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**SOMALI MARITIME HISTORY AND
REGIONAL SUB-CULTURES: A NEGLECTED
THEME OF THE SOMALI CRISIS**

by

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INTRODUCTION

Thirty-three years after its independence, Somalia was traumatized and truncated. In 1992 alone, an estimated 350,000 people died in what the Red Cross called "the worst humanitarian disaster in the world since the Second World War."

The destruction of Somalia was the result of systematic violence, a meticulous dismantling of property, the abuse and humiliation of civilians, mass executions, and the demolition of productive assets. No account of this devastation is complete without reference to the participants who decided to murder, rape, torture or avert their eyes amidst massive carnage. What motivated the sadistic abuses that typified Somali life in the early 1990s?

Explanations for the wanton destruction of Somalia cannot absolve individuals of responsibility. People make choices about their societies. Human aggression and hatred occur in a hostile environment where the surroundings of one's family, peers, and political institutions allow the abuse of sentient beings. In every outburst of popular anger there are people in authority, giving orders behind a "self-propelling" pogrom.¹

The historian's task to explain the pandemonium let loose in Somalia is neither simple nor pleasant. To comprehend the dynamics behind this history, we need to identify the human elements - the real Somalis - who provide the social cement that makes any analysis fit together. To show that Somalis were not simply victims of history but were active agents in making it, the historian balances impersonal social forces with subjective experiences. As Shula Marks explains:

Social historians pursue the richer moments of individual idiosyncrasy oblivious to the constraints on human agency posed by structure, and structuralists ignore the complexities of human consciousness and individual variations in the interests of overarching theory. Yet if we

are to move forward, it is necessary to bring together structure and meaning, process and consciousness, to engage in constant dialogue with empirical data and theory and to use the former to refine and modify the latter.²

To help promote that "constant dialogue," this paper suggests that an articulation between colonialism, pastoralist culture and maritime history enabled some Somalis to seize opportunities for overseas travel earlier than others.

During the colonial era, members of sub-clans from the British colonized north oscillated between modes of production to establish a regional base of entrepreneurship and merchant wealth. These Somalis were pushed and pulled by the twin social forces of colonialism and kinship. These complimentary imperatives strengthened their links to the wider world and to each other. As various lineages amassed wealth from domestic trade and wage labor (at home and abroad) they established social classes and elaborated a regional sub-culture within an otherwise homogeneous Somali culture.

COLONIALISM AND REGIONAL DIFFERENTIATION

"To get one's history wrong is an essential factor in the making of a nation."

Ernest Renan (1882)³

The Somali nation was not undifferentiated even at the beginning of the imperial intrusion. In Somali historiography, few icons seem more durable than the idea of the unique Somali ethnic nation in search of a single state. A Somali nation may have existed as a social and emotional construct but there was as much divisive misunderstanding and lethal conflict among its communities as in any country in Africa. Social class differences and sub-cultural heterogeneity resulted in nepotism and favoritism within the modern Somali state as people maneuvered to

advance their own status and place, eventually fragmenting state institutions themselves.

Having acknowledged the geographical boundaries of this cultural nation and its corporate emotions, what were its actual unifying or disparate experiences after 1880 when Somalis encountered representatives of aggressive and interventionist European states? From the mid-19th century onwards, northern Somalis took advantage of opportunities to travel abroad and advance the *tacabbir* tradition. The repatriation of receipts from Somalis working abroad back into the nomadic sector accelerated after 1869 when the Suez Canal increased trade through the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and northern Somali coast.

Isaaq lineages grew more connected to the European commercial world just when historic links between southern Somali towns of the Benadir Coast with India and Oman were reoriented southward toward Zanzibar. British imperial control at Aden skewed Isaaq trade and migration patterns more towards Europe and such colonies as India, Egypt and the Sudan enabling the Isaaq to maintain diverse contacts throughout the British Empire. Isaaq sub-clans become the first Somalis to actually live abroad in western Europe or its colonial outposts where they were socialized in two cultures.

The pastoral values and skills learned at home served Somalis well when they went abroad.⁴ Without meaning to minimize the diversity of Isaaq lifestyles, it seems that living amidst outsiders equipped them with experiences that enabled them to return home with cosmopolitan perspectives.

For instance, many northern Somali interpreters were drawn from Isaaq ranks, notably the Habr Awal (Musa Arreh) who were the first Somalis to sign treaties with the British in the 1880s. One of its members, Haji Musa Farah "Igareh" had served in India in the late 19th century and was well-known to British authorities in Somaliland and Aden.⁵ Because he played a major role on the

side of the British against the Dervishes, "Igareh" was on the Mullah's "most wanted" list. When British officials at Aden would ask a Somali to help recruit workers the Isaaq would likely identify a lineal relative. The shipping agents who hired the Somalis were already familiar with the Isaaq. A newly arrived Somali immigrant to Aden would flock to members of his primary lineage or another Isaaq sub-clan already living there.

Due to different experiences and educational attainments, the Isaaq were eventually stereotyped as resourceful or energetic. Somali sub-clans become distinguished by jobs, skills and opportunities within the colonial economy as those from the Berbera-Hargeisa-Burao-Erigavo quadrant gained easier access to international commerce and garnered the benefits of overseas travel. By the early 1960s, far greater numbers of northern Somalis than southerners were enmeshed in the international system of wage relations.⁶

The initial decades of colonial rule heightened the tendencies towards regional and clan particularities among Somalis. During the first 36 years of colonial rule (1884-1920), British imperial armies resorted to unprecedented violence and military force (especially after 1899) in efforts to subdue the Somali Dervish movement.⁷

For reasons connected with sub-clan lineages, commercial opportunities, and doctrinal antagonisms between devotees of the two schools of Islamic mysticism, many Isaaq (as Qadiriya adherents) opposed the predominantly Darod clansmen (and Salihiya partisans) of Sayyid Muhammad Abdullah Hasan.⁸ Not all Somalis suffered privation and dislocation from these conflicts. Some benefited from the wartime expenditures so that when the Dervish wars ended in 1920 "livestock and livestock products had become the most important pastoral trade items" from British Somaliland and a "process of pastoral commoditization was clearly under way."⁹

Take the years 1900-1910, for example, when the total value of duty and non-duty trade into Somaliland annually fluctuated between £650,000 and £785,000. A great deal of money circulated among Isaaq sub-clans from whom imperial forces hired or purchased horses and camels. By 1909, the British military engaged many Isaaq cooks, transport attendants and interpreters at "lucrative rates of pay." The money earned by hiring out transport animals made it unnecessary for the Isaaq to export as many domestic livestock, which in turn diminished official customs revenue.

Although British colonial authorities were pleased by Isaaq cooperation, they disapproved of the ways Somalis dispersed the wealth they acquired from military contractors, convinced it was not "spent in a way likely permanently to benefit the country."¹⁰ Somalis used their money to buy commodities that made life easier, more comfortable or simply more enjoyable. They consumed more flour and gradually substituted it for grains but a year of poor rains and hardship compelled people "to have recourse to imported food [so that] a decrease in imports was the natural result of a year of prosperity."¹¹

The expanded military expenditures simultaneously brought the physical destruction caused by modern warfare to some, yet stimulated prosperity for others. Imported cotton, sweets, soap, shoes, dates and rice increased while the export of livestock from Somaliland actually declined. "The sharp increases in government expenditure," notes Abdi Samatar, "correlate perfectly with imperial expeditions against the Dervishes."¹² Somalis who profited from the sale and hire of animals to colonialist forces enjoyed the greater prosperity of imported commodities while imperial officials sneered at their new wealth as an unproductive diffusion without practical benefit, criticizing their erstwhile Somali allies who "indulged in unwonted luxuries" and "began to affect alien habits."

