communities gradually created complementary markets where refugees sold and are still selling part of their rations mainly food stuff such as cereals, wheat flour, edible oil, beans, dates, sugar, etc, and the local community reciprocated and does still reciprocate by selling milk butter, fruits, fuel wood, building materials, milk goats, sheep, donkeys, animal feed, etc (op. cit, p. 106).

Before the presence of refugees in Qoriooley, pre-harvest food shortages were characteristic, exacerbated by weak local markets with few commodities and high prices. Kibreab, whose conclusions are based on empirical evidence, states, 'The supply of large quantities of food (from refugee trade) did not only offset the strain that might have been imposed on the food market [. . .] but the supply of food in the regional markets was increased drastically leading to the fall in food prices.' (op. cit, p. 105–106).

In addition the refugee relief effort led to increased market activity, greatly improved transportation facilities, and an increase in service industries in Qoriooley town. Somali wit found expression in the name of one of the new restaurants in Qooriooley, 'Food For The Hungry', the name of one of the voluntary agencies serving the camps.

(iii) Development in spite of development projects

A tantalizing conclusion drawn from this discussion is that real economic development resulted from the underground trade in refugee food. Each of the facets of the economic impact of refugees and refugee aid may be appreciated as a goal of development: increased food at lower prices, increased wage labour, increased income from food sales, market expansion, improved infrastructure, and so on. Could this process be planned (instead of reported as food theft), and thus enhanced? Certainly, the serious economic study of the process which actually took place was warranted. Assessing possible negative tendencies, such as the way in which local markets are flooded with locally produced grain (Jackson, p. 1982) would then be possible.

Farah, in a recent consideration of grain distribution and its economic impact in the Somaliland-Ogaden region develops a different perspective, and this should be balanced with that of Holt and Lawrence. He suggests that this trade affected the various segments of society in different ways. Pastoralists, he says, benefitted from the availability of cheap and plentiful grain, and they were able to build up their herds. The urban poor and other vulnerable groups similarly benefit. But, echoing Jackson's warning, he concludes that agriculturalists and agro-pastoralists whose storage pits are full, and who find prices for grain depressed by the donor grain, have taken land out of grain cultivation. He sees this as perhaps being dangerous for the food security of the region in the long run (Farah 1994, p. 9–10).

The effectiveness of the development taking place as a result of trade in refugee food is ironically counterpoised with the futility of the Qoriooley development projects already discussed. The real hidden losers in this generally favourable picture were the pastoralists who lost important dry-season grazing lands to agency-developed farms (op. cit, p. 107), and who also lost important access routes to essential watering spots on the Shebelli River to refugee camps and agency developed farm areas. Indeed, the pastoralists were the only group of locals who deeply resented the refugees and the activities relating to them (op. cit, p. 107). Another group of partial losers were the riverine agriculturalists of Bender village, whose irrigation ditch was taken over by agency agriculture. However, these people did receive supplemental income from land rental.

The most damaging impact of the refugee presence was certainly the ecological damage done in Qoriooley and even more starkly in Jalalaqsi. By the mid-1980s, most firewood was brought into these camps, and probably all the refugee camps in Somalia, by don key cart or truck. Kibreab and others testify to the way in which the Jalalaqsi area was turned to desert, noting that it was stripped of vegetation for a 40-kilometre radius from the camps.

(iv) Cessation of aid and economic collapse: unpredicted predictable

The cessation of food aid and other economic inputs which accompanied the end of the presence of international aid for refugees in Somalia must have created the drastic recession in the economy which Kibreab has described. What had been stimulated by donor food and refugee labour now was depressed. The conditions and timing of this withdrawal of the international presence from Qoriooley and elsewhere in the camp areas are poorly documented in the available literature. Certainly, the coming of civil war and the consequent disruption of the food supply overwhelms any attempt at analysis of the economic impact of the cessation of aid. However, the structure of the event must be appreciated for future guidance. WFP economists and other analysts of the implications

of food aid should consider that, to the extent that donor food stimulates a local economy, its abrupt withdrawal will certainly cause a crash. Not only must planners recognize the reality of the trade and its effects, but they should also plan for the minimization of the effects of withdrawal.

(v) Economic mutuality, social exclusivity

Kibreab's information on the social relationships between refugees and the local population is intriguing. Despite the economic symbiosis between refugees and the host community and the high volume of trade involved, the social attitudes of one group towards the other can best be summarized as one of guarded restraint. These findings have some relevance for prospects of integration between refugees and hosts in general but most of the findings should be interpreted as being specific to the event and to the communities in interaction.

Kibreab conducted some interesting studies of attitudes toward intermarriage. These showed, in general, that both refugees and locals were hesitant to consider intermarriage. The most frequent reason stated for this was 'cultural differences'. Since Qoriooley contained two ethnic groups, Oromo and Somali, there are added complications. These get particularly knotty when statistics reveal that the Oromo express a strong feeling of cultural distance, but, in fact, engage in a significantly higher rate of intermarriage with Somali locals than do the Somali refugees! This is attributed to a relative shortage of women in the Oromo community. Perhaps part of this intricacy is a questionnaire artefact. No determination of which Somali clan family or lineage (Lewis 1961, 1964) is dominant among refugees versus locals was made, and this might be significant. Moreover, many of the local Somali are riverine people, who are seldom sought in marriage by other Somali.

Future studies of social interactions and barriers between refugees in organized settlements and local populations will need to be informed by Kibreab's study, but many questions remain. One documented conclusion of Kibreab's study, however, is that although some (16.7 per cent) of the locals considered the refugees to be 'poor and inferior', a reason for disapproving of intermarriage, this varied considerably between camp areas, and was never a dominant reason underlying the reluctance to intermarry. This contrasts with another case of famine relief in northern Kenya, inhabited by Isiolo Borana Oromo, locals referred to aid recipients as 'the village of the poor' and refused to intermarry with families thus stigmatized (Asmarom Legesse, pers. comm, 1987).

(e) The Somali Refugee Health Unit: success against all odds

The Refugee Health Unit (RHU) provides one bright spot in the records of humanitarian aid to Somali refugees. It may be surprising to those who have formed a negative opinion of African governments, and of the Somali government in particular, to realize that one of the most competent and efficient agencies working with refugees in Somalia was an organ of the Somali government, not part of the international aid regime. Considered a model of refugee health administration, the RHU has been described as, 'the most successful refugee health programme' (Heide n.d.).

Godfrey reports on the development of Somalia's refugee health policies and provides a description of how the unit was formed with the collaboration of the UNICEF, UNHCR, the Ministry of Health and some NGOs (Godfrey 1988). This account is the most recent and best description of the development of RHU policies. An important

aspect of Godfrey's account is that it makes extensive use of RHU publications including The Refugee Health Newsletter 1980 to 1988. These RHU documents are extremely valuable sources of information about the formation and experiences of a successful African governmental endeavour. Like most documents produced by the Somali government, they may be presumed lost, and consequently Godfrey's account takes on additional significance. Godfrey's report also contains an organizational chart of RHU, showing its relationship to the NRC and the Ministry of Health. It also provides information on the achievements of the RHU in the face of the withdrawal of international voluntary agencies from health services during the 1980s.

(i) RHU: A truly participatory organization

The RHU was truly participatory in approach, including refugees on its staff and in its training activities, as well as working systematically with expatriate advisors. Unlike other refugee activities, the RHU programme was refugee based in its organization. Community health workers and health trainers were chosen from the refugee community by the refugees and senior medical personnel. Godfrey considers this remarkable effort, which could have been paralleled elsewhere in the administration of relief to refugees, a success (ibid).

Oxfam endorsed the RHU as a model that could be followed in all countries hosting refugees, and emphasized its participatory approach with expatriates as 'advisors and trainers' working side by side with the Somali doctors, health workers and refugees (Shears 1983). As early as 1982, in their assessment report on the RHU's performance Waldman and Sutherland noted:

In summary, four groups are primarily responsible for the success of the RHU to date — Ministry of Health, NRC, UNHCR and voluntary agencies [. . .] the RHU in the short time of two and a half years, has built what might be the most successful large primary health care programme in the world (Waldman and Sutherland 1982, pp. 1–2).

One caveat recognized by the report is the fact that

The refugee population is very different from the non-refugees. RHU methods and policies are not directly transferrable from one to other. The RHU can serve best as a 'training ground for personnel who will be involved in PHC [primary health care], not as a template for national PHC programs, although it must be said that RHU personnel have gained considerable expertise in the areas which are common to all PHC programs particularly training of unskilled health workers (Waldman and Sutherland op. cit).

In an organizational document written five years later, RHU stressed the importance of keeping the refugee health programme participatory, cost-effective and sustainable:

By providing a consistent, simplified system that focuses on the major causes of morbidity and mortality, we hope to be able to do the most good with limited resources. The guidelines are essential for our training programs. One of the most important purposes for guidelines and a standard drug list is the ability to train and retrain health workers in multiple locations and to transfer them as needed in emergencies. [. . .] No lasting service will be done to the refugee community nor to Somalia as a whole, by the employment by expatriate medical teams of elaborate and costly treatments which cannot be sustained on their departure. (RHU, Ministry of Health 1987, p. i)

Waldman and Sutherland recommended that, in the light of the long-term goals of RHU to lessen its dependence on expatriate personnel, international aid agencies still were necessary for support of the RHU:

[Agencies] need to understand that, for all its success, the RHU remains almost entirely dependent on external sources for financing and supplies. [. . .] Many of the agencies recognize this responsibility and continue to contribute to the upkeep for 'their' camp long after their personnel have returned home. Others feel that if they are not physically present, there is nothing they need do — 'out of sight, out of mind'. But the truth is that when an agency leaves a camp, no matter what the quality of its work has been, it creates a hole into which part parts of the RHU programs will crumble unless it is rapidly filled. [. . .] Personnel and finances will be extremely important in the coming year. Cutback in either of these two areas will result in converting the successful past of the RHU into a short future (Waldman and Sutherland, op.cit:3).

