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Anna Bruzzone

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**Territorial Appropriation, Trade, and Politics in the  
Somalia-Kenya Borderlands (c.1925-1963): State  
Formation in Transnational Perspective**

**by**

**Anna Bruzzone**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of Warwick, Department of History

April 2019

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## Declaration

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous application for any degree. The work presented was carried out by the author.

## Abstract

This thesis examines how the lived experience of British and Italian colonialisms on the two sides of what would become the Kenya-Somalia border transformed local society and local politics, through an interactive process in which African communities asserted their agency while colonial governments competed for sovereignty over the frontier.

Chapters 1 and 2 examine how socio-political identities and ideas of belonging acquired new shapes and functions in the process of state formation from the colonisation period to the establishment of a United Nations Trusteeship in former Italia Somalia in 1950, following Italy's defeat in WWII. Chapters 3 and 4 examine how different social actors in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands became involved in negotiating the state during the period of Italian Trusteeship until Somalia's independence on 1 July 1960. Chapters 5 and 6 explore the deeper history of political activism and insurrection in the Northern Frontier District (NFD) of Kenya during the final years of British rule until the colony became independent on 12 December 1963.

Envisaging factors which are usually associated with a-historical notions of identity and culture as social processes grounded in history, local economies, and regional reconfigurations of power, this thesis rejects the prevailing argument that the state was doomed to fail in these borderlands due to its imported origin and to uncondusive cultural conditions. It is argued here that historically contingent power relations shaped politics in this region in a way that undermined the state's legitimacy and the borderlanders' trust in state institutions. Challenging the idea that state formation was a unidirectional process from which the borderlanders attempted to escape, this thesis demonstrates that the local negotiation of authority and access to resources influenced socio-economic relationships and political options in the 'periphery', while peripheral politics shaped the character of the emerging nation-states in Somalia and Kenya.

## List of Terms

*Askari*: pl. *askaris*, a local soldier serving in the colonial non-white troops of the British empire.

*Banda*: pl. *bande*, Italian term for a military unit composed of Somali irregulars, *dubat* (see below). These units operated independently from the Italian colonial troops (*Regio Corpo Truppe Coloniali*).

*Baraza*: Swahili term used to refer to a public gathering in the colonial period.

*Boma*: livestock enclosure.

*Bulukbasci*: deputy commander of the *zaptié* corps (see below).

*Capo banda*: pl. *capi banda*, Somali leader of an irregular unit composed of *dubat* (see below).

*Commissariato*: the Italian equivalent of the British term ‘Province’ in the colonial administration.

*Deegaan*: Somali term often translated as ‘land tenure’ or ‘clan homeland’; *deegaan*, in fact, is a complex concept which connotes exclusive control by a group sharing similar language, identity, or clan affiliation of a land area and of the natural resources found there.

*Diya*: Arabic term for blood money; the Somali expression is *mag*.

*Dubas*: term used in the Kenya Colony to designate the locally recruited ‘tribal police’.

*Dubat*: ‘white turbans’; Somali irregulars who were recruited locally and organised into ‘bands’ (*bande* in Italian) by officers of the Italian colonial troops who volunteered for the task.

*Dugsi*: Qur’anic school.

*Duka*: licensed shop.

*Gogle*: term used in the Italian colonies to designate the ‘indigenous tribal police’.

*Ilaloes*: a force similar to the British-created tribal police established by the Italian Trusteeship Administration of Somalia and placed under the direct authority of District Commissioners (*Residenti*).

*Iusbasci*: commander of the *zaptié* corps (see below).

*Jamaaca*: pl. *jamaacooyin*, religious settlements established in the nineteenth century along the Jubba River by Somali clerics who called for Islamic

reformation. Some kind of cooperative farming was practiced in these settlements.

*Jareer*: literally ‘kinky hair’; Somali derogatory name for Gosha, Bantu people predominantly living in the Jubba Valley, mostly descendants of slaves imported from Eastern Africa in the nineteenth century.

*Mag*: blood money.

*Qabiila*: Arabic word for ‘tribe’ used by the Somalis as synonym of *tol* (see below), usually translated as ‘clan’.

*Residente*: the Italian equivalent of ‘District Commissioner’.

*Residenza*: the Italian equivalent of the British term ‘District’ in the colonial administration.

*Shamba*: term designating an indigenous farm in southern Somalia.

*Sheegad*: literally ‘pretender’ in Somali; the term refers to a customary system (no longer in use) of pseudo-kinship relations allowing individuals or groups that were too small or weak to compete for access to resources in a particular area to associate themselves with larger or more powerful kinship groups. This asymmetric mode of association prescribed that the client, called *sheegad*, named the ancestors of the ‘host’ group as their own. In the *sheegad* system, patrons gained territorial domination, control over land, and political power, while clients were kept in a position of political inferiority, with no say in collective decisions yet expected to make economic and military contributions to the host group.

*Shir*: pl. *shirarka*, Somali term for a customary clan assembly.

*Suldaan*: Arabic term used in Somali society (particularly amongst the Isxaaq and Ogaadeen clans) to indicate the traditional titular political office of chief of clan, or sub-clan where the clan is large. In addition to the universally understood Arabic *Suldaan*, the position has different titles, depending on the region, such as *Boqor* (especially amongst the Majeerteen in north-eastern Somalia), *Ugaas* and *Garaad* (used in most of the Daarood clans other than the Ogaadeen). Although the *Suldaan* symbolises the unity of the clan, not every clan can boast a *Suldaan*. The office is not indispensable.

*Tol*: Somali term for the concept of agnation. The verb *tol* means to bind together, or to sew.

*Ugaas*: Somali title for clan-head; regional variant of *Suldaan* (see above).

*Xeer*: customary agreements or contracts used in Somali society to form alliances and regulate relationships between kinship groups; these contracts are made on an *ad-hoc* basis usually in the context of military operations or through solidarity mechanisms regulating the payment of blood money.

*Zaptié*: in the Italian colonies, a locally recruited constabulary force modelled on the Italian *Carabinieri* corps.

## Linguistic Note

Somali personal, clan, and geographic names in this thesis generally follow the Somali orthography, except when they appear in direct quotations from primary sources. The Latin ‘c’ stands for a sound close to the Arabic ع (ayn), while ‘x’ denotes the Arabic ح (ha), as in Cabdi or Maxamed for instance.

## **Introduction: Researching the colonial borderlands**

This is the history of a multifaceted trans-border region in a time of profound change under colonial rule. It is a history of social resilience, marked by struggles over territory, access to resources, and power, but, above all, it is a history of dissent. Here, control over the arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid lands of what would become north-eastern Kenya and southern Somalia was contested between rival colonial powers and between African herders and farmers. It was a region that no one found it easy to dominate or to regulate, a region in which mobility held the key to sustainability, and across which boundaries and territoriality were malleable and changing concepts. During the colonial years, between the 1890s and 1963, the Somalia-Kenya borderlands came to be portrayed as an intractable periphery. This image of the borderlands as a disorderly and ungovernable space has persisted far beyond colonialism and into the present century: Kenya's border with Somalia today continues to be seen primarily as an unruly frontier, chronically affected by underdevelopment and blighted by recurrent local conflicts, its economy fuelled by smuggling and other illicit activities, and its politics inflamed by international Islamist terrorism. The intervention of the Kenyan army across the border in 2011, invading southern Somalia to later join the Africa Union's peace-keeping mission (AMISOM), is emblematic of the continuing contestations in these borderlands.<sup>1</sup> Within Kenya, the government has

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<sup>1</sup> David M. Anderson and Jacob McKnight, 'Kenya at War: Al-Shabaab and Its Enemies in Eastern Africa', *African Affairs*, 114, No.454 (2014), pp. 1–27; International Crisis Group, 'The Kenyan Military Intervention in Somalia', Africa Report No. 184 (Brussels, February 2012) <<https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/184%20The%20Kenyan%20Military%20Intervention%20in%20Somalia.pdf>> [accessed September 2018]; Journalists for Justice, *Black and White: Kenya's Criminal Racket in Somalia* (Nairobi: Journalists for Justice, 2015) <<https://www.jfjustice.net/downloads/1457660562.pdf>> [accessed September 2018]; Claire McEvoy, 'Shifting Priorities: Kenya's Changing Approach



responded to the increasing number of attacks carried out by the Islamist terrorist group al-Shabaab on Kenyan soil with an iron fist: the peoples of the borderland – mostly Kenyan Somalis but also Swahili-speaking Muslims of diverse origins, especially in the coastal area – and Somali refugees have often been subjected to beatings, arbitrary arrest and detention, and other forms of extra-judicial punishment, including torture, unlawful renditions, killings and disappearances.<sup>2</sup> This has once again raised the issue of the status of Kenyan Somalis, who are still

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to Peacebuilding’, NOREF Report (Oslo, May 2013)

<<https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/165125/bca199817c66f0d0f91212128181c024.pdf>>

[accessed September 2018]; Gorm Rye Olsen, ‘The October 2011 Kenyan Invasion of Somalia: Fighting Al-Shabaab or Defending Institutional Interests?’, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 36, No.1 (2018), pp. 39–53; Paul D. Williams, *Fighting for Peace in Somalia: A History and Analysis of the African Union Mission (AMISOM), 2007-2017* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

- <sup>2</sup> David M. Anderson and Jacob McKnight, ‘Understanding al-Shabaab: Clan, Islam and Insurgency in Kenya’, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 9, No.3 (2015): pp. 536–57; David M. Anderson, ‘Why Mpeketoni Matters: Al-Shabaab and Violence in Kenya’, NOREF Report (Oslo, September 2014)
- <<https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/183993/cc2dacde481e24ca3ca5eaf60e974ee9.pdf>> [accessed September 2018]; Amnesty International, *Somalis Are Scapegoats in Kenya’s Counter-Terror Crackdown* (London: Amnesty International, 2014)
- <<https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/4000/afr520032014en.pdf>> [accessed September 2018]; Anna Bruzzone, ‘Kenya’s Security Crackdown and the Politics of Fear’, *Focus on the Horn* (April 2014)
- <<https://focusonthehorn.wordpress.com/2014/04/23/kenyas-security-crackdown-and-the-politics-of-fear/>> [accessed September 2018]; Human Rights Watch, *Deaths and Disappearances: Abuses in Counterterrorism Operations in Nairobi and in Northeastern Kenya* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2016)
- <[https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report\\_pdf/kenya0716web\\_1.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/kenya0716web_1.pdf)> [accessed September 2018]; Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI) and Open Society Justice Initiative, *We are Tired of Taking You to the Court: Human Rights Abuses by Kenya’s ATPU* (New York: Open Society Foundations, 2013)
- <<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/human-rights-abuses-by-kenya-atpu-20140220.pdf>> [accessed March 2019].

considered second-class citizens and treated with weary suspicion.<sup>3</sup> On the Somali side of the frontier, the creation, in 2013, of the autonomous regional administration of Jubaland – a shorthand for Somalia’s southernmost areas, linked by the course of the Jubba River – and the ongoing, contested process of federalisation and political decentralisation have reignited controversies over the issues of autochthony and citizenship.<sup>4</sup> While the current political struggles in these borderlands have led to a surge in scholarly publications and analyses of the region’s present challenges, the deeper history of state-society relations and the role of the transnational in the historical genesis of the state in this region remain under-researched and only poorly understood.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Al Jazeera, *Not Yet*

*Kenyan*<https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/aljazeeracorrespondent/2013/10/not-yet-kenyan-2013102885818441218.html> [accessed October 2018].

<sup>4</sup> Anna Bruzzone, ‘Regional Extraversion and State Formation: Jubaland in Transnational Perspective’, paper presented at the 6<sup>th</sup> European Conference on African Studies (ECAS), Paris, 8 July 2015; Joanne Crouch and Oliver Chevreau, *Forging Jubaland: Community Perspectives on Federalism, Governance and Reconciliation* (London: Saferworld, 2016); ICG, ‘Jubaland in Jeopardy: The Uneasy Path to State Building in Somalia’, Crisis Group blogs (May 2013) <<https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/jubaland-jeopardy-uneasy-path-state-building-somalia>> [accessed March 2019]; Somalia Conflict Early Warning Early Response Unit (CEWERU), ‘From the Bottom Up: Southern Regions - Perspectives Through Conflict Analysis and Key Political Actors’ Mapping of Gedo, Middle Juba, Lower Juba, and Lower Shabelle’ (September 2013) <<http://www.theatm.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/CEWERU-FINAL-Report.pdf>> [accessed October 2018]; Jason Mosley, ‘Somalia’s Federal Future: Layered Agendas, Risks and Opportunities’, Chatham House Research Paper (August 2015) <[https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/field/field\\_document/20150902SomaliaFederalFutureMosley.pdf](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/field/field_document/20150902SomaliaFederalFutureMosley.pdf)> [accessed September 2018]; Cleophus Thomas, ‘Federalism in Somalia: Obstacles, Aspirations, and Opportunities in Jubaland’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, George Mason University, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> Anderson and McKnight, ‘Understanding al-Shabaab’; Brendon J. Cannon, ‘Terrorists, Geopolitics and Kenya’s Proposed Border Wall with Somalia’, *Journal of*

The study of borderlands across the African continent has advanced markedly in the past two decades, often integrating the discussion of contemporary concerns with an historical perspective on the evolution of the border dynamics.<sup>6</sup> Scholars have also increasingly challenged the notion that the margins of states are peripheral to state formation. Richard Reid, for instance, has

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*Terrorism Research*, 7, No.2 (2016), pp. 23–37; Neil Carrier and Hassan H. Kochore, ‘Navigating Ethnicity and Electoral Politics in Northern Kenya: The Case of the 2013 Election’, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 8, No.1 (2014), pp. 135–52; Hannah Elliott, ‘Planning, Property and Plots at the Gateway to Kenya’s ‘New Frontier’, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 10, No.3 (2016), pp. 511–29; Jeremy Lind, Patrick Mutahi and Marjoke Oosterom, “‘Killing a Mosquito with a Hammer’: Al-Shabaab Violence and State Security Responses in Kenya’, *Peacebuilding*, 5, No.2 (2017), pp. 118–35; Oscar Gakuo Mwangi, ‘Jubaland: Somalia’s New Security Dilemma and State-Building Efforts’, *Africa Review*, 8, No.2(2016), pp. 120–32; Paul D. Williams, ‘After Westgate: Opportunities and Challenges in the War against Al-Shabaab’, *International Affairs*, 90, No.4(2014), pp. 907–23; Hannah Whittaker, ‘Legacies of Empire: State Violence and Collective Punishment in Kenya’s Northern Province, c. 1963-Present’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 43, No.4 (2015), pp. 1–17.

<sup>6</sup> To cite but a few reference works, Fekadu Adugna, ‘Overlapping Nationalist Projects and Contested Spaces: The Oromo-Somali Borderlands in Southern Ethiopia’, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 5, No.4 (2011), pp. 773–87; Dereje Feyissa and Markus Virgil Hoehne, eds., *Borders & Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa* (Woodbridge, Oxford: James Currey, 2010); Benedikt Korf and Timothy Raeymaekers, eds., *Violence on the Margins: States, Conflict, and Borderlands* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Paul Nugent and Anthony Ijaola Asiwaju, eds., *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities* (London: Pinter, 1996); Paul Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier: The Life of the Borderlands since 1914* (Athens: Ohio University Press; Oxford: James Currey; Legon: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2002); Timothy Raeymaekers, *Violent Capitalism and Hybrid identity in the Eastern Congo: Power to the Margins* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Christophe Vaughan, Mareike Schomerus, and Lotje De Vries, eds., *The Borderlands of South Sudan: Authority and Identity in Contemporary and Historical Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

shown how the violent ‘fault lines and frontier zones’ of northeast Africa have ‘defined the very nature of states’, while Cherry Leonardi has argued for the ‘fertility of the frontier’ in South Sudan.<sup>7</sup> In this emerging body of literature, the Kenya-Somalia case has too often been viewed simply from the Kenyan side of the border, and not as a transnational issue.<sup>8</sup> Regardless of scholarly discipline, this literature, whether in history, anthropology, or social sciences, has tended to obscure the plurality of narratives, socio-economic dynamics, and geographies of power at play in this part of the Horn of Africa. The problematics of resistance and conflict in the Kenya-Somalia borderlands have been framed by these dichotomies and the dialogues they provoke: the ‘modern’ territorial state versus the ‘traditional’ socio-political organisation of borderland communities, the

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<sup>7</sup> Richard Reid, *Frontiers of Violence in North-East Africa: Genealogies of Conflict since c. 1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 20, 22; Cherry Leonardi, *Dealing with Government in South Sudan: Histories of Chiefship, Community and State* (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2013), p. 217.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, recent studies by Keren Weitzberg, Hannah Whittaker, and Julie MacArthur: Keren Weitzberg, ‘The Unaccountable Census Colonial Enumeration and its Implications for the Somali People of Kenya’, *Journal of African History*, 56, No.3 (2015), pp. 409–28; by the same author, *We Do Not Have Borders: Greater Somalia and the Predicaments of Belonging in Kenya* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2017); Hannah Whittaker, ‘The Socioeconomic Dynamics of the Shifta Conflict in Kenya, c. 1963–8’, *Journal of African History* 53, No.3 (2012), pp. 391–408; by the same author, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Kenya: A Social History of the Shifta Conflict, c. 1963–1968* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015); Julie MacArthur, ‘Decolonizing Sovereignty: States of Exception along the Kenya-Somali Frontier’, *The American Historical Review*, 124, No.1 (2019), pp. 108–43. Lee Cassanelli stands out as the notable exception, along with earlier work by Peter Little on trans-border trading: Lee V. Cassanelli, ‘The Opportunistic Economies of the Kenya-Somali Borderland in Historical Perspective’, in *Borders & Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*, ed. by Dereje Feyissa and Markus Virgil Hoehne (Oxford: James Currey, 2010), pp. 133–50; Peter D. Little, ‘Conflictive Trade, Contested Identity: The Effects of Export Markets on Pastoralists of Southern Somalia’, *African Studies Review*, 39, No.1 (1996), pp. 25–53.

borderless but resilient livelihoods of Somali pastoralists as against the sedentary lifestyles of farming communities, and the ‘rhetoric’ of Somali nationalism versus the ‘reality’ of a segmentary society.<sup>9</sup>

This thesis challenges much of the existing literature by envisaging factors which are usually associated with a-historical notions of identity and culture as social processes grounded in history, local economies, and regional reconfigurations of power. In so doing, this study explores the historical implications of the Somalia-Kenya border in terms of both constraints and opportunities. This thesis therefore examines how the political logics and the internal economies of different, often competing, colonial projects on the two sides of the frontier transformed local society and local politics, through an interactive process in which African communities asserted their agency while colonial powers sought to determine the process of state formation.

The material covered in this thesis spans four decades, from 1925, when the colonial border between the Italian and British spheres was fundamentally altered, to independence (1960 in Somalia and 1963 in Kenya). The complex social, economic and political transformations of the borderlands in these years will be examined with reference to the three inter-connected themes of territoriality, trade and political authority. Key research questions emerge from these themes:

- (i) ***Territoriality***: how did imperial rivalries, competing sovereignties, and conflicting modes of colonial governance transform the way territory was conceived, claimed, appropriated, and controlled in the trans-border region? How

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<sup>9</sup> See, for example, John G. S. Drysdale, *The Somali Dispute* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964); Ioan M. Lewis, ‘The Problem of the Northern Frontier District of Kenya’, *Race & Class* 51, No.1 (1963), pp. 48–60; Nene Mburu, *Bandits on the Border: The Last Frontier in the Search for Somali Unity* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press, 2005); Vincent Bakpetu Thompson, *Conflict in the Horn of Africa: The Kenya-Somalia Border Problem, 1941-2014* (Lanham; Plymouth: University Press of America, 2015).

did different modes of territorial appropriation affect definitions of identity and belonging?

- (ii) **Trade:** how did colonial policies and the unintended consequences of historical events affect cross-border trade? How did local agents involved in this trade exploit the affordances of the border to advance their economic and political goals? How did trade benefit some groups at the expense of others and with what consequences?
- (iii) **Political authority:** how did ‘traditional’ authorities in these borderlands participate in constructing the frontier and making the state? How was political authority reconfigured, negotiated and institutionalised in the process of state formation? By tackling these questions, this thesis has two aims. First, taking the people of the Somalia-Kenya borderlands out of the exotic ‘culture gardens’ to which they have been confined, showing that their history is less exceptional than it has often been assumed.<sup>10</sup> Second, situating this region within the broader debates on the state in Africa, on the one hand, and on the notion of ‘entangled histories’, on the other hand.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The term ‘culture gardens’ is borrowed from Steven Feierman, ‘African Histories and the Dissolution of World History’, in *Africa and the Disciplines: The Contributions of Research in Africa to the Social Sciences and Humanities*, ed. by Robert H. Bates, V. Y. Mudimbe, Jean F. O’Barr (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 167–212 (here p. 186).

<sup>11</sup> For the concept of ‘entangled history’, see Shalini Randeria, ‘Entangled Histories of Uneven Modernities: Civil Society, Caste Solidarities and Legal Pluralism in Post-Colonial India’, in *Unraveling Ties: From Social Cohesion to New Practices of Connectedness*, ed. by Yehuda Elkana et al. (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2002), pp. 284–311.

Before we can explore this history in greater detail, however, we must first orientate ourselves in the physical and social landscape of the Somalia-Kenya borderlands.

### **The borderlands and the borderlanders**

The Somalia-Kenya border runs through a patchwork of geographical and social spaces. These are part of different though interlinked ecological, economic, and cultural systems spanning nomadic pastoralism (in the arid lowlands encompassing north-eastern Kenya and the trans-Jubba region, between the homonymous river and the border), agro-pastoralism and sedentary agriculture (along the Jubba and Tana rivers), and coastal societies (gravitating around the port towns of Kismaayo and Lamu and characterised by a distinct culture of traders and urban people of mixed origins). This dynamic space of social, economic, and political interactions extends across an area which roughly covers – on present-day political maps – the counties of Mandera, Wajir and Garissa, predominantly inhabited by ethnic Somalis, in north-eastern Kenya, and the regions of Lower Jubba, Middle Jubba and Gedo in southern Somalia. Sometimes, however, the scope of the thesis extends beyond this area to include the counties of Isiolo, Moyale, and Lamu. These mark the outer reaches of the colonial frontier and the limits of Somali influence and action in north-eastern Kenya. Therefore, at certain critical junctures, these areas are not marginal at all but, rather, central to the borderlands' history, as we will see.

The region is predominantly inhabited by Somalis, but this should not overshadow the fact that these borderlands are a plural social universe, composed of people of different race, ethnicity, language, religion and culture. These include, besides the Somalis, Cushitic groups (Boran, Orma, Sakuye, Gabbra, Samburu and Turkana), Bantu-speaking groups (Gosha, Meru, Pokomo, and the so-called 'riverine' tribes along the Tana River), as well as groups of mixed origins, including Baajuun, Booni, Arabs, and Indians. This thesis, however, focuses particularly on the Somalis, although it brings other groups into the narrative whenever required. This is not to argue that these other groups simply

acted as ‘walk-ons’ in a fundamentally Somali drama. The status of the Somalis *vis-à-vis* the other groups is the product of a history of violence and marginalisation, but also of integration and assimilation. The thesis begins to reconstruct this history, examining how Somali groups have ‘appropriated’ the borderlands. In this process of appropriation, the identities and statuses of the various groups of borderlanders have been subject to constant redefinition. Therefore, instead of presenting ethnic and kinship groups as ‘internally homogeneous and externally bounded objects’– in Eric Wolf’s words – and charting their geographical distribution in the trans-border region, this thesis explores the metamorphoses of these groups as fluid social formations, moving through space and time within the context of the broader history of the Somalia-Kenya borderlands.<sup>12</sup>

The region has been dominated by Somali groups since at least the later nineteenth century, their so-called ‘conquest’ of the area to the west of the Jubba River being one of the principal dynamic drivers of the region’s history in the twentieth century.<sup>13</sup> A brief ethnographic introduction to the Somali kinship system is therefore required before we proceed to discuss the relevant historiography. During the colonial period, social and political relations among the Somalis were regulated predominantly through group membership based on patrilineal descent. Kinship has remained an important factor in the formation of social identities and political allegiances up to the present time.

The traditional Somali kinship system is characterised by the formation, within the framework of patrilineal descent, of corporate groups which have political relevance and present a peculiar feature: they are not stable but can form at different levels of genealogical segmentation.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, there is no specific vernacular terminology to designate these kinship groups. The Somali word *tol* (which literally means ‘to sew’) denotes the principle of patrilineal descent

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<sup>12</sup> Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (London; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Ioan M. Lewis, ‘The Somali Conquest of the Horn of Africa’, *The Journal of African History*, 1, No.2 (1960), pp. 213–30.

<sup>14</sup> Marcel Djama, ‘Trajectoire Du Pouvoir en Pays Somali’, *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines*, 37, No. 146 (1997), pp. 403–28 (here p. 406).



without distinction as to the level of segmentation.<sup>15</sup> The socio-political units which ‘coagulate’ within the kinship system are associated with an ancestor positioned at an intermediary level between the clan family and the individual, and only exist in relation to other equivalent units. Two criteria contribute to the formation of these corporate groups. Firstly, what the anthropologist Ioan Lewis has termed the ‘size factor’.<sup>16</sup> This implies that equivalence of status between these groups is not related to equal genealogical position but to the groups’ size, that is to say to the number of genealogical segments these units consist of. Therefore, corporate groups are fluid and contextually defined, rather than given within a predetermined, static genealogical order. Secondly, some kind of social contract intervenes to reinforce the cohesion of these groups: customary agreements (*xeer* in Somali) or contracts made on an *ad-hoc* basis in the context of military operations or through solidarity mechanisms regulating the payment of blood money. This is called *mag* in Somali, although Lewis uses the Arabic term *diya* to refer to what he calls *diya*-paying groups.<sup>17</sup>

Lewis has argued that the socio-political units which form under the combined influence of the ‘size factor’ and *xeer* have no territorial basis and that this is what differentiates the Somali lineage system from the ‘classic’ segmentary model theorised by Evans-Pritchard in his seminal works on the Nuer of southern Sudan and the Sanusi of Cyrenaica.<sup>18</sup> This model implies that socio-political units within a segmentary lineage system identify themselves with territory and that this reinforces group cohesion. Due to the supposed ‘distortion’ that characterises the Somali version of the segmentary lineage model, Lewis prefers the term ‘clan’ to

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Ioan M. Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy: A Study of Pastoralism and Politics among the Northern Somali of the Horn of Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 149.

<sup>17</sup> Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy*, pp. 127, 161–62; Jama Mohamed, ‘Kinship and Contract in Somali Politics’, *Africa*, 77, No.2 (2007), pp. 226–49.

<sup>18</sup> Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People* (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1940); by the same author, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949).

‘tribe’ to describe the largest socio-political units within the Somali kinship system.<sup>19</sup> However, as Marcel Djama has rightfully observed, the Somali language has no specific word for ‘clan’ and the Somalis often use the Arabic word *qabiila* (‘tribe’ literally), associated with the tribal societies of the Arabian Peninsula, as synonym of *tol*.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, the use of the terms ‘clan’, ‘sub-clan’ and ‘sub-sub-clan’ to designate socio-political units within the Somali kinship system is predominant in Somali Studies. Lineage identity is thus conventionally described in this way: Clan/Sub-Clan/Sub-sub-clan. For lack of better terminology, the thesis follows these conventions.

The Somalis claim an Arabian origin, all Somali genealogies going back to the Prophet’s lineage of Quraysh and those of his companions. In this genealogical system there are four main clan families: Daarood, Hawiye, Dir, and Digil-Raxanweyn. The socio-economic division between northern pastoral and southern agricultural groups is represented in genealogy. The pastoral clan-families – namely, Hawiye, Dir (including Isxaaq), and Daarood – trace their origins to an ancestor called Samaale, while the Digil-Raxanweyn cultivating clan-families trace descent from an ancestor called Sab. In the Somali social imaginary, the Samaale groups represent a ‘pastoral aristocracy’, while the Sab, settled mainly along the Shabelle and Jubba rivers in southern Somalia, are seen primarily as a hybrid conglomerate of many different Somali groups with Oromo (*Gaalla* in Somali, ‘Galla’ in colonial sources) and Bantu elements (whom the Somalis call *Jareer*, ‘kinky hair’, or Gosha in the Jubba Valley, mostly descendants of slaves imported from Eastern Africa in the nineteenth century).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Lewis, *Pastoral Democracy*, p. 297.

<sup>20</sup> Djama, ‘Trajectoire du Pouvoir En Pays Somali’, p. 407.

<sup>21</sup> Lewis, *Pastoral Democracy*, pp. 11–14. On the history of the Bantu groups in the Jubba Valley, see the seminal works of Catherine Besteman and Francesca Declich: Catherine Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia: Race, Violence, and the Legacy of Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); Francesca Declich, ‘I Goscia della regione del Medio Giuba nella Somalia Meridionale. Un gruppo etnico di origine bantu’, *Africa*, 42 No.4 (1987), pp. 570–99; by the same author, “‘Gendered Narratives,’ History, and Identity: Two Centuries Along the Juba River among the Zigula and Shanbara’, *History in Africa*, 22 (1995), pp. 93–122.

Due to their mixed origins and the fact that they are associated with agricultural labour, the Sab clan-families are lower in status than the ‘noble’ pastoral groups. However, the social history of the Somali-speaking lands is much more complex than clear-cut genealogical divisions might suggest, as this study will illustrate.