Those years saw increases in imported white cloth, as Ogaden caravans (*safar*) began arriving in coastal towns to purchase the cloth to trade in the interior. "Coffee shops" appeared at remote interior locations where they served Indian tea. Somalis in coastal towns had long worn cotton *tobes*, instead of the *dhuug* or *kiran* (a one-piece, tasselled garment of tanned skin), but by 1906 some were even "dressed in ostentatious semi-European garb with turbans, waistcoats and hemp-soled shoes." The British deplored such a "degeneration from simplicity" and bemoaned the use of "imported superfluities" like the umbrella:

This anomaly alongside a camel caravan is coming into general use, although the Somali traveller, to avoid public ridicule, unfurls it only after leaving the precincts of the town, where its possession is associated with the class of native women who introduced the fashion. Blankets are also a necessity and nomads now require kerosene oil and matches to light a fire.¹³

British consular reports warned that "in a civilized country, with a settled population employed in the agricultural arts and manufactures, the standard of material comfort is associated with advancement, but in a nomadic society it denotes deterioration and a disintegration of those austere qualities requisite for enduring a hard and precarious existence." In the face of this "prodigality and effeminacy" colonialists praised Somalis who "prudently invested the surplus of their profits or earnings in livestock or kept their flocks for breeding."¹⁴

For nearly a century thereafter, distinctions increased between the expectations and class consciousness of urban and rural Somalis. Gradual integration into world trade patterns subtly changed the Somali political economy so that it became characterized by "internal militarism and external supplication." The accumulation of wealth, struggles for political power and the growth of social classes produced the "toxicity of Somali underdevelopment" whereby prosperity eluded most people.¹⁵

When an ILO team of economists visited Somalia in 1987, they reported that income generated by wages and overseas remittances and through external aid (appropriated as state expenditures) increased wealth but did little for development. Rather than mere consumption, the evaluators implied that Somalis should have invested in small plants, workshops for manufacturers or education. The investigators found a "paradox of boom in the midst of stagnant domestic activities" throughout the 1980s due to the "curse of remittances [which] enabled the Somalis to lead a comfortable life, [but] detracted from the need to build up the domestic economy." Somali spending sprees provided no basis for long-term development, only "private opulence and public penury."¹⁶

Somalis seldom implemented the investment or spending patterns advocated by their colonial overlords or modern day development advisors. Amidst the political disarray of the 1980s, doomsday economists characterized Somalia as a hopeless basket case. They advocated austerity measures to cut government expenditures, devalue the currency, and liberalize the markets. One courageous economist, Vali Jamal, reconceptualized the official statistics of the World Bank and IMF. He showed how they underestimated the nutritional value of milk in Somali diets (vital in a pastoral economy) and ignored the economic impact of overseas remittances (thirteen times the Somalia-based wage bill) earned in the Arab states and sent home through informal channels. Describing Somalia as an "unconventional economy," Jamal demonstrated that Somali civil society endured outside the formal political economy through a web of obligations where family and lineage loyalties operated on a smaller, more intimate stage.¹⁷ Resilient and adaptable, Somali families provided a social security and welfare system that distributed resources according to a traditional sense of community.

A 1987 ILO study characterized Somali families as "multi-occupational, even multi-national production units. Most townspeople [had] kith and kin in the nomadic and farm sectors

and most [had] at least a distant relative in the Gulf countries." The Somali clan system acted as the conduit for the transfer of remittances through several hands, an economic lifeline that stretched from overseas "to a nomadic family grazing their livestock across the border in Ethiopia."¹⁸ Even an admittedly low estimate suggested Somalis earned \$700 million in the Gulf states in 1985 and remitted \$280 million (30%) to Somalia. The ILO concluded that the nearly 200,000 Somalis working in the Middle East "had far-reaching consequences for levels of living, domestic economic development and management of the economy."¹⁹ These are crucial factors when analyzing the economic prospects for separatist movements in northern and northeastern Somalia.

To function as a cog in the British imperial system, Somali society was reconfigured during the middle decades of the 20th century (1920-60) as a range of middlemen (teachers, civil servants, interpreters, traders and seamen) mediated between Somalis and colonial administrators. These intermediaries reflected tensions between metropolitan demands and the needs of a nomadic society being incorporated into the world economy. To control their lives in the face of colonial intervention, some Somalis sought work overseas. Some of these intrepid migrants were never heard from again. Others managed to accumulate money which they remitted through postal money orders to kinfolk in Somaliland and most eventually returned to Somaliland.

This action by individuals was important because established Somali kin affinities could accommodate the new social classes, at least those that emerged by the early 1950s.²⁰ The shifting between rangelands and sea provided the basis for the Somali diaspora which contributed to the evolution of modern Somali politics. An uneven distribution of Somali clan representation within that diaspora reflected a sub-cultural diversity that bears on the current political upheavals in Somalia and Somaliland.²¹ Northern Somali economic history illustrates how

an extended community integrated land and sea to coexist between two different modes of production.

SOMALI PASTORALISM AND MARITIME HISTORY

Late 19th century imperialism was characterized by increased militarism within Europe and its extension overseas through the forceful establishment of political claims to Africa. In addition to its new imperialism, the 19th century was an epoch of great migrations as over 50 million people, primarily Europeans and Asians, left their homelands to travel across oceans in search of work. Migrations were important agencies through which Africans diffused culture, technology and cosmology *overland* across their continent. Yet African societies remained far less associated with seafaring.²²

Somalis were an obvious exception to this generalization. Inhabiting an ethnic region bounded by the most extensive coastline in Africa, Somalis long recognized the sea as a source of goods and ideas. Beginning in the 1830s, more Somalis initiated travel overseas and were simultaneously encouraged by their families to return to their homeland to share their wealth and knowledge. By the late 20th century, Somalis were renowned throughout East and Central Africa as workers and merchants who operated across international boundaries. Even an admittedly low "guesstimate" of the ILO study reported that by 1987, over 75% of the cash earnings of northern Somalia were remittances sent home by workers abroad.²³

By focusing on the Somali environment and its pastoralist nomadism, scholars have underestimated the importance of maritime history in Somali culture. Whether as nomads across rangelands or nomads over the seas, Somali migrations were never wanderlusts without destination. They were responses to economic opportunities or attempts to mitigate such calamities as drought, warfare or poverty.

For a millennium before the 19th century, the migrations of Arab seafarers, merchants and *jihadists* from overseas brought knowledge and goods to the Horn, maintaining its ties to the Middle East. Somalis depended on the sea for commercial imports (rice, dates and cotton) and for export markets of such items produced in the nomadic environment as aromatic gum resins and livestock. Until the mid-19th century, however, the northern Somali coast was more of a destination for Hadrami, Omani and other Arab travellers rather than the source of Somali ones.²⁴

International commercial exchange with the Somali Peninsula arose from geographic proximity and economic complementarity. The advent of Arab communities, conversions to Islam and urban intermarriages resulted in a succession of political dynasties that blended Arab, Persian and Somali cultures like those established at Ifat and Awdal (with its capital at Zeila) or along the Benadir Coast. The long intervening coastline from Zeila to Mogadishu, however, produced no political structures comparable to those at the extremities due to "a paucity of ambition-breeding wealth and commercial interests."²⁵

An exception was the semi-nomadic Mijertein Sultanate of Boqor Usmaan Mahamoud that depended partially on regional seafaring and the export of myrrh, frankincense and livestock from small Cape Guardafui ports such as Bossaso, Alula and the Ras Hafun estuary.²⁶ Knowledge of English and Arabic was not as widespread among the Mijertein who remained less renowned for long distance seafaring, as did the Warsangali clans to their west.²⁷ The rocky Makhir Coast from Las Khorai eastward to Ras Hafun, then south to Hobbia buffeted by rough winds and storms was more distant from Aden and harder to reach than from the port of Berbera.

Somalis were not a pristine society uncontaminated by the outside world. Somalis are both sophisticated and isolated, their hybrid culture full of paradoxes that rewarded conservative risk takers, encouraged shrewd gamblers and nurtured survival skills.

Nomads relied on patterns of residential flux between ecological niches to attain grazing lands. A colonial era geologist likened Somali migrations "to the pumping of a heart - diastole when it rains and the tribes spread till their grazing needs are satisfied - systole when they contract back to their permanent water holes in dry seasons. The movement is not really irregular, though measured by dates on the calendar it may seem so."²⁸ In their quest for resources, nomads were not people who simply "chased ephemeral protein and water around an ecosystem."²⁹ When motive and opportunity were present, Somali pastoralists could opt for overseas travel.³⁰

In his review of the chaotic nomenclature that defines nomadism, Tim Ingold recommends that the term not be reduced "to the technical aspect of resource extraction or livestock rearing" as if pastoralism was only "the applied science of animal breeding."³¹ Nomads did many other things besides look after their herds. Somalis who travelled overseas fifty years ago were well aware of this aspect of their resource migrations.³²

Social commitments established through the control and disposition of animal property were the framework within which pastoralist activities took place. The alternation of stasis and movement is fundamental to nomadism but it is "the way that the movement is oriented to place [and] towards an intended destination [that] makes the difference."³³ Mobility was the essential condition for successful nomadism, the key being how one schedules activities between periods of rest and motion. No Somali group was fully nomadic as their various survival strategies included overseas work, temporary movement to small towns and commercial activities.³⁴ Travel overseas typically involved only a few lineage members at one time since others had to be left behind to mind the herds. Even today, a common Somali metaphor for locating opportunities abroad (i.e. "good grazing") is embedded in the phrase, "we hear it's 'raining' in Toronto...or Stockholm...or Washington."