With funds provided by UNHCR, the RHU continued to manage refugee health services.

(ii) RHU professionals in exile: a wasted resource

The organization of the Refugee Health Unit collapsed with the rest of the Somali government in 1991, and its well-coordinated staff was dispersed. Although this is hardly surprising, questions may be raised concerning the opportunities lost by international aid agencies in failing to use the personnel of the RHU systematically and also in failing to pay sufficient attention to the model provided by the RHU in the organization of future refugee health services.

The need for Somali-speaking practitioners familiar with local conditions is testified by the recurring outbreaks of cholera and other epidemics during the 1990s crisis (WHO 1994). However there is little evidence of how of RHU/Ministry of Health structures and personnel have been used by agency administering health programmes in Somalia.

Interviews with some of the NGOs based in Britain (SFC (UK) and Oxfam), indicate that, while the RHU infrastructures were destroyed, some agencies did manage to evacuate few of their Somali staff to Nairobi, where they advised agencies as the crisis unfolded.

In a small number of cases, Somali doctors were employed by these agencies and assigned to other third world countries. Given the desperate situation in the Kenyan refugee camps, it seems a tragedy that RHU staff, many of whom were now refugees themselves in Kenya, and the RHU model for recruiting and training refugees was not directly employed in serving the acute health needs of those residing in Utange, Liboi and the other Kenyan camps. This is certainly another instance of a lost opportunity.

Have any of the RHU operational guidelines been incorporated in any of the field handbooks of the agencies currently in Somalia, Ethiopia, Rwanda or Liberia, or is this another case of valuable lessons lost? We urge those concerned with refugee health issues to seek out and study again the experiences of the Somali government's Refugee Health Unit for the suggestions its experiences offer in the provision of competent, culturally sensitive, efficient health services, which, among other accomplishments provide a paradigm of a valuable approach to the concept of refugee participation.

In a broader sense, the present efforts directed at the restoration of Somali society and government services should make a much greater effort to identify and recruit competent Somali professionals, many of whom are in exile and without professionally relevant employment. Concerned agencies should be aware that the Centre for International Health and Cooperation in New York has published the first volume of a *Directory of*

Somali Professionals (the Centre for International Cooperation **1993**). The United Nations should seek out other such compilations and make them available to all international aid agencies. Certainly attracting professionals in exile back to their country of origin is worthy of serious attention from all who are concerned with the reconstruction of Somalia. If such professionals are to be encouraged to return to difficult conditions such as Somalia, agencies would have to offer fair salaries. This, in turn, would mean that agencies would have to terminate the established practice of giving host-country professionals a fraction of the salary routinely given expatriates. Such practices have long been viewed as prejudicial by local professionals. They need open discussion in forums of refugee studies as well by the agencies themselves.

5.1988–1994: REFUGEE FLOWS AND REPATRIATION POLICIES

(a) Villagization in Ethiopia, Civil war in Somalia

Between 1984 and 1988, a major new influx of refugees fleeing the increasing repression Mengistu Haile Mariam's rule in Ethiopia entered Somalia (Third Exodus). In northern Ethiopia and Eritrea, warfare had pushed some 400,000 refugees into the Eastern Sudan. Most of those now entering Somalia were fleeing the 'villagization' of rural communities (Cohen and Isaksson 1987; Clay et al. 1988; Survival International 1988), a resettlement programme which was to move over three million rural residents into collectivized villages. Many of the refugees from the programme were Oromo, who were pushed into exile as the Oromo Liberation Front intensified its guerilla warfare and as the Ethiopian government troops attacked Oromo communities in retaliation (Clay 1986; 1986a). Many were Somali who remained targets in the continuing climate of violence in Ethiopia.

At the same time, organized opposition from several fronts was attacking the regime of Siyaad Barre in Somalia. Among others, the Isaaq-dominated Somali National Movement (SNM) and the military wing of the Hawiye-dominated United Somali Congress (USC) were launching attacks on military targets in Somalia from safe havens inside Ethiopia. These increased from forays in the early 1980s to outright battles by the end of the decade. They too resulted in forced migrations, some into Ethiopia as refugees, some into safer regions of Somalia. The latter began the increasing movement of displaced people within Somalia which continues to the present.

Adding to the complexity of movements was the 'spontaneous repatriation', of the First Exodus population of refugees. The numbers and specific identity of these returnees are very difficult to ascertain, although they are treated as hard evidence by the contemporary agency literature, as the following quote indicates. 'The evidence to hand indicates that approximately 317,000 Ethiopian refugees had returned from Somalia to Ethiopia up to the end of October 1984' according to the UNHCR (WFP/UNHCR 1985, p. 1). This number seems to have taken on a mystique of its own.

This frequently quoted figure of '317,000 returnees' entered planning figures — both in assertions of a reduced number of refugees in Somalia, as above, and in figures used in calculations of returnees inside the Ethiopian Ogaden. This very dubious figure, which seemed to gain more credibility the more it was repeated, can be traced to a 1984 League of Red Cross communique which first reported 240,000 'registered and unregistered returnees', and then calculated the very precise figure of 317,003 registered returnees. This, it should be noted, was reached by taking a figure for registered heads of families, and then multiplying this figure by an estimated family size (League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 1984), a mathematically erroneous procedure.

In fact, forced migrations from all the sources mentioned here produced very complex populations, which typically included registered and unregistered returnees, recent refugees from Somalia, and internally displaced people from various origins, including the victims of drought. No one truly knew how many there were.

(i) 'Miracle' needed to solve the Somali refugee problem

The UNHCR was reaching a point of desperation: by late 1988, it was providing aid to 846,000 refugees in over 40 camps. The UNHCR and its constituent donors were seeking an acceptable way of ending this aid, or at least of winding down support. Other massive refugee events, especially the Eastern Sudan and Afghanistan were straining its institutional capabilities and donor support for Somalia was waning.

Kibreab, in a discussion paper states aptly:

The UNHCR and the international donor community seemed to be waiting for a 'miracle' to happen

Generally history is never made to order, but not in this case. The long-awaited 'miracle' occurred on 3 April 1988 when the Ethiopian and the Somali governments signed an agreement bringing to an end the state of **belligerency** that had characterized their relationship since the 1977 Ogaden War (Kibreab 1990a, p. 27).

(ii) Peace on earth, but little good will towards refugees

The mutual non-aggression pact signed by representatives of the collapsing Somali government of Siyaad Barre and the collapsing Ethiopian government of Mengistu Haile Miriam were measures of political expediency. Mengistu needed to concentrate his army on the forces of the Tigrean and Eritrean Liberation Fronts; Siyaad needed to force his armed opponents, particularly the SNM and the USC, out of their bases in Ethiopia: the pact signed in April 1988 achieved both these ends.

The UNHCR was another beneficiary of this pact, using it as the legal basis for its reclassification of all the refugees from Ethiopia. Since there was peace between Ethiopia and Somalia, UNHCR claimed, they were no longer eligible for refugee aid. This legal sophistry overlooked the reality: that an internal guerilla movement, the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), had been the forerunner of the Somali invasion in 1977. Presumably the punitive attacks on Somali civilians in 1978 was designed to rout these guerrillas. The peace pact did not affect conditions within Ethiopia which had produced the mass exodus of Somali refugees.

When the Cessation Clause was invoked, so was a concept of voluntary repatriation which involves some semantic sleight of hand, as explained by Cuny and Stein:

Although many people think of voluntary repatriation as a purely 'voluntary' act reflecting the individual will of the refugee, in practice the decision to return is often initiated from outside — is brought about by outside persuasion, influence and even pressure. Refugee status is not necessarily permanent; it is dependent on conditions in the homeland. The Cessation clause (Article I.C.(5)) provides that the Convention shall 'cease to apply' if the circumstances causing refugee status have ceased to exist and the refugee cannot refuse to avail himself of the protection of his country (Cuny and Stein 1989, p. 307).

Kibreab considers the reasons which the UNHCR used, some openly, some by implication, in its decision to start repatriating refugees and to cease aid. Apart from the legalism of the Cessation Clause, unfounded stereotypical blaming of the refugees (Waldron 1987) and accusations of corruption against the government certainly were involved (Kibreab 1990, p. 154). As far as dangers the returnees might face, the UNHCR asserted:

Having closely monitored the situation in the regions of origin, UNHCR is satisfied that returnees have not faced any security problems or even harassment while establishing themselves in their home region (UNHCR Position Paper 1988 quoted in Kibreab 1990, p. 153).

Cuny and Stein (1992) have pointed out that most voluntary repatriation now occurs during conflict and involves refugees re-entering troubled conditions (Cuny and Stein 1993). One wonders if recognition of descriptive facts of such returns, and the theoretical consideration of these as normative, do not provide a sanction for *promoting* returns to dangerous regions. As we will see, there were indeed dangers in the areas of return, as well as severe problems of food security.

The semantic gymnastics regarding the Cessation Clause, and the question of whether or not 'voluntary' means 'voluntary' cannot be considered further here. Kibreab's comment on the UNHCR decision seems to suffice:

There is no doubt that the UNHCR has an adequate empirical ground to re-orient its assistance programmes in Somalia, but there do not seem to be grounds which justify its hasty decision especially in the light of the fact that this was reached without consulting the refugees or even without waiting to assess their reaction to the **changed** circumstances in their areas of origin. Is this done to induce the refugees to accept voluntary repatriation? (ibid).

Professor I. M. Lewis has called attention to the political effects of the withdrawal of aid.