During the pre-colonial and colonial periods, the socio-political organisation of the Somalis facilitated flexible group formation and alliances to regulate recurring migrations and settlement. Individuals or groups that were too small or weak to compete for access to resources in a certain area used to enter into ‘pseudo-kinship relations with stronger groups’.<sup>22</sup> This asymmetrical mode of association prescribed that the client, called *sheegad* (‘pretender’) in Somali, named the ancestors of the ‘host’ group as their own, thereby subordinating themselves in terms of genealogy. The *sheegad* system was key to defining the patterns of migration and settlement in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands. It allowed mobility to be consolidated through alliances and protection, orchestrated through a well-understood system of hierarchy. Thanks to this system of patron-client relations, larger or more powerful kinship groups gained territorial domination, control over land, and political power, while clients were kept in a position of political inferiority, with no say in collective decisions yet expected to make economic and military contributions to the ‘host’ clan. The *sheegad* system and the transformations it underwent during the colonial period had far-reaching political implications, as this thesis will show.

### **Historiography and themes**

The historiography of Somali East Africa, including Somalia, Ethiopia’s Somali region, Djibouti, and Kenya’s north-eastern region has been dominated by a structural-functional approach to the socio-political organisation of Somali

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<sup>22</sup> Günther Schlee, ‘Regularity in Chaos: The Politics of Difference in the Recent History of Somalia’, in *Imagined Differences: Hatred and the Construction of Identity*, ed. by Günther Schlee (Münster, Hamburg, London: LIT-Verlag, 2002), pp. 251–80 (here p. 263).

pastoralists. An intellectual genealogy going back to explorers and colonial administrators has produced the unidimensional picture of a segmentary society fundamentally governed by clan-based allegiances and resistant to any form of authority emanating from the state.<sup>23</sup> This intellectual tradition, originally informed by the concerns, categories, and imperatives of colonial administration, has crystallized into a dominant interpretive paradigm, which has found its most renowned articulation in the work of Ioan Lewis.<sup>24</sup> This paradigm argues that the historical experiences of colonialism and of the post-colonial state produced

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<sup>23</sup> To cite but a few of the many travel, ethnographic, and historical accounts by explorers, colonial officials and anthropologists: Vittorio Bottego, *Viaggi di scoperta nel cuore dell’Africa: il Giuba esplorato* (Rome: Ermanno Loescher, 1895); Richard F. Burton, *First Footsteps in East Africa* (London: J.M. Dent, 1910); F. Elliott, ‘Jubaland and its Inhabitants’, *Geographical Journal*, 41 (1913), pp.554–61; Ugo Ferrandi, *Lugh, emporio commerciale sul Giuba. Seconda spedizione Bottego. Memorie e note di U. Ferrandi già comandante di quella stazione (1895-97); a cura e spese della Società Geografica Italiana* (Rome: Società Geografica Italiana, 1903); Giuseppe Caniglia, *Genti di Somalia* (Rome: P. Cremonese, 1935); Enrico Cerulli, *Somalia: Scritti vari ed inediti*, 3 vols. (Rome: a cura dell’Amministrazione fiduciaria italiana della Somalia, [poi] Ministero degli affari esteri, 1957–64); Charles Guillain, *Documents sur l’Histoire, la Géographie et le Commerce de l’Afrique Orientale*, 3 vols. (Paris: Arthus Bertrand, 1856); Marcello Serrazanetti, *La politica indigena in Somalia* (Bologna: Tipografia La rapida, 1934); Thomas S. W. Thomas, *Jubaland and the Northern Frontier District* (Nairobi: Uganda Railway Press, 1917); Richard Turnbull, *The Darod Invasion: An Account of the Movement of Darod Somalis into Jubaland and the Northern Frontier District* (Dar-es-Salaam, 1961); Bernardo V. Vecchi, *Somalia: Vicende e problemi* (Milan: Marangoni, 1935).

<sup>24</sup> Lewis, *Pastoral Democracy*; by the same author, *The Modern History of Somaliland* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965). For a critique of Lewis’ approach to the study of Somali society and politics see: Catherine Besteman, ‘Primordialist Blinders: A Reply to I. M. Lewis’, *Cultural Anthropology*, 13 (1998), pp. 109–20; and Marcel Djama, ‘The Political Anthropology of “Pastoral Democracy”: Scope and Limitations of a Political Ecology’, in *Milk and Peace, Drought and War: Somali Culture, Society and Politics*, ed. by Markus V. Höhne and Virginia Luling (London: Hurst & Company, 2010), pp. 105–15.

quantitative alterations rather than qualitative changes in Somali societies. As Abdi Ismail Samatar has pointed out, the logic behind this interpretive framework leads to the conclusion that the problem with the state in the Somali-lands lies in traditional Somali culture.<sup>25</sup> This rationale, however, is doubly problematic. Firstly, it posits an alleged homogeneity of identities and culture within Somali society, thereby obscuring the diversities and inequalities existing between and within social groups. Secondly, it reifies society, culture and tradition as self-contained, bounded entities.

Until the 1980s, the historiography of the Somali territories was dominated by two themes: the Somali ‘conquest’ of the Horn of Africa and the evolution of Somali nationalism and irredentism.<sup>26</sup> The first theme reflected the concerns of the colonial authorities for political stability and orderly administration, while the second one provided a historical backdrop to discussions of the drive for national unification in the Somali territories in the 1960s and 1970s. Preoccupation with unresolved border issues and the stabilisation of frontiers produced a unidimensional historical narrative of the Somalis as fiercely independent nomads, hungry for territory, and united by an innate sense of national identity.<sup>27</sup> Supported by Somali oral traditions collected and interpreted by colonial officials,

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<sup>25</sup>Abdi I. Samatar, ‘Destruction of State and Society in Somalia: Beyond the Tribal Convention’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 30, No.4 (1992), pp. 625–41 (here p. 629).

<sup>26</sup> On the theme of Somali expansion see: Turnbull, *Darod Invasion*; Lewis, ‘The Somali Conquest of the Horn of Africa’. For a critique of this interpretation see: Herbert S. Lewis, ‘The Origins of the Galla and Somali’, *Journal of African History*, 7 (1966), pp. 27–46; Edmund R. Turton, ‘Bantu, Galla and Somali Migrations in the Horn of Africa: A Reassessment of the Juba/Tana Area’, *Journal of African History*, 16 (1975), pp. 519–37. On the subject of Somali nationalism and irredentism see: Drysdale, *Somali Dispute*; Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism: International Politics and the Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963).

<sup>27</sup> See, for example: Ioan M. Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa* (Oxford: James Currey; Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002); by the same author, ‘The Problem of the Northern Frontier District’, pp. 48–60; Drysdale, *The Somali Dispute*.

this unidimensional narrative overlooks the diversity and richness of the Somali experience, in and of itself the product of a long and multifaceted historical development. In his seminal work on the pre-colonial history of Somali society, published in 1982, Lee Cassanelli stressed the need for exploring silent themes in Somali history, advocating the adoption of a regional framework to examine the role of social, economic, and religious connections in shaping the foundations of Somali politics.<sup>28</sup> Cassanelli's pioneering and challenging work threw down numerous research questions on the dynamics and drivers of Somali history that remain to be fully explored.

The implosion of the Somali state in the late 1980s and the ensuing civil war acted as a watershed in two senses: first, they brought scholarly work on the historical themes of Somali history to a grinding, if temporary halt; second, the grim reality of state collapse questioned the nationalist perspective which had tended to condense Somali history into a linear narrative of political unity. State collapse brought with it internecine violence, massive displacement of populations, and the creation of multiple political-military factions who struggled against one another over resources, power, and authority. The civil war exposed the hollowness and fragility of Somali 'unity', reviving the thesis that Somali segmentary society was in fact incompatible with the constructs of the modern state imported from Western Europe.<sup>29</sup> The demise of the previously dominating nationalist paradigm in Somalia has led to the emergence of a 'transformationist' approach, promoted by Abdi Samatar, amongst others, focussing on the 'the nature of the changes that had taken place in the social rather than the genealogical order' to understand the causes of Somalia's implosion.<sup>30</sup> In spite of

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<sup>28</sup> Lee V. Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society: Reconstructing the History of a Pastoral People, 1600-1900* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982).

<sup>29</sup> See, for instance: Cabdisalaam M. Ciisa-Salwe, *The Collapse of the Somali State: The Impact of the Colonial Legacy* (London: HAAN, 1996); David D. Laitin and Said S. Samatar, *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State* (Boulder and London: Westview, 1987).

<sup>30</sup> Samatar, 'Destruction of State', p. 631. See also, by the same author: *The State and Rural Transformation in Northern Somalia, 1884-1986* (Madison: University of

its proclaimed goal of reversing the traditional functionalist thesis, the work of Samatar and his followers did not fundamentally challenge the segmentary political model, as Marcel Djama has rightly observed, but instead sought to confine it to the pre-colonial era and the realm of tradition.<sup>31</sup>

At the same time, a new stream of scholarship, led by Somali intellectuals, began to criticize the ‘invention’ of ‘Somalia as a textual construction’, highlighting how the existing historiography simply reproduced the structures of domination and social exclusion which marginalise subaltern groups in the agro-pastoral south.<sup>32</sup> This new trend in the production of Somali history stemmed primarily ‘from the effort by exiled Somalis – and particularly those from the [so-called] ‘minority’ clans – to publicize the history of their particular communities’.<sup>33</sup> Mainly focusing on the riverine areas in southern Somalia, these revisionist scholars, including Ali Jumale Ahmed and Abdi Kusow, have criticized the one-sidedness of the northern nomadic bias in Somali studies. In doing so, however, they have tended to replace the dominant northern-centric paradigm with a south-centric one, reproducing the historical binary of nomadic north versus agro-pastoral south, as Abdurahman Abdullahi ‘Baadiyow’ has noted.<sup>34</sup> Intersecting in part with this new historiographical stream, Catherine Besteman, Lee Cassanelli, Francesca Declich, and Kenneth Menkhaus have each

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Wisconsin Press, 1989); ‘Somali Studies: Towards an Alternative Epistemology’, *Northeast African Studies*, 11 (1989), pp. 3–17.

<sup>31</sup> Marcel Djama, ‘Trajectoire du Pouvoir en Pays Somali’, *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines*, 37 (1997), pp. 403–28.

<sup>32</sup> Ali Jumale Ahmed, ed., *The Invention of Somalia* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1995); Abdi Kusow, ed., *Putting the Cart before the Horse: Contested Nationalism and the Crisis of the Nation-State in Somalia* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press, 2004).

<sup>33</sup> Lee V. Cassanelli, ‘History and Identity in the Somali Diaspora’, in *Variations on the Theme of Somaliness: Proceedings of the EASS/SSIA International Congress of Somali Studies, Turku, Finland, August 6-9, 1998*, ed. by Muddle S. Lilius (Turku: Centre for Continuing Education, Abo Akademi University, c2001), pp. 272–80 (p. 275).

<sup>34</sup> Abdurahman Abdullahi (Baadiyow), *Making Sense of Somali History. Volume 1* (London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers, 2017), p. 19.

produced seminal work on land, slavery, and the political economy of violence in southern Somalia, particularly in the Jubba River valley.<sup>35</sup> This work begins to take up some of the challenges first identified by Cassanelli in recognizing the diversity and the regional dimensions of the Somali past, while also providing much empirical evidence to support a reorientation of the historical focus from the north to the south.

Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that the historiography of Somali nationalism has tended to foster the assumption that it represents an exceptional case in modern African history. For some writers this revolves around the alleged homogeneity of the Somali nation, while for others it is due to the centrifugal and fissiparous forces of the Somali lineage system.<sup>36</sup> Both groups tend to examine only the workings of the Somali independent state, overlooking the proximate history of the late colonial period, and especially the political circumstances of decolonization. Despite a long-standing debate over the exceptionality of the Somali case in relation to state-making and nation-building, the historical

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<sup>35</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*; Catherine Besteman and Lee V. Cassanelli (eds), *The Struggle for Land in Southern Somalia: The War behind the War* (Boulder: Westview Press; London: HAAN, 1996); Lee V. Cassanelli, 'Hosts and Guests: A Historical Interpretation of Land Conflicts in Southern and Central Somalia' (London; Nairobi: Rift Valley Institute, 2015); Francesca Declich, 'Unfree Labour, Forced Labour and Resistance among the Zigula of the Lower Juba', in *Resisting Bondage in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*, ed. by Edward E. Alpers and others (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), pp.24–39; Kenneth J. Menkhaus, 'Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somalia's Lower Jubba Valley' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, South Carolina, 1989).

<sup>36</sup> See, for instance: Christopher Clapham, *The Horn of Africa: State Formation and Decay* (London: Hurst & Company, 2017); Latin and Samatar, *Nation in Search of a State*; Ioan M. Lewis, *Blood and Bone: The Call for Kingship in Somali Society* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1994); Abdalla Omar Mansur, 'Contrary to a Nation: The Cancer of the Somali State', in *The Invention of Somalia*, pp. 107–134; Ahmed I. Samatar, *Socialist Somalia: Rhetoric and Reality* (London: Institute for African Alternatives; London: Zed, 1988); Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism: International Politics and the Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963).



processes surrounding Somalia's decolonisation have received little attention from historians. This is in large part due to the difficulty of accessing Italian archival sources dating after the Second World War. In recent years, however, a new generation of Italian historians including Antonio Morone and Annalisa Urbano, along with a few Somali scholars, has begun to reverse this trend, conducting pioneering research on the history of decolonisation in Somalia with the benefit of Italian and Somali sources.<sup>37</sup> This emerging historiography has greatly enlarged the scope of Somalia's political history, but nonetheless remains predominantly focused on Mogadishu and the institutional mechanisms of state-building, overlooking the importance of local power relationships and the role of the 'margins' in the process of state formation.

The ways in which scholars have approached the 'Somali question' and its transnational implications were fixed long before archival sources were available to historians. The studies which set the tone for our understanding of nationalism and irredentism in the Horn region were written in the 1960s, the influential works of Ioan Lewis, John Drysdale, and Saadia Touval, remaining largely unchallenged until very recently.<sup>38</sup> This is a literature of its time, drawing up a synthesis of the key events from a relatively uncritical reading of official reports, newspaper articles and extant secondary sources, and often being grounded in personal observations. The fresh perspectives now being brought to Somali history emanate from the rigorous examination of multiple archives and the judicious use of wide-ranging oral histories, these providing a wholly different set of evidence that can allow for challenging and divergent interpretations.

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<sup>37</sup> Antonio M. Morone, *L'ultima Colonia: come l'Italia è tornata in Africa 1950-1960* (Rome; Bari: Laterza, 2011); Annalisa Urbano, 'Imagining the Nation, Crafting the State: The Politics of Nationalism and Decolonisation in Somalia (1940-60)' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Edinburgh, 2012); Abdi I. Samatar, *Africa's First Democrats: Somalia's Aden A. Osman and Abdirizak H. Hussen* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016); Mohamed I. Trunji, *Somalia: The Untold History 1941-1969* (Leicester: Loo Press, 2015); Abdurahman Abdullahi, *Making Sense of Somali History*.

<sup>38</sup> Drysdale, *The Somali Dispute*; Lewis, *Modern History*; Touval, *Somali Nationalism*.

This has been clearly apparent on the Kenya side of the border, where a range of new historical studies of Kenya's Somali region have begun to explore new sources to reveal more complex and contested histories.<sup>39</sup> Keren Weitzberg, in particular, has provided an important contribution to the historiography of the 'Somali problem' in Kenya, showing how historically specific, non-Western traditions of transnationalism have challenged the hegemony of the nation state. Hannah Whittaker has examined the history of the 1960s, focussing on the social dynamics of insurgency and counterinsurgency in north-eastern Kenya during the so-called *shifita* war (1963-67) that erupted in this region in the final months of colonial rule.<sup>40</sup> Deconstructing long-standing assumptions about Somali nationalism, Weitzberg has convincingly argued that the politics of Kenya's Somali region in the decolonisation era 'cannot be encapsulated through any binary – whether moderate/radical, collaborator/resister, loyalist/rebel, modernist/traditionalist, or tribalist/nationalist'.<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless, she has reproduced the trope of borderless mobility versus territorial sovereignty. Equating mobility with non-territoriality, she has used non-territoriality and de-territorialisation as categories for understanding the emergence of alternative forms of belonging and the complexity of Somali political discourses. In so doing, she has overlooked the gaps, mismatches, and discrepancies between discourse and practices, without

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<sup>39</sup> Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*; Whittaker, 'Socioeconomic Dynamics of the Shifita Conflict'; by the same author, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Kenya* and 'Legacies of Empire'.

<sup>40</sup> The term *shifita* is derived from the Amharic *shefta* (bandit or rebel), which itself stems from the root verb *shaffata* (to rebel). As Donald Crummey and Richard Reid have noted, *sheftenat* is an ambiguous term, covering both rebellion and banditry. Because of the prevalence of banditry in the Ethiopian highlands during the twentieth century, the term *shifita* found its way into English usage across north-east Africa, where 'it refers to any arm band at odds with the state' but also to 'low-level criminal behaviour'. Donald Crummey, 'Banditry and Resistance: Noble and Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Ethiopia' in *Banditry, Rebellion, and Social Protest in Africa*, ed. by Donald Crummey (London; Portsmouth, N.H.: James Currey, Heinemann, 2002, c1986), pp. 133–149 (here p. 135); Reid, *Frontiers of Violence*, p. 50.

<sup>41</sup> Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*, p. 95.

considering the ways in which territoriality influenced local power relationships and the production of politics. Whittaker's book on the *shifita* war has provided a pioneering contribution to the study of an under-researched topic.<sup>42</sup> However, her understanding of the multi-layered nature of the conflict suffers from a lack of transnational perspective, as she overlooks the role that cross-border networks of social, economic, and political exchange played in shaping secessionism and insurgency in north-eastern Kenya. As a result, the historical background to the *shifita* war has yet to be deeply investigated.

On the Kenyan side of the border, scholars have been able to consult a rich array of colonial sources on the history of the borderlands, sources that reflect the preoccupations and perspectives of the British colonisers rather than those of the local inhabitants. In their reports on clashes between Somali clans and between the Somalis and other ethnic groups, British colonial administrators identified competition for scarce water and grazing resources as the cause of 'perennial' strife in this region. In this way, colonial officials downplayed or ignored other historically contingent factors, such as competition over trade, or the impact of government policies. These were factors that had considerable transformative power across the region, redefining social relationships and sometimes provoking or influencing ethnic and clan conflicts. This thesis will provide many illustrations of the way in which these factors shaped local histories by defining the response of local communities. Scholars who have rightfully argued that violence and dissent in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands have deep historical roots in socio-economic inequalities and struggles over access to resources have focused predominantly on the issue of land appropriation, and have tended only to examine these conflicts on one side of the border.<sup>43</sup> Notable exceptions to this criticism are to be found in the works of Peter Dalleo and Peter Little, who have each documented the effects of trade, particularly livestock markets, on Somali pastoralists, Dalleo focusing on Kenya's Northern Frontier Province over the

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<sup>42</sup> Whittaker, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Kenya*.

<sup>43</sup> Besteman and Cassanelli, *Struggle for Land*; Cassanelli, 'Hosts and Guests'; Menkhaus, 'Rural Transformation'; Gufu Oba, 'Colonial Resource Capture: Triggers of Ethnic Conflicts in the Northern Frontier District of Kenya, 1903-1930s', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 5, No.3 (2011), pp. 505-34.

colonial period, and Little on the lower Jubba region in southern Somalia over more recent decades.<sup>44</sup> The deeper political implications of economic factors and the local effects of trade corridors taken up by Dalleo and Little are yet to be fully explored for the trans-border region over the twentieth century.

Since the early 1990s, following the collapse of the Somali state and the outbreak of civil war, mainstream scholarship on the historical roots of conflict in the Somali territories has been burdened (and to some extent blinded) by the trope of state failure. Research framed around this concept presents a major problem, as Tobias Hagmann and Markus Hoehne have rightfully observed: the tendency to overlook empirical statehood.<sup>45</sup> Following the warnings of Hagmann and Hoehne, this thesis rejects a definition of the state that is grounded in the notions of ‘lack’ of authority, or the ‘failure’ of institutions, focusing, instead, on the ways in which sovereignty was negotiated on the ground. As Keren Weitzberg has argued, colonial officials developed governance arrangements and techniques that, although they were inconsistent with normative forms of statecraft, should not be portrayed as ‘failures’, but, rather, as an intentional policy, which enabled local agency in the borderlands to assert some form of state power.<sup>46</sup>

The teleology of failure has gone hand-in-hand with the structural-functional approach to Somali societies. Writing about the role of boundaries in the history of the Horn of Africa, Christopher Clapham has argued that the sources of state failure in the Somali-lands ‘most basically derive from the problems of creating a territorial state on the inadequate foundations of clan-based pastoral societies’.<sup>47</sup> ‘Clan’, however, is an institution that should not be taken for

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<sup>44</sup> Peter T. Dalleo, ‘Trade and Pastoralism: Economic Factors in the History of the Somali of Northeastern Kenya, 1892-1948’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Syracuse University, 1975); Little, ‘Conflictive Trade, Contested Identity’.

<sup>45</sup> Tobias Hagmann and Markus V. Hoehne, ‘Failures of the State Failure Debate: Evidence from the Somali Territories’, *Journal of International Development*, 21 (2009), pp.42–57.

<sup>46</sup> Weitzberg, ‘The Unaccountable Census’ (p. 409).

<sup>47</sup> Christopher Clapham, ‘Boundary and Territory in the Horn of Africa’, in *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*, ed. by Paul Nugent and Anthony Ijaola Asiwaju (London: Pinter, 1996), pp. 237–50 (here p. 247).

granted and regarded as a self-contained unit, as a simple matter of genealogical descent. Rather, as Keren Weitzberg has noted, in Somali society clan ‘is defined relationally and what it means in any given context varies’.<sup>48</sup> Both the significance and political relevance of clan change depending on circumstances and geographical location. The dominant paradigm in Somali Studies, however, identifies the particularity of the Somali segmentary model as being the ‘absence of a territorial basis’ for social and political bonds.<sup>49</sup> By this interpretation, territory does not matter to identity or affiliation. Nonetheless, the works of Lee Cassanelli, Virginia Luling, and Catherine Besteman have shown that the agro-pastoral people of southern Somalia forged communal identities that were based more on spatial proximity than on genealogy. These agro-pastoral groups formed confederacies which reflected ‘a growing sense of territoriality’, although they were expressed in the idiom of kinship.<sup>50</sup> Building on the work of these scholars, this thesis challenges the prevailing assumption that socio-political identities among the Somalis had no territorial basis, specifically exploring the relationship between genealogical identities, allegiances, and territory.

As Cedric Barnes has pointed out, academic controversies between ‘primordialists’ and ‘transformationalists’ have essentially fallen into the north-south divide of historical lineage and territorial identification.<sup>51</sup> Barnes has sought

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<sup>48</sup> Weitzberg, ‘The Unaccountable Census’, p. 414.

<sup>49</sup> Djama, ‘The Political Anthropology of “Pastoral Democracy”’, p. 108.

<sup>50</sup> Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, p. 27; Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*; Virginia Luling, *Somali Sultanate: The Geledi City-State over 150 Years* (London: HAAN, 2002).

<sup>51</sup> Cedric Barnes, ‘U dhashay—Ku dhashay: Genealogical and Territorial Discourse in Somali History’, *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*, 12, No.4 (2006), pp.487–98 (here p. 488). The most famous academic controversy over the significance of clanship is the one that involved Ioan Lewis and Catherine Besteman, Lewis accusing Besteman of ‘doing violence to ethnography’ and Besteman replying that Lewis was misled by his ‘primordialist blinders’: Ioan M. Lewis, ‘Doing Violence to Ethnography: A Response to Catherine Besteman’s “Representing Violence and ‘Othering’ Somalia”’, *Cultural Anthropology*, 13, No.1 (1998), pp. 100–108; Besteman, ‘Primordialist Blinders’, pp. 109–20.

to bypass the dichotomy between genealogical and territorial discourses using empirical evidence from the Ethiopia-Somalia borderland. He has argued that descent by lineage should be seen as only one part of the repertoire of political legitimacy in Somali societies. Barnes has highlighted the historicity of the so-called *u-dhashay* - *ku-dhashay* debate which has been raging in the Somali-speaking areas since the collapse of the Somali state in the late 1980s. The couplet *u-dhashay* - *ku-dhashay* can be roughly translated as ‘born to’ (a family) and ‘born at’ (a place). However, as Roland Marchal has noted, this formula has come to signify ‘born for’ (a region, i.e. to the family/clan that claims to be the ‘natal’ clan of the place/region and, therefore, to ‘own’ the territory)’ and ‘born in’ (a place/region).<sup>52</sup> The *u-dhashay* - *ku-dhashay* debate is important for two reasons. Firstly, it is key to defining who is entitled to resource access and political representation and who is not and, therefore, to determining how a Somali state should be built. Second, the main line along which Somali studies have split, dividing into what Abdi Kusow has called ‘lineage narratives’ and ‘territorial narratives’, echoes the *u-dhashay* - *ku-dhashay* couplet.<sup>53</sup>

Barnes has convincingly argued that the ‘lineage’ and ‘territorial’ paradigms are ‘far more intertwined than they might first appear’, showing that traditional ‘segmentary’ identity ‘has at certain historical moments chimed with territorial identity’.<sup>54</sup> Building on Lewis’s argument that colonialism may have fostered the identification of clan and territory to pursue its own administrative and political goals but certainly did not invent it, Barnes has shown that ‘the dominance of genealogically related clans (or lineages) over territories has a long, albeit episodic and contradictory history, in the Somali-speaking lands’.<sup>55</sup> He has argued that this history is reflected in ‘multiple local narratives’ which emerged at

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<sup>52</sup> Roland Marchal, *A Survey of Mogadishu’s Economy* (Brussels: European Commission Somali Unit, 2002), p. 14.

<sup>53</sup> Abdi Mohamed Kusow, ‘Contested Narratives and the Crisis of the Nation-State in Somalia: A Prolegomenon’, in *Putting the Cart before the Horse: Contested Nationalism and the Crisis of the Nation-State in Somalia*, ed. by Abdi Mohamed Kusow (Trenton: Red Sea Press, 2004), pp. 1–14.

<sup>54</sup> Barnes, ‘U dhashay—Ku dhashay’, p. 489.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 491.

the inception of Somali nationalism. Barnes has presented these discourses as manifestations of ‘dissent from the nationalist genealogical narrative, and its accompanying irredentist “pan-territorial” narrative’, emphasising the ‘subaltern’ character of these ‘expressions of genealogical and territorial particularity’.<sup>56</sup> This thesis builds on Barnes’s argument that genealogical and territorial identities are historically intertwined to suggest that the struggles over genealogical claims to territory represented by the present-day *u-dhashay* - *ku-dhashay* debate were already apparent during the colonial period. This study will show how and why these struggles acquired particular salience in concomitance with the eventual fixation of the colonial border following the transfer of Jubaland in 1925 and during the long moment of decolonisation, from the end of the Second World War until independence. However, this thesis deconstructs the opposition between particularistic genealogical and territorial narratives on the one hand, and hegemonic nationalist trans-territorial discourse, on the other hand. In so doing, this thesis will demonstrate that the identification of clan with territory was not necessarily a ‘subaltern’ mode of dissent but, rather, played a fundamental role in defining who could enter the struggle for resources and, therefore, participate in negotiating the state in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands and who could not. It is argued here that, although colonialism did not ‘invent’ the connection between clan and territory, the territorialisation of genealogical identities was a key feature of colonial governance over these borderlands (despite the fact that it took on different forms on each side of the frontier) and was employed by the borderlanders as a means to assert their political and economic goals vis-à-vis one another, with the result that genealogical claims to territory acquired a new significance and new functions in the process of state formation.

Following Elden’s consideration of the meaning of territory, we will view territoriality as an ‘historical question: produced, mutable and fluid’.<sup>57</sup> This study will contextualise the meaning of territory in the borderlands, tracing its connections with political phenomena and understanding territoriality as a key concept in the way that local communities appropriate the borderlands. As David

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 492.

<sup>57</sup> Stuart Elden, ‘Land, Terrain, Territory’, *Progress in Human Geography*, 34, No.6 (2010), pp. 799–817 (p.812).

Delaney has effectively argued, territoriality cannot be reduced to a strategy for the control of space; rather, it is ‘better understood as implicating and being implicated in ways of thinking, acting, and being in the world’.<sup>58</sup> The term ‘territorial appropriation’ is adopted here as a conceptual tool for understanding transformations of territoriality. However, some precisions about the term territory are required to explain and justify our use of ‘territorial appropriation’. Territory is not quite the same for anglophone and francophone scholars. In the anglophone tradition, ‘the term territory is considered to coincide with state territory’, whilst among francophone scholars the notion of ‘*territoire* has never been so strictly linked with national boundaries’.<sup>59</sup> The difference between territory and *territoire* - which is often translated by ‘place’ and not by ‘territory’ - is not simply lexical, but epistemological. The anglophone conception of territory is centred around two main ideas. Firstly, a reading of territoriality ‘concerned, predominantly, with the study of geopolitical strategies of control/defence of space and with the resulting political-territorial arrangements’.<sup>60</sup> Secondly, the idea that human territoriality is ‘fundamentally distinct from animal territoriality in that the former is not the product of instinct but is instead a culturally situated process intended to achieve particular political and social ends’.<sup>61</sup> While in the anglophone tradition territory has never been detached from the state, in francophone scholarship *territoire* has assumed varied and complex connotations since the 1970s.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> David Delaney, *Territory: A Short Introduction*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), p.12.

<sup>59</sup> Cristina Del Biaggio, ‘Territory beyond the Anglophone Tradition’, in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Political Geography*, ed. by John Agnew and others (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2015), p. 35.

<sup>60</sup> Francisco R. Klauser, ‘Thinking through Territoriality: Introducing Claude Raffestin to Anglophone Socio-Spatial Theory’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 30, No.1 (2012), pp. 106–20 (p. 110).