Somalis consider the sea a barrier and a bridge. Given their cultural abhorrence of fish consumption, few Somalis relied on fishing for a livelihood although the Somali language refers specifically to the sea and to those who live across it. When nomads refer to people who have gone to live abroad they say *badduu tegay* ["they have gone to the sea"]. The word *maax* refers to water that seeps into the bottom of a freshly dug well in a pastoralist area while *badmaax* means a seaman. Children used to be named *Badmaax* by parents who understood the richness of the sea, although this would not generally be a nomad. The term *tacabbir* is a combination of the Somali word *ta'ab* ("effort" or "work") with the Arabic *abara* ("to cross over") and refers to someone who has gone across the sea, remained abroad and only returns after a long time.

Travel in search of new experiences was an important notion in Somali nomadic culture. A well-known proverb warns "*nin aan dhul marin dhaayo ma leh*" - a man who has not travelled does not have eyes.³⁵ Somali oral literature illuminates this history of travel and worldliness. The story of the character who leaves his place of origin and requires ingenuity to survive is a motif expressed throughout Somali oral and written narratives. Upon his return, the traveler is welcomed as someone with novel experiences and new stories to tell, a hero who brings something back to his community. This "does not necessarily have to be material gain or wealth," observes Ali Jimale, "it could rather be a new idea which sheds some light on an earlier misconception about other communities [or] a different sub-culture."³⁶

For instance, there is an old story from Zeila about a man named Maax engaged to a girl called Muuliyo.³⁷ The family of Muuliyo had established a high brideprice for her, so Maax sought resources elsewhere and ventured to India. En route the ship wrecked, marooning poor Maax now left painfully separated from his beloved Muuliyo. Throughout the story, poems and songs "fly" across the sea between the distressed, out of sight, lovers:

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*Anba waan jeclaa
Inan soo dhakhsado,
Jilaashihii baa
Jidka igu xannibay.*

I am longing to return
But the southwest monsoon winds
Battered me on the way,
And keep me from coming back.

*Shinbirey la,
Ma i duulisaa
Gabadhaan jeclaa
Ma i garab dhigtaa.*

You flying birds,
Will you fly me
and put me near
to where my beloved is?

*Dooniyihii Suur iyo
Reer Saaxil yimidde,
Dooniyihii Bombay
Ma Bir baa ka jaban.*

The ships from Oman
And from East Africa have arrived,
But the ships that were to come from Bombay
Is there some broken iron on them? [what
happened to them?]

Without formal male initiation rites in a culture where even circumcision is performed with little instruction or ceremony, the journey figures prominently in the process of growing up in Somali society. Travelling together is a prerequisite for knowing someone in Somali culture, as in the saying, "*jid ma la martay; jabad ma la degtay; jidiin ma la cuntay*" - you don't really know

a person unless he has been your neighbor, your wayfarer, and your eating partner.³⁸

It is assumed that one cannot really claim to know the true character of another person unless and until one has taken a journey with him/her. The journey into the Somali interior entails travelling on foot through an unfriendly environment. Characteristics such as cowardice and stinginess reveal themselves after a few days walk in the harsh Somali terrain.³⁹

When they became ill, Somalis viewed travel away from one's locale as something of a panacea. In the early 20th century, Somalis travelled to a curative center called Sheikh Mohil near Mocha where patients abstained from camel, sheep or cow's milk. They consumed only rice, dates, sweet oil and goat's meat and reported "speedy cures."⁴⁰

Somali society was internationalized thanks to a 20th century diaspora that reached every continent. Somalis initiated overseas travel to work abroad and sent home their savings to families. They retained emotional and financial ties no matter where they went, the essence of the Somali admission that no matter where they go, they never really leave home. Their money was passed by hand through the integrity of fellow clansmen who formed an indispensable "Somali Savings Bank." This overseas trade and cash remittances escaped the control of any state based in Mogadishu.

While Somalis ventured far and wide across international boundaries on trans-resource migrations, their ties to kinfolk bound them to a local habitat. The indeterminate character of nomadic campsites precluded identification with a particular piece of land as social edifices were constructed around family relations. Nomads rarely traveled anywhere, overland or overseas, without the intention of returning "home" to their families after gathering wealth, experience and personal knowledge.⁴¹ Somali

migrations were circular, not final. Somalis might change locales but they never left their cultural background either in their mind or in their behavior. There was no Somali term for exile.

Aside from a long history of travel to Islamic centers for religious and intellectual pursuits, following the Prophet's injunction that the faithful seek knowledge from cradle to grave even if that meant travelling considerable distances, the origins of Somali migrations as workers seeking to sell their labor for a wage lay in colonial history. Such migrations may be studied in terms of individual decisions but their dynamics formed part of a global production process.

With the expansion of capitalism into a world system, people migrated within regional economies in search of investment, markets, supplies of raw materials and jobs. Capital accumulation in Somalia stimulated the migration of labor whose remittances became a prominent feature of the Somali economy. The "capital exports" of Somalia were money and the agents of capital that mediated social relations.

A century and a half of overseas migrations enmeshed Somalis in imperial, border and Islamic histories to form a diaspora of transnational cultural flows. Through a mixture of choice and compulsion, the Somali *tacabbir* maintained their pastoralist roots while traversing overseas routes.

Many questions remain unanswered about experiences that Somalis consider travel. When Somali menfolk go abroad and women stay home, how is "home" lived in relation to this practice of coming and going? How did Somalis manage to leave nomadic life, transform themselves from nomads of the desert who fed and watered camels, and become nomads of the sea who tended to ships' engines? How did they cope with the innumerable dangers, random disasters and the failures anyone encounters whenever he leaves home?" This paper offers only preliminary suggestions about this area for investigation.

One's survival as a nomad demanded continuous accounting, acute observational skills and an understanding of causality and its consequences. Along with mental acuity, Islam and physical courage, a sense of humor ranked high among the various skills that Somalis cultivated to cope with the pressures of disasters and displacement and the constant mobility necessary for pastoral success.

Somalis value a shared culture whose elements include Islam, public speaking, story telling, poetry, bravery, resilience, hospitality and the reciprocity of family ties. As this cultural information circulates from adults to children it becomes the basis for the practices and expressions around which they organize their enjoyment. Somalis culturally constructed these qualities through repetitive routines which, like all people, made them into customs "so immemorial that they look like nature," as Nathaniel Hawthorne once put it.

By culture and temperament, Somalis are an "exceptionally verbal people" for whom public speaking and expressive diction are preeminently important.⁴³ Besides their eloquent and ubiquitous poetry, the verbal art of humor binds Somalis together. Humor is what Lenny Bruce called "tragedy plus time." It undercuts self-importance and pomposity, teaches humility and tolerance, protects us from the fear of failure and the sorrow of death, and contributes to survival. Learning what makes people laugh may help us better understand how they survive.⁴⁴

The British often described Somalis as hardy people with wit and charm whom they nicknamed "the Irish of Africa." Such ethnic stereotypes, based on observed behavior, ignore complexity and individuality. The Dutch sociologist A.V. den Hollander suggests that "the image of a national character held by members of another nation often reveals more about the observers than those observed." Yet like a misshapen pearl, there is a grain of truth at the center of stereotypes.⁴⁵

British colonialists considered the Somalis and the Irish inveterate extroverts, religiously devout, and notoriously unpredictable but attractive personalities prone to fiercely resist any foreigner who tried to rule them, especially when imperial authorities least expected it. Finally of course, both the Somali and Irish nations were partitioned victims of British imperial policies whose consequences they still endure.