In the 1980s Somalia had ceased to be a banana republic and had become virtually dependent on refugee aid. The withdrawal of aid as human rights criticism increased, paved the way for the collapse of the Somali state which finally disintegrated into its traditional clan components with the downfall of the dictator Siad. The struggle for survival in this nation of opportunists then became particularly acute (Lewis 1993, p. 15).

(iii) *From refugee camps to reception centres*

Plans for repatriation began immediately. The process began with individual registration, an irrevocable act for the refugee who, by signing, gave up refugee status. Food in refugee camps in Somalia would remain at full level until January 1990. After that date, only those awaiting repatriation or those who had individually won appeal cases would receive twelve months' food in the amount and type provided in camps, and a small cash grant. In its wisdom, the UNHCR Technical Support Service report says, 'The main objective of this food assistance is to support returnees as they overcome the dependency syndrome' (UNHCR TSS Mission Report 1989). Reception centres on the Ethiopian side were planned, where some were established on the Shebelle River. We will return to them after catching up with events in Hargeisa.

(b)SNM attacks Hargeisa; Ogadeni refugees killed

UNHCR hopes for an orderly transfer of refugees into the Ethiopian reception centres were disrupted at the same time it was being formulated. In the Northwest (as the region around Hargeisa is called), the Somali National Movement, which had lost its sanctuary in Ethiopia, went on the offensive in May 1988, trying to drive Siyaad Barre's army out of Hargeisa. For clarification, it may be worth reiterating that the SNM was comprised mostly of members of the Isaaq clan-family, which is the dominant population of the Hargeisa region.

The SNM attacked Hargeisa on 31 May 1988 and after fierce fighting inside the city, it drove out the Somali army, and held Hargeisa until 13 July. During that period, SNM troops repeatedly attacked the refugee camps within the region which harboured refugees from 1978 and later refugees fleeing the villagization programme (Second Exodus). Most of these refugees were Ogadeni Somali who the Isaaq of the SNM considered likely supporters of the hated Siyaad, and thus enemies themselves.

A fully documented, carefully researched report by Robert Gersony describes the events now under consideration (Gersony 1989). It is accessible to researchers and should be consulted. Gersony reports that of the 11 camps in the region, nine were attacked by SNM forces in May 1988. 55 refugees interviewed named 241 refugees who were killed during the period of SNM ascendancy (op. cit, p. 49).

The residents of the camp demanded protection. The UN pointed out that such protection was not part of its mandate, and the government said its troops were fully employed elsewhere and could not be used to protect them. The refugees then demanded weapons for self-defence, which — initially — they did not receive. Later, as we will see, they did receive small arms. Gersony reports that of the 241 deaths cited, 90 per cent were said to have taken place before the acquisition of arms, 10 per cent afterwards.

Government troops retook the city of Hargeisa on 13 July 1988 after fierce fighting. A virtually genocidal slaughter of the Isaaq inhabitants ensued under the command of Siyaad Barre's son-in-law Mohammed 'Morgan'. South African mercenaries flew fighter bombers which, along with artillery, destroyed the city of Hargeisa. A US government report estimated that seventy percent of the city was razed (GAO 1989, p. 6), which one of the authors of this report corroborates (Hasci pers obs 1989). The US report goes on to say, 'The governor of Hargeisa estimates the present population figure to be around 70,000, down from 370,000.' (GAO 1989, p. 6). Several accounts describe the inhumanity of the vengeance wreaked upon the Isaacs of Hargeisa, mentioning among other atrocities, a mass grave filled with 500 victims whose throats had been cut.

(i) US arms shipment arrives: 'Lethal aid'

Coinciding with the turn of the battle, the US government document notes, was the arrival of a significant shipment of small arms and ammunition.

Lethal US military assistance consisting of 1,200 M16 automatic rifles and 2 million rounds of M16 ammunition, plus 300,000 rounds of 30 calibre and 500,000 rounds of 50 calibre ammunition, valued at about \$1.4 million, was shipped on June 9, 1988, with approval of the Department of State and Defense, to the Somali army under the Foreign Military Sales program. [. . .] It finally arrived on June 28 at the port of Berbera and was used by the government at a critical point in the conflict. [. . .] During the period, the Somali government supplied arms to an undetermined number of refugees to fight SNM insurgents in the north (GAO 1989, p. 9).

The same report notes that in the same period, the US Defense Department's Humanitarian Affairs Office donated a \$1 million disaster hospital unit (GAO 1989, p. 8), thus restoring a sense of balance.

(ii) Armed refugees lose refugee status

Gersony's interviews showed ambiguity concerning the participation of refugees in combat aside from self-defence within the camps. Concerning the accusation that refugees had been seen fighting against the SNM, he states:

This **allegation** was in part corroborated by refugee interviews in Ethiopia and by authoritative independent sources, but generally denied by most Ethiopian refugees residing in UN refugee camps in northern Somalia (Gersony 1989, p. 55)

In refutation of the allegations, his interviews recorded:

Most of the sixty-five refugees residing in northern Somalia denied that they had witnessed refugee men from their camps who had joined these para-military forces. They also argued that the men would not have abandoned their families' defense to fight in behalf of the Government in a war that was not their own (Gersony 1989, p. 56).

The reaction of the UNHCR, which, it should be remembered, was in the process of ending its presence in Somalia, was to rule that the Ogadeni refugees were now ineligible for further aid.

In July, 1988, UNHCR and others noticed that some of the refugees at six of the 14 refugee camps in Somalia were carrying arms. The government of Somalia told the UNHCR that the refugees were armed for their own protection. While acknowledging that Ogadeni refugees and refugee camps had been attacked by the SNM and lives had been lost, the UNHCR believed that the Ogadeni refugees had become a party to the conflict, and thus were ineligible to receive international assistance (GAO 1989, p. 9).

(iii) The quality of mercy becomes strained

The UNHCR, upon declaring that combatants were not refugees, according to the conventions defining refugee status, terminated, and then later partially restored, food aid.

Considering UNHCR's strictly humanitarian and nonpolitical mandate, the High Commissioner noted that in these circumstances it could continue to assist only those refugees who had not taken part in the conflict. [UNHCR estimated that population to be 140,000.] For humanitarian reasons, however, relief assistance continued at the original planning levels of 370,000 refugees *albeit with reduced quantities and frequency* until an agreement could be reached between the Somali government and UNHCR (GAO 1989, p. 10 — emphasis added).

The agreement was reached only after UNHCR had terminated aid in northern Somalia, and thus did not affect the reduced deliveries. How it was calculated that 50 per cent of the population of the camp was combatant is not documented in the available literature. Certainly women and children were not directly involved in the combat, although their rations were reduced. The Somali News Agency, on 26 February 1989 reported a statement from the Somali government's NRC which said that 86 refugee women and children had starved to death in the preceding two weeks in these camps. The deaths were attributed to a reduction in food rations and a lack of food supply during that period, despite warnings from the NRC (NRC 26 February 1989).

UNHCR could not be overly surprised, moreover, at the presence of refugees under arms. As early as 1982, refugees in Sigaloow camp, and reputedly elsewhere in the Hiraan region, were being forcibly conscripted from the refugee camps. One of the

authors, employed by a voluntary agency in the region at the time was requested by his project director to write letters on agency letterhead for each of his refugee employees, to serve as a protection against these razzias. When he spoke to the regional UNHCR representative, the reply was a shrugged, 'What can I do?' (Waldron, pers. obs, Belet Weyne 1982). This forced conscription was well known and can be verified. The concepts of protection and voluntary repatriation seem more flexible than the concept of refugee status.

(c) Repatriation from south and central Somalia

At the same time as a massive exodus of refugees was taking place associated with the slaughter of the residents of Hargeisa (and to which we shall return), UNHCR was beginning the process of repatriating the long-standing refugee populations from the rest of Somalia. UNHCR reached an agreement with the governments of Somalia and Ethiopia in August 1989 and the registration process mentioned previously was put into action in November of that year.

By February 1990 some 107,000 out of a total 446,000 holders of ration cards were registered, and plans began to repatriate them (Crisp and Cater 1990, p. 8).

By the beginning of 1990, the border regions in the Hiraan area were swept by the civil war. As the military wing of the USC under General Aidiid pushed toward Mogadishu, UNHCR was, of course, forced to terminate all activity in the Hiraan. An account in *African Business* states that 7,000 refugees had been returned by UNHCR as early as January 1989 — apparently before the intergovernmental agreement.

No more than 7,000 refugees had voluntarily returned with UNHCR convoys [. . .] by January of this year [1989]. UNHCR confirms this figure of 7,000 as the number who have gone back with UNHCR convoys, but stresses that the UNHCR 'believes that the number who have gone back independently is much larger' (Lawrence 1989, p. 11).

The support package for returnees was to include one to four months food, at the WFP daily allotment of 445 grams per person per day, and a cash allowance of \$130/£86 per person. This was part of an overall program which was to include transport, shelter, health and administrative costs, totalling US\$62.5 million (Multi-Donor Report, February 1991: 22). The Multi-Donor Team which surveyed conditions in the returnee areas in February 1991, to ascertain the budgetary requests for the returnees' support, estimated a need to support 200,000 returnees (Multi-Donor Report 1991, p. 1). They also recommended cutting the support packages to reduce costs (ibid.).

A somewhat naive account from one of the few agencies working with returnees from Djibouti between 1984 and 1987 shows both the shallow level of understanding of their problems, as well as some of the strategies of the returnee programmes. Regarding the first point, a report from World University Service (Canada) suggests that since the returnees shared the culture and language of the local population, re-integration would be simple:

'The great majority (of returnees) were pastoralists or combined pastoralism with limited farming. It was thus fairly easy for the returnees to be reintegrated into society' (Qualman 1987, p. 4).