<sup>61</sup> Alexander B. Murphy, ‘Entente Territorial: Sack and Raffestin on Territoriality’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 30, No.1 (2012), pp. 159–72 (pp.160–61).

<sup>62</sup> Bernard Debarbieux, ‘Le Territoire: Histoire en Deux Langues. A Bilingual (His-)Story of Territory’, in *Discours Scientifiques et Contextes Culturels: Géographies Françaises et Britanniques à l’Epreuve Postmoderne*, ed. by Christine Chivallon



In the francophone tradition, territory is generally understood as the area of day-to-day practices and relations, whose limits are determined by the surface where these practices and relations take place.<sup>63</sup> Some Anglo-Saxon scholars such as Kevin Cox and John Agnew share this view and see territory as ‘the container of localized social and/or (non-invariably state) power relations’.<sup>64</sup> Territory thus denotes ‘at the same time a political circumscription and the group’s living space’, in Jaillet’s words.<sup>65</sup> These two areas, though, are not always spatially equivalent. For this reason, anglophone researchers have tended to abandon ‘territory’ and to prefer ‘place’ instead. They have sought to resolve this conceptual conundrum by distinguishing the ‘sense of territory’ – understood as ‘inextricably tied to the modern state system’ – from the ‘sense of place’.<sup>66</sup> However, the problem is not territory itself but ‘certain ways of thinking about territory’, as Elden has pointed out.<sup>67</sup> The French geographer Debarbieux has defined territory as a social construct which connects a geographical space to a system of values that gives multiple and combined meanings to each component of this space and to the

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and others (Bordeaux: Maison des Sciences de l’Homme d’Aquitaine, 1999), pp. 33–46 (p. 34).

<sup>63</sup> Joël Bonnemaïson, ‘Voyage autour du territoire’, *Espace Géographique*, 10, No.4 (1981), pp. 249–62 (p. 260)

<sup>64</sup> Del Biaggio, p. 39; Kevin R. Cox, ‘Redefining “Territory”’, *Political Geography Quarterly*, 10, No.1 (1991), pp. 5–7 (p.6); John Agnew, ‘Mapping Political Power beyond State Boundaries: Territory, Identity, and Movement in World Politics’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 28, No.3 (1999), pp. 499–521 (p. 503).

<sup>65</sup> Marie-Christine Jaillet, ‘Contre le territoire, la “bonne distance”’, in *Territoires, Territorialité, Territorialisation: Controverses et Perspectives*, ed. by Martin Vanier (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009), pp. 115–21 (p. 115).

<sup>66</sup> Alexander B. Murphy, ‘National Claims to Territory in the Modern State System: Geographical Considerations’, *Geopolitics*, 7, No.2 (2002), pp. 193–214 (pp. 197–98).

<sup>67</sup> Stuart Elden, ‘Thinking Territory Historically’, *Geopolitics*, 15, No.4 (2010), pp. 757–61 (p. 757).

discontinuities this space encompasses.<sup>68</sup> This is the definition that it is adopted here. This way of thinking about territory implies that a territory, insofar as it is such, has to be appropriated materially and/or symbolically by individuals or groups. The concept of territorial appropriation is thus inherently connected with the issues of control over resources, differentiation, and domination. Therefore, this concept is particularly useful for studying identity formation and power, conceived as not necessarily linked to state power but as inherent to any social relationship.<sup>69</sup>

To revisit how colonial domination worked in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands and take the borderlanders' agency into account, this thesis examines how 'colonial transactions', understood as relations of both material and symbolic exchange, influenced the internal politics of borderland societies, shaping their relationships with the state.<sup>70</sup> To explore these transactions, this study focuses particularly on the negotiation and transformation of 'traditional' authority, drawing inspiration from Cherry Leonardi's work on state-society relations across South Sudan. Leonardi has argued against the idea that chiefs are 'interstitial actors', mere 'intermediaries between distinct, antagonistic entities of state and society'.<sup>71</sup> Her approach to both state and tradition 'not as fixed entities but as ideas, discourses and imaginaries, as well as institutions, actors and processes' has proved particularly relevant to studying processes of state formation in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands.<sup>72</sup> This is due to the fact that there are similarities between the ways state-society relations have been conceived in the contexts of

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<sup>68</sup> Bernard Debarbieux, 'Le Lieu, Fragment et Symbole du Territoire', *Espaces et Sociétés*, 80A, No.1 (1995), pp. 13–36 (pp.14–5).

<sup>69</sup> Frédéric Giraut, 'Conceptualiser le Territoire', *Historiens et Géographes*, 403 (2008), pp. 57–67 (p. 60).

<sup>70</sup> Florence Bernault, 'Transactions: Revisiting How Domination Worked in Colonial Africa', talk delivered at the African Studies Seminar, African Studies Centre, University of Oxford, 25 October 2018; by the same author, *Colonial Transactions: Imaginaries, Bodies, and Histories in Gabon* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019).

<sup>71</sup> Leonardi, *Dealing with Government in South Sudan*, pp. 4, 224.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

South Sudanese History and Somali Studies. In both contexts, the notion of state-society separation has gone largely unquestioned. Leonardi's book has challenged the assumption shared by pioneers of political anthropology that the state was 'irrelevant to the political cultures of the southern Sudanese "segmentary lineage systems"' as well as the idea that 'such political cultures were fundamentally at odds with the modern state systems imposed through colonialism'.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, this thesis challenges both the ideas of the state as irrelevant to Somali traditional political culture and of state power as an alien imposition whose transplant into the Somali segmentary lineage system was doomed to fail. Building on Leonardi's argument that state formation should be understood in terms of local relations, this thesis will explore the role of chiefs and headmen in negotiating the state in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands.<sup>74</sup>

### **Methodology and sources**

Drawing inspiration from seminal works on African borderlands by Dereje Feyissa, Markus Hoehne, Paul Nugent, Anthony Asiwaju, and Cedric Barnes, this thesis adopts an actor-centred approach to challenge the argument that the artificiality of the colonial border explains its problematic nature.<sup>75</sup> This approach

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>75</sup> Dereje Feyissa and Markus Virgil Hoehne, 'State Borders and Borderlands as Resources: An Analytical Framework', in *Borders & Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*, ed. by Dereje Feyissa, and Markus Virgil Hoehne (Oxford: James Currey, 2010), pp.1–26; Nugent and Asiwaju, eds., *African Boundaries*; Paul Nugent, 'Arbitrary Lines and the People's Minds: A Dissenting View on Colonial Boundaries in West Africa', in *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*, ed. by Paul Nugent and Anthony Ijaola Asiwaju (London: Pinter, 1996), pp. 35–67; Cedric Barnes, 'The Ethiopian State and its Somalia Periphery, c.1888-1948' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2001); by the same author, 'The Ethiopian-British Somaliland Boundary', in *Borders &*

allows us to explore social, economic and political processes that have been largely ignored by old-fashioned historiographical research on inter-state politics and their effects on borderland peoples. This approach, however, risks to leave the actors themselves – their emergence, their interests and identities – unexplained. This thesis, therefore, seeks to develop a combined understanding of agency and structure, inspired by Anthony Giddens’s theory of structuration.<sup>76</sup> The notion of structuration involves the concept ‘of the *duality of structure*, which relates to the *fundamentally recursive character of social life, and expresses the mutual dependence of structure and agency*’.<sup>77</sup> The theory of structuration thus rejects ‘the identification of structure with constraint’.<sup>78</sup> Drawing on this theory, the thesis seeks to apprehend structure not ‘as a barrier to action, but as essentially involved in its production’.<sup>79</sup> The state is not considered here as an actor, as an autonomous power over society, but, rather, as a ‘résumé of society’ – as Bruce Berman has called it.<sup>80</sup> This thesis, therefore, adopts the distinction proposed by Berman and John Lonsdale between state-building, ‘as a conscious effort at creating an apparatus of control’, and state-formation, ‘as an historical process whose outcome is a largely unconscious and contradictory process of conflicts, negotiations and compromises between different groups’, focusing primarily on state formation.<sup>81</sup>

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*Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*, ed. by Dereje Feyissa and Markus Virgil Hoehne (Oxford: James Currey, 2010), pp. 122–32.

<sup>76</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (London: Macmillan, 1979).

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Bruce Berman, “‘A Palimpsest of Contradictions’: Ethnicity, Class, and Politics in Africa’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 37, No.1 (2004), pp.13–31, (p. 21).

<sup>81</sup> Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* (London: James Currey; Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya; Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992), p. 5.

Moving beyond formal institutions as the *loci* of politics, this study uses the borderlands as a vantage point to observe the politics of state formation not only in the state's periphery, but also at its centre. As Niccolò Machiavelli wrote in the *The Prince's* dedication to the Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici, 'those who paint landscapes place themselves in a low position on the plain in order to consider the nature of the mountains and the heights, and place themselves high on top of mountains in order to study the plains'.<sup>82</sup> In a similar way, this thesis shows how particular socio-economic and political configurations in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands participated in 'doing the state', and how changes at the state's centre influenced social, economic, and political transformations in the borderlands.

Throughout the thesis the heuristic framework of 'negotiation', proposed by Tobias Hagmann and Didier Péclard to grasp some complex dimensions of statehood, will be utilised. The term 'negotiation' in this sense allows us to close in on the peculiar set of social, economic, and political arrangements which characterised the process of state formation in the trans-border region.<sup>83</sup> This framework has proved particularly helpful in better understanding how heterogeneous actors at the local, national, and regional levels forged the state through processes of negotiation and contestation. As Hagmann and Péclard have pointed out, 'negotiation does not occur between co-equal parties or in an inclusive manner [...]. Not everything is or can be negotiated and not everyone takes part in negotiating statehood'.<sup>84</sup> To understand how local processes of negotiation and contestation shaped the state in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands, this thesis will consider how different actors (soldiers, chiefs, farmers, traders,

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<sup>82</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. and ed. by Peter Bondanella, with an introduction by Maurizio Viroli (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 'Dedicatory Letter', Niccolò Machiavelli to the Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici, pp. 5–6.

<sup>83</sup> Tobias Hagmann and Didier Péclard, eds., *Negotiating Statehood: Dynamics of Power and Domination in Africa* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011); by the same authors, 'Negotiating Statehood: Dynamics of Power and Domination in Africa', *Development and Change*, 41, No.4 (2010), pp. 539–62.

<sup>84</sup> Hagmann and Péclard, 'Negotiating Statehood', p. 545.

middlemen, and politicians) became involved in shaping political authority; how negotiation arenas (such as cross-border trade corridors, plantation agriculture in the Jubba Valley, and electoral politics) conditioned social actors' inclusion in or exclusion from the negotiation process; how the main objects of negotiation were resolved, namely security provision and the balance of power between the state and its periphery (in particular, the instrumentalization of identity politics at the local level in attempts to claim authority and gain access to the state's resources); and how negotiation affected the questions of sovereignty and citizenship. To better implement the idea of 'negotiation', this thesis also adopts an 'externalist' approach – 'one deliberately detached from the national as the place/people/period in which nationalising processes occur' – to write a history of state formation outside the framework of national historiography, using the borderlands' vantage point to rethink established historical problems.<sup>85</sup> In so doing, this study then deals with the transnational as a 'a phenomenon that extends across, and thereby links as well as transcends, different (territorial) "levels"', rather than a 'level' *per se*, as opposed, for instance, to the 'national' level.<sup>86</sup>

This transnational way of seeing is exemplified in the methodology of the thesis and its emphasis upon 'seeing' from both sides of the border. The thesis makes extensive use of both Italian and British colonial sources. While the emerging historiography of Kenya's frontier region has looked northwards from metropolitan Nairobi, and while Somali studies continue to be dominated by a Mogadishu-centred focus, this study has eyes on both sides of the frontier. Local perspectives from the borderlands are the dominant feature of the archives used here. The bulk of the source material used in this thesis is drawn from archives in Kenya, the United Kingdom, and Italy: the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi; the Bodleian Library's Commonwealth and African collections in Oxford; The National Archives in Kew; the Historical-Diplomatic Archives of the Italian

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<sup>85</sup> John Breuilly, 'Nationalism as Global History', in *Nationalism and Globalisation: Conflicting or Complementary?*, ed. by Daphne Halikiopoulou and Sofia Vasilopoulou (London; New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 65–83 (here p. 67).

<sup>86</sup> Bastiaan van Apeldoorn, 'Theorizing the Transnational: A Historical Materialist Approach', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 7, No.2 (2004), pp.142–76 (here p. 144).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Historical Archives of the Historical Museum of the Carabinieri Corps, the Historical Archives of the Historical Office of the Carabinieri General Command, and the Archives of the Historical Office of the Italian Army General Staff, all in Rome. Amongst the sources I examined in the Historical-Diplomatic Archives of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Historical Archives of the Historical Museum of the Carabinieri Corps are several files concerning the Italian Trusteeship Administration in Somalia during the 1950s that no other historian had seen before. Alongside archival documents, this thesis draws on published primary sources, including travel accounts, memoirs and essays by both British and Italian colonial officials, government publications and newspaper articles. These sources were accessed in various libraries in the United Kingdom and Italy: the British Library and the SOAS Library in London, the Bodleian History Faculty Library and the Weston Library in Oxford, the Historical Library of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Library of the Central State Archives in Rome, the Library of Modern and Contemporary History and the National Central Library, both in Rome.

Conducting archival research in Italy presents several challenges. None of the Italian archives mentioned above, with the exception of the Archives of the Historical Office of the Italian Army General Staff and of certain collections in the Historical-Diplomatic Archives of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has an online catalogue. Moreover, applying for access to reading rooms sometimes entails byzantine procedures. For instance, visits to the Historical Office of the Italian Army General Staff have to be booked via telephone, one month in advance, on the first working day of the month, between 9.00 am. and 12.00 noon. Prospective visitors are only allowed to book one seat for three consecutive days and for no more than five days each month. Moreover, the Historical Office's study rooms are open only from 8:30 am to 13:30 pm Monday to Thursday and from 8:30 am to 11:30 am on Friday. None of the Italian archives mentioned above is open after 2:00 pm or during the month of August. Furthermore, the most serious problem in terms of access to archival documents stems from the fact that there is no Freedom of Information Act in Italy. As a result, in the Historical Archives of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a special authorisation is required to access files dating from or after 1949. An authorisation request has to be made for each of these files and sent to the Director of Collections, who is

authorised to refuse permission for accessing documents without providing an explanation. In the Historical Archives of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, access to files dating from after 1950 is further limited by the fact that the records of the Directorate General of the Italian Trusteeship Administration of Somalia have been inaccessible since the spring of 2015 because of structural damage caused by heavy rains in the main storage building. According to the Director of Collections, this situation is likely to last indefinitely due to lack of funding. These challenges notwithstanding, colonial archives in Rome have proved to be a goldmine, whose potential is, for the most part, yet to be tapped.

Collecting and using the voices of local informants has been perhaps the most challenging but also the most interesting and, no doubt, the most humanly rewarding aspect of this study. In order to verify the solidity of oral evidence and to unpack local voices and imperial perspectives, I have triangulated archival and oral sources. I spent over nine months in Kenya between 2015 and 2017, alternating periods of intensive archival research with stints of fieldwork. This enabled me to move back and forth between different sets of evidence, using oral testimonies to identify concealed threads in the colonial archives and using archival sources to check, whenever possible, information or broader insights obtained during interviews. Each new visit to the archives generated new questions for more interviews, and each new set of interviews ushered me back to the archives. Often, the local voices I gathered are not in agreement with the colonial archive. Still, I have used those voices to bring out points of dissent. No matter how elusive and fraught with problems locally-understood history may be, this history is often more important than the official record because it governs people's behaviour. If, however, one voice is isolated, I have not used it, unless it represents a body of opinion.

I interviewed seventy-four informants (mostly Somalis but also several Boran) including chiefs, descendants of chiefs, businessmen, politicians, former soldiers and policemen, local government officials, and former civil servants, in various locations in Kenya and in the Somali capital Mogadishu. In Kenya, I conducted interviews in Nairobi, particularly in the predominantly Somali neighbourhood of Eastleigh (also known as 'Little Mogadishu'), and in the counties of Wajir, Garissa, and Isiolo. Unfortunately, I was unable to visit Mandera county (wedged between Ethiopia and Somalia in the north-easternmost



part of Kenya) and Somalia's border region due to extremely volatile security conditions. Nevertheless, among the informants I interviewed in Nairobi, Garissa, and Mogadishu are several Somalis from Kismaayo, Afmadoow, and Garbahaarrey, in Somalia's border region. I conducted some interviews in English, some in Italian (nearly all the elderly informants from southern Somalia could speak Italian), and many others in either Somali or Oromo.

I relied upon assistants to provide on-the-spot translations into spoken English of vernacular interviews in Somali and Oromo. I worked intensively with my assistants to verify written notes and interview transcriptions and to ensure that as much original idiom as possible was retained. Nonetheless, every quoted or paraphrased interview I have cited in translation has passed through an interpretative process, with the risk of potential loss or shift of meaning. Interviews were not taped but recorded as field notes. People in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands and Somalis in Nairobi and Mogadishu are wary and worried by the power of a voice recorder, due to their lived experiences of violence, state repression and conflict, and to the volatile security situation in these areas. Putting a voice recorder on the table would have either prevented the interview from taking place or distorted the interaction with my informants and, therefore, irremediably compromised the quality of historical information. Lengthy interview notes were discussed with interpreters - in the case of interviews conducted in Somali and interpreted on the spot - and with the informants themselves - in the case of interviews conducted in English or Italian - to check specific points. Indeed, this source material was fundamentally mediated by interpreters and assistants. This, though, doesn't make it less valuable than government sources, as these were 'similarly mediated by clerks, interpreters and primary informants of government officials', as Cherry Leonardi has pointed out.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Leonardi, p. 10.

## **Argument and thesis structure**

The thesis chapters are organised into three parts. The first part, consisting of Chapters 1 and 2, examines how socio-political identities and ideas of belonging acquired new shapes and functions in the process of state formation from the colonisation period to the establishment of a United Nations Trusteeship in former Italia Somalia in 1950, following Italy's defeat in the Second World War and the dismembering of Italian East Africa. Challenging time-honoured ethnographic and anthropological traditions, these two chapters examine how group fault-lines and processes of identification and affiliation metamorphosed as the borderlands' economic and political geographies changed.

Building on work by Peter Dalleo and Peter Little (discussed previously in this Introduction), Chapters 1 and 2 use cross-border movements and trade as lenses for observing social relationships and the local dynamics of power. Particular attention is paid to export markets, whether legal or 'illicit' (livestock, hides and skins, game trophies, and agricultural produce), and the social groups and actors associated with them, in order to examine the effects of these markets on the people of the Somalia-Kenya borderlands in the process of colonial state formation.

In parallel with trade, these chapters focus on the politics of territory, exploring how transformations of territoriality, along such variables as ethnicity, clan, and class, affected local power balances and the negotiation of political authority. More specifically, Chapter 1 documents the emergence of colonial regimes of territorialisation following the redrawing of the British-Italian border in 1925 and explores how local actors exploited imperial rivalries and conflicting modes of governance on the two sides of the border to assert their own political and economic goals. Chapter 2 investigates how mobilisation policies in the lead-up to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, the second Italo-Ethiopian war in 1935-36, and the East Africa Campaign in 1940-41 transformed the imperial frontier, affecting allegiances, alliances, and conflicts among the people of the Somalia-Kenya borderlands. In so doing, Chapter 2 also lays the groundwork for reconstructing the history of war in these borderlands, a history which, for the most part, is yet to be written. This Chapter then jointly discusses the socio-political implications of colonial development policies in north-eastern Kenya, on

the one hand, and the political impact of certain strategies of economic development and territorial control adopted by the British Military Administration (BMA) in southern Somalia, on the other hand, using Wajir District and the Lower Jubba Valley as case studies. In so doing, Chapter 2 shows how British and Italian agendas influenced identities and political alignment as different social groups translated these (conflicting) agendas into Somali politics.

Only recently has a new generation of historians begun to explore the relationship between ideas of territory and belonging and the emergence of Somali nationalism, emphasising the plurality of actors, struggles and ideas that characterised this phenomenon. Keren Weitzberg has explored the deeper history of the debates around identities and allegiances among the Kenyan Somalis and how these debates intertwined with the politics of Somali nationalism, while Annalisa Urbano has provided important insights on the emergence of the so-called ‘pro-Italian’ political parties in southern Somalia in the late 1940s.<sup>88</sup> Urbano has discussed the meanings of political alignment in connection with territorial appropriation and land issues, yet focusing essentially on the discursive level. Another few scholars have examined the impact of agricultural and resource management policies on certain areas of southern Somalia and north-eastern Kenya in the 1940s. Kenneth Menkhaus has documented the relationship between agricultural exploitation in the Lower Jubba Valley and the development of Somali political parties in this region, while Hannah Whittaker has showed that increased colonial interventionism in the Northern Frontier Province was motivated by political and security interests as well as ecological and economic considerations.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Annalisa Urbano, “‘That Is Why We Have Troubles’: The Pro-Italia Movement’s Challenge to Nationalism in British-Occupied Somalia (1946-9)”, *Journal of African History*, 57, No. 3 (2016), pp. 323–44; Keren Weitzberg, ‘The Promise of a Borderless World: Diaspora, Nativism, and the Kenyan Somali population (1890-2010)’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 2013); Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*.

<sup>89</sup> Menkhaus, ‘Rural Transformation’, pp. 278–308; Whittaker, ‘Frontier Security in North East Africa’.

Building on this scholarship, Chapters 1 and 2 treat the Somalia-Kenya borderlands as a single unit of analysis and take a comprehensive view. The main argument put forward in these two chapters is that different social actors exploited the colonial categories of political ordering and the administrative and economic differentials created by the imperial border to either maintain a dominant position or challenge their adversaries, with the result that social identities and the bases of ‘indigenous’ power were transformed in the process. Hegemonic struggles between British, Italian, and Ethiopian imperialisms magnified these issues, telescoping the temporalities of global history and those of local histories. This created new configurations of space, power, and belonging which are crucial for understanding the historical trajectory of the Somalia-Kenya borderlands and the emergence of Somali nationalism.

The second part of this thesis, consisting of Chapters 3 and 4, examines how different social actors in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands became involved in shaping political authority and negotiating statehood during the period of Italian Trusteeship, from 1 April 1950 until Somalia’s independence on 1 July 1960. Challenging prevailing views of state and institution building, Chapters 3 and 4 focus on social order below conventional politics, exploring how commoners – subjects on the road to becoming citizens – participated in the process of state formation, navigating and sometimes reproducing the dynamics of power and domination that they were experiencing under the Italian Trusteeship Administration. These two chapters also account for the effects that the negotiation of political control, access to resources (both material and symbolic), and state-sanctioned authority in the Jubba Valley had across the Kenya-Somalia border.

Chapters 3 and 4 build on Cedric Barnes’s observation that ‘the seemingly simple nationalist genealogical discourse of a Somali territorial commonwealth is cross-cut by any number of particularistic genealogical and territorial histories’ and pushes this line of reasoning further.<sup>90</sup> By exploring the meaning of sub-national clan and territorial discourse within the politics of state formation in the Jubba River valley, these two chapters suggest that territorial and genealogical

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<sup>90</sup> Barnes, ‘U Dhashay—Ku Dhashay’, pp. 496–97.

(clan) polarisation were two sides of the same coin – rather than the manifestations of two conflicting identity paradigms – and that these struggles ultimately coincided with the emergence of a national system of power. These genealogical and territorial histories did not constitute an autonomous domain of anti-elitist politics; rather, they were subsumed within the power contest at the state’s centre, as we shall see.

Building on the emergent literature on Somalia’s decolonisation, Chapters 3 and 4 offer a different perspective on the politics of Somali nationalism and on the formation of the post-colonial state in the Trust Territory of Somaliland (hereafter Somalia) from a peripheral and trans-border vantage point. Despite all we may think we know on these topics, there remain a number of issues that complicate the prevailing picture of Somalia’s transition to independence. I am now going to address these points.

The first surrounds the tendency to describe the emergence of the Somali post-colonial state as either a laboratory example of distorted state making and nation building or, conversely, a lost golden age of Somali politics. In the first instance, Italian scholars such as Angelo del Boca, Paolo Tripodi, and, more recently, Antonio Morone and Annalisa Urbano have interpreted the Italian Trusteeship Administration as an ill-conceived experiment which ambiguously mixed the modern politics of state building with tribalism, with the result that the imported state failed to overcome the fractured and fissiparous realities of traditional clan-oriented society.<sup>91</sup> Annalisa Urbano, for instance, has argued that ‘the imposition of self-government and democratization through the trusteeship system’ led to the establishment of an institutional framework which ‘was marked by ambivalent tensions between its modernist character and “traditional” features’.<sup>92</sup> According to Urbano’s interpretation, this produced a ‘state system based on a distorted model of nation-state’ which negatively affected the process

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<sup>91</sup> Angelo Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Africa orientale. Volume 4: Nostalgia delle colonie* (Milano: Mondadori, 1992); Paolo Tripodi, *The Colonial Legacy in Somalia. Rome and Mogadishu: from Colonial Administration to Operation Restore Hope* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999); Morone, *L’ultima colonia*; Urbano, ‘Imagining the Nation’.

<sup>92</sup> Urbano, ‘Imagining the Nation’, p. 5.

of national unification.<sup>93</sup> The problem with this approach is that it explains Somalia's predicaments as a consequence of distorted political development or political under-development, thereby assuming the linearity of political development and raising broader theoretical issues concerning the relationship between state formation and nomadic tribes, conventionally regarded as precursors and opponents of the nation state. Offering an empirical alternative to the prevailing normative approach, Chapters 3 and 4 show that the so-called 'traditional' features of the emerging Somali state were in no sense a residue of the past but an outgrowth of the particular form that the process of state formation took in Somalia.

In the second instance, Somali scholars such as Cabdi Ismaaciil Samatar and Maxamed Ciise Trunji have tried to rehabilitate the image of Somalia's post-colonial past, showing 'a political reality that contrasts with today's Somalia'.<sup>94</sup> These scholars have stressed the democratic practice of Somali leaders during the decades of Italian trusteeship and civilian government to challenge the assumption that post-colonial Somalia lacked democratic culture and governance capability. The critical narratives of Somalia's decolonisation offered by Samatar and Trunji are intended to act as an antidote to Somali-pessimism, and Afro-pessimism more broadly. Their practice-oriented approach, though, tends to overlook or downplay the structural constraints – inherited from the Italian administration but also related to Cold-War politics – that conditioned Somali social actors' scope.

The second problem lies in the fact that Somali nationalism, although it has been treated in greater detail than have most other aspects of the history of Somalia's decolonisation, has been contended in terms which oppose the myth of Somali unity and the 'nation in search of a state' thesis – what Jean-François Bayart has termed 'the illusion of cultural identity' – to the constructivist critique of the 'invention of Somalia'.<sup>95</sup> This nationalist/revisionist dichotomy has emphasised the hiatus between the 'rhetoric' of nationalism and the 'reality' of Somali politics. Ioan Lewis and Alphonso Castagno, for instance, have stressed

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<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>94</sup> Samatar, *Africa's First Democrats*, p. 1; Trunji, *Somalia: The Untold History*.

<sup>95</sup> Jean-François Bayart, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity* (London: Hurst in association with the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales, 2005).

that the Somali Youth League, in spite of its nationalist rhetoric, tended to operate on age-old principles of clan politics.<sup>96</sup> Kenneth Menkhaus has argued that ‘the SYL, in fact, was neither as nationalistic nor as anti-colonial as its rhetoric led observers to believe’.<sup>97</sup> While these analyses have highlighted the need for a critical approach of the nationalist narrative, they have failed to grasp the locally- and temporally-specific dimensions of Somali nationalism’s uneven trajectories in the process of state formation. Cedric Barnes has provided more nuance to this debate, highlighting the importance of the interaction between external forces and ‘the internal histories of Somali society’ in the making of modern Somali political history.<sup>98</sup>

Thirdly, in examining the transnational dynamics of state formation in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands we should not assume that cross-border trade and smuggling were purely a ‘subversive economy’, undermining state authority and legitimacy. In his historical overview of the opportunistic economics of the Kenya-Somalia borderland, Lee Cassanelli has shown how Somali actors with a foot in both economies took advantage of the cross-border affordances, although these were ‘neither automatic nor invariably beneficial for borderlanders’.<sup>99</sup> Yet, in exploring the agency of these opportunistic traders, Cassanelli has emphasised the elusive dimension of their business and their autonomy from ‘squabbling politicians’.<sup>100</sup> Chapter 4 engages with the politics of cross-border trade, both ‘formal’ and ‘informal’, during the 1950s to show how the ‘second economy’ actually depended on channels that were opened by the state and were managed by elements who operated within both the ‘official’ and the ‘informal’ economy.

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<sup>96</sup> Alphonso A. Castagno, ‘Somali Republic’, in James S. Coleman and Carl G. Rosberg Jr, eds, *Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 512–59 (p. 512); Ioan M. Lewis, ‘Modern Political Movements in Somaliland. II’, *Africa*, 28, No.4 (1958), pp. 344–63 (p. 354).

<sup>97</sup> Menkhaus, ‘Rural Transformation’, p. 296.

<sup>98</sup> Barnes, ‘U Dhashay-Ku Dhashay’, p. 497.

<sup>99</sup> Cassanelli, ‘Opportunistic Economics’, p. 144.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

These were licensed traders, askaris, and government-paid chiefs and most of them were involved in the politics of state formation.