British military officers often disliked Somalis because they didn't accept commands well and loved to challenge authority. The Somali disdain for any outside authority rarely implied subordination. To cite a minor incident from the 1940s, the Somalis of the Protectorate Police Force were required to salute the British customs officer H.W. Claxton. Dour and phlegmatic, Claxton never returned their salutes. After working many years abroad primarily in America, a Somali *tacabbir* named Hassan "Charlie" returned home to Berbera where he took a menial job in the British Customs House. He treated British officials the same as anyone else, accustomed to greeting them casually. Hassan "Charlie" so greeted Claxton. When he got no reply, he asked Claxton facetiously if he suffered from a stomach disorder or was otherwise ill, in which case he would immediately summon a doctor.⁴⁶

While the categories with which we organize our lives work well, humor provides a renegade component of experience that refuses to be contained. The sudden glory of the joke permits us a glimpse of the world gone topsy-turvy and, at that instant, hints that we might redesign our relationships with one another and with reality. If human behavior was simply programmed and we were incapable of varying our categorical concepts, we would cease to be an adaptive species. Laughter and humor not only give us pleasure but provide valuable lessons in disorientation. This characteristic of humor provides a useful advantage that helps people adapt to different environments.⁴⁷

A perceptive teacher of Somali and European children observed that:

since skills, abilities and expectations that are nurtured by a culture can transfer and have application in new and changed settings, it is useful to investigate what some of these may be...we may find that a student from Somalia already knows from first hand experience a good deal about the nature of a *wadi*, about tap roots and the behaviour of plant life in semi-arid conditions, the anatomy, biology and physiology of a range of domestic animals, and that observational skills are extremely well developed.⁴⁸

Three important social values enabled overseas Somalis to thrive and to maintain relationships among themselves, their homeland and their host societies: 1) the social and economic basis of family linkages; 2) the self-confidence borne of nomadic upbringing with its shrewd observational and survivalist skills; and 3) a sense of humor.

Somalis overseas retain collective memories and visions about "home." Many believed they were never fully accepted by their host country and regarded the Somali lands as the place to which they eventually want to return to assure themselves a proper Islamic burial.

Somalis may not be formally well-educated but they are well-informed. They knowledgeably discuss world affairs as even nomads listen to radio broadcasts, an ideal communication medium for an oral society made easier by the dissemination of inexpensive transistor radios. In the mid-1970s Somalis followed the Watergate scandal via the BBC. One day, a nomad boarded a commuter bus that ran between Afgoi and Mogadishu. Straight out of the bush, the nomad brought his little pet monkey aboard the bus. The monkey was on a leash but kept jumping around, landing on passengers' laps and shoulders. To compound the nuisance, the monkey's erect penis was constantly touching the passengers. As

the nomad tried to restrain the monkey, he reprimanded the pet by saying, "*Naga joog, Niksonow! Isku xishood, Niksonow*" ["Stop it Nixon! Shame on you, Nixon!"]

Although there are less than 10 million Somali-speakers worldwide, the BBC's Somali Service - one of only three African language programs carried by the network - reflects the Somali diaspora as it receives over 1000 letters and faxes per month from its listeners around the world.⁴⁹ Whether it's a miner's strike in Papua New Guinea, political upheaval in Assam or controversy over the new African government in Namibia, the Service is usually able to find a Somali on location to give a report.

When a Somali buys a radio, he invariably asks, is it good enough to pick up the BBC? Radios notwithstanding, Somali worldliness mixes with naivete. Female circumcision, a form of genital mutilation, is still performed on almost all Somali women. When I told a nomadic woman in 1984 that most women in the world never have their clitorises removed, she didn't believe me. Yet literary urban Somalis know all about Shakespeare, whom they humorously call *Skeikh Subeer*. In May 1992, when Mogadishu's armed thugs heard about the riots that erupted following the Rodney King verdict, they tried to figure out a way to join their "brothers" in looting Los Angeles.⁵⁰

The Somali "grapevine" keeps tabs on the whereabouts of diaspora members. Since 1987, several Somalis in Djibouti have amassed extensive VHS collections of television coverage of Somali news taped from European, African and American networks, a "visual archives" that would have been impossible without the international links of the resourceful Somali diaspora.

Italian and British colonialism integrated Somalis into the world economy and installed government systems whose operations largely depended on external aid, not internally generated revenue. The primary exception was the Juba Valley of

southwestern Somalia where Italians established a cheap labor pool for colonial enterprises that relied on a state-instituted hut tax and cheap, coerced labor on banana and sugar plantations. After independence, most Italians were replaced by Somali planters. The next thirty years saw "no transformative development policy" as "property relations and social relations of production inherited largely from the fascist colonial regime remained the basis of the plantation economy" in the region.⁵¹ Unable to generate domestic revenue from nimble nomads who could disappear over horizons with their herds, nearly all modern Somali development projects were funded by foreign sources which minimized any incentive for attentiveness to central budgetary controls.

Somalis considered European colonial administrations essentially undemocratic and equated "government" [*dawlad*] and "ruler" with the term "oppression" [*gumeysi*] so that "colonial government" was called *dawladaha gumeysiga*. Indigenous towns that were commercial or religious in nature where law and order flourished were called *beled-salaama* [peaceful towns] as distinct from 20th century urban areas that came to be known as *beled colaadeed* (town of hatred), *beled gaalaad* (city of infidels) or *lama degaan* (cursed place). Rural Somalis could be especially contemptuous of city folk. By the 1960s, many Somalis scorned public officials as lazy, unproductive siphons "who sat around so much they made their chairs tired." Somalis treated city dwellers with suspicion and dread, and traditionally abandoned towns thought to be accursed or infected with bad luck.⁵²

From 1946 to the early 1970s, the world economy enjoyed an unprecedented expansion as the reformulation of the international monetary system facilitated the rapid growth of trade. Somali livestock export earnings boomed during that period due to the simultaneous development of oil resources in Middle East and increased livestock demands by pilgrims in Mecca. The flow of commodities, capital, and ideas were part of the interaction of economy and ecology that tied Somalia further into global

monetary exchanges. In some areas, however, the development of private wells and increased concentration of animals threatened the rangelands with soil erosion and habitat degradation.

As an external institution, the colonial state concentrated opportunities and resources in those places that Somalis feared and despised. The historical basis for the Somali nation-state differed from that of Europe where capitalism first emerged through civic social institutions and the centralized state later became an instrument to correct inequalities and imbalances. Throughout the colonial period, some sub-clans benefited from the colonial presence because they were better positioned by pre-colonial social arrangements to take advantage of opportunities afforded by collaboration.

Sub-clan differences did not necessarily mean ethnic stratification. Each Somali had strengths and weaknesses, yet the Somali nationalist agenda extolled complementarity and insisted on homogeneity. Somali civil society existed without a pan-Somali state but the modern state tended to exacerbate clan differences. Cynthia Enloe suggests that just "as one is unlikely to find a police force or a military that mirrors its plural society, so one is unlikely to find a representative bureaucracy."⁵³ Different groups commonly relied on different mobility ladders. Some choose the military, others the bureaucracy and others various parts of the private sector. In the 20th century, differential patterns of Somali commercial activity and cultural exchange developed from a historical context and regional geography. The Isaaq responded to colonialism by adapting to unfamiliar ways, borrowing ideas and modifying the skills of their immigrant predecessors.

Somalis bandied about numerous stereotypes of clan behavior that mirrored these emerging social inequalities. The pejorative slang terms *iidoor* or *kabadhe iidoora* (loosely meaning "exchange") reflect Somali disdain for the go-between, the person who amasses wealth through persistence and mercantile skills

without firm commitments to anyone else. As the Isaaq became more international and cosmopolitan, their commercial success and achievement ideology aroused suspicion and jealousy, notably among rural Darod who disliked Isaaq self-confidence and made them the target of stereotypes.