The naivete of the reporter is further revealed by the assertion that, 'Livestock was associated with status and was only sold in cases of dire need' (ibid.). The trade in livestock in Somalia should have been obvious, even to the most casual observer. The need to provide returnees with economic support during the expensive process of rebuilding **herds** is also something that an agency working with returnee pastoralists might have been expected to understand.

The same report itemizes the purposes of food aid for returnees. The first purpose listed was, 'as part of the repatriation package to attract refugees to return to Ethiopia', as well as to provide food aid (Qualman 1987, p. 7). Seldom has the implicit purpose of cross-border aid, to lure people in need of food to 'voluntarily' return across the border from their refuge, been more clearly and openly stated.

(i) Things fall apart

By mid-1991, the governments of both Siyaad Barre in Somalia and Mengistu Haile Mariam were overthrown, and all orderly aid and the institutions which organized it were at least temporarily in chaos. In Ethiopia, the new Transitional Government of Ethiopia and its refugee support organization, the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA; also designated as ARA), had established a presence in the recipient regions on the Shebelle River north of the Somali-Ethiopian border by late 1991.

Conditions in this region, including river towns from Kelafo to Gode, were extremely disturbed, and the returnees were but one group in need of aid. The Ethiopian wars had taken their toll in this region at least since 1978. The riverine agricultural population had been especially victimized.

(ii) Riverine populations of the Shebelle: not 'Bantu'

The farmers of the riverine areas of the Shebelle occupy a separate status within Somali society, while none the less speaking Somali and identifying themselves with characteristic lineage connections. In the region of Kelafo they are called **Reer Beer** ('Farmer Lineage') by other Somali (Samatar 1982). Unlike many riverine populations on the Juba River, they do not identify themselves as Bantu, nor is there convincing evidence of Bantu-speaking origins (E. Turton 1975), although they are often referred to in agency literature by this term.

The danger in such inappropriate usage is that it creates a label which facilitates the separation of this population from the rest of Somali society. This becomes particularly invidious when their land is being appropriated by powerful political elite (Africa Rights 1993, p. 11). Their specialized farming economy, which is based on riverside irrigation, is normally highly productive. It also uses land which is potentially valuable. Many of these riverine farmers fled into the northern Hiraan camps of Somalia after 1978, where they formed a sizeable proportion of the population. Moreover, an NRC study concluded that 41 per cent of the urban self-settlers in Mogadishu were riverine farmers from the Shebelle River regions under discussion (NRC 1985, p. 16).

This riverine population maintained a high degree of communication with their home conditions in Ethiopia during their period of exile. There was a regular bus service to the border town of Fer Fer, connecting with transport on the Ethiopian side. In all probability they were, in fact, the bulk of the somewhat mysterious figure of 317,003 spontaneous returnees reported by the League of Red Cross report considered previously.

The riverine population, however, could not simply return to their farms after the peace accord of April 1988 and after the change of governments in Ethiopia in May 1991. As part of its resettlement and villagization policies, the Mengistu regime had repopulated the farming areas with settlers from the highlands, creating further problems for all concerned after 1991.

(iii) Donor support for repatriation minimal

Meanwhile, UNHCR's plans for an orderly repatriation were frustrated when an appeal for donor funds was virtually ignored, as the following report testifies:

The appeal received a weak response and in early 1991 most of the refugees fled to Ethiopia suddenly and without adequate preparation for proper assistance. This set the stage for the events of mid-year (DeMars 1992, p. 44).

Drought and civil war further displaced populations throughout the region of the Ogaden. By 1992, the population of the Shebelli, of which the returnees were only a part, was in crisis.

The following is a passage from a report on Gode, Kelafo and Mustahil on the Shebelli:

Up to 70 per cent of the animals [livestock] died due to the recent drought. Early in 1991 the civil war in Somalia forced tens of thousands of refugees and returnees into the region to compete for resources with numerous local drought affected persons. The wars in both Somalia and Ethiopia restricted traditional trade options which drove up local food prices. Some people were already starving to death as a cutoff of relief transport routes during May and June (DeMars 1992, p. 44).

UNHCR's appeal for US\$60 million to facilitate its repatriation plans for the Somali refugees was not fulfilled. Even the minimal support packages for the returnees thus could not be provided in the necessary numbers.

(iv) Cross mandate at cross purpose

To address the urgent needs of populations stemming from a variety of causative factors, in most of the region the UN used a novel and potentially promising cross-mandate approach in 1991.

Under the cross-mandate approach, UNHCR would operate on a community basis and provide assistance to all needy groups regardless of whether they are refugees or not (Gallagher and Martin 1992, p. 36).

Part of this plan was to involve several UN agencies, each in different regions (ibid). Although the cross-mandate policy was designed to provide administrative flexibility, its interpretation varied considerably from post to post. In Gode, all the in need received aid.

A UNHCR airlift reached Gode on June 19, and a provisional registration was quickly conducted which included refugees, returnees and local drought affected people without discrimination. Dry rations were distributed in June and July to over 42,000 beneficiaries. Internally displaced persons close to the urban centre benefitted from the cooperative, pragmatic policy (DeMars 1992, p. 44).

Downriver, in Kelafo, only registered returnees were given food:

In Kelafo, 120 km from Gode, local drought migrants were excluded from a July distribution to 27,000 fully registered returnees from Somalia done by UNHCR and the Ethiopian Administration of Refugee Affairs [ARA]. Almost 20,000 local drought affected

people received no assistance through July and their death rate remained high. After a **strongly critical** [Ethiopian Government] field report in late July the policy was changed to allow field staff of UNHCR and ARA the 'authority to respond to urgent local needs' without **waiting** for sometimes slow authorization from Addis Ababa. Drought affected persons in **Kelafo** were then fed in a combined distribution (DeMars 1992, pp. 44-45).

Mustahil, a regional border town, received no UN presence and no food from May to July. The same report says, 'Until Mustahil was reached in August, tens of thousands of returnees and drought affected persons were reduced to searching for wild "famine foods" and many could not even afford shrouds to bury their dead' (ibid.).

(v) UN official killed, *Ogaden* off limits

Yet another crisis arose in the provision of aid to the Shebelli populations when a UN official was murdered in early April 1992. The UN suspended all activities in the region at that point, including an emergency airlift of food. The region was still off-limits in June 1992. One of the problems with the direct-delivery system of providing food to Gode and nearby Shebelli River regions was the long and dangerous line of supply. Trucks leaving the port of Assab first made the circuitous route to Dire Dawa. From there they went to Harar, then on to Jijiga and finally down a very poor road to the Gode-Kelafo region. The route was at least 600 miles (900 kilometres), as well as being very dangerous with land mines, political disruptions and bandits. In the weeks preceding the murder of the official, several Ethiopian drivers were killed en route. A communique issued a few weeks before the murder of the UN official, which cannot be identified because of conditions of privileged access, stated:

Food convoys from Jijiga to Deghabour still constitute a problem because of bandit activities along the supply routes. Water tankering operation from Jijiga to the camps which was suspended for two days because of the murder of a car driver by unknown bandits has resumed.

The murder of at least six drivers was taken seriously, but was not used as a reason for abandoning the refugees, returnees and others in need of food aid in Gode. However, the death of one UN official not only put a lengthy stop to food deliveries, it also affected the general attitude of the UN and US towards the entire Somali region of Ethiopia.

The government of Ethiopia carried out a national election in June, 1992. An international team of observers, which included one of the co-authors of this report, had been invited to witness the Ethiopian national elections and their preparations. Although the invitation was from the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, much of the organization of the sub-teams was in the hands of USAID and embassy personnel. The murder was used by these extra-national organizations as the basis for what amounted to a policy of neglect of the Somali electoral region.

The Ugaz (a traditional title denoting high rank) of the Shebelli River town of El Karre invited the team to come to his region in his vehicle under his guarantee because, 'My people are dying of hunger even as they stand in line to register.' A political attache from the US Embassy, who introduced and supervised the initial presence of the group sent to Hararghe, refused this request, citing the murder as evidence of 'the nature of Somalis to settle things through aggression'. There was thus no presence of the Joint International Observer Group in the Somali region (Waldron, field notes, Dire Dawa, June, 1992). A representative of one of the political parties of the Somali region, interviewed in Harar the next day, claimed the killing was not done by anyone in Gode, but that eight men had been sent in from another region by another organization to cause trouble.

The people of Gode, including the returnees, continued to suffer, as excerpts from the following **1993** UN report emphatically establish:

We have received data indicating that the camp and non-camp population around Gode region continue to experience severe problems, as follows.

Gode Camp 1 : Prevalence of wasting in young children increased from 24% to 47% **between** August and October. Crude **mortality** rates decreased from **5.8/day** (20 x normal) to 2.2 (8x normal) between September and December.

Gode Camp 2: Prevalence of wasting increased from 43% to 60% between August and October. Crude Mortality Rates decreased from **11/10,000/day** (40x normal) in September to **2.2/10,000/day** (8x normal) in the second week of November and then rose again to **2.8/10,000/day** (10x normal) in December.

Gode Town (60,000): Crude Mortality Rates of **12–14/10,000/day** (40–50 x normal) and 40% prevalence of severe wasting were recorded at the end of September and first three weeks of October. The situation arose largely because of a delay in the general ration distribution which was eventually expected in the town on 2219. Up to 5,000 people from surrounding areas moved to Gode town in anticipation of the distribution. Many arrived in **extremely** weakened condition. The distribution eventually took place on 2110192 and was the first for some new arrivals since April. Sufficient food stocks had been in the town store for six weeks but had not been distributed due to the absence of any delegated authority in the RRC in Gode (UN/ACC/SCN, Geneva, 29 January 1993; emphasis added in last sentence only).