Finally, for all that we think we know about the making of the Somali post-colonial state during the 1950s, scholars have focused on the institutional mechanisms of state- and nation-building and on party politics from a Mogadishu-centred perspective. The only concrete study we have that attempts to look at the history of Somalia's southern 'periphery' during these years 'from the bottom up' is Kenneth Menkhaus's doctoral thesis on rural transformation and the roots of underdevelopment in the lower Jubba Valley.<sup>101</sup> Menkhaus's focus, though, is on the political economy of cash-crop production, while the deep connections between this economy and party politics, particularly during elections, remain to be explored.

The argument put forward in Chapters 3 and 4 is that binary categories such as modern state/traditional society, nationalism/clannism, and borderless nation/territorial state, although they are widely used in British and Italian sources and scholarly literature alike, are unhelpful heuristic tools. They are, in fact, misleading when it comes to understanding Somalia's colonial legacy and the formation of the Somali nation-state. While territorial boundaries and the links between territory and belonging, land and political subjectivity acquired new meanings and unprecedented relevance in the 1950s, the boundaries between state and society, public and private, centre and periphery blurred. As a result, a national system of power emerged by transforming but also by strengthening local systems of powers in a dialectic process which kept the connections between the two fragile and open to monopoly. Within this context, middlemen and power brokers in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands stood guard over the synapses of relationships which connected the local systems to the larger whole. A network of personal links thereby worked to offset the tensions inherent in the relationships between the antagonistic but interdependent groups that made up this emerging national configuration. What seems the antithesis of strong government and authority actually constituted a pragmatic dimension of the state, one which

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<sup>101</sup> Menkhaus, 'Rural Transformation', pp. 309–67.



renders ill-suited any idea of political development as the unidirectional struggle of a particular government over the forces of tradition and particularism.

The third part of this thesis, including Chapters 5 and 6, explores the deeper history of political activism and insurrection in the Northern Frontier Province (NFP) – formerly Northern Frontier District (NFD) – of Kenya at the end of colonial rule. In so doing, Chapters 5 and 6 bridge the two main approaches which have so far characterised scholarly works on Somali secessionism in Kenya. The few existing studies fall into two broad categories. The first is made up of research that has mainly focused on the issues of territorial sovereignty and self-determination.<sup>102</sup> The second category comprises research which is local in scope and has primarily centred on local experiences.<sup>103</sup> Research in the first category is mostly based on official documents and news reports and has tended to present the NFD problem as a territorial dispute ‘created by Somalia’s irredentist preoccupation’ – as Vincent Thompson has argued – and rooted in what John Drysdale has termed ‘Somali ethnic pride’.<sup>104</sup> As for the second category, recent works by Hannah Whittaker and Keren Weitzberg have offered new perspectives on the question of Somali secessionism, drawing on interview-based fieldwork and highlighting the agency of local actors.

Four fundamental problems, though, remain to be tackled. First, the assumption that Pan-Somali nationalism in the NFD was an imported construct which succumbed to the ground realities of clannism and age-old conflicts over land and water between ethnic groups. Works as different as those of Thompson and Whittaker share this assumption.

Second, the tendency to study Kenyan Somalis merely as an ethnic group and to consider the arid pastoral ‘North’ a homogeneous space, without exploring locally-grounded dynamics of social differentiation. As a result, the existing literature is not very insightful when it comes to understand the social

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<sup>102</sup> Alphonso A. Castagno, ‘The Somali-Kenyan Controversy: Implications for the Future’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 2, No.2 (1964), pp.165–88; Drysdale, *The Somali Dispute*; Lewis, ‘The Problem of the Northern Frontier District’, pp. 48–60; Mburu, *Bandits on the Border*; Thompson, *Conflict in the Horn of Africa*.

<sup>103</sup> Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*; Whittaker, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*.

<sup>104</sup> Thompson, *Conflict*, p. xi; Drysdale, *The Somali Dispute*, p. 113.

underpinnings of political alignment and to explain alliances and conflicts within the boundaries of ethnicity, except for primordialist interpretations of lineage-based divisions.

Third, the assumption that ‘tribe’ and religion determined political allegiance. This assumption can be traced back to the 1962 Report of the Northern Frontier District Commission (as we shall see in Chapter 5) whose interpretive categories have remained largely unquestioned in the existing literature. These categories, though, overlook the complexity of social relationships across lineage, ethnic, and religious boundaries.

Fourth, scholars have primarily studied the influence of Somali nationalism on the attempted secession of the Kenya-Somalia frontier as a spill-over effect from across the border with Somalia, equating Somali nationalism with a self-evident, ancestral Somali nation. Keren Weitzberg is the only scholar so far who has examined Somali nationalism in Kenya as a social construct and the nation as a category of action. She has rightly argued that ‘one cannot speak of a singular Somali nationalism, but rather of multiple nationalisms that drew the boundaries of belonging in different and sometimes incommensurable ways.’<sup>105</sup> Weitzberg has thoughtfully analysed the ideational aspects of the debates around Somali secessionism in Kenya. What is yet to be explored, though, is how different actors accommodated these debates into the social fabric within which power and authority were being negotiated.

Drawing on theoretical insights from recent works by Miles Larmer and Baz Lecocq, Chapters 5 and 6 aim to reveal the inner struggles which characterised political activism in the NFD and how these struggles reflected inequalities of resources, influence, and power.<sup>106</sup> In so doing, these chapters challenge two engrained perceptions. First, that non-Somali herders were lured into the secessionist movement as simple figureheads. Second, that pastoralists

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<sup>105</sup> Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*, p. 106.

<sup>106</sup> Miles Larmer, ‘Historicising Activism in Late Colonial and Post-Colonial Sub-Saharan Africa’, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 28, no.1 (2015), pp.67–89; Miles Larmer and Baz Lecocq, ‘Historicising Nationalism in Africa’, *Nations and Nationalism*, 24, No.4 (2018), pp. 893–917.

were either passive recipients or rejecters of change, in either case unruly masses largely devoid of political consciousness.

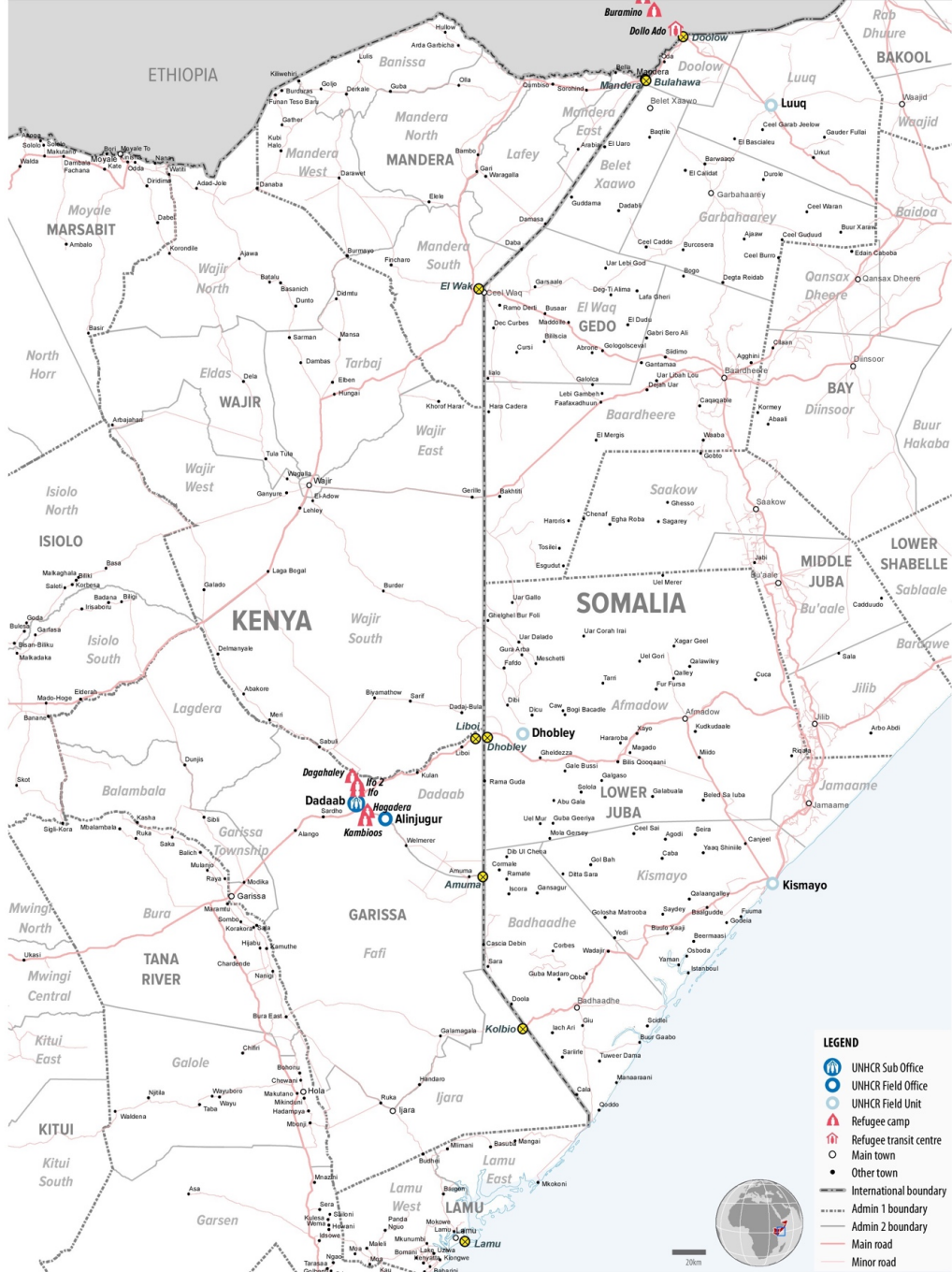
Chapter 6 also breaks with previous reconstructions of the historical background of the so-called *shifita* war. Hannah Whittaker has portrayed the politics of secession in the run-up to Kenya's independence as a struggle between 'moderates' and 'radicals', reproducing the binary categorization used in British sources. She has argued that 'political factionalism and personal rivalries within the NFD' weakened the secessionist movement from within, setting the stage for 'both a military confrontation with the newly independent Kenyan government and radical secessionists, and the outbreak of hostilities between rival NFD communities.'<sup>107</sup> Such an interpretation, however, is problematic in several ways. Firstly, it obscures the social underpinnings of the choices of allegiance made in such difficult circumstances. Secondly, it describes a symptom, at best, but does not explain the underlying causes of the partisan divide. Thirdly, it downplays the responsibilities of the British and Kenyan governments in deliberately closing political space and pushing secessionists into violent confrontation.

The argument put forward in Chapters 5 and 6 challenges the notion that the secessionist movement was merely driven by the attempt to avoid state power, or, to put it another way, by local dissent *against* the modern nation-state as a product of political globalisation. Rather, secessionist insurrection in the Kenya-Somalia borderland was driven by anti-colonial sentiments and attempts to achieve political emancipation *within* global processes of change. At stake was the question of who was entitled to power and resources (including the state) after the end of colonial rule. The secessionists – just like their antagonists – wanted more, not less. They thought that by joining the Somali Republic they would be able to achieve their goals and aspirations, while they feared to be marginalised if they remained within Kenya. Therefore, these chapters argue for a shift in focus from secessionism as an anti-state phenomenon to political activism as a historical process, outside the framework of national histories.

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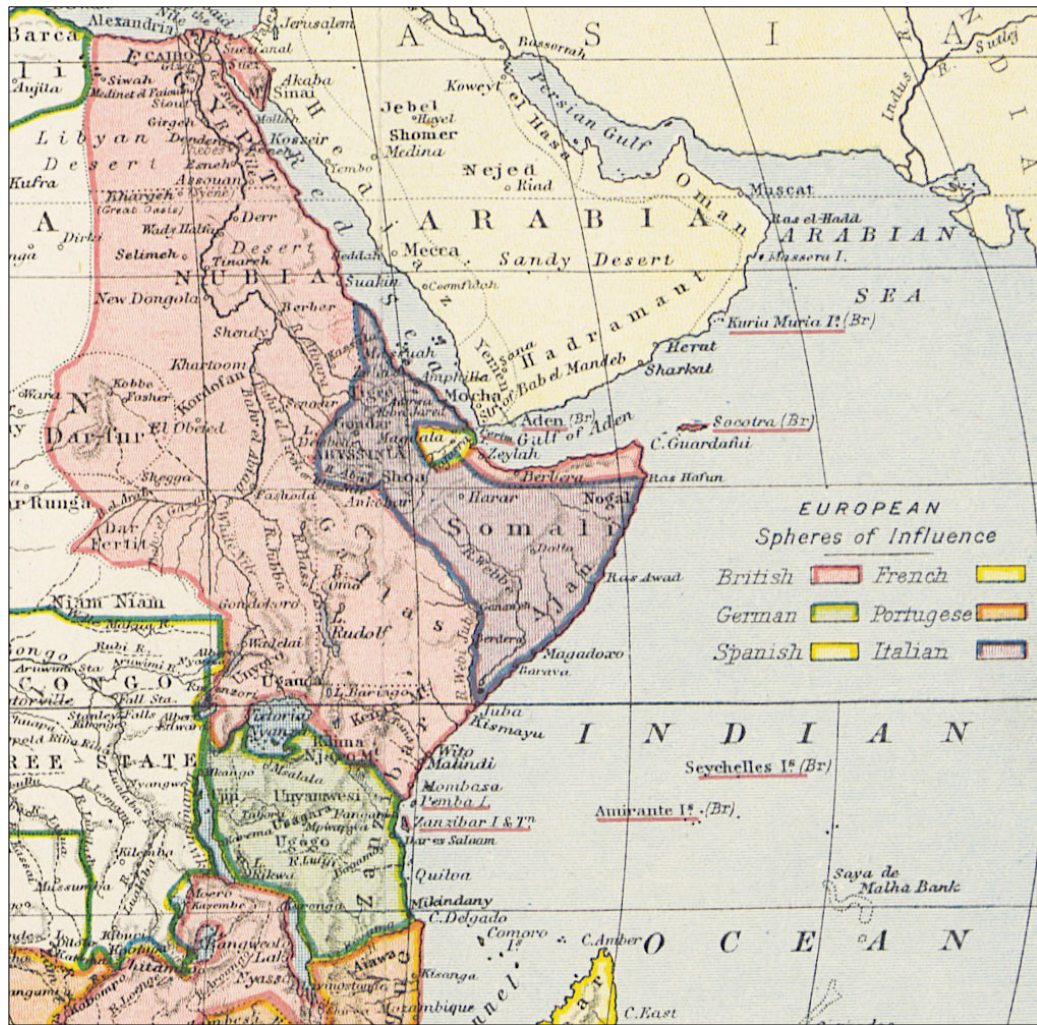
<sup>107</sup> Whittaker, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, p. 26.

**KENYA - SOMALIA**  
An Overview of the border area

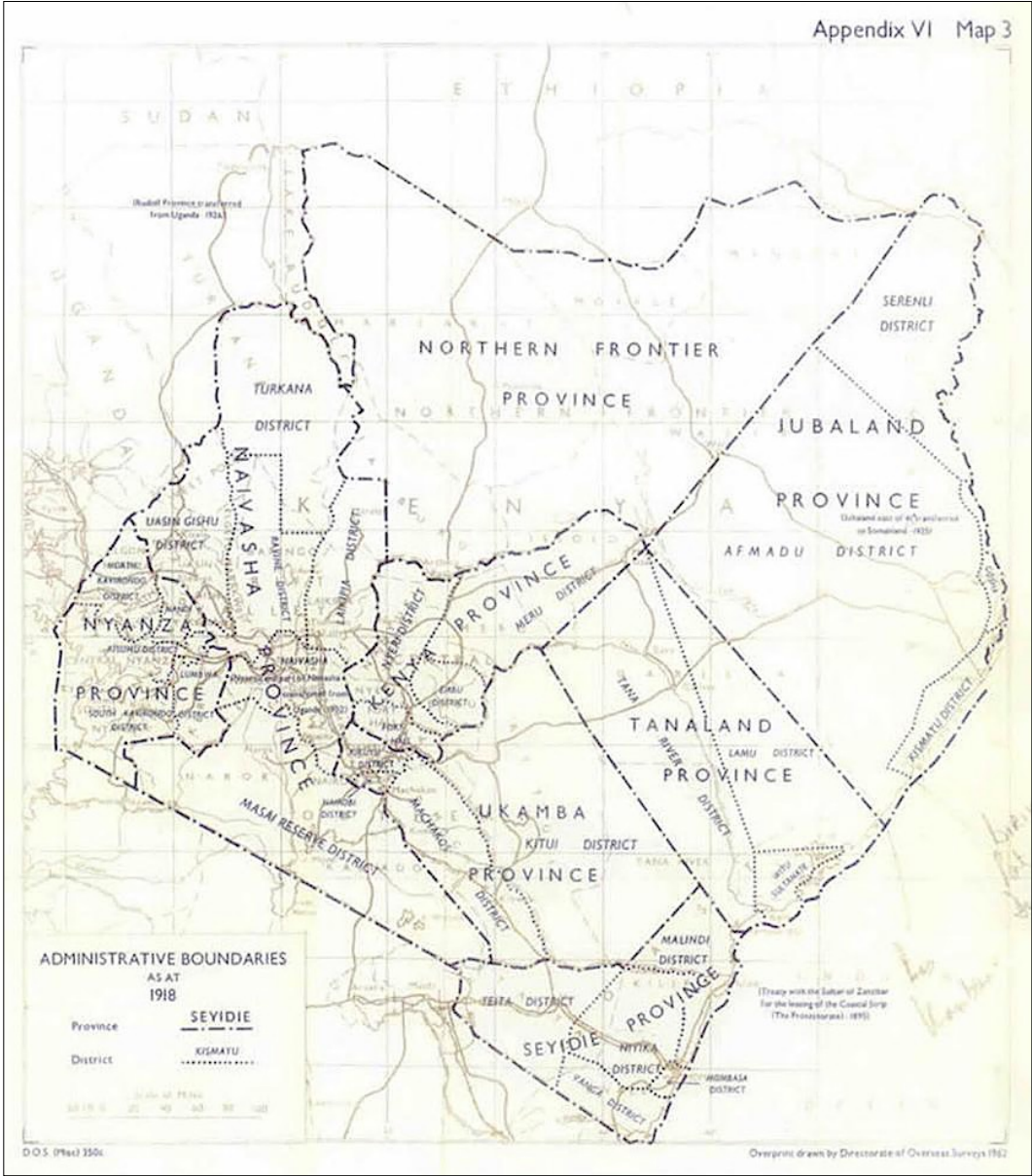


The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.  
Printing date: 23 Feb 2017 Sources: UNHCR, UNCS, UNDP, IEBC, Kenya Roads Board, IRC, NIMA Author: UNHCR Regional Service Centre Nairobi Feedback: kenngis@unhcr.org

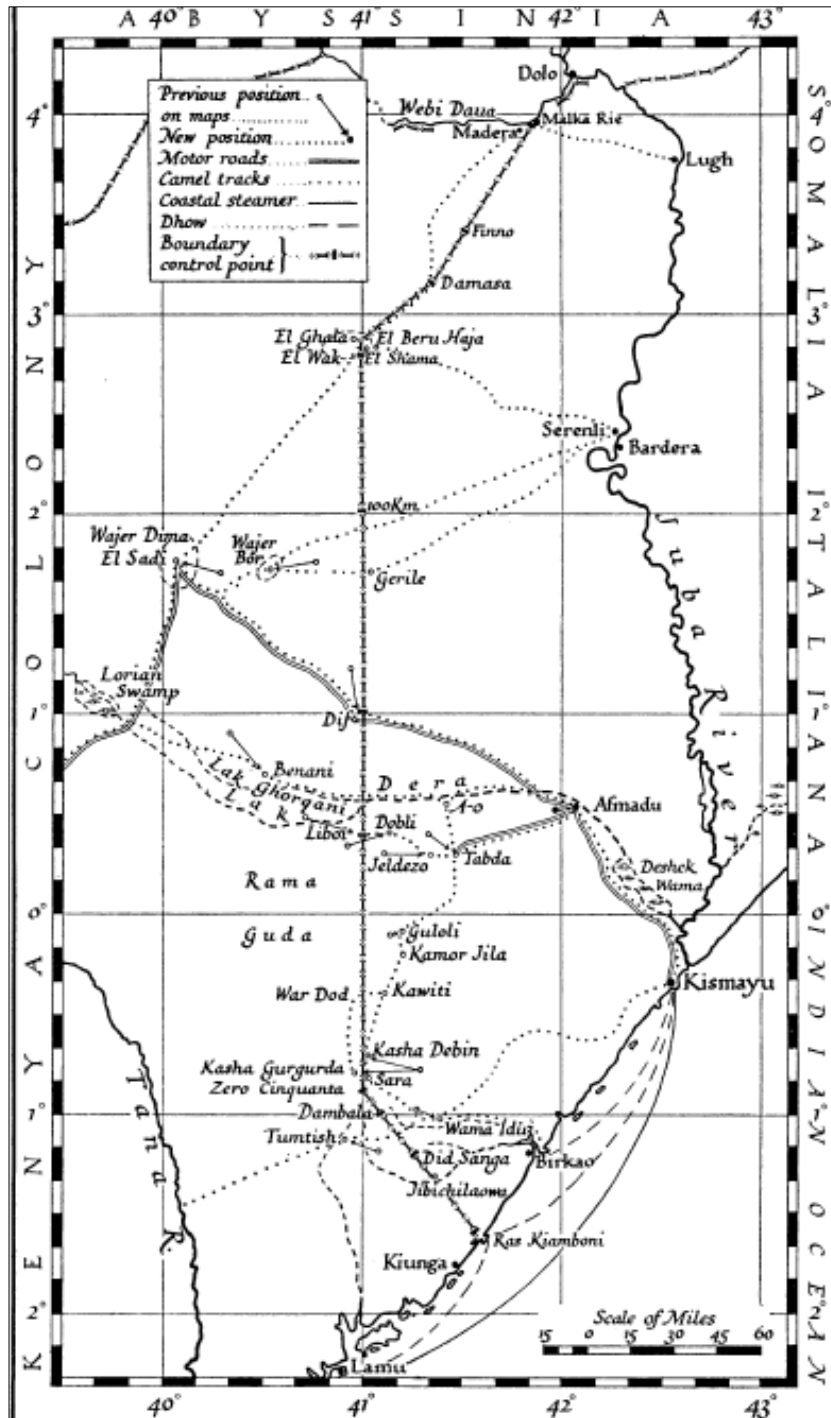
Map 1: The Kenya-Somalia border today  
Source: UNHCR, Kenya-Somalia Border Overview Map, February 2017.  
<<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/30890>>



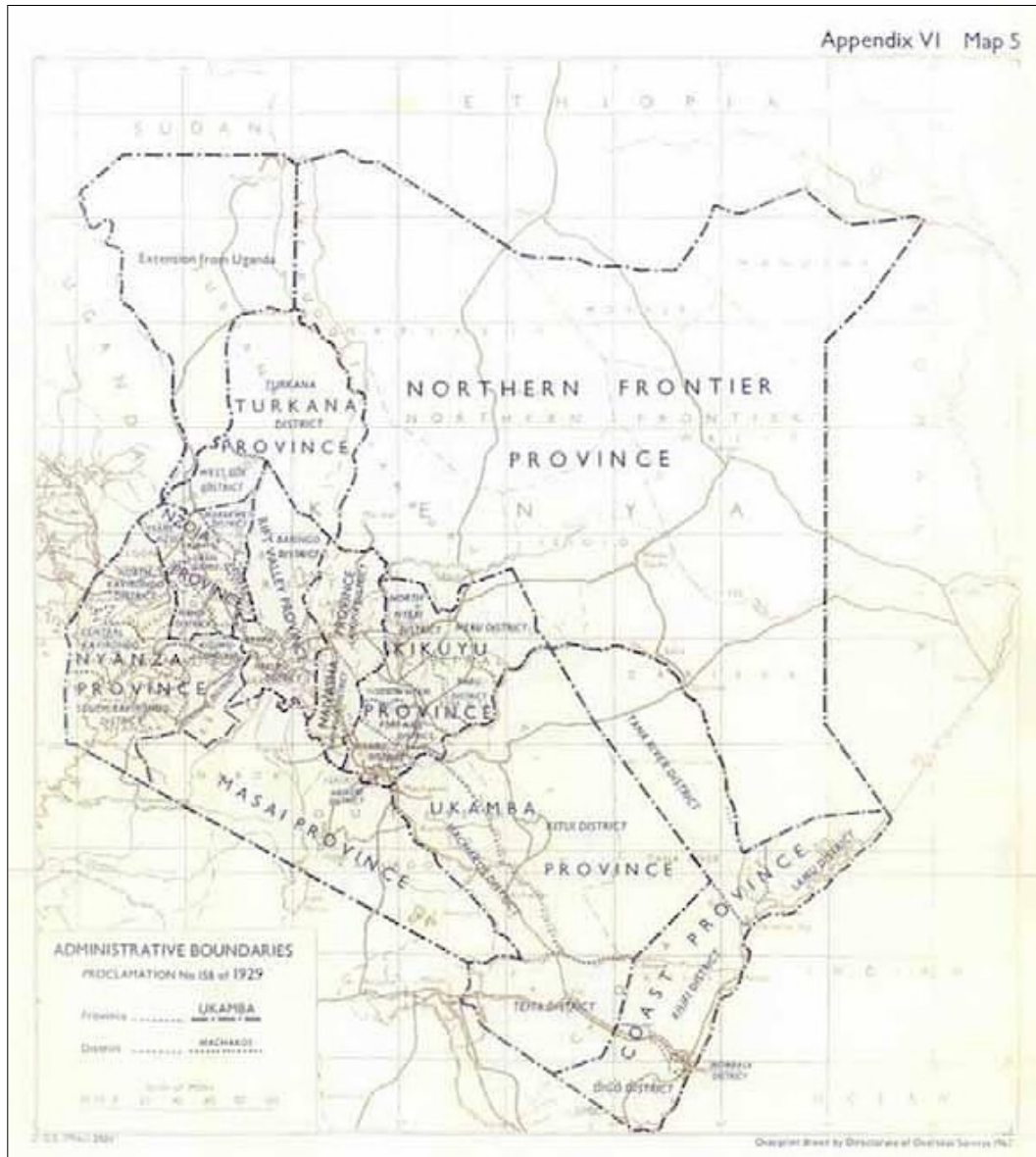
Map 2: European spheres of influence in East Africa following the Anglo-Italian Treaty of 1889. Extract from: Nancy R.E. Bell, *Heroes of Discovery in South Africa* (London, 1983), 467. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/britishlibrary/11224419636>



Map 3: Kenya, Administrative Boundaries as at 1918  
 Source: Great Britain, Foreign & Commonwealth Office. *Kenya: Report of the Northern Frontier District Commission* (London: HMSO, 1962).

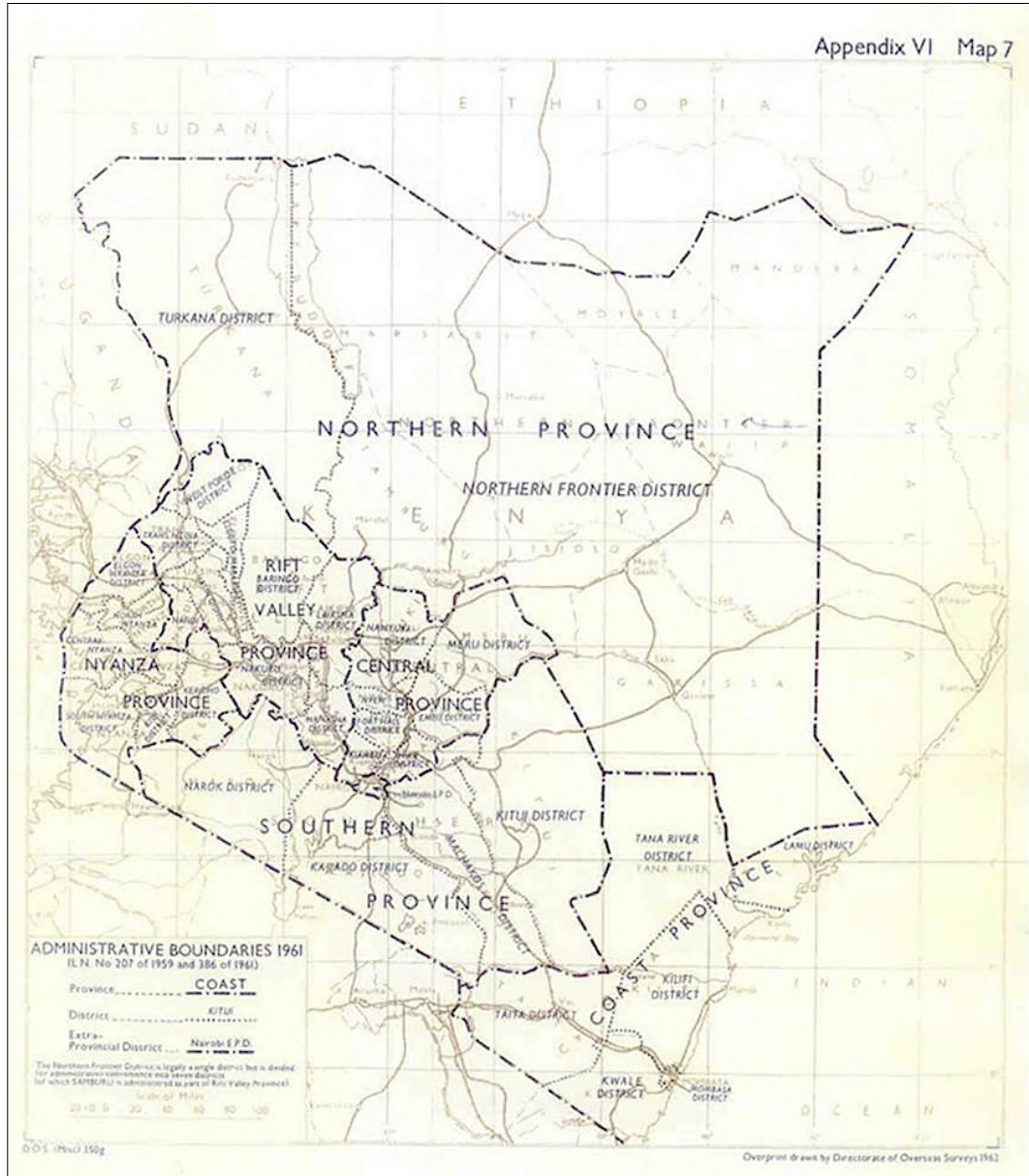


Map 4: The New Western Boundary of Italian Somaliland, 1928  
 Source: L. N. King, 'The Work of the Jubaland Boundary Commission', *The Geographical Journal*, 72, No.5 (1928), pp. 420–35 (p. 425).