As the Isaaq formed a trading minority within a predominantly nomadic society, they maintained sub-clan affiliations like any other Somalis. Isaaq lineages took advantage of overseas opportunities while Hawiya, Ogadenis and Marehan did not. The attempt by a predominantly Darod clan regime to annihilate the Isaaq in the 1980s degenerated into lethal battles between sub-clans and social classes as ethnic Somali families used modern weaponry against each other. The military traditionally recruited soldiers from parochial, tougher regions (e.g. Marehan, Habr Gedir, and Ogadenis) where less experience in statecraft rendered them quicker to resort to brute force so that in Somalia as elsewhere, the "advent of the military often exacerbated the very conflicts that had provided the pretext for intervention."⁵⁴

The range of overseas experiences among strangers was unevenly distributed among Somali clan families. While people from the former British Protectorate constituted 33% of the population of Somalia, an estimated 66% of the Somali diaspora came from that region. This regional concentration affected the way families endured the immense hardships that characterized Somali life in the early 1990s. A 1991 survey of refugees from and returnees to the Ogaden, for example, rarely cited overseas linkages or remittances as critical devices for their economic survival.⁵⁵

Studies by Mohamed H. Muhktar and others on southern Somalia and inter-riverine political organization acknowledge long-standing Somali prejudices or stereotypes about who was noble, un-noble or an outcaste.⁵⁶ The Digil and Rahanweyn who practiced a mixture of nomadism with dry-land farming in

Somalia's "breadbasket" were socio-culturally and linguistically distinct. In the late 1940s, southern Somalis boasted that "we live in that part of Italian Somaliland which is more comfortable and fruitful than the rest..." Sheikh Abdullahi Sheikh Mohamed contended that his people, the Dighil and Mirifle clans of the Rahanwein "behave themselves better than others. We always prevent other people from making trouble or robbing."⁵⁷

European colonial intervention brought new access and social redefinition as far-reaching exchanges took place within networks of power and influence. The British colonialist state required collaborative agents so not all Somalis were victimized by the colonial enclosure. Active participants in the colonial order widened their intellectual horizons and accrued benefits that typified what Stanley Crouch calls that "bittersweet conjoining, rife with uplift and destruction."⁵⁸

The modification of established ways of thinking and acting is often provoked by contacts with strangers. Learning how to do things from other people defines a pattern of world history distinct from more local histories. "By focusing on the pattern of interaction and showing how borrowed skills and ideas always had to be adapted to fit local geographical and cultural environments," argues William McNeill, "a simple and commonsensical pattern for world history emerges within which a detailed study of any chosen time and place will fit smoothly."⁵⁹ McNeill organized his History of the Human Community around the principle that "people change their ways mainly because some kind of stranger has brought a new thing to their attention."

The new thing may be frightening, it may be delightful; but whatever it is, it has the power to convince key persons in the community of the need to do things differently. If this is true, then contacts between different cultures become the main drive wheel of history, because such contacts start or keep important changes going. The central theme of human

history, after all, is change - how people did new things in new ways, meeting new situations as best they could.⁶⁰

Every person is born inside a small and particular world. Whether it is a village, a neighborhood, a religious community or the family platoon of the Somali reer, it is there that we learn our values. The individual has his immediate family, kinship group or occupational group as a surrounding cocoon. That local network rests within a larger, more fluid social structure beyond our circle of familiarity. We are bombarded by systems of values that come to us from outside our world. Individual lives are defined in terms of events of a different sort from revolutions, famines and depressions. The contradictions of the outer world differ from the inside contradictions and strain different vulnerabilities.

The values associated with modern success and educational achievement were prominent among the Isaaq. Nonetheless, many Isaaq pondered the advantages of association with the colonialists even though the Somali Muslim League and the Somali National League were "political movements drawing on Muslim reformist ideology...reacting against colonialism and Christianization."⁶¹ For instance in the mid-1940s, two Isaaq (Habr T'Jaalo), Michael Mariano, a prominent Catholic and articulate nationalist and Sheikh Bashir a devout anti-colonialist who gained notoriety for his brazen raids on British police barracks in 1945 constantly debated each other.

Sheikh Bashir once entered Mariano's house and demanded to know why he helped Somalis study English in preparation for the annual civil servants' examination. Mariano admonished Sheikh Bashir with a Koranic retort that "he who knows other people's languages can escape from their evil."⁶² Sheikh Ali Ibrahim (a senior teacher) and Jirdeh Hussein (a prominent businessman) defended secular education, advocated sending Somalis abroad for teacher training (Egypt and Sudan) and urged that bureaucratic

standards be developed akin to those of the Indian civil service.

The Abby Farah brothers were Habr Awal, Haji Jama Mohamed "Miateyn" was Habr Yunis and "Hashish" was Habr T'Jaalo. Jirdeh Hussein, a Habr Awal, was the first Somali in the British Protectorate to get an import license when one day in the late 1930s, he simply walked into a District Clerk's Office and requested one. The Somali District Clerk who issued it to him was Haji Dualleh Abdulla, a religious man who was so pleased at Jirdeh's initiative that he promised to pray hard for his prosperity.⁶³

In the 1940s, the first modern Somali political organizations, the Somali Youth League and the Somali National League, made political freedom and territorial unification their primary objectives. They insisted that only a central state could restore the territorial integrity of pastoralist rangelands and unite its people under one independent Somali government.

An educated Somali class resorted to rhetorical devices, poetic exhortations, and mass organizations to mobilize people behind the symbols of a conceptual world whose political imperatives included support for irredentism in the quest for reunification. The obsession with changing boundaries compelled Somalis "to misapprehend the world outside their own lands and customs, to see it in terms of fanciful concepts."⁶⁴ The five-pointed star on the new flag symbolized the search for "Greater Somalia" when the state would re-unite all five Somali-inhabited territories to re-form the nation. Under the regime of Siyad Barre, government offices prominently displayed the Somali version of the "real" map of northeast Africa as if it had already been redrawn.

The colonialist division of Somali lands created a national sense of humiliation and resentment. The fragmentation of the Somalis was diagnosed as a "wound" inflicted by Christian strangers who had "dismembered" the Somali lands. The sole

intellectual goal and common denominator for advocates of Somali national consciousness was unification under a single Somali state. To minimize antagonisms within an agro-pastoral culture, nationalists insisted that Somalis unify behind the nationalist project. Without a whole Somali nation, Somali identity was incomplete.

During the 1950s, Somali clans united under this banner of anti-colonialism. Popular support for the reunification campaign to create a "Greater Somali" identity entailed an "underlying spirit of national unity which, under severe provocation, unleashed considerable emotion."⁶⁵ Amidst the era of African decolonization, the Somali Republic was formed on July 1, 1960 when the ex-British and ex-Italian regions united. The tenuous unity of an externally-oriented state laid over the fissionary tendencies of sub-clan society. The new Somali anthem, *Soomaliya Ha Noolaato* (Long Live Somalia) had only a title, no words: it was composed by an Italian.⁶⁶

When African states emerged from colonialism in the 1950s, they agreed to maintain the boundaries established by European colonialists. It was thought that strong governments would engineer development, initiate social reforms and create structures with a sense of national unity. Inside those boundaries, ethnic groups competed vigorously for opportunities and privileges that came from affiliation with the government in power. Whichever group controlled the capital and its symbols of power received critical assistance during the decades of US-Soviet rivalry in Africa. In this sense, Somalia was no exception to a prevailing pattern.

Although most northern Somalis supported the union, the two territories were individual colonial states for over fifty years and had grown institutionally and historically distinctive. Once political independence and partial reunification were achieved, Somalis fought among themselves as regional sub-cultures, aggravated by social class competition emerged to produce

conflicts as lethal as those anywhere in the world.⁶⁷ These communal affinities became the basis for post-colonial competition over public patronage and international aid, a struggle among the Somali ruling class that "invented clanism as a means of mobilizing the population while its members competed to capture the state in order to enrich themselves."⁶⁸

Metropolitan affinities characterized the British and Italian offspring who aspired to rule postcolonial Somalia. When Isaaq and Dolbahanta civil servants from northern Somalia moved to the new unified capital of Mogadishu they experienced culture shock as many mingled with Hawiya and Rahanwein for the first time. Unfamiliar southern dialects and the Italian language competed with English; people took siestas instead of playing soccer; they ate pasta instead of rice, and preferred coffee to tea.

At first, Somalis humorously acknowledged such elementary regional elements as speech patterns. A popular joke told of a northerner who moved south to work for the early nationalist government. While getting a haircut in Mogadishu, he asked the barber, "please hand me that magazine from the *kabadhka*." The barber, a southerner, testily replied, "what's a *kabadhka*? You northerners always use foreign words. That's not a *kabadhka*, it's an *armajaha*."⁶⁹

At a deeper level, the colonial experience of Somalis under British rule differed from those under the Italians which produced different concepts of governance, financial systems and trading practices. Italy has been called a country run as a protection racket, where clientelism built into everyday life spreads money around so that every state job belongs in some way to a political party.⁷⁰ Northern Somalis from a British colonial tradition began to see themselves as distinct from southerners. When social class differences, clan particularism, and distinctive colonial histories were manipulated and aggravated by the Siyad regime, the result was economic discrimination and

genocidal madness comparable to the ethnic cleansing that overwhelmed Yugoslavia in 1991-92.⁷¹

When they recall the horrors of being terrorized by a veritable foreign army of occupation, the bitterest complaint among northern Somalis throughout the 1980s was that armed refugees (primarily rural Ogadenis) together with poorly-paid Marehan and Dolbahanta soldiers, provoked and encouraged by the government of Siyad Barre, behaved in a despicably "un-Somali and un-Islamic manner."