(vi) Bureaucratic disputes cost lives

Bureaucratic disputes cost lives. A problem in the Gode case above was whether the government agency (identified in the report as the RRC — Relief and Rehabilitation Commission) was authorized to distribute food without further authority from the capital. In Kelafo, the cross-mandate approach of the UN was not recognized by the Ethiopian ARA, which distributed only to returnees, not other famine victims. In considering the policies and practices affecting refugee from Hargeisa, a similar dispute between the administering bureaucracies occurred. UNHCR/WFP food deliveries were based on an estimate of 170,000 refugees. ARA, however, used the number of registered ration cards as its guideline, and it refuse to deliver any food at all until food for that number had arrived. Since the disparity was not resolved, ARA delayed distribution until a second round of deliveries arrived. Hunger, malnutrition and death were caused by the failure of two competing bureaucracies to reach consensus. Relevant to an earlier consideration of social stratification in terms of access to food rations, it was certainly the most deprived who suffered first and most.

Unfortunately, there is no reason to believe that conditions have significantly improved in the Shebelle region, as the following excerpt from a **15 February 1994** report indicates.

The situation in the Ogaden where several camps house displaced and returnee population~continues to cause grave concern [. . .] crude mortality rates are three to six times normal and the under five mortality rate is three times that expected in Ethiopia. Recent reports (December) show the levels of wasting in Gode are rising and may be as high as 31%. [. . .] Scurvy, vitamin A deficiency and anaemia are still being seen in clinics. For example the incidence rate of scurvy seen at Gode camp clinic in November was **3.5/1000/month**. These consistently high mortality and malnutrition rates have been reported since at least mid-1992, and can partly be explained by the fact that throughout this period general ration food delivery has been erratic. The RRC controlled food distributions have been sporadic due in part to insecurity in the area. For example, there have been attacks against truck drivers and at least six have been shot and killed. [. . .] The general **impression** here is of a situation which remains out of control and there appears to be little prospect of this changing in the near future unless different measures are taken.

The population of Gode camps (45,000) is considered to be in crisis [. . .] while the remaining 200,000 are not currently at high risk. (ACC/SCN 1994, pp. 6-7).

(d) What happened to the refugees who stayed in Somalia?

Given the severe disruption of the whole of Somali society was accompanied by extreme hardships and massive numbers of lives lost and ruined by the events of Somalia's civil war, it may seem artificially selective to attempt to follow the fates of the refugees who had been in the camps and not to discuss the fate of the population in general. We do this in the spirit of completing an investigation of this topic, rather than singling out refugees as being of sole importance. No attempt is made in this section to be authoritative, concerning the fates of the former residents of the refugee camps, but rather to represent their state of existence in the period of civil war. Only further documentation and analysis of all the people who suffered during this period will reveal an accurate picture. Most of what is briefly considered below is derived from a report made by the Inter-NGO Committee for Somalia (UK and Kenya). The on-the-spot observers were both expatriates and Somali, working in the immediate aftermath of warfare.

In June 1990, the USC attacked the major military base in the Hiraan, located in **Belet Weyne**. Siyaad **Barre's** troops, in their retreat down the Shebelli River, killed and looted in **Belet Weyne**, Buulo Burti, Jalalaqsi and Jowhar. **Belet Weyne** and Jalalaqsi were central towns in large refugee-complex areas. The team of observers, arrived in Jowhar first and found some 1,200 refugees present as the major vulnerable group there. They had made their way south, hoping that Mogadishu would provide them with protection and welfare. They needed food.

The [refugee] committee members said that the town people have collected some milk and grains for the refugees, and that they have assisted some 300 refugees to go onwards to Mogadishu. But they cited their own needs as the major factor limiting the amount of assistance they could give (**Asante et al** 1991, p. 71).

Jalalaqsi town had been deserted with the onslaught of the retreating army. Two vulnerable groups were identified, homeless townspeople and refugees who had been stranded on the camp side of the river by the destruction of the bridge. Townspeople said that of approximately 18,000 refugees who were there when the area was attacked, some 10,000 had already left for Ethiopia and Mogadishu. About 8,000 refugees were stranded. 'The overall impression was that everyone wanted the refugees to leave as soon as possible, and that included the refugees (**Asante et al** 1991, p. 75).

In Buulo Burti, where Siyaad **Barre's** troops had looted and killed, but where even more destruction of the population was to come later because this was a population thought to have supported Siyaad (**S. Samatar** 1991), the observers stated, 'The general sense was that everyone was vulnerable to the shortage and high prices of available food.' (op cit, 77).

Belet Weyne had been spared the worst excesses of destruction. However, the refugees were definitely considered a vulnerable group.

There were two groups of refugees waiting in two adjacent compounds near the army camp. Both were waiting to go to Ethiopia. The first group had come some time ago from the camps near to **Belet Weyne**, and was in the worst condition. The second had come from Jalalaqsi some days ago, and were in reasonable condition. However both had very little food left, and were in immediate need for food. Some **support** had been given to the first group by the townspeople, but they themselves were **finding** times difficult (op. cit p. 83).

Some refugees were still in the camp areas, but local residents were afraid to go to those regions because of unidentifiable mine fields, near which the refugees were attempting to farm.

One team of the observers visited Qoriooley. Food was in short supply, but the town committee thought that, if fuel was available for those tractors which had not been looted, food could be produced. Irrigation required replacement of looted water pumps.

There were still 30–35,000 persons in the Qoriooley refugee camp. Most of those remaining seemed to be Oromo — not 'Bantu' as Rogge reported (Rogge 1992, p. 27). Between 5,000 and 6,000 people presumed to be **Somali** had already left after witnessing the killing of other refugees by members of the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM). Pastoralists reported seeing other refugees killed while fleeing west, also possessions of Qoriooley refugees had been looted, including money and personal belongings.

Food was in short supply. The observations were made in March. The last ELU/CARE food ration had arrived in December. 'The Camp Chairman expressed the feeling of being abandoned' (op cit, p. 101). The report states,

Malnutrition is prevalent. We were told of one man who having lost **three** of his children through illness in the past weeks had decided to head West, after selling his belongings on the local market at low prices (op. cit, p. 101).

(i) *The fate of refugees from the central and southern Somali camps*

The final assessment of the events which followed the signing of the non-aggression pact between Mengistu Haile Mariam and Siyaad **Barre** will have to await further documentation and future analysis. Certain realities, however, are obvious. The rapidly conceived and underfunded repatriation effort would not have been an ideal model of humanitarian aid whatever conditions which surrounded it (see Kibreab 1990, pp. 152–178; 1990a).

War and famine awaited those who returned, although their specific identity is merged in the overall population under distress there. Even after the restoration of government in Ethiopia, the lack of adequate food and the failure of humane administration doomed an unnecessarily large component of that total population, including the returnees from the Somali camps.

Those who remained behind in the Hiraan and lower Shebelli camps were trapped by the civil war in Somalia. If the little information as yet available is indicative, they seem consistently to be among the homeless from the towns and villages as the hardest hit of the unimaginably damages lives throughout Somalia. We will see in the next section that those who lingered in the aftermath of the destruction of Hargeisa fared little better.

(e) The flight From Hargeisa

The destruction of Hargeisa and the massacre of its population by the troops of Siyaad **Barre** has been described earlier in this report. A quotation from Gilkes serves to summarize the events which began with the **SNM's** attempt to liberate Hargeisa, mentioned above in reference to the Hargeisa-area refugee camps occupied by Ogadeni. According to Gilkes:

General Mohammed Said 'Morgan', one of Siad **Barre's** sons-in-law, [was given] the opportunity to put into operation further elements of a pacification plan he had drawn up earlier. Government forces reacted with appalling **savagery** to the **SNM** seizure of Burao and near capture of Hargeisa. The response culminated in the bombing and artillery bombardment of Hargeisa to a point of virtual destruction. Civilian refugees fleeing towards the border were bombed and gunned indiscriminately. It was seen, probably rightly, as an attack on the whole Isaaq people, and it succeeded as no amount of **SNM** propaganda had done, in uniting the Isaaq behind the **SNM**. Over 250,000 Isaaq took up residence in the camps at Hartisheikh and Aware in the Haud inside Ethiopia (Gilkes 1993, P. 7).

Part of Morgan's 'pacification plan' involved the laying of hundreds of thousands of mines. These were designed in part to protect strategic infrastructure and military sites. However, thousands upon thousands of mines were placed in a campaign of what has been deemed 'terror mining' (DeWaal and McGrath 1993, p. 19). As that source explains:

Another government strategy was laying anti-personnel land mines to terrorise the population. This was a logical if grotesque development of the military strategy of total destruction. Many streets, markets, public buildings, clinics and open spaces (such as football pitches) were mined. Most of the approaches to the town were mined. Mines were placed inside houses; either in the courtyards or inside the dwellings themselves, to deter people from returning to their homes. Some of these mines were booby-trapped (DeWaal and McGrath 1993, p. 19).

GerSONY's account suggests that, as in all wars, both sides were implicated in the violence. However the overwhelming impact of his documentation of events through refugee interviews is to establish the violence done to civilians, who had to flee for their survival. Section by section in his document he builds the picture of 'Why Somalis Flee'. The subheadings of his report are enough, although the documentation should be read by all those who are concerned by the horrors of war. It should be read again by those who, in 1994, suspect that the lingering refugees are simply taking advantage of free food aid. Topics which indicate types of serious violence against civilians in his report: civilians killed near battle areas; attacks on unarmed civilians and watering points; attacks on unarmed asylum seekers; summary executions and other killings; systematic elimination outside conflict zone; deaths and ill-treatment in prison; deaths during looting and rape (GerSONY 1989, p. 19 et seq.).