Map 5: Kenya, Administrative Boundaries Proclamation 158 of 1929  
 Source: Great Britain, Foreign & Commonwealth Office. *Kenya: Report of the Northern Frontier District Commission* (London: HMSO, 1962).





Map 6: Kenya, Administrative Boundaries, 1961  
 Source: Great Britain, Foreign & Commonwealth Office. *Kenya: Report of the Northern Frontier District Commission* (London: HMSO, 1962).

# PART I

# 1 BOUNDARY POLITICS, TRADE CORRIDORS, AND TRANSFORMATIONS OF TERRITORIALITY, c.1925-1934

## 1.1 Historical background: a complex social universe

During the period between the early nineteenth century and the late 1920s, the region encompassing the Dawa, Jubba, and Tana rivers underwent profound transformations, becoming a *locus* of migrations, trade, violence, and re-compositions of power.<sup>108</sup> These transformations involved and contributed to create a mosaic of people of different ethnicity, religion, and culture. Until the mid-nineteenth century, an Oromo-speaking group who originated from the Dirre and Liban areas of southern Ethiopia, the Warday or Warr(a) D(a)ay(a) (usually referred to as ‘Galla’ in colonial sources) inhabited almost all of present-day north-eastern Kenya and the hinterland between the Jubba and Tana rivers. Raxanweyn groups lived on the left bank of the Jubba, hosting an increasing number of Daarood immigrants as their clients. The Gharri, a Cushitic group who later became associated with the Hawiye and Digil Somalis as a result of localised patterns of assimilation, inhabited the right bank of the Dawa River. The Baajuun, a variegated Swahili-speaking group mostly composed of fishermen and sailors, along with Arabs and Asians, populated the villages on the Indian Ocean coast between the Jubba and Tana rivers and the islands off the littoral between the

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<sup>108</sup> Other scholars have documented population movements in detail and the history of different groups in this region: Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*; Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*; Dalleo, ‘Trade and Pastoralism’; Declich, ‘I Goscia’; by the same author: “‘Gendered Narratives’”; Menkhaus ‘Rural Transformation’; Edmund R. Turton, ‘The Pastoral Tribes of Northern Kenya, 1800-1916’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1970); by the same author, ‘Bantu, Galla and Somali Migrations’; Gufu Oba, *Nomads in the Shadows of Empires. Contests, Conflicts and Legacies on the Southern Ethiopian-Northern Kenyan Frontier* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

present-day town of Kismaayo and the Lamu archipelago. Groups of hunting and fishing nomadic people known as Ribi and Boni, whose ethnic affiliation remains obscure, also lived in the coastal area and many of them were clients of the Baajuun, while the Bantu-speaking Pokomo occupied the agricultural lands in the lower basin of the Tana River. A Sab group (see general Introduction), the Gasaargude, and their Gabaweyn associates inhabited the area around the trading town of Luuq, in the upper Jubba Valley. The Ajuuraan (who claim Hawiye descent, but only by a female ancestor) lived in what is today north-eastern Kenya. Meanwhile, Daarood pastoralists began to cross the Jubba river in small numbers as clients of the Oromo, gradually absorbing external aggregates through the *sheegad* system (see general Introduction), as they needed new elements to strengthen their own position vis-à-vis their patrons.

At the same time, a group of Somali Muslim clerics who called for Islamic reform established a religious settlement, *jamaaca* in Somali, on the Jubba River, laying the foundations of what was to become the town of Baardheere. After modest beginnings in 1819, the *jamaaca* attracted an increasing number of adherents from many clans, to the point that in about 1840 ‘the movement probably counted twenty thousand supporters’, according to Lee Cassanelli.<sup>109</sup> In the mid-1830s, ‘the Baardheere movement entered a militant phase’, remembered in oral traditions as the Baardheere *jihad*.<sup>110</sup> Allying themselves with Daarood pastoralists who had recently arrived in the surrounding areas, the *jamaaca*’s supporters attacked the Warday to the west of the Jubba river, raided Luuq, and spread in the pasturelands south-east of Baardheere, before being stopped by an army of about forty thousand men led by the *Suldaan* of Geledi.<sup>111</sup> This improvised army, drawn from the clans of the inter-riverine areas, captured the town of Baardheere after a long siege and burnt it to the ground. Cassanelli has convincingly argued that such a strong counter-offensive was prompted, among

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<sup>109</sup> Cassanelli, *Somali Society*, p. 135. See also: Ugo Ferrandi, ‘Gli scek di Bardera’, *Bollettino della Società Africana Italiana*, 11 (1892), pp. 5–7.

<sup>110</sup> Cassanelli, *Somali Society*, p. 137.

<sup>111</sup> For a history of the Geledi Sultanate see: Luling, *Somali Sultanate*.

other factors, by ‘the threat that the reform movement posed to the ivory trade’, which the Geledi Suldaan Yuusuf Maxamed swiftly moved to revitalise.<sup>112</sup>

Migratory movements and attempts at Islamic reformation intertwined with the expansion of international trade. This was linked to the rise of the island town of Zanzibar and the industrial revolution in Europe, which created an increasing demand for skins and vegetable dyes for the leather and shoe industries. Boosted by foreign demand, the agricultural sector in southern Somalia grew dramatically, absorbing slaves from other parts of East Africa, while ivory and game trophies continued to sustain the expansion of upcountry caravan trade. These economic transformations produced a phenomenon which was to play a crucial role in the history of southern Somalia: the development of a peasant society composed of runaway slaves and freedmen in the Jubba Valley. It seems that the first fugitive slaves who settled along the Jubba River were Zigua (Zigula-speaking people) from Tanzania, who escaped from Banaadir plantations around 1840.<sup>113</sup> As the importation of slaves into Somalia grew, so did the number of fugitives who took refuge along the lower course of the Jubba River, where they found fertile land and forested riverbanks that protected them from their former masters. In her seminal study of the social history of the Jubba riverine area, Catherine Besteman has insightfully observed that the name the Somalis coined to designate these ex-slaves-turned-peasants, Gosha (or Wa Gosha, ‘the people of Gosha’) can be rendered in English as ‘unhealthy forest’ and refers to the stretch of riverine jungle and inland puddles bordering the lower and middle course of the river.<sup>114</sup> According to Kenneth Menkhaus, at least 20,000 slaves made their way into the Jubba valley between 1865 and 1895.<sup>115</sup> This phenomenon also contributed to foster Islamic proselytising in the Jubba Valley, as several ex-slaves joined communal farms in Islamic religious settlements, *jamaacooyin* in

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<sup>112</sup> Cassanelli, *Somali Society*, p. 140.

<sup>113</sup> Menkhaus, ‘Rural Transformation’, p. 108. See also: Declich, ‘Unfree Labour’, pp. 24–39.

<sup>114</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, p. 62.

<sup>115</sup> Menkhaus, ‘Rural Transformation’, p. 110.

Somali (plural of *jamaaca*), which ‘offered religious instruction and fed needy families’.<sup>116</sup>

The rise of Goshaland was part of an ongoing process of socio-genesis. From the 1840s to the turn of the twentieth century, migrations and conflicts reconfigured population distribution as well as social and economic relationships, shifting the balance of power between various ethnic and kinship groups, whose identity and status were being redefined in the process. The Daarood pastoralists who had begun to settle as *sheegad* amongst the Oromo and the Raxanweyn in the Jubba valley belonged to a confederation of related clans known as Kablalax. These included various Ogaadeen sub-clans, namely Maxamed Subeer, Cawlyahan, Maqaabul, Bartiire, Cabudwaaq, and Cabdalla, as well as the Xarti confederation (composed of Majeerteen, Dhulbahante, and Warsangeli). Groups of Daarood/Mareexaan attached themselves to the Kablalax – so named after the common ancestor of Ogaadeen and Xarti – as they migrated into the Jubba Valley. The Kablalax also hosted among themselves a number of clients, including groups of Hawiye/Gaaljecel (*sheegad* to the Xarti) and Shiikhaal (mostly *sheegad* to the Ogaadeen).<sup>117</sup> For the most part, though, these client groups remained invisible to the eye of the colonial administrators, who were preoccupied with classifying Somali clans into neat genealogies.

Thanks to the incorporation of new immigrants and associates, the Kablalax gradually increased their strength to the point that they were able to challenge their patrons in a series of wars, defeating first the Eelaay (a section of the Raxanweyn/Mirifle), presumably between 1855 and 1860, then the Oromo,

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<sup>116</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, p. 67.

<sup>117</sup> Interview with Maxamed Maxamud Ibraahim ‘Goodir’, Mogadishu, 13 April 2016.

Ministero delle Colonie, *Oltre Giuba: notizie raccolte a cura del Commissariato generale nel primo anno di occupazione italiana (1925-1926)* (Roma: Sindacato Italiano Arti Grafiche, 1927), pp. 140 and 273. Although now aligned with the Hawiye, the Shiikhaal trace their genealogy back to an Arab ancestor, a descendant of the first Caliph Abu Bakr.

between 1865 and 1869, and finally the Raxanweyn/Digil, in 1869-1870.<sup>118</sup> Severely weakened by a smallpox epidemic, the Warday Oromo were simultaneously attacked by the Kablalex from the east and an alliance of Boran Oromo, Ajuuraan and Gharri from the north. As a result, most of the defeated Warday were sold by the Ogaadeen into slavery or became serfs to the Ogaadeen, while others retreated to the Tana River. Numerous women captured from the Warday were absorbed into Ogaadeen groups, creating a mixed population.<sup>119</sup> Following the expulsion of the Warday, the Gharri gained access to the wells of Ceel Waaq.

Pushed by Ethiopian raids and inter-clan conflicts, large numbers of Ogaadeen continued to move into the lower Jubba hinterland in the 1870s and 1880s, taking control of this area. During the same period, groups of Xarti began to settle on the coast to the south of the Jubba River's mouth. Following the destruction of the port of Giumbo during the Kablalex-Digil war, the Kablalex obtained some help from the Lamu Arabs to establish a market in what was to become the town of Kismaayo, in exchange for the recognition of the sovereignty of the Zanzibar Sultanate on the coastal strip to the south of the Jubba. After the Oromo withdrew to the Tana River, some Boni became clients of the Somalis, while Xarti and Ogaadeen traders began to sell cattle and slaves in Lamu. As Marguerite Ylvisaker has remarked, the Somalis 'preferred to sell the Oromo and "Abyssinian" slaves whom they captured in war, replacing them with slaves from the south who, being farther from home, were less tempted to run away'.<sup>120</sup> After a caravan route was opened between Lamu and Baraawe in 1871 to channel slaves to the Banaadir region, the Xarti monopolised the slave trade north of Lamu.<sup>121</sup> The rise of Kismaayo attracted more Xarti families along with their clients from north-eastern Somalia. The Xarti were experienced traders who had developed

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<sup>118</sup> Ministero delle Colonie, *Oltre Giuba*, pp. 141–46; KNA, PC/NFD, 4/1/1, Turnbull, 'The impact on East Africa of the Galla and the Somali', September 1953, p. 5; Turnbull, *The Darod Invasion*, pp. 11–14.

<sup>119</sup> Schlee, *Identities on the Move*, pp. 42–43.

<sup>120</sup> Marguerite Ylvisaker, *Lamu in the Nineteenth Century: Land, Trade, and Politics* (Boston: African Studies Center, Boston University, 1979), p. 118.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

long-standing commercial and cultural ties with the Arabian Peninsula. Gradually adopting a settled lifestyle, the Xarti became ‘the dominant group of petty traders along the coast between the Jubba and Tana Rivers’.<sup>122</sup> Some of them also settled in Kismaayo’s hinterland as pastoralists, intermarrying with Ogaadeen groups. The Kablalax confederation, however, gradually broke down, as the Xarti and the Ogaadeen, particularly the Maxamed Subeer, began to compete over control of Kismaayo port, of the nearby pastures and of livestock trade routes to the interior.<sup>123</sup>

At the same time, sections of the Digoodiya clan moved from the Oddo region in southern Ethiopia into the area inhabited by the Oromo Boran and the Ajuuraan near present-day Moyale. In the early years of the twentieth century, the Digoodiya moved further south towards present-day Wajir and the Uaso Nyiro basin.<sup>124</sup> Meanwhile, between approximately 1848 and 1892, a combination of migratory movements by groups of Ogaadeen ensured the influence of this clan over the territory stretching from the western side of the Jubba River inland to Wajir, the Lorian Swamp, and the Tana River.<sup>125</sup> Colonial sources show that the increase in Somali population in north-eastern Kenya during this period provoked conflict not only between the Somalis and the Boran, but also among the Somalis themselves.<sup>126</sup> Nevertheless, it would not be accurate to ‘portray this period as solely one of conflict’, as Dalleo has pointed out, nor would it be correct to pit the ‘Somali’ against the ‘Boran’.<sup>127</sup> Social and cultural assimilation occurred through the *sheegad* system and trade.

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<sup>122</sup> Cassanelli, *Somali Society*, p. 181.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*; Little, ‘Conflictive Trade’, p. 33; Cassanelli, ‘Hosts and Guests’, p. 9.

<sup>124</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 4/1/1, Turnbull, ‘Some notes on the history of the Degodia up to 1912’, September 1953. The Digoodiya count themselves as Hawiye, but only by the link of a female ancestor, like the Ajuuraan, under whose umbrella most of the Digoodiya placed themselves when they arrived in north-eastern Kenya.

<sup>125</sup> Dalleo, ‘Trade and Pastoralism’, pp. 33–34 and 35–42; Turton, ‘Pastoral Tribes’, pp. 361–72 and 492–93.

<sup>126</sup> TNA, CO 533/134, DC Wajir to Chief Secretary, 20 January 1914.

<sup>127</sup> Dalleo, ‘Trade and Pastoralism’, p. 42; Turton. ‘Pastoral Tribes’, p. 278.



Between the 1870s and the early twentieth century, a segmented system of long-distance caravan trade supplied the coastal ports of Mogadishu, Baraawe and Marka, in southern Somalia, with goods (including ivory, rhino horns, slaves, and animal skins) from southern Ethiopia.<sup>128</sup> Somali clans such as the Ajuuraan and the Gharri entered into client-host relationships with the Boran and acted as middlemen in the trade between the Borana region in southern Abyssinia and the towns of Luuq and Baardheere in the upper Jubba valley, thereby drawing present-day northern Kenya into the Borana-Luuq-Banaadir economy. At the same time, caravans largely controlled by Arab merchants from the coast began extending further inland. At the turn of the twentieth century, however, this system of mobility and trade was progressively undermined by the advent of European imperialism and by the recurrent raids of Ethiopian troops that sought to stop the flow of goods out of the Abyssinian Empire.

Following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and Egypt's withdrawal from areas around the Sudan and Ethiopia, European powers vied for influence over the strategically important zones of the Horn of Africa. Between 1885 and 1907, Britain, Italy, and France staked claims around the Somali Peninsula, through treaties with a variety of Somali leaders and negotiations with the Ethiopian Emperor Menelik II, dividing the Somali people among five different administrations (see Map 2). In the 1890s, British, Italians, Ethiopians, and Somalis began to assert their territorial claims in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands. British expansion in Somali territory began at Kismaayo. The Anglo-Italian treaty of 1889 stipulated that the Jubba River marked the boundary between the British and Italian spheres of influence in East Africa.<sup>129</sup> That same year, Italy established the Somalia Protectorate, which became the colony of Italian Somalia in 1908, and in 1890 obtained control of Eritrea. In 1891, the Imperial British East Africa Company assumed charge of what was to become Kismaayo district, which was transferred to the British East Africa Protectorate in 1895 as part of the Jubaland

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<sup>128</sup> Cassanelli, *Somali Society*, pp. 147–82.

<sup>129</sup> Robert L. Hess, *Italian Colonialism in Somalia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 13–38.

Province.<sup>130</sup> This extended from the right bank of the Jubba River to the eastern part of present-day Wajir (see Map 3). British expansion in the interior gradually encompassed the territory inhabited by the Somalis, the Boran, the Gabbra, the Rendille, the Sakuye, and the Samburu. This area formed the Northern Frontier District (NFD), which was officially established in 1909 with headquarters at Moyale.<sup>131</sup> The spread of British administration in the NFD had two main goals. First, preventing unrest along the border between the East Africa Protectorate and the Ethiopian empire. Second, containing the south-westward migration of the Somalis to protect the settled areas in the Protectorate. The British also sought to divert some portion of the trade between the Borana region and the Banaadir coast, under Italian administration, to British-controlled markets. To this end, a British garrison was established at Wajir in 1912.

Meanwhile, in down-country Kenya, groups of Isxaaq and Xarti, to whom the British referred as ‘alien’ Somalis to distinguish them from the ‘indigenous’ Somali clans of the NFD, became involved in the livestock trade. They first arrived in Kenya from British Somaliland as soldiers and British employees. Following the creation of the Jubaland Province, several Xarti who had recently migrated to Kismaayo, entered the British service as *askaris*, clerks, interpreters, mail runners, and syces, some of them subsequently moving to Kenya. In the following decades, these groups of Xarti maintained strong contacts in the lower Jubba region, while the Isxaaq developed extensive connections in the Rift Valley and Nairobi. On retirement, these ‘alien’ Somalis often became livestock traders, eventually dominating the trade between southern Ethiopia and the settled areas of the Kenya Colony. The ‘aliens’ occupied the nascent townships of the Northern Frontier District and the Rift Valley, along with Arab and Indian traders, gradually developing an urban life-style.

Divisions of self-interest emerged between those groups who were involved in the caravan trade and, increasingly, in British-controlled markets and those who were not. As John Lonsdale and Bruce Berman have acutely observed, ‘local economic differences became the frontiers of British security’ in Kenya at

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<sup>130</sup> P. L. McDermott, *British East Africa, or IBEA: A History of the Formation and Work of the Imperial British East Africa Company* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1895).

<sup>131</sup> Thomas, *Jubaland and the Northern Frontier District*, pp. 101–03.

the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>132</sup> Rifts developed between those whom the British colonisers saw as friendlies and those whom the British considered ‘recalcitrant’. These rifts became the fault-lines of violence, as British ‘friendship’ and clientage created a realignment of the balance of power among the borderlanders. The Xarti’s close association with the British in Jubaland further strained their relationship with the Ogaadeen, particularly those groups of Maxamed Subeer and Cawlyahan who engaged in armed resistance against British colonial rule on various occasions between 1898 and 1916.<sup>133</sup> Somali resistance was quelled by a series of ‘pacification’ campaigns, which contributed to crystallise the image of Somali pastoralists as ‘resisters *par excellence*’, suspicious of state power and ‘treacherous’, in the eye of the British colonial administration.<sup>134</sup> Significantly, more punitive expeditions were conducted against the Somalis in the Jubaland Province than against any other people in Kenya. Although these expeditions failed to durably secure and stabilise the frontier, they had long-term effects on the patterns of interaction between British colonial officials and Somali agents in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands. Keeping away from the incipient state and not complying with government orders, while gradually appropriating the colonisers’ political idiom and resorting to selective cooperation through customary chiefs was the Somali response. As for the British administrators, they considered ‘firmness’ in the form of authoritarian rule and violent repression to be the only language that the Somalis understood and, therefore, the only way in which the colonial state could effectively make its presence felt in these borderlands, as we shall see in the next chapters.

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<sup>132</sup> Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, p. 26.

<sup>133</sup> For a discussion of Somali resistance and British ‘pacification’ campaigns in Jubaland see: Edmund R. Turton, ‘Somali Resistance to Colonial Rule and the Development of Somali Political activity in Kenya 1893-1960’, *Journal of African History*, 13, No. 1 (1972), pp. 117–43; George L. Simpson, ‘Frontier Banditry and the Colonial Decision-Making Process: The East Africa Protectorate’s Northern Borderland Prior to the First World War’, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 29, No. 2 (1996), pp. 279–308.

<sup>134</sup> Turton, ‘Somali Resistance’, p. 121.

During this period of migrations, wars, and population adjustments, powerful *jamaacooyin* situated along the Jubba River continued to exercise their influence among the Kablalax. These religious settlements were usually affiliated to one of the three predominant Sufi orders (Ahmadiyya, Qadiriyya, and Salihyya), which the Italian administration supported as a means to facilitate the extension of colonial rule in Italian Somalia. In the 1910s, the most important *jamaacooyin* in the Jubba valley were those of Baardheere, Sheekh Murjaan, and Bandar Salaam. The latter was founded by Sheekh Cali ‘Nairobi’, a Dhulbahante who had migrated to the East Africa Protectorate (hence his nickname). Interestingly, he began his career as an informant of the Italian Government, then, ‘harnessing the benefits of his service’ to the Italians, Cali ‘Nairobi’ settled to the south of Baardheere on the left side of the Jubba River, where he established the *jamaaca* of Bandar Salaam. He was subsequently recognised as vicar of the Salihyya order.<sup>135</sup>

British-Italian competition over control of trade on the Jubba, the creation of a British-induced and Kismaayo-oriented economy, and the consequent ‘pacification’ of the Jubaland frontier, all these factors contributed to transform the social universe of the Somalia-Kenya borderlands, creating new tensions, alliances and conflicts between ethnic and lineage groups who were in the process of shaping themselves. Contrary to the image conveyed by colonial ethnographies, these heterogeneous groups were the ever-incomplete result of recurrent mobility and contingent modes of settlement, rather than self-contained entities that conquered new territory in tidal waves of migration.

## **1.2 Competing imperialisms, border making, and local politics**

The border between the Kenya Colony and Italian Somaliland was finally settled with the transfer of the Jubaland Province from Britain to Italy in 1925. The cession took place in pursuance of Article 13 of the Treaty of London of 1915

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<sup>135</sup> Enrico Cerulli, ‘Note sul movimento musulmano nella Somalia’, *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, 10, No. 1 (1923), pp. 1–36 (p. 15).

between Great Britain, France, Russia and Italy which provided territorial compensation for Italy's support to the Allies during the First World War.<sup>136</sup> The new Anglo-Italian border stretched from the confluence of the Ganale and Dawa rivers, on the Anglo-Abyssinian frontier, to Ras Kamboni, on the Indian Ocean Coast, and followed the 41<sup>st</sup> meridian east from Ceel Waaq (in present-day Gedo) to near Kolbio (in the lower Jubba region) (see Map 4).

With the acquisition of former Jubaland, which was renamed *Oltre Giuba* (Trans Juba), Italy took a further step towards the conquest of Ethiopia, thereby asserting its imperial agenda in the Horn of Africa.<sup>137</sup> In the eye of the British Government, the cession of Jubaland allowed for concentrating government expenditure in 'more worthwhile' regions in the Kenya Colony and for a 'simplification' of British possessions in East Africa.<sup>138</sup> The new Anglo-Italian border was considered to be instrumental for the creation of a buffer zone, 'occupied by a limited number of Somalis directly under British control' between the Somali tribes under Italian sovereignty and the non-Somali tribes in British territory.<sup>139</sup> This buffer-zone policy was aimed at facilitating the containment of the Somalis to the east of the Somali-Galla line. Drawn in 1909, this line ran along the western border of Wajir District from the Tana River to the south to Moyale to the north and was intended to separate the Somalis from the Oromo, marking the south-westernmost limit of Somali expansion.

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<sup>136</sup> TNA, FO 12390/15, 'Memorandum respecting questions outstanding between England and Italy', Annex I, 4 April 1923.

<sup>137</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/13, fasc. 51, 'Rapporto di S. E. il Conte De Vecchi di Val Cismon, Governatore della Somalia, sulla sua azione di governo nel quadriennio 21 ottobre 1923 – 31 ottobre 1927', enclosed with Zoli to General Directorate for East Africa, Italian Ministry of the Colonies, 28 November 1927.

<sup>138</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/6, fasc. 18, 'Jubaland's Problems', *East African Standard*, 14 June 1924; 'Copia di rapporto del R. Consolato d'Italia in Nairobi', enclosed with Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Ministry of the Colonies, 10 June 1924; Italian Consul, Nairobi, to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 27 April 1924.

<sup>139</sup> TNA, FO 12390/15, 'Memorandum respecting questions outstanding between England and Italy', Annex I, 4 April 1923.

With this goal in mind, British diplomats rejected Italy's repeated request of including the Wajir wells and the Lorian Swamp in the territory to be ceded.<sup>140</sup> Italy's chief negotiator at the Paris Peace Conference Tommaso Tittoni requested the new border to be traced along the Dooloow-Moyale-Lorian Swamp-Dick's Head (Ras Kamboni) line, which was to be referred to as the 'Tittoni line'.<sup>141</sup> Officially, the Italian government coveted the Dooloow-Moyale-Lorian Swamp triangle to preserve the geographic, economic and ethnic homogeneity of the territory to be ceded. The unofficial reason was that this triangle would have provided an effective springboard for the invasion of Abyssinia. Tittoni's demand, however, was unacceptable to London, as the territory Italy coveted exceeded by far the borders of the Jubaland Province, trespassing into Tanaland and the Northern Frontier District (see Map 3).

Britain and Italy adopted conflicting approaches to the imperial frontier which reflected two different visions of colonial order. On the one hand, the British considered territorial segregation to be the best way to prevent conflict between the Somalis and their neighbours (Boran-speaking groups, Rendille, Gabbra, Sakuye, Samburu, Turkana, and Bantu groups along the Tana River) and to protect the interests of white settlers in Kenya.<sup>142</sup> With this goal in mind, the British administration declared the Northern Frontier District, whose name changed to Northern Frontier Province in 1925, a closed area. This meant that residents needed a special pass to be allowed to move across or out of the NFD and non-resident people were not allowed to proceed through the NFD unless they received a special authorisation from the administrative authorities.<sup>143</sup> On the other hand, cross-border migration was not a major concern for the Italians, who regarded Somali pastoralists as a strategic asset, for two main reasons. First, the

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<sup>140</sup> 'L'utilità dell'accordo per il Giubaland', *Corriere Mercantile*, 27 May 1924.

<sup>141</sup> Tommaso Tittoni and Vittorio Scialoja, *L'Italia alla Conferenza della pace: discorsi e documenti* (Rome: Libreria di Scienze e Lettere, 1921), pp. 9–40.

<sup>142</sup> Ian R. G. Spencer, 'Pastoralism and colonial policy in Kenya, 1895-1929', in Robert I. Rotberg (ed), *Imperialism, Colonialism and Hunger: East and Central Africa* (Lexington, Mass: D. C. Heath, 1983), pp. 113–40 (p. 114).

<sup>143</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 2/5/1, Wajir District Handing Over Report for 1921, Sharpe to Bailey, p. 14.

Italian Government intended to make the most out of its new territorial acquisition in terms of economic exploitation. Despite the Juba valley's agricultural potential, pastoralism was the dominant mode of production in the borderland; therefore, the Italians were ready to make concessions to the Somali pastoralists to advance their own interests. Secondly, Italy needed not only exploitable economic resources, but also potential recruits to fulfil its imperial ambitions towards Abyssinia.<sup>144</sup> While British rule emphasised territorial control and taxation, the Italian colonial regime encouraged mobility and trade to pave the way for territorial expansion. Italy was concerned with the economic self-sufficiency of the territory to be ceded, and thereby refused to consider the border as static and definitive.

In the run-up to the cession of Jubaland, imperial rivalries intermingled with clan politics. Italy attempted to use the claims of the Ogaadeen clan (which was numerous and scattered all over the Somalia-Kenya-Ethiopia borderlands) over the area between the Jubba river, Wajir, and the Lorian Swamp to strengthen its own position vis-à-vis the British and Ethiopian empires. The British, on their part, were determined to contain the westward migration of the Ogaadeen/Maxamed Subeer for fear that the Italians could use the seasonal migrations of this clan across the border to *de facto* extend their control over the Wajir-Lorian area and eventually annex it.<sup>145</sup> Meanwhile, the Ogaadeen, through their *Suldaan* and government-paid chiefs, petitioned both the Italians and the British to assert their claims over the area stretching from the Jubba River to Wajir and the Lorian Swamp, which they portrayed as 'the land of the Ogaden', at the expense of the other groups that were also living in this area.<sup>146</sup> If, on the one

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<sup>144</sup> Gian Paolo Calchi Novati, 'L'annessione dell'Oltregiuba nella politica coloniale italiana', *Quaderni della rivista Africa*, 13, (1985), pp. 5–38; by the same author, 'Il passaggio dell'Oltregiuba all'Italia e i suoi effetti per l'unità nazionale somala', in Annarita Puglielli (ed), *Proceedings of the Third International Congress of Somali Studies* (Rome: Il Pensiero Scientifico Editore, 1988), pp. 283–90 (pp. 285–87).

<sup>145</sup> TNA, FO 371/11392, King, 'Confidential report', C 4790/689/22.