Where the Isaaq came to form a trading minority within a predominantly rural society and maintained their clan distinctions, they became the target of stereotypes. Why did Isaaq lineages take advantage of overseas opportunities while Hawiya, Ogadenis and Marehan did not? This is where modern Somali maritime history intersects with regionally different opportunities. As an example of a vicious conflict between tribes and social classes within an African country, the attempt by a predominantly Darod regime to annihilate the Isaaq was aggravated when sub-ethnic "family" members were armed with modern weaponry.

The requirements and opportunities of colonialism increased pressures on Somalis to migrate. African migratory labor under colonialism entailed arduous journeys and long separation from home and family, "repetitive and exhausting activities [that] no sensible person would undertake except by necessity or for large reward."⁷² As northern Somalis reshaped their lives to the demands of a global market economy, colonialist institutions made out-migrations attractive and compelling.

DECOLONIZATION AND THE STATE

The nature the post-colonial African state has attracted contentious examination. The colonial state did several important things besides sanction new forms of violence and coercion. Colonial development of commodity production for export withdrew

labor from the subsistence sector without compensating returns. The roots of this transformation in new state structures developed during the colonial era. With the nation-state came the creation of nationality as a legal concept. The national boundaries of states constituted political barriers to human spatial mobility as each person was "attributed with a legal status 'tying' him or her to that nation state."⁷³ Somali migrations occurred in the context of capital accumulation mediated by colonial and post-colonial states whose role was "to guarantee the reproduction of the dominant mode of production and the nation state itself."⁷⁴

The declaration of a separate Somaliland Republic on 18 May 1991 exposed the fragility of the Somali nation-state. Clan and regional differences over competition for control of resources lay at the heart of modern demise of Somalia. The Isaaq-dominated Somali National Movement sought to undo the unification of 1960 and split Somalia into autonomous or loosely federated states.

Geography and history placed some northern Somali sub-clans in close contact with the Middle East. Some of its 2 million people, about 33% of Somalia's population, are best known (and evidently resented) for their tradition of independent entrepreneurship, rather than within the range of state-owned enterprises spawned since 1969. According to a recent study, until the mid-1980s the northern region accounted for 86% of Somalia's livestock exports.⁷⁵

From 1960 to 1991, Somalia existed as a territorial state, not a nation state. The formal dispensation of state power was not established in the hearts or sympathies of its Somali inhabitants. The most important focus of a Somali's loyalty remained the social grouping in which he originated or with whom he had grown up. Those were the foundations of trust and the networks through which power was mediated.⁷⁶

CONCLUSION

Fifteen years ago at a remote spot east of Las Anod, a Somali nomad stared at me after my Land Rover had broken down. The Somali offered a customary greeting which I returned, adding, also in Somali, that I was from California. The elder smiled and, in perfect English, asked, "What do you think of San Diego?"

Eager to talk about his experiences as a seaman, the Somali *tacabbir* had worked overseas earning money for his family back home and in the process gathered knowledge and experiences which he shared with family and friends. Somali cultural traditions have long included international travel and work. Historian Gordon Waterfield noted in the 1940s that:

the Somali is a great traveller and a good trader; his *savoir-faire* enables him to fit easily into the life of the West. Having earned good money abroad and tasted the pleasures of the West, the Somali returns to Somaliland in his western finery, and after entertaining his friends handsomely he puts on the native *tobe* and goes back to his village, investing his capital in camels and sheep and takes up again the life that his people have lived in the desert for many centuries. The man who goes striding through the bush with his camels and armed with a spear may know the slang of British sailors, or the jargon of Chicago, and play an excellent game of football.⁷⁷

Today, over 1 million Somalis are scattered around the world. Thousands of merchants, professionals, civil servants, health care workers, intellectuals and engineers are among the educated, skilled Somalis who fled their country over the past ten years. In the past, no matter how far Somalis went, they never "left" Somalia in their minds. They retained strong ties to their homeland through social obligations to kinfolk who stay behind to tend animal herds or to farm.

At this crucial time in their history, the Somalis of the diaspora, the *Somaalida Debedda Joogta*, make up the largest pool of energy, minds and strong bodies capable of resurrecting their country. The question is, will they return? The answer has profound implications for any effort to rebuild Somalia. The historical reality of the *tacabbir* tradition must be part of national reconciliation talks.

The degeneration of urban life, meltdown of governmental structures and militarization of the countryside during the regime of Siyad Barre have left overseas Somalis dejected and full of despair. They now comprise a "country in exile," a "republic without a country."

The remaining Somali elite now fear the armed *mooryaan* thugs who terrorize southern Somali cities. Named after a nasty intestinal worm, the *mooryaan* lack farming, herding or bureaucratic skills. They disdain formal education and covet any property, public or private. Their hatred of economic success and prejudice against the work habits of achievers reflects the profound crisis of Somali institutions. With their nihilistic destruction of property and precious infrastructure, the *mooryaan* have become the Somali equivalent of the Visigoths who wrought havoc after the fall of Rome.

Most Somalis, of course, are neither looters nor warlord supporters. A semblance of order and security prevails in Somaliland and Mijerteinia, and rudimentary administrative structures capable of relief efforts exist throughout much of the countryside. Foreign relief workers depend on thousands of unsung Somali heroes who assist in local rehabilitation whose participation is critical for rebuilding effective authority and regional administrations.

A legitimacy gap exists between Somalis who fled and those who stayed behind to work among people traumatized by atrocities. Somalis who return from overseas will need to cooperate with

skilled Somalis already in the country. Together they can revive the political culture and create interim security councils empowered to resolve local issues like disarmament. External aid agencies can encourage Somalis to bridge the gap and reverse the "brain drain" by targeting assistance to local organizations that demonstrate an active commitment to this collaboration. The famous fashion model Iman returned to Somalia in 1992 for the first time in twenty years. She felt compelled to give something back to her homeland, a Somali doing something for Somalis.

These days, many Somalis living overseas seem unprepared to return "home," as interpreters for Operation Restore Hope quickly discovered. Shocked and depressed by his lack of connectedness, a Somali who returned in 1993 after eleven years abroad, realized that urban Somalis had lost their entire system of values. "I noticed it from the first day I arrived," recalled Hassan Hussein. "You see it in their eyes. Before, to make eye contact with an elder was a real taboo. Now the children look at you like they want to kill you.""

Somali children have routinely witnessed beatings and robberies, and seen the power that accrues to teenagers with guns. Their drawings and makeshift toys reflect an obsession with weapons. Wilhelm Huber of the German aid group SOS-Kinderdorf in Mogadishu said, "Their values will never be the same - family values, religious values, community values. With smaller children, it may be easier. With bigger children, it's not so easy. You have a big social disaster on your hands.""

There isn't enough time, political will or money available to create another generation with the experiences and knowledge of the Somali *tacabbir*. The international community cannot rejuvenate Somalia by itself. It can only assist Somalis who take the initiative themselves.

If this doesn't occur, historians will record that a country called "Somalia" was decapitated in 1992. Somali farmers,

fishermen and nomads will subsist on the margins of the world, while the UN or some other urban coalition tries to administer the ruins of Mogadishu as a political ward disconnected from the countryside. Will future generations of Somalis remember 1993 as the UN's "Year of Indigenous Peoples" or as *dad cunkii*, "a time of cannibalism"?