The instruments of death throughout the internal wars in Somali were made at profit in the industrial countries. The mines were made in the USA, Belgium, Italy and Pakistan. 'Between 1982 and 1989, Siad **Barre** received \$550 million worth of arms from the United States, most of it without payment (DeWaal and McGrath 1993, p. 15). Details of this are reported in Lefebvre (1993) which also deserves scrutiny. Between 1960 and 1977, the USSR supplied another \$500,000 worth of arms.

Hargeisa was depopulated and people were attacked as they fled. The roads were mines as well. 'Hundreds of thousands of civilians fled from Hargeisa and other towns and villages. Unaware of where the minefields have been placed, many ran straight into them. Estimates of civilian deaths are impossible to affirm, although they run into the

thousands' (S. Samatar 1991, p. 19). Estimates of the numbers of refugees in the camps across the border vary considerably. Holt seems to represent a median when he says, 'By 1989 there were well over 300,000 refugees registered in camps in the northern part of the Ogaden' (Holt 1992, p. 2).

Some of the conditions and administrative practices of these camps have been discussed in earlier sections. Food was provided through direct delivery. In the early months of these camps' existence food was not provided in sufficient amounts. We have already cited the very high incidence of mortality and malnutrition in Hartisheik and other regional camps (Toole 1989; Toole and Bhatia 1992; Toole and Waldman 1988; Toole and Waldman 1990; Nieburg, B. Person-Karrell and Toole 1992). By 1990, Toole was able to report that things had improved:

The health and nutritional status of refugees in the eastern camps has continued to improve since December 1989, although the high incidence of certain communicable diseases (hepatitis, diarrhoea, and, possibly typhoid fever) is cause for serious concern (Toole 1990, p. 14).

(i) Regional conditions deteriorate with the collapse of governments

Siyaad's army in retreat devastated much of the Hargeisa region, just as it did elsewhere in Somalia. In the Northwest, the result was the displacement of an estimated 67,000 persons in the region which was to declare its independence as Somaliland.

By 1991, this region was in the midst of a new crisis, building upon the previous ones in the region, as the flow of refugees into Hartisheikh and other regional camps increased. Hogg states, 'According to UNHCR planning figures for June 1992, there were a total of over 594,000 refugees and 117,000 returnees in the northern part of the Ogaden' (Hogg 1992). Ryle, who cites figures used by UNHCR for planning in these camps, reports 579,000 refugees and 55,000 returnees. He cites an ARA estimate of 305,000 displaced persons in the adjacent region of Ethiopia.

Both Hogg and Ryle emphasize that these numbers are inflated, since they represent the number of ration cards in circulation, not the number of people entitled to receive aid (Hogg 1992, p. 2; Ryle 1992, p. 9). Although this is an important observation, regarding the amount of food entitlements, and consequently the amount of food entering the region through refugee relief, the magnitude of the problem of refugees, internally displaced, and returnees is clear. A severe drought had hit the region during this period thus compounding an already incredible scene of misery and adding to the complexities of administration.

In addition, Hogg mentions that the major source of external revenue in the region - the livestock trade with Saudi Arabia - had been ruined by war (Hogg 1992, p. 3). Holt and Lawrence point out that, 'The overwhelming feature this year [1991] is the breakdown of the formal livestock trade with Somalia in exchange for grain and other commodities' (Holt & Lawrence 1991, p. 2).

Food was delivered in massive amounts to the region, and the full discussion of the theoretical issues raised in the context of this relief effort is considered in the earlier in the section 'Donor Food and Refugees'.

(ii) Repatriation II: Hargeisa refugees and cross-border mandates

We saw in the earlier consideration of the ill-fated return of the Somali refugees from the Hiraan region into the Ethiopian Shebelle valley that the operation was beset by several problems. Although warfare on both sides of the border disrupted orderly repatriation, particularly after 1990 by which time the UNHCR had abandoned the Hiraan, the fact of warfare does not eliminate the need for an inspection of the repatriation plans and policies of that event. A basic problem was that the provision of returnee packages of food and some cash was underfunded from the outset because of 'donor fatigue'. However, a somewhat hidden dimension that was the apparent failure to plan adequate support on the receiving end of the repatriation. As discussed, the logistical problems of delivering food to Gode, Kelafo and Mustahil were extremely severe, even without the banditry which sporadically interrupted food deliveries to these inaccessible areas.

The issue is to what extent is 'voluntary' repatriation humane when it is clear that conditions in the receiving area inadequate? This question is of much more than academic importance since, at the time of writing — July 1994 — UNHCR was in the process of mobilizing two large cross-border mandate repatriations. The first we will discuss is the Hargeisa case at hand, and the second will deal with those returning from Kenya.

(iii) Repatriated and rehabilitated — or dumped in the desert?

A major force behind the repatriation of the thousands of refugees still in Hartisheikh and other camps of the region is the threat of withdrawal of support from the US. In April 1994, Marwan Elkhoury, information officer at the UNHCR was quoted as saying that:

The US government [UNHCR's main donor] has withdrawn its support from care and maintenance projects in the camps', and that 'while the question of repatriation has been agreed on both sides, discussion now surrounds the revalidation of refugee ration cards and the package of rehabilitation measures required' (Horn of Africa Bulletin 1994, p. 25).

The article concludes on a note of warning:

The NGOs are clearly concerned that all efforts should be made to ensure that the return is secure and the facilities are available for the returnees so that they do not become like refugees in their own land (ibid.).

Because we will now turn to the inner complexities of this repatriation, it will be important to keep these statements clearly in mind. If the conditions for survival and rehabilitation are not assured, these refugees will effectively be dumped in the desert, and this will be sanctioned in legalistic jargon as 'voluntary repatriation'.

(iv) UNHCR's repatriation package

Since 1991, several analyses of the problems associated with the plans for repatriation have come forth, as we will see. A theme running throughout is the lack of information about the plans for repatriation, particularly as this concerns the so-called repatriation package. The package is, of course, the means of support on which returnees will depend until they arrive at their destination inside Somaliland, and until aid for rehabilitation, is forthcoming. Yet what this package will be, and what the other components of the plans are seems veiled in secrecy. In 1991, Ryle comments, 'at the time of writing the target date is 1 February 1992. There is, however, as yet, no published plan for the operation' (Ryle 1991, p. 165). A year later, Hogg comments:

It is still uncertain how in practice the new policy will work. No detailed guidelines appear to have been worked out. Community development programmes [...] are not worked out overnight, and, in addition, they require a level of development expertise which the UNHCR may not possess. The inevitable implication is that the UNHCR will depend increasingly on other collaborating organizations to manage the programme (Hogg 1992, p. 6, footnote 2).

Farah's recent excellent analysis, which must be consulted by future researchers, suggests that the announcement of a repatriation programme without being accompanied by clear statements of plans and package amounts, has confused refugees, has interfered with spontaneous repatriation, and has further eroded the credibility of UNHCR in the region:

Broken deadlines and little publicised repatriation plans by UNHCR, marred the issue of repatriation and shrouded it with an aura of secrecy and uncertainty (Farah 1994, p. 63).

Returnees and refugees distrust UNHCR, which maintains a detached and distant approach in its relations with the recipients of humanitarian assistance in Eastern Hararghe (Farah 1994, p. 65).

Since the number of registration cards which define entitlements to food and other support in circulation is considerably greater than the actual number of returnees (Ryle 1991, p. 164), part of the UNHCR's plan is a proposed re-registration. Ryle recommends buying them back at fair prices, rather than attempting to invalidate those presently in circulation (Ryle 1991, p. 167). On this issue, Farah raises further questions:

As stated previously, relations between UNHCR and ARA and the beneficiaries are fraught with suspicion and distrust. Therefore, any sign of such an effort will trigger a movement back to the camps. It will confuse and disrupt the voluntary repatriation that has taken place since 1991 (Farah 1994, p. 65).

The statement of UNHCR's Elkhoury, quoted above, indicates that in March 1994, the package of rehabilitation measures required 'is still being discussed'. This implies more than the individual return packages but includes them. It also indicates a delayed decision making process.

To make plans in response, the implementing NGOs, the Somaliland government and its agencies, and obviously the potential returnees, all need to know what these individual support packages and other conditions structuring their voluntary rehabilitation will be. Some idea can be deduced from the packages provided residents of two of the regional camps in 1991, Teferi Ber and Dher Wanaje.

Both food and cash components of the repatriation package were limited to allow the returnees to relocate themselves in their home areas. The former consisted of one month ration, and the second of travel grant of Birr 100 for each parent and half this for each child (Farah 1994, p. 63).

To give an idea of the value of the cash component, the official exchange rate of the Ethiopian Birr to the US dollar at the time was approximately 5.5:1. The unofficial rate was much less favourable, at least 10:1. Thus the converted value of the cash component was approximately US\$18/£12 (official) or not better than \$10/£6.67 at the unofficial rates. The per diem is hardly worth consideration. Moreover, in this and other planned cross-mandate events the massive presence of returnees results in an instant devaluation in the worth of any goods, such as food, which they have to sell and at the same time will trigger inflation in the cost of the essentials they need to buy. Those without family connections or other contacts for support will have some difficulties.

Both Ryle and Farah have carried out extensive analyses of the social composition of the refugee camps in terms of lineage identity. The use of Somali lineage identity in a simplistic and deterministic fashion by expatriates who do not understand the full range of institutions and the elaborate nature of negotiations in Somali society can cause serious misunderstandings. Lineage identity is a necessary condition for understanding social alliances in Somalia, but it is not a sufficient basis, as we have discussed earlier.