<sup>146</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 3/1, Political Record Book, Wajir District, Vol. I, extract for Wajir District Annual Report for 1922, pp. 23–24; ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/5, fasc. 13, Sultan Osman Guelleh Maghan to Governor of Italian Somaliland, 24 November 1920.

hand, the new border failed to contain the seasonal migrations of Somali pastoralists, on the other hand, the rivalry between the British and the Italians was accommodated into local politics, gradually transforming a fluid space of migration and trade into chunks of territory over which dominant clans asserted their claims.

Imperial politics also intermingled with the rivalry between the Xarti and the Ogaadeen in the lower Jubba basin. In the lead-up to the transfer of Jubaland, the Somalis in the area between Kismaayo and Afmadoow split into two factions, one self-identifying as ‘pro-British’ and the other one as ‘pro-Italian’. The former included a majority of Xarti, while the latter was largely composed of Ogaadeen/Maxamed Subeer. These choices of allegiance were influenced by the fact that, thanks to their collaboration with the British, ‘the Herti chiefs held undisputed sway’ in Kismaayo: ‘no other tribe could hope for justice, decisions being entirely governed by what was to the benefit of the Herti, and the poorer litigant invariably lost his case’.<sup>147</sup> The Xarti, therefore, feared that the cession of Jubaland would diminish their status, while the Maxamed Subeer hoped they would reassert themselves after the Italians took over from the British.<sup>148</sup> Meanwhile, the Italian administration, under the iron fist of Count Cesare Maria De Vecchi di Val Cismon (nicknamed ‘the sabre Governor’) was carrying out a series of ‘pacification’ campaigns in the Xarti’s homeland in north-eastern Somalia. These campaigns provoked a new influx of Xarti immigrants into Kismaayo, which deepened tensions between the Xarti and the Maxamed Subeer and complicated the Xarti’s position vis-à-vis the Italians, fuelling divisions within the Xarti clan.

It is within this context that a pending issue over water and grazing rights escalated into a deadly conflict between the Xarti and the Maxamed Subeer just a couple of months before the cession of Jubaland. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the British had attempted to delimit the territory assigned to

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<sup>147</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 2/1, Wajir District Handing Over Report for 1925, Mahony to Cooke, p. 45.

<sup>148</sup> Ministero delle Colonie, *Oltre Giuba*, p. 165; ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/6, fasc. 20, Commissariato Generale dell’Oltre Giuba, ‘Relazione generale, 1 luglio 1925 – 31 gennaio 1926’, pp. 1–3.



various clans, namely the Xarti, Maxamed Subeer, Cawlyahan, and Mareexaan, through the imposition of 'tribal boundaries'. The Xarti had thereby obtained control of the Dhasheeg Waamo, a large depression rich of pastures in the lower Jubba basin to the west of the river. This area marked a contested frontier between the zones controlled by the Xarti and the Ogaadeen. In February 1925, a dispute between these two clans over access to the wells of Curcumesa in the Dhasheeg Waamo rapidly escalated, leading to livestock raids, counter-raids and murders on both sides.<sup>149</sup> The Senior Commissioner of the Jubaland Province Hastings Horne reportedly distributed a few hundred rifles and ammunitions among the Xarti and participated in their offensive against the Maxamed Subeer.<sup>150</sup> Following a punitive campaign during which regular troops were deployed from Kenya to Kismaayo, the Maxamed Subeer were requested to surrender twenty-thousand head of cattle to the Xarti as blood money and compensation for the raided livestock.<sup>151</sup> The Maxamed Subeer thus lost most of their cattle, which was sold off to Indian merchants and exported to Mombasa and Zanzibar.<sup>152</sup>

When the cession took place, on 29 June 1925, the situation in the Kismaayo-Afmadoow area was still unsettled. The Italians profited from the strained relations between the Xarti and the Maxamed Subeer to insinuate themselves into a dominant mediating position. In October 1925, the

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<sup>149</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/6, fasc. 20, Zoli to Minister for the Colonies, 11 June and 22 June 1925.

<sup>150</sup> Ministero delle Colonie, Commissariato Generale dell'Oltre Giuba, *Relazione generale dell'Alto Commissario per l'Oltre Giuba a S. E. il Principe Pietro Lanza di Scalea* (Roma: Sindacato Italiano Arti Grafiche, 1926), p. 50; ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/6, fasc. 20, Zoli to Minister for the Colonies, 11 June 1925.

<sup>151</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, posizione 89/6, fasc. 21, 'Rapporto', enclosed with Italian Consul, Nairobi, to Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 10 April 1925; ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/6, fasc. 21, 'Appunti e note sull'Oltre Giuba al momento della cessione', Rollini to Alto Commissario per l'Oltre Giuba, 28 June 1925.

<sup>152</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/6, fasc. 20, Commissariato Generale dell'Oltre Giuba, 'Relazione generale, 1 luglio 1925 – 31 gennaio 1926', p. 1.

Commissioner in charge of Oltre Giuba Corrado Zoli deployed troops to the Dhasheeg Waamo-Afmadoow area and struck a peace deal (known as the ‘peace of Curcumesa’) between the Xarti and the Maxamed Subeer. Both British sources and oral testimonies suggest that the Italians were successful in their peace-making efforts because they promised the Maxamed Subeer that their claim over territory across the Anglo-Italian border would be satisfied.<sup>153</sup> The Maxamed Subeer chiefs reportedly ‘told the Italians that, if they wanted the tribes to be peaceful, they must gain access for them to the Uaso [Nyiro]’.<sup>154</sup> Following the peace of Curcumesa, the Dhasheeg Waamo, which now fell within the boundaries of Afmadoow district, was split into two parts: the southern one was given to the Xarti while the northern one was assigned to the Maxamed Subeer.<sup>155</sup>

### 1.3 The reorganisation of the frontier, 1925-26

The re-drawing of the Anglo-Italian border was accompanied by the administrative, political and economic reorganisation of the frontier.<sup>156</sup> From 29 June 1925 to 29 June 1926, *Oltre Giuba* was administered as a self-contained colonial possession. The fascist propaganda spoke in very optimistic terms about a future European plantation economy on the ‘rich, fertile soil’ bordering the lower

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<sup>153</sup> Interviews with Khaliif Santuur Gooloo, Garissa, 1 June 2015; and Maxamed Amiin, Nairobi, 25 May 2015.

<sup>154</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 3/1/1, Kenya Colony Intelligence Reports, Officer in Charge Gurreh District, Mandera Reports, Sept.–Nov. 1925.

<sup>155</sup> Ministero delle Colonie, *Oltre Giuba*, pp. 242–43.

<sup>156</sup> Article 12 of the Anglo-Italian Treaty of 15 July 1924 authorized the appointment of an Anglo-Italian Commission, ‘later known as the Jubaland Commission, with power [...] to decide generally on the manner in which the treaty should be put into force’. The Jubaland Boundary Commission was successively created to deal with ‘all matters regarding delimitation, survey, and demarcation of the boundary’. L. N. King, ‘The Work of the Jubaland Boundary Commission’, *Geographical Journal*, 72, No. 5 (1928), pp. 420–35 (p. 420). The Jubaland Boundary Commission carried out its work between July 1925 and April 1927.

and middle course of the Jubba River, which was even compared to the Nile.<sup>157</sup> However, the limited budget of the *Oltre Giuba* administration and labour shortage prevented, at least temporarily, the establishment of a plantation economy in the Jubba Valley.<sup>158</sup> Instead, the Italian administration focused on developing the strategic potential of the frontier. Under British rule, government control in the upper Jubba valley did not extend beyond the garrisons at Serenli (opposite Baardheere) and Luuq.<sup>159</sup> Following the Italian occupation of *Oltre Giuba*, which involved the deployment of about 2,000 troops, temporary sub-districts (*Vice-Residenze*) were established along the Somalia-Kenya border at Garbahaarrey, Ceel Waaq (both in in upper Jubba valley) and Wama Idu (between Kismaayo and Kolbio). In order to expand government control, the Italian administrator recognised some Mareexaan chiefs in Garbahaarrey and put them on payroll. He used the same strategy with the Gharri in Ceel Waaq and with the Ogaadeen/Cabdalla and the Ogaadeen/Maqaabul in Wama Idu.<sup>160</sup> In this way, each of the three sub-districts was ‘assigned’ to a clan, the one which appeared to be dominant in that particular area. Although customary chiefs were not a colonial invention, the Italian administrator recognised clan chiefs even where there was none, for the purpose of making the borderland ‘legible’.

*Oltre Giuba* was divided into three districts (*residenze*): *Residenza del Nord* (northern district), including Serenli, Garbahaarrey, and Ceel Waaq; *Residenza del Centro* (central district), with headquarters in Afmadoow; and *Residenza del Sud* (southern district), with headquarters in Kismaayo, also

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<sup>157</sup> ‘Per la colonizzazione del Giubaland’, *Il Popolo*, 20 October 1924.

<sup>158</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/6, fasc. 21, Zoli to Minister for the Colonies, 3 March 1925.

<sup>159</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I Somalia, pos. 89/6, Zoli to Minister for the Colonies, fasc. 21, 3 February 1925. In 1916, the Ogaadeen/Cawlyahan sacked the British garrison at Serenli, killing the Serenli District Commissioner, Lieutenant Francis Elliot, and sixty-five askaris. The British responded with a brutal punitive campaign. See George L. Simpson, ‘British Perspectives on Aulihan Somali Unrest in the East Africa Protectorate, 1915-18’, *Northeast African Studies* 6, No. 1 (1999), pp. 7–43.

<sup>160</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/6, fasc. 20, Commissariato Generale dell’Oltre Giuba, ‘Relazione generale, 1 luglio 1925 – 31 gennaio 1926’, p. 9.

including Alexandra, Goobweyn, and Wama Idu. In principle, Mr Zoli re-appointed the chiefs and headmen who had been recognised by the British, choosing to maintain the *statu quo*. He did not want to bet on people who claimed chieftaincy but whose actual authority had not been tested yet. Those ‘dissident chiefs’, particularly among the Xarti/Majeerteen, who had hoped for a revolution ‘under the pretext of sympathy for Italy’ received no concessions.<sup>161</sup> Nevertheless, in a few cases, the Italian administrator appointed new chiefs to empower a particular type of *sheegad*. This group was composed of Arabs, Baajuun, and Banadiiri (a heterogeneous conglomerate of people of various origins mainly inhabiting the Banaadir region) who had migrated to the coast of Trans-Jubba for trading purposes and had become clients of the Kablax to do business in the coastal areas and near Kismaayo and Goobweyn. This type of *sheegad*, therefore, was particularly common among the Xarti.<sup>162</sup> The Italian administrator appointed two chiefs for the Baajuun and one chief for the Arabs in Kismaayo and allowed the Banadiiri to do business as they pleased, without recurring to the intercession of Xarti chiefs. This move was motivated by economic as well as political considerations, as Arab merchants, in particular, dealt in livestock products, ivory, and agricultural produce from the Gosha areas and controlled, along with the Indians, a large part of the Kismaayo trade.<sup>163</sup>

Along with chiefs, another group of agents of empire was to play a key role in the Somalia-Kenya and Somalia-Ethiopia borderlands: the *dubat* (‘white turbans’). These were Somali irregulars who were locally recruited and organised into ‘bands’ (*bande* in Italian) by officers of the colonial troops who volunteered for the task. First established by Governor Tommaso Carletti in Italian Somalia in 1908 following the occupation of Afgooye, these irregular forces were given new impetus by the ‘sabre Governor’, Cesare Maria De Vecchi, who instituted the so-

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<sup>161</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, posizione 89/6, fasc. 21, ‘Appunti e note sull’Oltre Giuba al momento della cessione’, Rollini to Alto Commissario per l’Oltre Giuba, 28 June 1925; Ministero delle Colonie, *Relazione generale*, pp. 102 and 104–05.

<sup>162</sup> Ministero delle Colonie, *Oltre Giuba*, p. 179; Ministero delle Colonie, *Relazione generale*, p. 112.

<sup>163</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/6, fasc. 20, ‘Notizie sul territorio di riva destra del Giuba’, March 1925, p. 27.

called ‘frontier bands’ (*bande di confine*) in 1924 and increased the *dubat*’s numerical strength the following year.<sup>164</sup> Meant to be ‘the assault militia of the colony in action’, the *dubat* operated independently from the colonial troops (*Regio Corpo Truppe Coloniali*).<sup>165</sup> Three *dubat* bands, one for each district, were created in *Oltre Giuba* in October 1925.<sup>166</sup> These forces were entrusted with several tasks: border policing and custom surveillance; guarding remote locations; ‘services of a political nature’ in the territory of the *Residenze*; and the enforcement of government orders.<sup>167</sup> The *dubat* were ‘stationed as police and spies in every Somali section’ and moved about with the pastoralist clans throughout the country.<sup>168</sup> The newly appointed chiefs in Garbahaarrey, Ceel Waaq, and Wama Idu supplied the Italian administration with camels for the colonial troops and recruits for the *dubat* bands in exchange for government recognition.<sup>169</sup>

As they received no rations but lived on the local population, the *dubat* were cheaper than the regular troops.<sup>170</sup> This made them a particularly valuable asset in a context of economic uncertainty. As the Italians sought to sever Kismaayo’s ties with British markets and link the region’s economy to Italy, the *Oltre Giuba* administration adopted the Italian lira, while the Italian rupee, a sub-multiple of the British pound, remained the official currency in Italian Somalia

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<sup>164</sup> Francesco Saverio Caroselli, *Ferro e fuoco in Somalia: Venti anni di lotte contro Mullah e Dervisc* (Rome: SIAG, 1931), p. 186; Cesare M. De Vecchi di Val Cison, *Orizzonti d’Impero: Cinque anni in Somalia* (Milano: Mondadori, 1935), p. 97 and pp. 99–100.

<sup>165</sup> De Vecchi, *ibid*, p. 99.

<sup>166</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, posizione 89/6 fasc. 20, Commissariato Generale dell’Oltre Giuba, ‘Relazione generale, 1 luglio 1925 – 31 gennaio 1926’, p. 13.

<sup>167</sup> Ministero delle Colonie, *Relazione Generale*, p. 91.

<sup>168</sup> KNA, KW/14/3, Erskine, ‘Ivory trade – Italian Somaliland and Oltre Giuba ceded to Italy’, 24 July 1926.

<sup>169</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/6, fasc. 20, Commissariato Generale dell’Oltre Giuba, ‘Relazione generale, 1 luglio 1925 – 31 gennaio 1926’, p. 10.

<sup>170</sup> KNA, KW/14/3, Erskine, ‘Ivory trade – Italian Somaliland and Oltre Giuba ceded to Italy’, 24 July 1926.

until 1926. While it was being introduced in *Oltre Giuba*, however, the lira underwent a severe depreciation and rampant inflation undermined the purchasing power of the colonial troops.<sup>171</sup> As a result, the value of the troops' salary (paid in Italian liras) was equivalent to about one sixth of the average salary of a longshoreman at Kismaayo port.<sup>172</sup> To avoid the risk of mutiny and desertion, regular troops were replaced by *dubat* bands at Unsi (on the Dawa River, on the frontier with Ethiopia) and along the Anglo-Italian border by the end of 1925.<sup>173</sup> *Dubat* bands were also stationed at Curcumesa (on the Dhasheeg Waamo), Afmadoow, and Kismaayo.<sup>174</sup>

In charge of custom posts on the border with Kenya, the *dubat* were involved in poaching and ivory smuggling. Organised poaching played an important part in the economic life of the Somalis in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands. Cooperating with several other groups (such as the Samburu, Turkana, Boran, Gabbra, Sakuye, Warday, Boni, and Pokomo), Somali pastoralists, middlemen, and traders dealt in ivory, rhino horn and game products. As this activity conflicted with British colonial interests, game laws were enacted as early as 1897 in the East Africa Protectorate. While the British imposed a complex system of hunting and trade licenses to ensure that 'no trading of game take place without government sanction', the Italians adopted a different

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<sup>171</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/6, fasc. 21, Zoli to Under-Secretary of State, Ministry for the Colonies, 4 July 1925; Commissariato Generale dell'Oltre Giuba, 'Relazione generale, 1 luglio 1925 – 31 gennaio 1926', pp. 37–8.

<sup>172</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/6, fasc. 20, Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of the Colonies, 'Promemoria per S.E. il Ministro', July 1925; Zoli to Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of the Colonies, 4 July 1925.

<sup>173</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/14, fasc. 55, Zoli to Minister for the Colonies, 6 July and 9 August 1925; Quercia to Zoli, 26 August 1925; Carnevali to Zoli, 26 August 1925; ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/6, fasc. 20, Commissariato Generale dell'Oltre Giuba, 'Relazione generale, 1 luglio 1925 – 31 gennaio 1926', p. 13.

<sup>174</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, posizione 89/6, fasc. 21, Zoli to De Vecchi, 25 March 1926.

approach.<sup>175</sup> In Italian Somalia, ivory was a duty-free article which was sold by auction on the markets of Mogadishu and other coastal towns. In order to offset the loss of government revenue which resulted from the fact that the greatest part of the caravan trade from southern Abyssinia passed through Moyale, Wajir and western Kenya, the *Oltre Giuba* administration ‘tacitly tolerated’ the smuggling of ivory and rhino horns from the Northern Frontier District across *Oltre Giuba* into Italian Somaliland.<sup>176</sup> The smuggled ivory was thus sold to foreign buyers in Mogadishu to the profit of the Italian treasury. Although a few scholars have already written about poaching and the trading of game trophies in north-eastern Kenya and the Tana River area during the colonial period, the role that the *dubat* played in these activities has remained undocumented so far.<sup>177</sup>

As the ivory buyers (mostly Xarti and Arabs) in *Oltre Giuba* were awaiting the establishment of free ivory markets such as existed in Italian Somalia and poachers were burying their ivory, due to the little money offered by the Italians following the depreciation of the lira, the *dubat* searched everywhere for concealed ivory, which, if found, they took to Kismaayo in exchange for rewards.<sup>178</sup> In July 1926, Captain Erskine, the Political Officer of the Jubaland Boundary Commission in charge of demarcating the Anglo-Italian border, reported:

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<sup>175</sup> Peter T. Dalleo, ‘The Somali Role in Organized Poaching in Northeastern Kenya, c. 1909-1939’, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 12, No.3 (1979), pp. 472–82 (p. 473).

<sup>176</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/6, fasc. 20, Commissariato Generale dell’Oltre Giuba, ‘Relazione generale, 1 luglio 1925 – 31 gennaio 1926’, p. 43; KNA, PC/NFD 1/1/3, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1926, p. 36; KNA, KW/14/3, Erskine, ‘Ivory trade – Italian Somaliland and Oltre Giuba ceded to Italy’, 24 July 1926.

<sup>177</sup> See Dalleo, ‘Somali Role’; Edward I. Steinhart, *Black Poachers, White Hunters: A Social History of Hunting in Colonial Kenya* (Oxford: James Currey; Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006); M. L. Stone, ‘Organized Poaching in Kitui District: A Failure in District Authority, 1900 to 1960’, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 5, No.3 (1972), pp. 436–52.

<sup>178</sup> KNA, KW/14/3, Erskine to Game Warden, 15 October 1926.

They [the *dubat*] arrest at once on suspicion any native suspected of being in possession of ivory. As there is no Habeas Corpus act in Italian Somaliland the suspect languishes in gaol without trial for an indefinite period. When information is wanted the prisoner's food supply is cut off.<sup>179</sup>

The *dubat* harassed especially those who were in a subservient position, such as the Boni. These were clients – ‘slaves’, according to Captain Erskine – to the Ogaadeen Somalis, particularly the Cabdalla and the Maxamed Subeer, and hunted game for their masters in the Wama Idu area and in the south of the Tana River basin.<sup>180</sup> The *dubat* proffered ‘false charges of all kind’ against the Boni and arrested them, then offered to release them if they disclosed ‘ivory secrets’ – Erskine recorded.<sup>181</sup>

Although the Italians and the British adopted different, often conflicting methods to assert their sovereignty and expand government control in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands, both colonial administrations sought to delimit ‘tribal’ areas, in order to ‘stabilise’ Somali clans, and to make ‘tribal’ boundaries coincide with administrative boundaries. Between 1925 and 1926, the military gave way to a civilian administration in the newly-titled Northern Frontier Province (NFP). This included the districts of Moyale, Gurreh (Mandera), Wajir, Telemugger (intended to regroup the Ogaadeen/Talamooge – i.e. Cabdalla and Cabudwaaq – between the Tana River and the Coast), Garba Tulla, Marsabit, and Samburu. As a way to halt the penetration of Somali pastoralists into the frontier districts, the British administrators attempted to disrupt the system of patron-client relationships which had served, for decades, to regulate migration and settlement in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands. As the British regarded the *sheegads* as illegal trespassers, they sought to sever the ties between the *sheegads* and their hosts.

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<sup>179</sup> KNA, KW/14/3, Erskine, ‘Ivory trade – Italian Somaliland and Oltre Giuba ceded to Italy’, 24 July 1926.

<sup>180</sup> KNA, KW/14/3, Erskine to Game Warden, 15 October 1926; Dalleo, ‘Somali Role’, p. 477.

<sup>181</sup> KNA, KW/14/3, *Ibid.*



Groups of *sheegads* in the NFP consequently adjusted to the new policy. In his handing-over report of 1925, Captain Mahony, Wajir District Commissioner, observed that:

A weaker tribe only desires to cease to be 'Shegat' in order to obtain separate recognition, and thereby possibly greater concessions, while it is the ambition of every petty Chief or Headman to receive a Government subsidy, no matter how small, and he is more likely to do so as the chief of a recognised and distinct tribe.<sup>182</sup>

Territorial segregation and trade control represented two sides of the same coin. The restriction of trade to designated stations, under the eyes of British officials, was an essential component of the Government's policy towards the Northern Frontier Province. 'Sundry alien tribes' (Xarti, Isxaaq, Arabs and Indians) were encouraged to trade and set up *dukas* (licensed shops) in the townships of the NFP, but they were kept from 'trading, swindling or settling among the natives of the district', for fear that, if they were allowed to live in the bush, these 'townspeople' would have a subversive influence on the nomads, stirring up tensions.<sup>183</sup> The British administrators gave trade licenses to the 'aliens', but prevented the 'natives' from trading, settling, or getting employment in the townships. Trade control was also motivated by budgetary considerations, as trade and livestock licences, along with the Non-Native Poll Tax (which the 'alien' tribes had to pay), were the main sources of revenue in the NFP. The new *duka* economy, *de facto*, excluded the pastoralists from the legal cross-border trade, which was controlled by Arabs, Indians, 'alien' Somalis and Italian merchants based in Kismaayo and Luuq.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 2/1, Wajir District Handing Over Report, 1925, Mahony to Cooke, p. 34.

<sup>183</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ/2/1, Wajir District Handing Over Report, 1921, Sharpe to Bailey, p. 2.

<sup>184</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 1/1/3, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1926, p. 23;  
KNA, PC/NFD 3/1/1 Kenya Colony Monthly Intelligence Report for December 1926, pp. 22–23.

Following the cession of Jubaland, both colonial administrations sought to redirect trade flows to suit their own interests. In 1925-1926, however, *Oltre Giuba*'s economy remained largely dependent on imports from British markets, where prices were relatively low, as most of the goods that were imported into *Oltre Giuba* (maize, tea, sugar, coffee, flour, and rice) were produced in British colonies.<sup>185</sup> At the same time, the import trade into the NFP chief buying districts of Wajir, Moyale and Mandera, remained tributary to Kismaayo. As imports from *Oltre Giuba* were duty-free, commodities were cheaper in Wajir and Moyale than in Meru. Goods from down-country Kenya and Kenyan ports could not compete with cross-border imports due to heavy duties and freight rates.<sup>186</sup> Starting from 1925, both the British and the Italian administrations gave impetus to road construction and the introduction of mechanical transport as a means of expanding trade as well as government control. In 1925, the tracks linking Ceelwaaq to Wajir and the Lorian Swamp were repaired, thereby establishing a road connection between Nairobi, Wajir and Ceelwaaq.<sup>187</sup> The following year, a new road linking Wajir to Mandera was opened and motor tracks were created between all frontier outposts in *Oltre Giuba*.<sup>188</sup>

#### 1.4 Territorialisation, trade, and violence, 1926-1930

In July 1926, *Oltre Giuba* merged with Italian Somalia. This led to the creation of the Jubba Province (*Commissariato del Giuba*), which included the districts of Kismaayo, Margherita (present-day Jamaame), Afmadoow, Jilib, and Baardheere, and to the absorption of the upper Jubba Valley into the Frontier Province (*Commissariato del Confine*), created in 1925, which consisted of the districts of

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<sup>185</sup> Ministero delle Colonie, *Relazione Generale*, p. 195.

<sup>186</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 1/1/3, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report, 1926, p. 23.

<sup>187</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/6, fasc. 20, Zoli to Minister for the Colonies, 28 September 1925.

<sup>188</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/6, fasc. 20, Commissariato Generale dell'Oltre Giuba, 'Relazione generale, 1 luglio 1925 – 31 gennaio 1926', p. 42.

Luuq, Dooloow and Beledweyne.<sup>189</sup> The Commissariato del Confine was intended to interface with the British administrators in Mandera and the Ethiopian authorities in Dooloow. In both provinces, the *dubat* were entrusted with border surveillance and their number was increased.<sup>190</sup> In Luuq, the strength of the *banda* varied as the situation required, but ‘increased above the normal’ in the summer of 1926, following Governor De Vecchi’s order to disarm the Mareexaan.<sup>191</sup> This was considered necessary in view of attracting commercial flows from southern Ethiopia. Two platoons of Italian native troops with two machine guns were also deployed to Unsi to collect rifles from the Mareexaan. From there, the two platoons proceeded to Dooloow, Luuq, and Serenli, while another platoon was sent from Goobweyn to Ceelwaaq and Garbahaarrey, along the border with Kenya. According to British intelligence sources, about 1,600 rifles and only one cartridge were collected, although Governor De Vecchi boasted that disarmament operations had been a complete success.<sup>192</sup>

Between 1926 and 1927, *dubat* bands were increased in all northern posts, as counter-raiding became an important part of the Italian frontier policy. The *dubat* were employed to raid and subdue people across the boundaries with Kenya and Ethiopia with the aim to eventually attract sections of Somali clans to Italian territory.<sup>193</sup> Although Article 9 of the Treaty of London of 1924 read that ‘the two Governments undertake that they will respectively endeavour to prevent any migration of Somalis or other natives across the frontier’, ‘this article of the agreement the Italians have never kept and are not keeping or endeavouring to

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<sup>189</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/12, fasc. 48, Guido Corni, ‘Relazione sulla Somalia Italiana per l’esercizio 1929-1930 presentata a S.E. il Ministro delle Colonie’, p. 63.

<sup>190</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/6, fasc. 20, De Vecchi to Minister for the Colonies, 30 November 1926.

<sup>191</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 3/1/1, Kenya Colony Monthly Intelligence Reports, September–November 1926, Mandera, September 1926, p. 15.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*; De Vecchi, *Orizzonti d’Impero*, p. 233.

<sup>193</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 4/2/2, Butler to Chief Native Commissioner, 6 December 1926; KNA, PC/NFD 3/1/1, Kenya Colony Monthly Military Intelligence Reports, January–April 1927, p. 3.

keep now’ – Captain Erskine commented in November 1926.<sup>194</sup> The policy of the Italian administrators was to induce Somali families with livestock to migrate from British territory into Somalia, as the Italians believed that the livestock so obtained and the product thereof enriched the colony and that the additional manpower was beneficial for prospective labour and taxation. As a result, in the autumn of 1926, a *dubat* band seized livestock in British territory on the Lagh Dera (Uaso Nyiro) and an ‘international incident’ occurred at Ceelwaaq when some of the Italian *banda* were dealt with by a patrol of King’s African Rifles.<sup>195</sup> Besides, it was reported that the Deputy District Commissioner in charge of Ceel Waaq was encouraging an influx of Gharri into the Serenli area.<sup>196</sup> At the same time, the *dubat* bands were put in charge of preventing Somali livestock from leaving Italian territory. The *banda* frequently followed up Somalis into British territory and took prisoners as well as witnesses and livestock across the border into Italian territory. According to British intelligence sources, a ‘picturesque rumour’, which reportedly emanated from the Italian officers stationed at Luuq, spread in Mandera at the beginning of 1927: it was said that the Gurreh (Mandera) District would shortly be handed over to Italy. It was also alleged that the *Residente* of Baardheere *Signor* Gaglione had purposefully smashed three border stones near Ceelwaaq, while declaring that Italy’s sovereignty extended much further west.<sup>197</sup>

Some chiefs were also involved in drawing people from Kenya to Somalia. For instance, the former *Suldaan* of the Ogaadeen/Cabdalla Xasan Cismaan, who had been deposed by the British because they considered him a source of trouble, had crossed into Italian territory following the cession of Jubaland and had been recognised as chief of the Reer Cabdalla by the Italian Government.<sup>198</sup> Xasan Cismaan was thereby able to establish himself once again as a salaried headman,

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<sup>194</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 4/2/2 Erskine, to the Officer i/c, Northern Frontier Province, 1 November 1926.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>197</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 3/1/1, Kenya Colony Monthly Military Intelligence Reports for January–April 1927, p. 3; 3<sup>rd</sup> KAR, Annual Intelligence Report for 1927, p. 14.