ENDNOTES

1. In addition to studies on evil by Carl Jung, Eric Fromme, Norman Cohn and George Mosse, recent works include David Parkin (ed.), The Anthropology of Evil (London: Basil Blackwell, 1985); Ervin Staub, The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and Sam Keen, Faces of the Enemy: Reflections of the Hostile Imagination (New York: HarperCollins, 1986)
2. Shula Marks, "The Historiography of South Africa," in B. Jewsiewicki and D. Newbury (eds.), African Historiographies: What History for Which Africa? (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1986), p. 175. A promising application of this approach to Somali history is Lidwien Kapteijns and Jay Spaulding, "Class Formation and Gender in Precolonial Somali Society: A Research Agenda," Northeast African Studies, XI, #1 (1989), pp. 19-38.
3. Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?" reprinted in Emile Bure (ed.), Ernest Renan and Germany (New York, 1945)
4. Some Somali intellectuals acknowledge this characteristic too. For example, see the prefaces to Abdi Ismail Samatar, The State and Rural Transformation in Northern Somalia, 1884-1986 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989) and to Said S. Samatar, Somalia: A Nation in Turmoil (London: Minority Rights Group, 1991)
5. Interview with Musa Gul Mohamed, (Djibouti), 10 November 1991.
6. An important survey is Edward A. Alpers, "The Somali Community at Aden in the Nineteenth Century," Northeast African Studies, VIII, #2-3 (1986) pp. 143-68. By the early 1960s so few Hawiya worked in the Gulf that a pioneer Hawiya *taabhir* who now owns the Hotel Towfiq in Mogadishu, earned the nickname Yusuf "Hawiya" [Interview with Jama Mohamed Ghalib, Djibouti, 9 October 1991]
7. Military histories of the Dervish period demonstrate this dramatically, including recent studies: Lawrence L. James, The Savage Wars: British Campaigns in Africa, 1870-1920 (London: Robert Hale, 1985); Ray Beachey, The Warrior Mullah: The Horn Aflame, 1892-1920 (London: Bellew Publishing, 1990); David Omissi, Air Power and Colonial Control: The Royal Air Force, 1919-39 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990); and Randal Gray, "Bombing the 'Mad Mullah' - 1920," Journal of the Royal United Services Institute, CXXV, #4 (1980), pp. 41-47.
8. In addition to lengthier studies of Sayyid Muhammad and the Dervish movement, a valuable synthesis of the movement is Samatar, Socialist Somalia, Chapter 2, "Proto-Nationalism and the Somali Response." Two important recent studies are: Abdi Sheik-Abdi, Divine Madness: Mohamed Abdule Hassan of Somalia, 1856-1920 (London: Zed Press, 1993) and Said S. Samatar (ed.), In the Shadow of Conquest: Islam in Colonial Northeast Africa (Trenton: Red Sea Press, 1992).

9. Samatar, The State and Rural Transformation, p. 39, 42.
10. Diplomatic and Consular Reports: Somaliland to March 31, 1904 (London: HMSO, 1905), p. 6.
11. Somaliland Protectorate Report, 1906-07 (London: HMSO, 1908), p. 8.
12. Samatar, The State and Rural Transformation, p. 41.
13. Annual Report for the Somaliland Protectorate, 1909-1910 (London: HMSO, 1911), p.10.
14. Annual Report for the Somaliland Protectorate, 1910-11 (London: HMSO, 1912), p. 9.
15. Ahmed Samatar and Abdi Samatar provide revisionist treatments of Somali underdevelopment. Their publications include:
 - (1) Abdi I. Samatar, The State and Rural Transformation in Northern Somalia, 1886-1986 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); "Merchant Capital, International Livestock Trade and Pastoral Development in Somalia," Canadian Journal of African Studies, XXIII, #3 (1987), pp. 355-74; "Somali Tradition, Peripheral Capitalism, and the Politics of Development," Northeast African Studies, XI, #1 (1989), pp. 39-52; and with Lance Salisbury and J. Bascom, "The Political Economy of Livestock Trade in Northern Somalia," African Economic History, XVI, (1988); and "Social Decay and Public Institutions: The Road to Reconstruction in Somalia," in Martin Doornbos, et. al. (eds.), Beyond Conflict in the Horn (Trenton: Red Sea Press, 1992)
 - (2) Ahmed I. Samatar, Socialist Somalia: Rhetoric and Reality (London: Zed Press, 1988); "Somali Studies: Towards an Alternative Epistemology," Northeast African Studies, XI, #1 (1989), pp. 3-18.
 - (3) Abdi I. Samatar and A.I. Samatar, "The Material Roots of the Suspended State in Africa: Arguments from Somalia," Journal of Modern African Studies, XXV, #4 (1987), pp. 669-90.
16. International Labour Office/Jobs and Skills Programme for Africa, Generating Employment and Incomes in Somalia (Addis Ababa: ILO, 1989), pp. 35 and 154.
17. Vali Jamal, "Somalia: Survival in a 'Doomed' Economy," International Labour Review, Vol. 127, #6 (1988), pp. 783-812; "Nomads and Farmers: Incomes and Poverty in Rural Somalia," in Dharam Ghai and Samir Radwan (eds.), Agrarian Policies and Rural Poverty in Africa (Geneva: ILO, 1983), pp. 281-311; and "Somalia: The Gulf Link and Adjustment," in Kunibert Raffer and M.A. Mohamed Salih (eds.), The Least Developed and the Oil-Rich Arab Countries (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).
18. John Drysdale, "Somalia: The Only Way Forward," Journal of the Anglo-Somali Society, Winter 1992/93, p. 6.
19. Somalia's export-oriented economy of labor and livestock must be situated within the Middle Eastern regional economy to appreciate how the fall in oil prices, slowdown of the construction boom in the Gulf, and the consequences of Operation Desert Storm affected separatist movements in the country. International Labour Office, Jobs and Skills Programme for Africa, Generating Employment and Incomes in Somalia (Addis Ababa: International Labour Office, 1989), pp. 25-26, 166-67.
20. The author discusses this period in "Anti-Colonialism and Class Formation: The Eastern Horn of Africa Before 1950," International Journal of African Historical Studies, XVIII, #1 (1985), pp. 1-35.
21. Funds from overseas Somalis provide crucial support for various political movements vying for power in Somalia in 1993. Roland Marchal, "La guerre à Mogadiscio," Politique Africaine (1992), pp. 120-25.

22. Efforts to correct the imbalance include Jeffrey C. Stone (ed.), Africa and the Sea (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University African Studies Group, 1985); Andrew Roberts, "African Cross-Currents," in A. Roberts (ed.), The Colonial Moment (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and P.C. Emmer and M. Morner (eds.), European Expansion and Migration: Intercontinental Migration from Africa, Asia and Europe (London: Berg, 1991).
23. ILO/JASPA, Generating Employment and Incomes, pp. 154-55.
24. Somalis who traveled abroad before 1800 generally sought religious or intellectual gain, not commercial wealth. See for example, the account of Sheikh Abd Allah ez Zeilai, a 14th century Zeila'i savant at Al-Azhar University, in Ibn Padl Allah Al-Omari, Masālik al-absār FI Mamālik al-amsār: L'Afrique, moins l'Egypte, translated with introduction and notes by Maurice Gaudetroy-Demombynes (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1927), II, Chapter 8, pp. 1-31. Special thanks to Daoud Abubaker Alwan for bringing this material to my attention. See also, Mohamed Haji Mukhtar, "Arabic Sources on Somalia," History in Africa, Vol. 14 (1987), p. 143.
25. Ali A. Hersi, The Arab Factor in Somali History, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, UCLA, 1977, p. 211.
26. David D. Laitin and Said S. Samatar, Somalia: A Nation in Search of a State (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), pp. 19-20.
27. Around the towns of Obock and Tadjoura (in Djibouti) lives a small community of fishermen known as the Ayro Lasso who insist they are Afars. They admit, however, that "we used to be Somalis" and claim descent from Mijertein and Warsangali traders.
28. John A. Hunt, Annual Report of the General Survey of British Somaliland Protectorate, 1944 (Hargeisa: Government Printers, 1945), p. 8.
29. E.L. Croze and M.D. Gwynne, "A Methodology For the Inventory and Monitoring of Pastoral Ecosystem Processes," in The Future of Pastoral Peoples (Ottawa: IDRC, 1981), p. 350.
30. Theodore Monod, intrepid European crosser of deserts, found numerous similarities between crossing the desert and crossing the ocean. He recalled that both forms of travel induced frugality, humility, meditation and a sense of awe for the things of nature.
31. Tim Ingold, The Social Appropriation of Nature (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1987), p. 167 and especially Chapter 7, "Changing Places: Movement and Locality in Hunter-Gatherer and Pastoral Societies."
32. Interviews with Somali seamen: Musa Jama Ali (age 84), Abdullahi Abdi Ghele (73) and Abdullahi Mohamed Noor (71), 23 August 1991, (London)
33. M.A. Mohamed Salih, "Pastoralism and the State in African Arid Lands," Nomadic Peoples, #25-27 (1990), p. 175.
34. Nomadism required mobility to extract the resources for survival but "a pure nomad is a poor nomad" observed Owen Lattimore, Inner Asian Frontiers of China (New York: American Geographical Society, 1940). See also Rada Dyson-Hudson and Neville Dyson-Hudson, "Nomadic Pastoralism," Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol. 9 (1980), pp. 15-61.
35. Ali Jimale Ahmed, Tradition, Anomaly and the Wave of the Future: Somali Oral Literature, Nuruddin Farah and Written Somali Prose Fiction, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, UCLA, 1989, p. 51.