However, if one has this understanding, it is possible to appreciate the work that Ryle has performed in documenting these relationships and relating them to the **post-repatriation** prospects of the returnees. Farah, a Somali himself, is in a position to discuss such implications with a full understanding of the subtle factors involved. The basic conclusion of both these authors' analyses is that some camp populations are able to make reliable connections with family and lineage members inside Somaliland. Still others may find that they are in grave danger of being utterly without support. Some will find that 'repatriation' means little more than being evicted into an area which is actively hostile to them because of their involvement in Siyaad Barre's armies and their assumed role in the destruction of Hargeisa.

Farah's report, which should be made available to future analysts of this event as an excellent example of the benefits to be derived from the in-depth understanding of a social scientist whose cultural background is relevant to the region and population of concern, indicates other concerns. He confirms that, in terms of access to food — itself determined by the number of ration cards held — there is a stratification within the refugee population.

Farah says that the stratification is evidenced by differential access to ration cards, which means in one dimension a difference in access to income through trade, and in another, difference in access to food for survival. If repatriation packages are handed out in terms of ration cards, then these differences will be perpetuated in the repatriation process.

The assumption that [. . .] cards are equally distributed **among** the beneficiaries and the implication that ration reductions will equally affect them, is **fallacy** that contradicts the circumstances obtaining in the camps.

Professionals of the failed Somali state, merchants and politicized prominent clan and lineage leaders, tend to dominate the affairs of the camps [. . .] one can say that members of these influential urban groups still remaining in the camps, do so because of vested interest they have in the appropriation of relief aid. The majority of the ordinary camp dwellers and particularly the poor sections who have no educated members among their families, manage to obtain very little additional ration, or nothing at all, from the appropriated relief goods (Farah 1994, p. 54).

(v) Reduction of rations: pushing refugees out of camps

By 1993, UNHCR had cut rations in the camps by one half, based on the erroneous idea that half the people in the camps had spontaneously returned (Farah 1994 p. 64). This reduction is certain to continue under the donor pressure mentioned in Elkhoury's statement, above. Unless UNHCR attends to the variables affecting the fates of different elements in the returnee population, they will not be performing a humane repatriation, but will indeed, simply be dismissing a caseload, as demanded by powerful donors.

(vi) Receiving resources: what awaits returnees in Somaliland?

Any repatriation plan should obviously consider the practicality of the return to the recipient area. Hargeisa was destroyed and the ruins salted with land mines. The economy of Somaliland is weak, at best, with very little margin to afford reconstruction of infrastructure, and probably very little capacity in its economy to absorb several hundred thousands of returnees without outside aid. Since Somaliland is not recognized as a sovereign entity by the international community, attracting bilateral aid is all but impossible. What plans does the United Nations have planning for the returnees within Somaliland, and what will happen to the returnees without some consideration of the questions which have arisen here?

SORRA, the Somaliland relief agency said, in reply to the earlier-quoted statement by Elkhoury,

The position of the Somaliland government and NGO community is that, although they are ready to welcome back home their brothers and sisters across the border, the country is too traumatized and war torn to accommodate the returnees and that the crucial issue of disarming, demobilizing and demining should first be addressed (Horn of Africa Bulletin 1994 p. 25).

To quote the same article (but not the direct words of Elkhoury) here:

As for the issue of mines, he (Elkhoury) says that UNHCR is undertaking a mine awareness programme in the camps and in Somaliland and will be involved in support of demining and isolating mine fields [. . .] (ibid; emphasis added).

Many residents of Somaliland, including the returnees, are already quite aware of mines, since they have watched as their family and community members have been blown apart by the mines which are scattered and unmapped throughout their area. This should provide an distinct advantage to the agency who is awarded the mine awareness project contract. 'There are thousands of victims of land mines in Somalia and Somaliland', a recent report states (Dewaal and McGrath 1993 p. 8).

This report, already cited above, elaborates on the categories of victims. 'Most of the victims are children'. 'Farmers, herders and traders are severely affected by land mines'. 'The poor suffer most from land mines. It is the poor who are compelled to cut firewood for sale in order to earn an income' (ibid.).

(vii) Mine clearance and Project Rimfire

Brief mention should be made of Project **Rimfire**, instrumented by a British commercial firm concerned with mine removal which was contracted to work with Somaliland's own Pioneers, a group of self-trained mine removal volunteers. Project **Rimfire** was funded by EEC, UNHCR, USAID and Britain's ODA.

The Africa Watch report states that 'The **Rimfire** expatriates earn over £40,000 per year' (op. cit, p. 63). **Rimfire** functioned by hiring members of the Pioneers at \$125/£83 per month. The report states that, 'At least six Pioneers have been killed and eleven injured, some of them very seriously, in land mine accidents'. Further, 'Rimfire has an official policy of paying \$2,750/£1833 to the family of a Pioneer killed while on duty. But it is evident from [. . .] testimonies that this money is not always paid' (op.cit, 6061). Labour problems arose because, in fact, injured employees were not given medical care by **Rimfire**, and the payments to the family of the deceased were not always made. This is a low point in agency behaviour in Somalia.

(f) Repatriation **III**: is this trip necessary?

The cross border repatriation of refugees from Kenya was beginning at the time of this writing, July 1994, with the end of the region's rainy season.

Information on the present status of the crossborder repatriation plan for moving Somali refugees out of Kenya is scanty. A UNHCR report dated February 1993 outlines the basics of the plan for repatriating some 300,000 refugees from the camps in Kenya, whose conditions are discussed elsewhere in this report.

The 1993 report states that approximately 240,000 of these people will be moved by road 'of whom 150,000 may require assistance' (UNHCR,1993:2). In these early plans, which reportedly have been changed, this would entail 4,000 truckloads of human beings. The same report states, 'CARE has offered to cooperate with UNHCR in organizing returns by road.' Most of these returnees had fled from the Juba River valley, where they were agriculturalists.

Reports which can not be confirmed, but which derive from an informed source, indicate that the trucking of returnees is now planned on a much smaller scale. Most of these returnees are expected to walk. The return on foot would involve walking overland, rather than on roads. Fear of more robbery, rape and murder will necessitate that these returnees travel through semidesert, overland, a distance of 130 miles/286k as measured on a direct route. This will be a 21-day walk

The 1993 UNHCR plans say the following about the support these returnees will receive:

In order to avoid a 'recycling back of returnees ('revolving door' phenomenon),and limit transport costs, *only minimal assistance will be given upon departure.* [. .]

Thus each returnee convoy will also carry the equivalent of one month's ration of three major food commodities: cereals, pulses and oil. In addition, one roll of plastic sheeting will accompany each truck so as to provide initial temporary shelter (UNHCR 1993 p. 5; emphases added.)

The inhumanity of this humanitarian aid will be directly proportional to the number of returnees forced to walk in this vzriation of voluntary repatriation. Would a UNHCR official volunteer to make this hike as a backpacking adventure, even if he could select his own equipment and provisions? Has a survey been carried out on the ground of political conditions, presence of bandits and such details as water? Presumably the assumption is that these people arrived on their own and can thus return. However children and the elderly died on that trip. That fact alone will reduce but not stop the mortality on the return: the most vulnerable are already dead.

At the time of writing, it was reported that a UNHCR airplane was shot down in the very area that these refugees will be traversing, killing among others the UNHCR protection officer. This occurred in the area of the Kenyan border which has been designated as a 'safe zone' for the staging of these crossborder repatriations.

This variant of the cross border repatriation in the Hargeisa region has paid somewhat greater attention to recipient conditions. One agency is mobilizing some 30 QIP (Quick Impact Projects), which are addressed to building up the infrastructure, increasing the absorptive capacity of the Juba Valley economy, addressing health and other necessities of the returnees. These are designed to be completed, in terms of their objectives, within a three-month period. No further comment can be made in this report, in the absence of

information, although it should be understood that a strong NGO presence has been established here by Oxfam and the International Rescue Committee.

Agricultural land is reportedly available for those who reach the Juba Valley. If they can survive the time between planting and harvesting, an estimated three months, they may have passed the crisis of return. This depends, of course, upon the absence of warlike conditions and further displacement which can not be guaranteed.

There were reportedly no large numbers of desperately needy in the region before the arrival of the returnees, except for a group of people brought in by World Concern some months ago. These internally displaced apparently were thought to be identified (in terms of expatriates' misuse of lineage logic) with local riverine people. They found no reception and squatted in the town of Bu' aale without aid. At least 13 of these doubly displaced are reported to have died since they were delivered, although the source can not be cited.

(g) Reviewing repatriation in Somalia

The processes of repatriation which have taken place since 1990 involve three major blocs of people. (1) The long-established refugees from Somalia, who fled the Ogaden in 1978 (First Exodus, Table 1); (2) The refugee population fleeing the destruction of Hargeisa (Third Exodus); and the those who fled to Kenya after 1991 (Fourth Exodus). The Ogadeni refugees and the Oromo refugees of the Second Exodus are virtually unreported in the literature.

The plans for the first group were begun as soon as the pact between Barre and Mengistu were signed. It may be said and one UNHCR official has, that 'the events of war overtook the process'. However, the process was without adequate planning or funding. Because of an incredibly bad route even without banditry the logistical connection of the populations returning to Gode and other regions on the Shebelli has never been adequate. The complex problems of addressing the needs of the returnees and subsequent refugees, famine victims and internally displaced in this region are still unsolved.

The crossborder operations in Hargeisa and Kenya seem to be poorly planned and driven by donor desires to write off these blocs of refugees, treating them as burdensome caseloads rather than human beings in need. Stereotypes of dependency and refugee manipulation of relief, supplemented by an active resentment of Somali behaviour, in the case of the murder in Gode, and especially in the case of the embarrassment of the United States and UNOSOM in that confused period.