<sup>198</sup> Ministero delle Colonie, *Oltre Giuba*, p. 271.

but on Italian pay. In the spring of 1927, he raided across the border into British territory at the head of twenty armed men and forcibly removed over twenty *reer* (families) into Italian territory near Wama Idu, with the support of the local *dubat* band.<sup>199</sup> Living on killing game and extortion, the *dubat* regularly ‘invaded’ Sankuri district in search of animals, ‘giving orders to British natives and committing excesses’.<sup>200</sup> The *dubat* used to kill large numbers of antelopes, zebras, and giraffes in British territory. At the *banda* station in Wama Idu, near the border with Kenya, the *dubat* kept a large deposit of skins of these animals, which they reportedly sent to the Italian authorities in Kismaayo from time to time.<sup>201</sup>

The British interpreted the ‘disinterested’ – not to say complicit – ‘attitude of the Italian higher officials’ in connection with the trespassing of their subjects into British territory as a trick to advance pretensions to the area between the Anglo-Italian border and the ‘Tittoni line’ up to Moyale. According to an intelligence report by the 3<sup>rd</sup> KAR regiment for July 1928, the possible reason behind the Italians’ attitude was that:

... they wish to make out a case to show that the territory handed over to them in 1925 was inadequate for the grazing of their tribes, and that, by being able to show that their subjects must seek grazing in British Territory every year, they may be able to obtain an extension of the area handed over.<sup>202</sup>

The Italians were clearly still interested in the Dooloow-Moyale-Lorian Swamp triangle, as this adjoined part of the Abyssinian territory which they hoped

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<sup>199</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 4/2/2, Butler to Officer Commanding Troops, Nairobi, 14 March 1927; KNA, PC/NFD 4/2/2, Mahony to Senior Commissioner, Northern Frontier Province, 26 April 1927; PC/NFD 3/1/1, Kenya Colony Monthly Military Intelligence Reports for January–April 1927, p. 5.

<sup>200</sup> KNA, KW/14/3, Erskine to Game Warden, 9 January 1927.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 3/1/1, 3<sup>rd</sup>KAR, Monthly Intelligence Reports for July 1928, p. 2.

ultimately to conquer. Writing from Mandera to the Provincial Commissioner, NFP, in September 1929, the District Commissioner, Moyale, remarked:

we are dealing with a civilised nation whose officers are superficially polite and helpful, but in reality they are unpleasant neighbours. [...] I have just patrolled the 100 miles of our own frontier between here and Eil Wak. [...] I discovered that in this sector of the boundary all of the numbered cement pillars which were erected by the Boundary Commission have been destroyed – and intentionally destroyed. In each case the identification numbers were missing. During my Predecessor's time the pillar at Eil Wak was smashed, and it was reported to him that this had been done by an Italian Officer from Afimadu. I do not know who destroyed the others, but it is clearly not the work of local natives. [...] the Italian 'Banda' are constantly telling our people that the present boundary is going to be extended westwards.<sup>203</sup>

While the British and the Italians were struggling for hegemony over the frontier, road construction was given further impetus. In 1927, the Italians built a road that ran from Afmadoow to Diff, on the Kenya-Somalia border; from there, the road continued into British territory for about fifty kilometres until it joined one of the main roads in the NFD, thereby establishing a connection between Mogadishu and Nairobi. That same year, the Northern Frontier Province was linked to Lamu via Sankuri by motor road. This intersected with the main road to Wajir, Moyale, and Mandera at Muddo Gashi.<sup>204</sup> The year 1927 also saw the introduction of mechanical transport. As a result, the departure of commercial lorries from Meru to Wajir, Marsabit, Moyale and Garba Tulla was almost a daily occurrence in the dry seasons.<sup>205</sup> However, general government policy, aimed at increasing government revenue through the creation of new townships and the

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<sup>203</sup> KNA, DC/MDA 4/6, Reece to PC, Northern Frontier Province, 5 September 1929, p. 3.

<sup>204</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 4/2/2, Ag. Senior Commissioner, Coast, to Chief Native Commissioner, 13 July 1927.

<sup>205</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 1/1/3, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1927, p. 22.

expansion of trade connections across the NFP, was thwarted by specific veterinary policy on disease control intended to protect livestock in the white settled areas in the Colony. As a consequence, trade expansion was severely hampered by the introduction of permanent quarantine restrictions that banned the export of livestock from the NFP.<sup>206</sup> This further marginalised the nomads, who could not sell their livestock nor participate in the *duka* trade, this being reserved to the ‘aliens’.

The ‘wave of prosperity’ in trade that British colonial officials reported in 1928 was somewhat artificial, as markets benefited from the effects of an abnormal drought. This affected particularly the Muddo Gashi and Lorian areas and caused the Ogaadeen/Cawlyahan to lose ninety per cent of their livestock, according to British estimates.<sup>207</sup> The year 1928 was one of the worst British officials could remember for drought in the NFP. During a visit to the Lorian Swamp in September, the District Commissioner, Wajir, remarked: ‘a depressing sight – dead cattle, sheep and goats lying all over the place’.<sup>208</sup> The heavy losses in livestock caused by the drought, combined with high market prices, temporarily boosted the hides and skins trade in the NFP and accidentally increased the purchasing power of Somali pastoralists. This, however, was an ephemeral parenthesis.<sup>209</sup> The drought also provoked an influx of Italian subjects (including groups of Bartiire, Cawlyahan, Liisaan, Shiikhaal, and Ashraaf) to British territory, especially in the Wajir and Uaso Nyiro areas in the spring of 1928. Petty indirect taxation, the introduction of forced labour in newly established Italian plantations in the lower Jubba Valley, and the depredations of the *dubat* were reportedly further reasons why these groups of Somalis crossed into British territory.<sup>210</sup> The British authorities’ response was to send out patrols to search for

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<sup>206</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 1/1/3, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report 1926, 1927 and 1928.

<sup>207</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 1/1/3 Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1928, p. 4; KNA, PC/NFD 4/2/2, Mahony to DC, Wajir, 2 August 1928.

<sup>208</sup> KNA, PC/NFD, 6/2/1, Wajir District Diary for September 1928, Sept. 6.

<sup>209</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 1/1/3 Northern Frontier Province Annual Report 1928, p. 5.

<sup>210</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 4/1/7, DC, Wajir to Senior Commissioner, Northern Frontier Province, 1 March 1928, ‘Appendix: Resumé of conversations with Italian Authorities’.

Italian natives in Wajir District. Trespassers were heavily fined, and ten percent of their livestock was sized. Over one thousand pounds were collected in fines in connection with these 'incursions'.<sup>211</sup>

In 1928, the northern part of Kipini District was absorbed into the Northern Frontier Province as part of Telemugger District, whose headquarters were transferred from Sankuri to Bura.<sup>212</sup> This move was officially aimed at bringing the Ogaadeen/Cabdalla, the dominant group in the area, under closer administrative control and to protect the riverine tribes from encroachment by the Somalis.<sup>213</sup> The new administrative boundary, in fact, acknowledged an existing state of affairs, as the Pokomo of Kipini District were mainly dependent on the NFP for the marketing of their crop production and an increasing number of them was entering employment under the Somalis.<sup>214</sup> This administrative change was also intended to facilitate the attempts of British officials to divert trade from Kismaayo to Lamu, with a view to introducing taxation in the Northern Frontier Province.

A road linking Lamu to Bura, which was established as a trading centre, was opened up with the aim of further developing trade in the districts of Telemugger and Wajir. The opening of the Bura-Lamu road, however, had unintended consequences, as it brought Somali livestock into competition with Orma livestock. The Orma, who had 'practically a monopoly of the Mombasa meat market' theretofore, 'made representation to the Coast administration to prevent the passage of Somali stock to Mombasa'.<sup>215</sup> Moreover, British efforts to increase trade between the NFP and Lamu were frustrated by the decision of the

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<sup>211</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA. PP., 1919-30, Somalia, b.1583, fasc. 7257, Ministry of the Colonies to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2 March 1928; PC/NFD 3/1/1, 3<sup>rd</sup> KAR, Intelligence Report for June 1928, p. 1.

<sup>212</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 4/2/2, Butler to Asst. DC, Sankuri, 15 February 1928.

<sup>213</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 4/2/2, Mahony, Asst. DC, Telemugger, to Senior Commissioner, Northern Frontier Province, 21 March 1928.

<sup>214</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 4/2/2, Mahony to PC, Northern Frontier Province, 16 October 1928.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*



new Italian Governor Guido Corni to allow goods imported via Kismaayo to pass through Italian territory in transit.<sup>216</sup>

While the British unsuccessfully attempted to re-orient the NFP trade towards Lamu, the Italians focused on asserting economic and political control over the northern frontier, exploiting the issue of the border between Somalia and Ethiopia to advance their imperial policy. In the Italo-Ethiopian negotiations of 1897 after Italy's *débaclé* at Adwa, the Italian sphere of influence had been defined as an area 180 miles in depth running from the Jubba River north of Baardheere to the boundaries of the British Somaliland Protectorate. The peace treaty of 1897 had thus left Luuq, where the Ethiopian Emperor 'Menelik had agreed to an Italian commercial concession', outside the Italian sphere.<sup>217</sup> The Anglo-Ethiopian agreement of 1907, however, had enhanced Italy's position, fixing the frontier between Abyssinia and Kenya at Doolow on the Jubba River, well north of Luuq. The Italo-Ethiopian treaty of 1908 had then established a frontier running from Doolow northwards to the Shabelle River where it joined the line agreed to in 1897. As there were no clear lines of demarcation on the ground, the frontier between Somalia and Ethiopia was based on the principle of 'ethnic separation'.<sup>218</sup> This provided for the allocation of different Somali clans on the frontier to either Italian or Ethiopian control, regardless of the watering and grazing needs of the people concerned, who, therefore, continued to move across the boundary following the pattern of seasonal migration. Under Governor Corni, the Italian administration sought to take advantage of this fluid situation, by encouraging the clans on the Italian side to trespass into Abyssinian territory under the armed protection of the *dubat* and by adopting a policy of commercial

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<sup>216</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 1/1/3, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1928, p. 30; ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/12, fasc. 48, Corni, 'Relazione sulla Somalia Italiana per l'esercizio 1929-1930 presentata a S.E. il Ministro delle Colonie', p. 70.

<sup>217</sup> Lewis, *Modern History*, p. 88.

<sup>218</sup> Caroselli, *Ferro e fuoco*, p. 312.

penetration intended to attract the trade of western and southern Ethiopia to Luuq instead of Moyale.<sup>219</sup>

As part of this policy, the *dubat* were further empowered. They were entrusted with gathering cross-border intelligence, patrolling roads along the Anglo-Italian border and on the Ethiopian frontier, and channelling trade to Italian-controlled markets.<sup>220</sup> *Dubat* bands were hailed as the ‘connecting link’ of Fascist empire-building.<sup>221</sup> They were also a source of trouble though, as they were ‘above all rules’ and operated independently from any other military and police authorities in the outlying areas of the colony.<sup>222</sup> According to British sources, ‘shooting was free for the Banda and ammunition was a free issue’, thanks to masses of old stock from the First World War.<sup>223</sup> In 1928, the Commander-in-Chief of the *Regio Corpo Truppe Coloniali* Lieutenant Colonel Vittorio Ruggero reported that the *dubat*, unlike regular troops, were allowed to maintain ‘the greatest opacity with regard to the loads of military materials, arms and ammunitions’.<sup>224</sup> Moreover, as the *dubat* were rewarded with a large percentage of what they had captured after successful operations, it became necessary for the Italian administration to provide them with opportunities for raiding, even when there was no need for punitive action.<sup>225</sup> As a result, it was not uncommon that the *dubat* committed abuse and violence against other Somalis not only in foreign territory but in Italian territory as well.

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<sup>219</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/13, fasc. 50, Corni, ‘Riassunto della mia azione di Governo nel triennio 1928-1931’, 3 June 1931, p. 22.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>222</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/13, fasc. 52, Ruggero, ‘Relazione a S.E. il Governatore della Somalia Dott. Comm. Guido Corni’, 29 July 1928, p. 27.

<sup>223</sup> KNA, KW/14/3, Erskine to Game Warden, 9 January 1927.

<sup>224</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/13, fasc. 52, Ruggero, ‘Relazione a S.E. il Governatore della Somalia Dott. Comm. Guido Corni’, 29 July 1928, p. 27.

<sup>225</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 3/1/1, 3<sup>rd</sup> KAR, Monthly Intelligence Report for July 1929, p. 1; ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/13, fasc. 52, Ruggero, ‘Relazione a S.E. il Governatore della Somalia Dott. Comm. Guido Corni’, 29 July 1928, p. 28.

At the same time, the Italian administration advanced commercial penetration by building more roads and establishing automotive transport services on the Somalia-Kenya and Somalia-Ethiopia frontiers. The Frontier Province (*Commissariato del Confine*) was organised around a road axis that linked the administrative centres of Luuq, Xudur and Beledweyne, whose strategic role was thereby strengthened. This main road axis, which ran east to west, intersected the roads which came from the south and those that ran northwards to reach the so-called ‘bands’ motor road’ (*camionabile delle bande*).<sup>226</sup> This connected all the *dubat* posts on the Ethiopia-Somalia frontier with Malka Rie near the Kenya-Somalia border. Along the motor track between Xudur and Luuq, small permanent villages emerged near the posts where the frontier bands (*bande di confine*) were stationed, as the *dubat* and their families were joined by relatives and families of *ex-dubat* as well as a few shopkeepers and traders. Permanent villages were also created near the bands’ posts on the Somalia-Kenya frontier at Ceelwaaq and Malka Rie.<sup>227</sup> In 1929, the general headquarters of the frontier bands were established at Dooloow, forty kilometres from Mandera. That same year, the Luuq-Dooloow-Mandera road was opened to motor traffic, pushing Moyale’s traders to get their supplies from Mogadishu, as this was cheaper than importing goods via Mombasa and Lamu. In the two months following the road’s opening, twelve lorries carrying cotton cloth, oil, petrol, and various other products left Mogadishu for Moyale and came back loaded with coffee, precious wood, ivory, rhino horns, hides and skins.<sup>228</sup> Goods in transit between Ethiopia and Somalia were granted customs exemption and free crossing was allowed on the Dawa River to attract caravans from the Boran and Digoodiya areas to Somalia. Free ferry services were established on the Jubba River at Malka Rie,

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<sup>226</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 3/1/1, 3<sup>rd</sup> KAR, Annual IR for 1927, p. 13; ASDMAE, ASMAI/I,

Somalia, pos. 89/13, fasc. 49, Micheli, ‘Commissariato di confine: il territorio dei Rahanuin’, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>227</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/13, fasc. 49, Micheli, ‘Caratteri orografici, vie di comunicazione, genti e centri principali del Commissariato della Regione del Confine’, June 1929, pp. 23 and 25.

<sup>228</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/12, fasc. 48, Corni, ‘Relazione sulla Somalia Italiana per l’esercizio 1929-1930 presentata a S.E. il Ministro delle Colonie’, p. 63.

Luuq, Doolow, and Baardheere.<sup>229</sup> Connections between the frontier and the coast were also enhanced through the construction of the Luuq-Serenli-Kismaayo road and the Luuq-Baydhabo-Mogadishu road.

In order to enhance their economic policies as well as political control, both colonial administrations rearranged administrative boundaries between 1929 and 1930. In 1929 the seven districts of the Northern Frontier Province became five, including Telemugger, Wajir, Gurre, Marsabit, and Isiolo. Tana River was absorbed into Telemugger district, until then administered separately, in order to subsume 'all Galla' in the NFP.<sup>230</sup> The provincial headquarters were then shifted from Meru to Isiolo and, concurrent with this, the Samburu and Garba Tulla Districts were amalgamated with headquarters at Isiolo. It also became necessary to remove the headquarters of Telemugger District from Bura, a place 'infested with mosquitoes' and disliked 'by everyone, black and white, officials and non officials'.<sup>231</sup> In fact, despite the (misplaced) efforts of the colonial administration, it had proved impossible to develop Bura as a livestock market and trade centre, as the place was at the western end of the Tana River 'fly belt'. As the District Commissioner, Telemugger, insightfully observed in December 1930: 'it is no good trying to build up a thriving trade unless people are fairly healthy and a mixed prosperous village springs up. Five "dukas" in a row will not do it'.<sup>232</sup> All 'consulted native opinion', including Somalis, Orma, and Riverine tribes, voted in favour of moving the district headquarters from Bura to Garissa, which was done in 1931.

In Italian territory, the reorganisation of provincial and district administration in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands went hand in hand with the demarcation of 'tribal boundaries'. These were meant to regulate grazing and

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<sup>229</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE AA.PP., 1931-45, Somalia, b. 4, fasc. 1, 'Riassunto relazione riservata', enclosed with Corni to Aloisi, 27 April 1935, pp. 3-4.

<sup>230</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 8/1/1, Minutes of Meeting of District Officers of the Northern Frontier Province, 10 October 1928; KNA, PC/NFD 4/2/2, Glenday to Colonial Secretary, 11 July 1930.

<sup>231</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 4/2/2, DC, Telemugger, to PC, Northern Frontier Province, 27 December 1930, p. 2.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

watering rights and to ‘enforce the principle of authority’, placing each ‘tribal territory’ under the responsibility of a chief. Based on this rationale, the Upper Jubba Province (*Commissariato dell’Alto Giuba*) was created in 1930, *Commissariato del Confine* being subsequently dismembered.<sup>233</sup> Conceived as a ‘Raxanweyn Province’, *Alto Giuba* consisted of the four districts of Luuq, Xudur, Baydhabo (where the provincial headquarters were established) and Buurhakaba, thus bringing the greatest part of the vast alluvial region between the Jubba and the Shabelle rivers under a single administration. According to a 1931 census, this was the most populous province in the colony, inhabited by about 300,000 people – mainly Raxanweyn groups with their clients – out of an estimated total population of about one million.<sup>234</sup> Through the creation of *Alto Giuba*, the Italian administration aimed to bring these groups under tightened control and to favour the creation of a manpower pool for the concessionary plantations that were emerging in the lower Shabelle valley, particularly in the Janaale area, and near Jilib, in the lower Jubba basin.

Since the mid-1920s, the Italian Government had championed the ‘fascistisation’ (*fascistizzazione*) of agriculture, providing Italian settlers with ‘a series of incentives, subsidies, and loans’ aimed at facilitating the development of concessionary plantations.<sup>235</sup> The number of private concessions increased from four in 1919 to 90 in 1929 and to more than 115 (extending over 30,000 hectares) in 1933.<sup>236</sup> The Upper Jubba Province became part of a regional network for the recruitment of forced labour for the Italian plantations. As the demand for agricultural manpower was huge and constantly increasing (according to 1929

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<sup>233</sup> Following the creation of Upper Jubba, the Jubba Province was renamed Lower Jubba (*Commissariato del Basso Giuba*). This consisted of five districts: Kismaayo, Margherita (present-day Jamaame), Jilib, Afmadoow, and Baardheere.

<sup>234</sup> Carlo Scaramella, ‘La carestia del 1931-34 Nell’Alto Giuba, Somalia Italiana’, *Africa: Rivista Trimestrale Di Studi e Documentazione Dell’Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente*, 52, No.4 (1997), pp. 536–77 (p. 536).

<sup>235</sup> Annalisa Urbano, ‘A Grandiose Future for Italian Somalia: Colonial Developmentalist Discourse, Agricultural Planning, and Forced Labor (1900-1940)’, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 92, No.92 (2017), pp. 69–88 (p. 79).

<sup>236</sup> Scaramella, ‘Carestia’, p. 547.

estimates, about 100,000 individuals were needed every six months in Janaale alone) a major change in the system used to marshal labour for the Italian plantations was introduced in 1929.<sup>237</sup> Forced labour was ‘cynically disguised’ as a labour contract which was, in fact, ‘far worse than slavery’ – Marcello Serrazanetti, the federal secretary of the Fascist Party in Mogadishu yet also a vocal critic of the forced labour policy in Somalia, commented in 1933.<sup>238</sup> Under the new regime, labourers were even deprived of their economic value: when one of them died, all the concessionaire had to do was asking the relevant government office for a replacement, free of charge. Labourers were usually recruited from those tribes who were regarded as ‘devout’ and ‘docile’. A certain number of families were requested from each clan and the clan chiefs were entrusted with selecting these families, who were often fictitiously created.

Following the introduction of the new ‘contract’, many labourers attempted to run away from the concessions, seeking refuge in forested and remote areas for fear of being denounced to the police, imprisoned, beaten up, and forcefully brought back to the plantations. It was not even possible for the runaways to go back to their clans, as these were obliged to replace fugitives and severely fined if they were caught hosting any of them. In 1929, several hundred runaways were rounded up near the Jubba River, about four hundred kilometres away from Janaale.<sup>239</sup> That same year, groups of Raxanweyn/Eelaay from Baydhabo and Buurhakaba fled from their home areas to escape forced recruitment and established new villages along the Jubba and on the right bank of the Shabelle river, where it was harder for the Italian administration to reach them.<sup>240</sup> The introduction of forced labour reconfigured the administrative and social geographies of the Jubba valley, creating a situation of social and economic

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<sup>237</sup> Guido Corni, ed., *Somalia Italiana* (Milan: Ed. Arte e Storia, 1937), p. 413;

ASDMAE, AA.PP., 1919-30, Somalia, b. 1585, fasc. 7267, *Notiziario Politico*, December 1929, p. 21.

<sup>238</sup> Marcello Serrazanetti, *Considerazioni sulla nostra attività coloniale in Somalia* (Bologna: La Rapida, 1933), p. 10.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>240</sup> ASDMAE, ASDMAE, AA.PP., 1919-30, Somalia, b. 1585, fasc. 7267, *Notiziario Politico*, Dicembre 1929, p. 19.

malaise. This amplified the impact of the devastating drought which struck the Jubba Valley from 1931 to 1934, as we will see in the next section.

### **1.5 Taxation, drought, and displacement, c. 1930-34**

While Somali agriculturalists attempted to escape forced recruitment or to run away from plantations seeking refuge near the Jubba River, Somali pastoralists from Kenya crossed into Italian territory to escape taxation. When the Kenya Government first announced the imposition of poll tax in the NFP in 1928, the response of the majority of the Somalis was a flat refusal to pay an individual tax. The nomads pointed to the problems caused by the livestock quarantine and complained of the difficulty of obtaining cash. Moreover, they feared that taxation would weaken their contacts (through the herding of livestock, 'illegal' trade, and marriage connections) with their kin across the border with Somalia. As Dalleo has rightly observed, 'the nomads realised that taxation would enable the British to identify more easily anyone who was not a Kenyan subject'.<sup>241</sup> Also, Somalis opposed taxation for religious reasons – sheikhs and holy men exhorted their fellow Muslim nomads not to pay what they regarded as a Christian tax.

The British attitude towards the Somali pastoralists was either 'pay or get out'.<sup>242</sup> Those who did not want to pay tax could move to either Abyssinia or Italian Somaliland, although by so doing they risked being stripped of the rights they had previously enjoyed over grazing and wells.<sup>243</sup> Yet, generally speaking, the nomads appeared to be more inclined to temporarily leave the NFP than to pay tax. Some Somali chiefs, however, attempted to take advantage of the situation to reassert their own authority. Sanbul Cabdi, for instance, chief of the Ogaadeen/Cabudwaaq, asked the District Commissioner, Telemugger, whether

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<sup>241</sup> Dalleo, 'Trade and Pastoralism', p. 209.

<sup>242</sup> Isaac K. Tarus, 'A History of the Direct Taxation of the African people of Kenya, 1895-1973' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Rhodes University, 2004), p. 206.

<sup>243</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 1/3/1, Wajir District PRB, Extracts from Wajir District Annual Report for 1930, p. 41.

the Government would back him ‘if he ordered all his people to stay’.<sup>244</sup> The chief also complained that too much had been said about people having the option of going. It would seem that all Cabudwaaq headmen in Telemugger District were very pleased when the DC announced that ‘no one would leave if his headman wished him to stay’.<sup>245</sup> Despite this, a ‘silly rumour’ was circulating among the Somalis: it was said that Italy would soon take over the area between the border and the Tana and those who had paid tax would be moved by force across the river.<sup>246</sup>

Due to these Somali objections to the poll tax, its introduction was delayed in the NFD until 1931, and then the Government did eventually concede to some Somali demands – reducing the tax from Shilling 20/- to Shilling 10/- per poll, and promising to improve water and veterinary facilities in the Province. But the government refused to accept livestock in lieu of cash payments.<sup>247</sup> In Wajir District, where the opposition to taxation was particularly strong, the Government initially allowed local Somalis to pay a commuted tax by section, instead of the individual poll tax. Despite these palliative concessions, several groups of Somalis still left the NFP and moved across the Italian border: various Ogaadeen families, especially from the Cabudwaaq and Cabdalla clans, along with some Gharri sections, crossed into Italian territory with their livestock in January 1931. According to estimates made by the Italian authorities, more than seven hundred people, together with 15,300 head of cattle and 1,100 goats, moved from Kenya to Italian Somalia.<sup>248</sup> Later that year, in September, it was reported that groups of Gharri had crossed into Abyssinia to avoid paying the tax, while further migrations were made into Somalia during the following year.<sup>249</sup> The Italian

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<sup>244</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 6/2/1, Telemugger District Diary for December 1930, p. 3.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.

<sup>247</sup> Dalleo, ‘Trade and Pastoralism’, p. 213.

<sup>248</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA.PP., 1931-45, Somalia, b. 1, fasc. 1, Notiziario Politico, January 1931, pp. 2–3.

<sup>249</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA.PP., 1931-45, Somalia, b. 1, fasc. 1, Notiziario Politico, September 1931, p. 6, and fasc. 2, Notiziari Politici, January, February, March, and April 1932.



Government welcomed these groups into their territory and assigned them to specific areas, mostly seeking to align them with members of their own clan or sub-clan. This contravened the Anglo-Italian Treaty of 1924 but was justified for ‘reasons of political convenience’.<sup>250</sup> In the following years, however, the Somalis in the NFP became more acquiescent to taxation, their freedom of mobility being to some extent constrained by the Italo-Ethiopian war. This war also generated a temporary trade boom and popularized the use of cash, as we shall see in the next chapter.<sup>251</sup> Conditions within Italian Somalia were also changing after 1925, especially with the introduction of a modernised fiscal system in 1926. This allowed for the introduction of a British-styled hut tax and saw the Italian administration issue cultivation licences for indigenous farms (*shambas*) – which many viewed as a penalty upon agriculturalists.<sup>252</sup>

Heavy taxation and forced labour undermined the coping mechanisms of the Jubba Valley’s agricultural populations to deal with environmental and economic volatility, which became evident during the severe drought which plagued the borderlands, particularly *Alto Giuba*, from 1931 to 1934. Lack of pastures due to poor rains provoked increasing unrest between pastoralist groups and between pastoralists and agriculturalists in the Italian territory during 1931.<sup>253</sup> By the end of the year, the effects of drought were being felt beyond the Upper Jubba region, spreading into Lower Jubba and affecting Baardheere, in Afmadoow District, and the Gosha areas near Jilib. In the Lower Jubba the impact of drought was aggravated by repeated locust invasions, similar attacks being experienced in parts of northern Kenya.<sup>254</sup> As the drought decimated the livestock

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<sup>250</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/11, fasc. 41, Notiziario Politico, May 1932, pp. 12–13.

<sup>251</sup> Alan Smith, ‘The Open Market: The Economy of Kenya’s Northern Frontier Province and the Italo-Abyssinian War,’ *East Africa*, 6, No.11 (1969), pp. 34–42.

<sup>252</sup> Menkhaus, ‘Rural Transformation’, pp. 207–10; Scaramella, ‘Carestia’, p. 546.

<sup>253</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA.PP., 1931-45, Somalia, b. 1, fasc. 1, Notiziari Politici, September to December 1931.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*; David Anderson, *Eroding the Commons: The Politics of Ecology in Baringo, Kenya, 1890s-1963* (Athens: Ohio University Press; Oxford: James Currey; Nairobi: E.A.E.P., 2002), pp. 70–9.

herds by 1932, pastoralists in the districts of Baardheere and Afmadoow turned to poaching, with increased quantities of ivory and rhino horn being smuggled in from Kenya.<sup>255</sup> Estimate suggested that an average of one hundred kilograms of ivory and three hundred leopard skins were being sold every month during 1932 in Afmadoow.<sup>256</sup>

By the end of 1932, a drought-led food crisis had assumed regional proportions, provoking massive displacement of populations who feared famine. As groups of agriculturalists moved to the irrigated areas along the Jubba and Shabelle rivers in order to survive, clashes erupted between them and pastoralist groups, who were now all competing for the same meagre resources.<sup>257</sup> Following two years of nearly uninterrupted drought, 1933 was probably the most difficult year in the entire colonial period for the people of *Alto Giuba*, as famine descended on the region, accompanied by a severe smallpox epidemic.<sup>258</sup> The Italian Government organised 'relief operations' in *Alto Giuba* which consisted in food distributions and the creation of 'job opportunities' in public works.<sup>259</sup> 'Relief', though, also assumed other forms, with the Italian administration seeking to control and restrict the extent of displacement. By January 1934, the Italian administration had established three 'concentration camps' in Xudur, Buurhakaba, and Baydhabo. These camps were intended to facilitate 'aid delivery', and to improve public health control. Undernourished people, most of whom were also suffering from smallpox, were transferred from the areas of Luuq and Uegit to the concentration camp in Xudur, some of them being taken in trucks, while others

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<sup>255</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/13, fasc. 50, Commissariato del Basso Giuba, 'Relazione semestrale, gennaio-giugno 1932', 30 July 1932, pp. 19 and 24.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>257</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA.PP., 1931-45, Somalia, b. 1, fasc. 2, Notiziari Politici, April, May, June 1932.

<sup>258</sup> Scaramella, 'Carestia', p. 558.