36. Ali Jimale Ahmed, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49. When asked how a Somali nomad like him dealt with shopping malls, sorority girls and prevalence of cocaine in America, the Somali Olympic runner Abdi Bile calmly replied: "There is no shock if you don't judge people. You see these differences but you still have to get along with them." Quoted in Kenny Moore, "Hero for a Thirsty Land," Sports Illustrated (25 September 1988), p. 77.
37. This is an example of a poetic genre called *maqalay warlay*. Thanks to Mohamed Abdillahi Rirash for providing me with the story.
38. The Somali National Movement added two more requirements to the list: imprisonment and being a guerrilla (*jabbad*). Interview with Colonel Ahmed Mire, (Djibouti), 14 September 1991.
39. Ali Jimale Ahmed, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
40. Somaliland Protectorate Annual Report, 1907-08, p. 26. It is uncertain which illness this treatment was supposed to cure, but British officials suspected it was syphilis.
41. An introduction is: Bernhard Helander, "The Somali Family," in Kim Barcik and Sture Normark (eds.), Somalia: A Historical, Cultural and Political Analysis (Uppsala: Life and Peace Institute, 1991), pp. 17-28.
42. Colin Pooley and Ian Whyte (eds.), Emigrants, Migrants and Immigrants: A Social History of Migration (London, 1990) includes studies that illuminate the effects of migration on donor as well as receiver societies.
43. Laitin and Samatar, Somalia: Nation in Search of State, pp. 36-37. See also B.W. Andrzejewski, "Somali Literature," in B.W. Andrzejewski, et. al. (eds.), Literatures in African Languages: Theoretical Issues and Sample Surveys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 337-407 and Lark Ellen Gould, "Somalia: A Nation of Bards," Aramco World (November/December 1988)
44. Somali humor is discussed in Charles Geshekter and Said Ahmed Warsama, "An Introduction to Humor and Jokes in Somali Culture," in I.M. Lewis and Richard Hayward (eds.), Language and Culture in the Horn of Africa (London: University of London Press, 1993).
45. Somalis themselves use jokes or humorous stories that are direct, cruel or bawdy to perpetuate sub-cultural stereotypes, e.g. Midgans are represented as cunning yet innocent, Ogadenis are provincial and unworldly, Mijertein think of reasons to delay actions, Isaaq are proud and selfish, Hawiya are indolent, etc.
46. Interview with Musa Gul Mohamed (Djibouti), 10 November 1991.
47. John Durant and Jonathan Miller (eds.), Laughing Matter: A Serious Look at Humor (New York: John Wiley, 1989); Neil Schaeffer, The Art of Laughter (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981) and Henri Bergson, "Laughter," in Wylie Sypher (ed.), Comedy (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956); and T.G.A. Nelson, Comedy: An Introduction to Comedy in Literature, Drama and Cinema (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990)
48. Anita Suleiman, "Somali Children in Britain - Their Cultural Background," Journal of the Anglo-Somali Society (Summer 1991), p. 20.
49. The other two are Hausa and Swahili, each of which numbers between 50-70 million speakers. When the BBC evening broadcast ends at 9:30 p.m. in Djibouti, people pour out of houses and shops in numbers that resemble a mass exiting from movie theaters.

50. Roland Marchal, "Formes de la Violence et son Contrôle Dans Un Espace Urbain en Guerre: Les Mooryaan de Mogadishu," unpublished paper (November 1992)
51. Abdi Ismail Samatar, "Structural Adjustment as Development Strategy? Bananas, Boom, and Poverty in Somalia," Economic Geography, Vol. 69, #1 (1993), pp. 25-43.
52. These town/countryside distinctions are effectively shown in the novel by Farah M.J. "Cawl", Ignorance is The Enemy of Love (London: Zed Press, 1982).
53. Cynthia Enloe, Power, Military and Ethnicity: Foundations of State Power (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 163.
54. Aristide Zolberg, "The Specter of Anarchy in Africa," Dissent (Summer 1992), p. 310.
55. Julius Holt and Mark Lawrence, An End to Isolation: The Report of the Ogaden Needs Assessment Study, 1991 (Addis Ababa: Save the Children Fund/UK, 1991). Conducted between 16 August and 15 September 1991, this survey indicates how the collapse of state institutions in southern Somalia and reduced cross-border trade disrupted the lives of Ogadeni Somalis. The interviewees never mentioned overseas kinfolk or remittances as sources of support. In 1992-93, the same effects applied to Digil and Rahanweyn agro-pastoralists caught amidst the warring factions, bereft of overseas linkages, and forced eventually to abandon farming for the safety of relief camps.
56. Mohammed Haji Mukhtar, "The Emergence and Role of Political Parties in the Inter-River Region of Somalia from 1947 to 1960," Ufahamu, XVII, #2 (Spring 1989), pp. 75-95; and Abdi Mohamed Kusow, "Somalia's Silent Sufferers," Africa News (3 January 1993), p. 5
57. Mukhtar, "Political Parties", pp. 77-78.
58. Stanley Crouch, Notes of a Hanging Judge (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 219.
59. William McNeill, "Teaching World History," American Historical Association Perspectives (March 1991), p. 19.
60. William McNeill, History of the Human Community (New York: Prentice Hall, 1990), xiii.
61. Mukhtar, "Arabic Sources", p. 152.
62. Interview with Jama Mohamed Ghalib (Djibouti), 14 October 1991.
63. Loc. cit.
64. Samir Amin, Empire of Chaos (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1992), p. 110.
65. John Drysdale, The Somali Dispute (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964), pp. 165-66.
66. Mohamed Osman Omar, The Road to Zero: Somalia's Self-Destruction (London: Haan Associates, 1992), p. 49.
67. Another example (of many) where union exacerbated very old prejudices would be Scotland. The Scots reinvented their identity in the mid-18th century in "response to the dilemma of maintaining a national identity as a stateless nation." Keith Brown, "Imagining Scotland," Journal of British Studies, Vol. 31, #4 (October 1992), pp. 415-25.

68. Samatar, "Structural Adjustment," p. 35.
69. Of course both were foreign words: one from the English "cupboard," the other from the Italian "armadio".
70. Jane Kramer, "Letter From Europe," The New Yorker (21 September 1992). Metternich once called Italy not a country but a "geographical expression." This could apply equally to Somalia. Italian political patronage played a major role in the determination of radio and television jobs, professorships, even string sections of symphony orchestras. Strikingly similar arrangements prevailed under the dictatorship of Siyad Barre.
71. Basil Davidson, The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State (New York: Times Books, 1992), p. 281 argues that when mutual ethnic respect gave way to crude chauvinism it destroyed Yugoslav federalism and "the principal reason for failure lay in the persistence of a single party authoritarianism unable and unwilling to reform itself."
72. C.C. Wrigley, "Aspects of Economic History," in Andrew Roberts (ed.), The Colonial Moment in Africa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 123.
73. Robert Miles and Victor Satzewich, "Migration, Racism and 'Postmodern' Capitalism," Economy and Society, XIX, #3 (August 1990), pp. 351-52.
74. Miles and Satzewich, op. cit., p. 353 and Lydia Potts, The World Labour Market: History of Migration (London: Zed Books, 1990)
75. John Drysdale, Somaliland 1991: Report and Reference (Brighton: Global-Stats), p. 25.
76. In terms of "identity management" relevant to the vigorous demonstration of northern Somali consciousness, David Laitin demonstrates how Somali concepts of ethnic consciousness, clan differentiation and national or cultural identities were not immutable but open to subtle - or not so subtle - redefinitions. "The Ogadeen Question and Changes in Somali Identity," in Donald Rothchild and Victor A. Olorunsola (eds.), State Versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983), pp. 331-49.
77. Gordon Waterfield, Morning Will Come (London, 1944), pp. 57-58.
78. Keith Richburg, "The Homecoming," Washington Post Magazine (27 June 1993), p. 18. Sizeable Somali communities in Britain include East London, Cardiff, and Sheffield. There were not comparable Somali communities in Italy where no state sector supported refugees or minority groups. Today an estimated 30,000 Somalis live in Italy, mostly workers and students given longstanding academic links between the two countries. Zeinab Suleiman, "Somalis in Italy," Journal of the Anglo-Somali Society, Spring 1992, pp. 12-13.
79. Keith Richburg, "Famine, War in Somalia Creating 'Lost Generation'," San Francisco Chronicle (15 September 1992)