The crossborder operations in Kenya and the region of Hargeisa are more clearly seen as social engineering than voluntary repatriation. This needs very serious review by experts in refugee law, beyond the apologia for such returns to conflict areas that we have seen in our survey of the literature. Since 1990 serious inroads have been made on the practices of humanitarian aid. The treatment of the Haitian exodus has manipulated the definition of refugee, versus 'economic migrant'. In a less obvious way, the cross border operations we have examined are eroding the concept of voluntary repatriation. These practices, if unchallenged, will affect refugee policies, and will further curtail the human rights of refugees and displaced in their millions, throughout the world.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) Research issues

1. Research must inform all concerned in future refugee events. Research can provide an informational link between refugees and administrators. In the virtual absence of appropriate research, administrators do not understand the people who they are charged with aiding, as was the case in Somalia.
2. Research is not a one-time thing. Research must be a constant endeavour if it is to inform the parties involved of changing conditions, new problems and opportunities.
3. Research should be carried out by competent professionals. The generation of **pseudodata** through inappropriate questionnaires is dangerously misleading, even while it generates apparently impressive statistics.
4. Research should be multidisciplinary in nature, and in the optimum instance would involve anthropological, sociological and economic perspectives.
5. Research, in part, would be conducted by those trained and experienced in the languages, societies and cultures of the aid recipients. Most humanitarian aid is immersed in transcultural situations. The understanding of one culture by another is never simple. Communication between cultures is always difficult, and in the case of Somalia was never adequate. The result is blatant ethnocentrism by the more powerful partner.

(b) Dissemination of information

1. Information, especially including that derived from research, will be useful to all partners involved in humanitarian aid only if it is systematically and continuously conveyed.
2. Administrators such as UNHCR and NGO's must be constantly informed of the findings of research. The implications of this knowledge must be discussed and evaluated in terms of practical, on-the-spot applications.
3. Refugees, displaced persons and other recipients of aid, in the same sense, must be informed of policies, practices, and ongoing events as they come from those administering aid.
4. State governments and international aid agencies must develop better systems for open communication than was apparent in the context of the Tripartite Agreement in Somalia. Secrecy breeds suspicion, suspicion breeds tension and resentments, and these destroy the effort to aid refugees. This was and is apparent in the practices of the UNHCR in Somalia.
5. Ongoing forums for dissemination of this knowledge must be part of the structure of aid. These should include, but not be limited to, workshops and seminars. It must also address refugees in culturally appropriate forms. Samatar (1982) points out the institutions of *geedka*, forums of oral debate and discussion in Somali culture. The

failure to identify and address such culturally appropriate vehicles of communication is essentially a waste of resources.

.(c) Sponsorship of research

1. Probably outside sponsorship of research (including forums of communication), will be necessary until sceptics within aid agencies are convinced that the investment involved is a way of saving unnecessary expense (as in the development projects discussed in the text).
2. Philanthropic agencies, governments and international development agencies should be addressed concerning the needs and practicality of this research.
3. Much of this research must be carried out by independent researchers whose careers are not affected by the results of their studies.
4. Therefore the funding agencies should give particular support to the few independent refugee studies institutions. Oxford University's Refugee Studies Programme is foremost in this field. Others in different regions, with different perspectives are also essential, such as the Refugee Policy Group.
5. Universities must devote more of their effort to the concerns of global poverty and issues of forced migration. Funding of relevant Ph.D and D.Phil research by outside sources is one important way of stimulating research and awareness on the topics we are concerned with here.
6. NGOs need to carry out more basic research on the regions and peoples appropriate to their endeavours. Some organizations have seen the value of such research, and have produced information which makes their work more efficient and is important far beyond their particular interest. In our study of recent Somali events, SCF(UK) has produced extremely useful studies. (Consultants' reports generating and evaluating model projects are not what is meant.)
7. A generation of Somalis remains without adequate higher education and technical training. Bilateral donor agencies (ODA, USAID, SIDA, CIDA and others) need to sponsor particularly qualified students for higher education. Presently they do not fall under any scholarship category due to the absence of government structures which used to act as the above agencies' counterpart in the administration of funds earmarked for students and civil servants.

(d) Preservation of, and access to, research materials

1. Government documents are important. In the case of Somalia we recommend funding a search for the National Refugee Commission's materials and their duplication and preservation, if they are found. This should be done, of course, in a manner which is sensitive to the rights of those in control of this material.
2. UNHCR and bilateral agencies such as ODA, USAID, etc must be encouraged to provide access to closed files for research by qualified persons. These are the basic archives for the field of refugee studies. We can not learn from past errors without access to them.

3. NGO archival materials are extremely important. NGOs should be required by those funding them to leave records of their research and reports of appraisal in a central repository. In both the UK and the USA, publishers are required to deposit one copy of every new issue in a national repository. There is no reason why the documents of concern could not be mandated for public record in this fashion. Internal affairs of agencies and personnel records would remain 'in house'.
4. Some NGOs, particularly those which already appreciate the value of research, maintain archives. Some of these are now open to qualified researchers. Such agencies are to be encouraged. Other major agencies are secretive and suspicious. These agencies' policies should be publicized, and their reasons for secrecy brought into the open. In our present research, for example, SCF (UK) and Oxfam (UK) have both been extremely cooperative. Other agencies have barred access to any records.
5. In this context, one possibility to encourage such access would be for funders to provide contractual encouragement, rewarding those who provide defined conditions of access, cutting a percentage from those who wish to retain secrecy.
6. Support should be given to enable central collections of the rare documentation of forced migration, such as the Documentation Centre of the Oxford Refugee Studies Programme. The United States government designates specialized collections in specific universities as national resources and supports those libraries accordingly. Refugee studies collections must obtain similar support, or documents will be lost, will become dispersed and will be destroyed for any future use.
7. Those documents which are either rare or insufficiently available should be republished. We specifically recommend the republication of Kibreab's study of social and economic conditions in Somali refugee camps (Kibreab 1990). There seem to be only a few of this left. We also recommend, in this sense, that the most interesting and best documented of agency research reports be published or made available in an inexpensive format which would permit wider dispersal. Here we think of the importance for this work of Holt & Lawrence, Ryle, and Farrah. These should be read by students and scholars of refugee studies.

(e) Recommendations for Somali sources

1. We have mentioned the need to salvage what is left of the NRC files above.
2. Funding should be provided for Somali people to write memoirs. The account by Mohammed Osman demonstrate the great value of such projects, particularly in the likely absence of state records. A memoir project would seem a likely subject for foundation support.
3. No one knows more than a hint of the life of the refugees and displaced persons in and around Somalia. A serious oral history project could salvage this information. There are scholars who have specialized in this dimension of often neglected knowledge, and they should be enlisted. Obviously this would also have to involve persons fluent in the appropriate languages, viz. Somali and Oromo. Such a project would stimulate the understanding of refugees beyond the label. It might also stimulate a respect for the rural poor of the Horn of Africa.

(f) Policy suggestions

1. UNHCR, WFP and other aid agencies are held accountable, at present, primarily in regards to the expenses involved in the fulfilment of their mandated and contracted duties. A new accountability is strongly needed which would emphasize the human dimensions of their work. No systematic appraisal is now carried out and reported to the higher echelons of the aid bureaucracies which evaluates the damages done in the name of humanitarian aid. Perhaps if the human dimension of accountability were part of performance appraisals, failures of the international aid regime would be corrected. Scurvy should not appear in a population receiving aid. Repatriation should not accentuate the suffering of forced migrants.
2. Those aid agencies which have dual agendas, such as religious conversion in refugee contexts, should be barred from the scene of humanitarian relief.
3. Higher echelon appointments throughout the UN system, and particularly in UNHCR, must be based on professional experience and competency rather than being political appointments which too often reward the incompetent but politically influential. Head of mission is too important a position in a country such as Somalia in the 1980s to be occupied by incompetents.
4. Forced migrants and their need for humanitarian aid are the direct product of political instability in economically weak states. A strong economy is much more likely to find peaceful solutions for its internal problems than a weak economy. Significant international aid, without political provisos, to such economies may do much more to avoid the expense of refugee aid than any other single effort. Political intervention, as is obvious in the recent UN intervention in Somalia, should not be attempted from armed helicopters. Lengthy negotiations would have worked better in Somalia.

(g) Field research needed in crisis situations

1. Research is constantly needed to inform the process of refugee administration, as suggested above. Research is also needed before and after the events of refugee flight.
2. Early warning systems have not prevented the massive loss of life in Somalia. A reexamination of existing early warning signs of both ecological catastrophes and political violence is needed, and a concerted search for improving early warning systems is urged. The media, whose power is crucial in mobilising public opinion is part of the mobilization of political action, and this must be appreciated.
3. To gain better understanding of the survival strategies of affected populations and the possibilities for future reconstruction, field research is needed in areas affected by war. The impact of war on the people, their socioeconomic networks, the local, regional and national economy are interrelated, essential topics. Included in such economic research is the investigation of trading and other commercial activities related to livestock and agricultural produce.
4. Notwithstanding the difficulties surrounding initiatives of peacemaking in Somalia, programmes designed to promote peace and reconciliation must be part of an overall strategy that supports the United Nations efforts in the whole of Somalia. These

programmes must be supported and informed by fieldbased research with a view of nurturing broadbased participatory mechanisms of peacemaking throughout Somalia.

5. As the violence directed at Somali refugees in the Kenyan camps attests, knowledge of conditions and troubles must be constantly sought through fieldbased research. This is particularly necessary for refugee women, but it also needed in regard the situation of men in relation to women's activities. Thus the community as a whole must be understood and constantly reviewed for important gender-related problems.

(h) Refugee **participation**

Refugees should be included as a significant voice in all phases of planning, staffing, instrumenting and evaluating aid programs affecting them. The short discussion of refugee participation on p. 29 of this report carries the spirit of our recommendation. The tenor of the report, however, indicates the broader issues involved in refugee participation, which is as much a pillar of the philosophy of humanitarian aid as a recommended practice.

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