<sup>259</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/11, fasc. 43, Notiziario Politico, April 1933.

made the journey on foot.<sup>260</sup> By the end of March 1934, more than 5,700 people had been interned in these camps.<sup>261</sup>

Meanwhile, large numbers of pastoralists had moved from the districts of Luuq, Buurhakaba, Baydhabo and Xudur, where drought and famine were especially severe, to the Lower Jubba region, on the right bank of the river.<sup>262</sup> By the time that the drought finally came to an end in 1934, those Raxanweyn, Gaaljecel, Shiikhaal, and Liisaan pastoralists who had moved into Afmadoow district were increasingly regarded as unwanted squatters by the local populations, who feared that these new immigrants might seek to settle permanently. Fearing conflict, the Italian administration ordered the removal of the immigrant pastoralists from Afmadoow; *gogle* patrols (tribal police) escorted them back to the areas the colonial administration saw as their homelands.<sup>263</sup> In other areas, where displaced groups had provided labour for local agriculture, those people's presence was regarded favourably by the Italian administration. The Raxanweyn groups who had migrated from *Alto Giuba* to the lower Shabelle valley, for example, boosted the supply of labour to the concessionary plantations, particularly in the Janaale area, allowing for the substitution of cotton, whose profitability had severely decreased due to the global economic crisis, with bananas.<sup>264</sup> Plantation agriculture also expanded elsewhere in the Lower Jubba Valley, wherever additional manpower had been made available by the food crisis, thereby becoming the fulcrum of the Valley's political economy. The socio-political repercussions of colonial cash-crop production continued to be felt after the collapse of the Italian Empire, as we shall see in the next chapter.

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<sup>260</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA.PP., 1931-45, Somalia, b. 3, fasc. 3, Notiziario Politico, January 1934, p. 2.

<sup>261</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA.PP., 1931-45, Somalia, b. 3, fasc. 3, Notiziari Politici, January to July 1934.

<sup>262</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/I, Somalia, pos. 89/11, fasc. 43, Notiziario Politico, May 1933.

<sup>263</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA.PP., 1931-45, Somalia, b.3, fasc. 3, Notiziario Politico, May 1934, p. 6.

<sup>264</sup> Scaramella, 'Carestia', p. 566.

## 1.6 Conclusion

The first three decades of the twentieth century saw profound social, economic, and political transformations in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands, as a result of inter-imperial competition and colonisation. The redefinition and eventual fixation of the border between the Kenya colony and Italian Somalia in 1925 catalysed the efforts of the incipient colonial states to assert their control and territorial sovereignty over the borderlands. The definition of the Anglo-Italian border and of internal administrative boundaries prompted the emergence of new regimes of territorialisation, which gradually reshaped a fluid space characterised by recurrent migrations, social, economic, and environmental interconnections into clusters of appropriated territories. In this process, competing modes of territorial appropriation became entangled in issues of resource access and control, identity and belonging. This generated new divisions of self-interest, re-compositions of power, and new fault-lines of violence, as different individuals and groups responded to colonial interference in different ways: the people of the borderlands selectively appropriated governmental practices and discourses and accommodated them in local struggles to advance their own goals.

As the colonial states on both sides of the frontier aimed at securing control over trade routes, they were initially more present in the borderlands than elsewhere. As Paul Nugent has remarked, empires had to make their power felt especially in the frontier because ‘maintaining the mystique of the state was fundamental to securing compliance’.<sup>265</sup> In order for the state to exist in the borderlands, these had to be made legible. Instead of creating cadastral maps and population rolls, British and Italian colonial officials resorted to the tribal mapping of territory, through the registration of chiefs, attempts to control the movement of people and goods, and the imposition of taxes, especially in Kenya.

Establishing a formal border proved much easier than converting the borderlanders, particularly the Somalis, into compliant colonial subjects. They rejected the terms of the state imaginary, as they could imagine belonging to a political community which lacked such assumption of hierarchy. The Somalis

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<sup>265</sup> Paul Nugent, *Boundaries, Communities, and State-Making in West Africa: The Centrality of the Margins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 10.

welcomed being liberated from the threat of raids by their Ethiopian neighbours but did not acknowledge the border. Nevertheless, they somehow ‘domesticated’ the idiom and practices of colonial territorialisation to advance their claims, compete against each other, and take advantage of volatile opportunities. This was particularly apparent in the case of agents of empire such as government-paid chiefs, irregulars (*dubat*), and traders, whose behaviour and choices were marked by conflicting interests and ambivalent attitudes toward the colonial state. During the late 1920s and the early 1930s, a fundamental tension emerged between the borderlanders’ need to rely on cross-border connections for their own survival and the attempts of the colonial administrations to assert territorial control through movement restrictions, deportations, and routinized violence. The incentive to expand commercial trade to generate government revenues clashed with the effort to territorialise the ‘tribes’ and with the livelihoods of the borderlanders, reducing their ability to cope with a volatile environment. As a result, the people of the borderlands were often left with no choice but to not comply with government orders.

The Somalis relied on cross-border networks to avoid colonial interference. However, considering their responses to colonial rule to be purely aimed at circumventing the state would obscure the complex dynamics of resistance and cooperation which influenced not only power relationships between colonisers and colonised, but also inter-group relations and identities among the borderlanders. As this chapter has shown, kinship groups in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands were neither consolidated nor bounded entities in the early decades of colonisation. Internal tensions and the external politics of alliance and competition prompted group cohesion, while the changing salience of territory contributed to (re-)define intercommunal boundaries and allegiances. The social, economic, and political transformations we have discussed so far accelerated in the 1930s and 1940s as a result of war, as we shall see in the next chapter.

## 2 WAR, DEVELOPMENT POLICIES, AND THE EMERGENCE OF SOMALI NATIONALISM, 1934-1950

### 2.1 The Italo-Ethiopian war: irregular levies, trade, and refugees, 1934-39

After Italian and Ethiopian forces clashed near Beledweyne, on the Shabelle River, in 1932, rumours spread that allied Italian and German troops were preparing to seize Moyale, Wajir, Lamu and the Tana River.<sup>266</sup> Countering these allegations, other rumours circulated that not only would the British Government retain control over the NFP, but it would also retake its former territory of Jubaland.<sup>267</sup> On 5 and 6 December 1934, Italian and Abyssinian forces clashed at Wal Wal, and the next month Luuq and Doolow were established as military bases. By February 1935, some 3,000 troops were concentrated in Luuq. As the recruitment of local levies continued, the situation became tense in the district: ‘all strangers were very carefully watched and questioned, and many reported to have been detained in prison and made to build houses in Luuq’, claimed British intelligence sources.<sup>268</sup>

The *dubat* were to play a crucially important role in the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. By the end of 1934, numerous frontier bands (*bande armate di confine*) consisting of about 2000 *dubat* each, and nominally under the authority of the Italian district commissioners, had been recruited. As mobilisation went on, the

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<sup>266</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 3/4/1, Garissa District Intelligence Report, November 1932, p. 3;

ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA.PP., 1931-45, Somalia, b. 4, fasc. 1 bis, Notiziario Politico, October 1934, par. 439.

<sup>267</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA.PP., 1931-45, Somalia, b. 3, fasc. 3, Caroselli to Directorate General for East Africa, Ministry of the Colonies, 13 September 1934, p. 2; Notiziario Politico, July 1934, p. 17.

<sup>268</sup> KNA, PC/GRSSA 3/21/1, Mandera District Intelligence Report, February 1935, pp. 1 and 3.

*dubat* bands became part of the Italian colonial troops (*Regio Corpo Truppe Coloniali*) and were organised into four mobile groups, each composed of a varying number of sub-groups (*sotto gruppi*); these were commanded by low-ranking officers of the colonial troops. Each sub-group consisted of bands (whose number varied depending on operational tasks) led by Somali band leaders, *capi banda* in Italian. Training and discipline, though, were kept to a minimum, as each *dubat* group (about 900-1000 men) counted only five officers in total.<sup>269</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> mobile group of frontier bands (*1° Gruppo Mobile Bande Armate del Confine*) was established in December 1934, with its headquarters in Luuq.

Dooloow became the mobilisation centre for the entire Jubba region. Ex-*dubat* and voluntary recruits were regrouped there. Except a few hundred *dubat* who came from Kismaayo, Mogadishu, and God Dere (Ethiopia), most of the recruits were people who were considered by the Somalis (and by the Italian colonists as well) to be ‘of inferior race’, namely Raxanweyn, Gabaweyn (from present-day Gedo) and Garre Marre (from the Dawa River area). These people were predominantly agriculturalists, and therefore looked down upon by pastoralist Somalis and regarded as ‘un-pugnacious’ and ‘un-fit for war’ by the Italians.<sup>270</sup> Subsequent events were to prove this assumption wrong, as these ‘elements from inferior tribes’ were quickly seen to rival the ‘noble’ Somalis in bravery and pride – the commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> *Gruppo Bande*, Lt.-Col. Giuseppe Settanni, observed. By the end of October 1935, the *Gruppo* consisted of five sub-groups.<sup>271</sup>

On 3 October 1935, Italy invaded Abyssinia. From Dooloow, the frontier bands were deployed across the boundary and participated in the assault on the Ganana and Dawa rivers. In February 1936, two sub-groups of *dubat* bands were sent to Malka Murri and Malka Rie, along the border with Kenya. In March, the *dubat* bands of *Oltre Giuba* were placed under the commandment of the 1<sup>st</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Luigi Frusci, *In Somalia sul fronte meridionale* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1936), pp. 35–6; Rodolfo Graziani, *Il Fronte Sud* (Milan: Mondadori, 1938), pp. 129–130.

<sup>270</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/ASG, b. 264, fasc. 122, Settanni, ‘Relazione – 1° Gruppo bande armate mobili del confine’.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*

*Gruppo Mobile Bande Armate*, forming the sixth sub-group.<sup>272</sup> On 4 May 1936, the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie left Djibouti aboard a British vessel *en route* for Geneva via Palestine and England. The following day, Benito Mussolini declared: ‘Ethiopia is Italian’.<sup>273</sup> On 9 May, the dictator announced that Italy, at last, had her Empire. The Ethiopian Somali areas, with the exception of Jijiga, were incorporated into Italian Somalia; Ethiopia, Somalia, and Eritrea formed Italian East Africa (*Africa Orientale Italiana*).

At the end of June 1936, the *Gruppo Mobile Bande Armate* occupied the Ethiopian town of Moyale, on the frontier with Kenya, opposite British Moyale. Although Kenya was not directly involved in the war, the British improvised airfields and landing grounds and improved communication services in the Northern Frontier Province in response to the Italian action. However, the most significant effect of the Italo-Ethiopian war on the NFP was the creation of an enlarged market for livestock, with the trade between Kenya and Italian Somalia booming as the war got underway. Kenya’s exports and re-exports to Somalia, valued at £81,027 in 1934, rose to £432,695 in 1935, largely to the benefit of the European agricultural industries.<sup>274</sup> Other aspects of overland trade fared less well, as the Italian government imposed duty on goods entering Somalia in transit, and prohibited exports from the Italian colony. Traders from Mandera who boldly entered the Italian territory in February 1935 were held at Luuq for three weeks, before finally being compelled to leave their goods there, ‘unsold, and apparently unsalable’.<sup>275</sup> As imports through Kismaayo collapsed with the war, most of Wajir’s trade shifted to Lamu port. Customs revenues in Wajir consequently dropped from £2,200 in 1932, to £1,066 in 1936. However, as livestock was required for war mobilisation, 1,500 head of cattle from Wajir were sold in Italian Somaliland in December 1935.<sup>276</sup> Between 1934 and 1936, livestock exports from

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<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>273</sup> Arthur Steiner, ‘The Government of Italian East Africa’, *American Political Science Review*, 30, No.5 (1936), pp. 884–902 (p. 884).

<sup>274</sup> Smith, ‘Open Market’, p. 38.

<sup>275</sup> KNA, PC/GRSSA 3/21/1, Mandera District Intelligence Report, February 1935, p. 2.

<sup>276</sup> KNA, DC WAJ/3/1, Wajir Political Record Book, Vol. I, Extracts from Annual Report 1936, p. 50; Smith, ‘Open Market’, p. 38.



the district trebled, making some Wajir tribesmen ‘fabulously rich’: in 1936 alone, livestock exports resulted in an influx of about 2.5 million liras into the district, producing an income of £300,000.<sup>277</sup> Wajir township doubled in size, ‘a new street of superior shops’ being added to the previously sleepy trading centre.<sup>278</sup>

The wave of relative prosperity proved to be short-lived. Italy’s military advance in Abyssinia reduced the Italian troops’ dependence on livestock imported from the NFP, as captured herds were confiscated. Moreover, as Italy’s currency reserves became depleted by the costs of war, the lira sharply devaluated. In February 1936, these currency problems led the Italian Government to suspend payment of its debts to Somali livestock suppliers, most of whom were normally resident in Kenya. British subjects who had entered Italian Somaliland to sell livestock were forced to hand over their Italian currency, and to accept in its place pass books or paper receipts that could be encashed through the Royal Italian Consulate in Nairobi. (The money was deposited by the Italian authorities in the local Post Office Savings Bank).<sup>279</sup> The export of liras from Italian Somalia was forbidden, but the Italian currency was extensively smuggled across the border into Kenya. To cite an emblematic example, Lalji Magalji, an Indian merchant based in Wajir who had extensive trading interests across the NFP, often moving goods between Lamu, Nairobi, and Mega (in Ethiopia), was reported to have concentrated great quantities of the Italian currency in Wajir before sending them to Mombasa.<sup>280</sup> At the end of July 1936, all traders from Kenya who were

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<sup>277</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 1/3/1, Wajir Political Record Book, Extracts from Annual Report 1936, p. 50.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>279</sup> KNA, DC/MDA 4/6, Reece, ‘A narrative of happenings in the Province of Borana in Ethiopia from April to August, 1936’, September 1936, Appendix, p. 9, enclosed with DC Moyale, to DC Mandera, 25 September 1936; KNA, DC/WAJ 2/1/5, DC Moyale to DC Wajir, 22 September 1937; Daly & Figgis to DC Wajir, 25 February 1938.

<sup>280</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 1/5/2, Wajir District Annual Report for 1936; ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA.PP., 1931-45, Kenya, b. 1, fasc. 1, ‘Foglietti cronologici di informazioni riservate’, enclosed with Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Ministry of War, 30 October 1936.

holding cattle at Baardheere were given a five-day notice to leave Somalia and were turned away by native troops. By the end of the year, it was estimated that 'the Italian Government owed some 100,000,000 lire to the residents of Moyale and Mandera Districts alone'.<sup>281</sup> The debts owed by the Italians for livestock which had been supplied to them in 1936 subsequently became a matter of negotiation between the British and the Italian governments. Some debt claims remained outstanding in 1951.<sup>282</sup>

Besides the infamous use of bombs and poison gas, Italian methods of warfare and 'pacification' in Abyssinia involved the mobilisation of local levies among the peoples through whose territory Italian forces were passing. According to one British account of this, these local militia 'were never paid, but it was apparently understood that they should make what they could by looting.'<sup>283</sup> The occupation of Ethiopian Moyale, on the frontier with Kenya, in June 1936, offers a good example to illustrate the adverse effects of Italian military tactics. To capture Moyale, the Italians used a force of about two thousand men, including about two or three hundred armed 'tribal levies'. The Ethiopians were taken by surprise and most of them fled to the north-west. Gerald Reece, who was District Commissioner in (British) Moyale at the time, vividly described the dynamics of the attack by the Italian forces:

On entering the village, machine guns were fired through the mud walls of the houses, in case anyone remained inside, and the soldiers then occupied themselves with looting. This was done with the evident consent, and in the presence, of the officers. The worst incident of the expedition took place soon after dark, when some of the Gurreh levies proceeded to steal cattle, rape, and murder some of the tribesmen, who were living a few hundred yards from the village. Three old men were

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<sup>281</sup> Smith, 'Open Market', p. 41.

<sup>282</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 2/1/5, Ag. PC Northern Frontier Province, to DC Wajir, 19 March 1951; Baron to PC Northern Frontier Province, 22 March 1951.

<sup>283</sup> KNA, DC/MDA 4/6, Reece, 'A narrative of happenings in the Province of Borana in Ethiopia from April to August, 1936', September 1936, Appendix, p. 3, enclosed with DC Moyale to DC Mandera, 25 September 1936.

shot in cold blood, and for several minutes rifles were fired at random. This happened between the Abyssinian and the British villages of Moyale, and only a few hundred yards from the commanding officer's tent; but such was the discipline of the force that, so far as is known, no action was taken about it, either at the time or subsequently.<sup>284</sup>

As soon as Moyale was occupied, a *Residente* was appointed to the town. In the following weeks, Reece tells us, many complaints were reportedly made about crimes that had been committed by youths armed with Italian rifles, but the Italian authorities took no action. The Gharri irregulars were allowed to keep the cattle they had looted from the Boran during the military operations, along with a large number of camels they had stolen from the Gabbra. Although orders were issued that 'all rifles in the possession of the tribesmen were to be handed over to the Government within ten days', no steps were taken to enforce this directive.<sup>285</sup> At the same time, the Italians decided to arm their allies around Moyale with new Italian weapons, in order to protect them from Abyssinian attacks. *Banda* posts, commanded by untrained and undisciplined native non-commissioned officers, were established along the Anglo-Ethiopian frontier to control the local populations now under Italian rule. Moyale's British officer-in-charge, Reece, lamented that these *banda* posts were 'very seldom visited by a white officer'.<sup>286</sup> The word of the native non-commissioned officer was 'accepted in all disputes without question by the Italian officer in charge of the district', Reece asserted,

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<sup>284</sup> KNA, DC/MDA 4/6, Reece, 'A narrative of happenings in the Province of Borana in Ethiopia from April to August, 1936', September 1936, p. 9, enclosed with DC Moyale to DC Mandera, 25 September 1936.

<sup>285</sup> KNA, DC/MDA 4/6, Reece, 'A narrative of happenings in the Province of Borana in Ethiopia from April to August, 1936', September 1936, p. 10, enclosed with DC Moyale to DC Mandera, 25 September 1936.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*

which caused ‘much corruption and injustices to the tribesmen’ as well as provoking frontier disputes.<sup>287</sup>

Among the cross-border effects of the Italian occupation of Abyssinia was the influx of 6,200 Ethiopian refugees into northern Kenya between March and October 1937.<sup>288</sup> With the exception of a dozen sick individuals who were hospitalized, the refugees were accommodated at Isiolo, where a camp was established to host them. Speaking at the opening of Legislative Council on 29 October 1937, the Governor of Kenya, Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, exalted the ‘good work done in the care of the Abyssinian refugees’ as a ‘contribution to civilisation’, which stood out ‘like a ray of sunshine in a murky haze of cloud’.<sup>289</sup> At the same time, though, the Governor made it clear that the refugees would not be allowed to settle permanently in Kenya. Before the end of the year, a second camp had been established at Isiolo, this time to host 549 Eritreans refugees, who had deserted from the Italian army during the occupation of Abyssinia. The two refugee camps provided a valued outlet for slaughter livestock, and so brought some benefit to the local economy, yet they also raised security concerns for the British.<sup>290</sup> The Governor’s praise for the Colony’s ‘contribution to civilisation’ in 1937 was more widely being described as ‘Kenya’s refugee problem’ two years later, when a report in the London *Daily Telegraph* of June 1939 gave an adverse account of the camps, accusing the Ethiopian refugees of having ‘no desire for work’, indulging in a ‘life of ease’, and profiting from ‘free hospitality by Britain’.<sup>291</sup> Within the next few weeks the Isiolo camps were closed down, their

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<sup>287</sup> KNA, DC/MDA 4/6, Reece, ‘A narrative of happenings in the Province of Borana in Ethiopia from April to August, 1936’, September 1936, Appendix, pp. 5-6, enclosed with DC Moyale to DC Mandera, 25 September 1936.

<sup>288</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA.PP., 1931-45, Kenya, b. 2, fasc. 5, Italian Consul in Nairobi to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1 November 1937.

<sup>289</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA.PP., 1931-45, Kenya, b. 2, fasc. 5, ‘Refugees will not settle in Kenya’, *East African Standard*, 30 October 1937, enclosed with Italian Consul in Nairobi to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1 November 1937.

<sup>290</sup> KNA, DC/ISO 2/1, Isiolo District Handing Over Report, Turnbull to Lewis, 1 November 1938, p. 6.

<sup>291</sup> ‘Kenya’s refugee problem’, *Daily Telegraph*, 27 June 1939.

occupants transferred to a less comfortable camp site in an isolated area near Voi, where some of them were given employment in road construction.<sup>292</sup>

Amidst mounting tensions between the British and the Italian governments from 1938, the Ethiopian refugees and the Eritrean internees had in fact become political pawns in the game of rhetoric and allegations which culminated in vehement war propaganda.<sup>293</sup> In the summer of 1938, rumours circulated among the Italians that the Eritrean deserters in Isiolo were paid 16 shillings a month and were receiving military training so that they might be eventually recruited into the King's African Rifles.<sup>294</sup> Suspicions between the two colonial powers deepened in 1940 when repatriation of the refugees to Ethiopia began. The British complained to their Italian counterparts that the first of the refugees to be repatriated had not been allowed to return to their home areas but were instead being held in what they described as Italian 'concentration camps'. Receiving no satisfactory explanation for this, the British suspended the repatriations, amid Italian protests that the British authorities were merely looking for a pretext to halt the repatriations. Italian propaganda accused the British of making use of the 'rebels for the purpose of spying and fomenting revolts in the very territories of Italian East Africa'.<sup>295</sup> This was the prelude to open conflict between the British and the Italians, as the Second World War opened its front in East Africa.

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<sup>292</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI, AA.PP., 1880-1955, b.79, fasc. 228, Teruzzi to Governorate General, Italian East Africa, 21 December 1939.

<sup>293</sup> The Kenya National Archives contain numerous files concerning tensions between the British and Italian governments over the issue of refugees from the Italo-Ethiopian war. Their history, however, which Brett Shadle has recently begun to explore, falls beyond the scope of this thesis. See Brett L. Shadle, 'Reluctant Humanitarians: British Policy Toward Refugees in Kenya During the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935–1940', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 1, No. 47 (2019), pp. 167–86.

<sup>294</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/ASG, b. 41, Notiziario Politico, September 1938, pp. 9–10; b. 44, Notiziario Politico Riassuntivo, August 1938, p. 5.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*

## 2.2 The East African Campaign, 1940-41

During 1939, Britain was preparing for war in the Northern Frontier Province: internal security schemes were prepared, manpower was reviewed, ‘aliens’ were formally registered, and the collection of military intelligence intensified. Evacuation schemes were prepared for Mandera, Moyale and Wajir, should there be an Italian invasion. Meanwhile, the Italians reinforced *dubat* outposts all along the frontier. Another five hundred *dubat* were recruited at Ceel Waaq, and a new road was cut through to Baardheere; the police post in Malka Rie, near Mandera, was transformed into a *dubat* camp; around four hundred *dubat* were stationed in Luuq, and five hundred in Dooloow.<sup>296</sup> A band composed of two hundred and fifty *dubat*, mostly Xarti and a few Ogaadeen/Maqaabul and Shiikhaal, was raised in Kismaayo district and entrusted with security and intelligence tasks in the area between the Indian Ocean, the Jubba River, and the border with Kenya. Until December 1940, however, this *banda* was mainly busy with poaching and collecting elephant tusks, some of which were sent as gifts to Italian generals and colonels.<sup>297</sup>

The Italians finally declared war on Great Britain on 10 June 1940. During the following weeks, air attacks were made on Garissa and Wajir, but, according to British reports, these were largely ineffective.<sup>298</sup> The bombardment of Wajir took the heaviest toll, with five civilians killed according to British sources (thirteen, according to oral testimonies), and many more injured, including women and children.<sup>299</sup> Shops in the township were heavily damaged, and when the shopkeepers fled to the bush to escape the attack their properties were

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<sup>296</sup> KNA, DC/MDA 4/6, DC Mandera, ‘Mandera in the Italian War, 1940-1941’, 20 November 1941, p. 2.

<sup>297</sup> KNA, DC/MDA 4/6, DC Wajir, ‘History of the War – Garissa, September 1939-October 1940’, p. 1; Ugo Pini, *Sotto le ceneri dell'Impero: dalle rive del Giuba alle falde del monte Kenya* (Milano: Mursia, 1967), pp. 82–6.

<sup>298</sup> KNA, DC/MDA 4/6, DC Wajir, ‘History of the War – Garissa, September 1939-October 1940’, p. 3.

<sup>299</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 1/3/1 Wajir District Political Record Book, Coutts, ‘History of the war– Wajir, 1940-March 1941’, p. 2; Interviews with Barre Cabdi Oogle, Khaliif Cabdi Oogle, and Axmed Siyaad Cabdi Oogle, Habaswein, 26 March 2016.

looted.<sup>300</sup> Bombing and machine-gun attacks were also mounted along the Tana River, while Habaswein, Buna (both in Wajir District), Mandera, Rhamu, and Derkale were all bombed.<sup>301</sup> At the beginning of July, the British were forced to retreat from Moyale and they also abandoned Buna. The Italians used their local levies to insert ‘a large screen of irregulars into the Northern half of NFD to gain information’ and made efforts to gain control of Somali herders in the border area, ‘moving them back from the Wajir area’.<sup>302</sup>

Aware of the Italian use of local levies, the British military authorities ordered pastoralists to vacate the Wajir wells and move south-westward toward the British-controlled Uaso Nyiro River. As a result of these pressures, large numbers of Somalis in the Wajir area crossed the border into Italian Somaliland, ‘where there were fewer restrictions’ on their movements.<sup>303</sup> But these herders found that the Italian administration was intensifying military recruitment. In Luuq district, the *Alto Giuba* Provincial Commissioner Gualtiero Benardelli raised a militia mainly composed of Mareexaan and Ogaadeen Somalis, who – according to British reports – had been persuaded to support the Italian side in the hope of gaining access to water and grazing.<sup>304</sup> This *banda*, which Benardelli later commanded in the field at Ceel Waaq, came to be referred to as the ‘Commissario’s Men’ and, according to oral testimonies, contained Wajir Somalis who had migrated into Italian Somaliland.<sup>305</sup> Heavily armed by the Italians, these

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<sup>300</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 1/3/1 Wajir District Political Record Book, Coutts, ‘History of the war– Wajir, 1940-March 1941’, p., 3; extract from ‘Political records – 1941’, p. 60.

<sup>301</sup> KNA, DC/MDA 4/6, DC Mandera, ‘Mandera in the Italian War, 1940-1941’, 20 November 1941, p. 7.

<sup>302</sup> KNA, DC/MDA 4/6, DC Mandera, ‘Mandera in the Italian War, 1940-1941’, 20 November 1941, p. 6.

<sup>303</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 1/3/1 Political Record Book, Wajir District, Coutts, ‘History of the war–Wajir, 1940-March 1941’, 4; ASDMAE, ASMAI/ASG, b. 291, fasc. 83, ‘Relazione politica del mese di Luglio 1940’, p. 1.

<sup>304</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, PC/NFD 1/5/3, Wajir District Annual Record for 1940, p. 3.

<sup>305</sup> KNA, DC/MDA 4/6, DC Mandera, ‘Mandera in the Italian War, 1940-1941’, 20 November 1941, p. 2; interviews with Cabdullaahi Cali Maxamed ‘Suufi’, Wajir, 23 March 2016; Barre Cabdi Oogle, Khaliif Cabdi Oogle, and Axmed Siyaad Cabdi

*banda* forces drew British troops into guerrilla warfare along the border in the Buna and El Katulo areas during the summer of 1940.<sup>306</sup>

In September 1940, the British began to adopt similar tactics to counter the Italian *banda* forces: Capt. H. M. Grant was seconded from the Administration for the purpose of raising a company of irregulars, ‘lightly armed, and with speed and mobility in the bush’.<sup>307</sup> By November, local irregular forces had been formed by the British in Wajir and Garissa. According to Italian sources, these two militias, each about two hundred and fifty men strong, were composed of Cawlyahan and Maxamed Subeer, and Cabudwaaq respectively.<sup>308</sup> These ‘happy-go-lucky adventurers’, as a British officer described them, played an important role during the British counter-offensive from December 1940 to February 1941.<sup>309</sup>

In December 1940, the 1<sup>st</sup> South African brigade and the 24<sup>th</sup> Gold Coast brigade captured Ceel Waaq, and burned the settlement to the ground – ‘not four walls were standing in any part of El Wak or its adjoining villages’, according to a British account.<sup>310</sup> Italian forces subsequently retreated across the Jubba, leaving only a thin line of *dubat* bands on the western side of the river.<sup>311</sup> The main British attack on the Jubba valley was launched from Garissa, with the 1<sup>st</sup> South African brigade and the 11<sup>th</sup> African division moving along the route which led from Bura to Kolbio, on the Kenya-Somalia border, and from there toward Kismaayo. At the same time, the 12<sup>th</sup> African division advanced from Garissa to

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Oogle, Habaswein, 26 March 2016; Xaaji Maxamed Maxamuud, Yuusuf Ibraahim, and Isak Macallin Xuseen, Garissa, 31 May 2015.

<sup>306</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 1/3/1 Wajir District Political Record Book, Coutts, ‘History of the war– Wajir, 1940-March 1941’, p. 2.

<sup>307</sup> Great Britain, War Office, *The Abyssinian Campaigns: The Official Story of the Conquest of Italian East Africa* (London: HMSO, 1942), p. 71.

<sup>308</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/ASG, b. 291, fasc. 83, Relazione Politica, September 1940, p. 3.

<sup>309</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 1/3/1, Wajir District Political Record Book, Coutts, ‘History of the war– Wajir, 1940-March 1941’, p. 2.

<sup>310</sup> Great Britain, *Abyssinian Campaigns*, p. 73.

<sup>311</sup> Angelo Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Africa Orientale, vol. 3: La caduta dell’Impero* (Rome: Laterza, 1976), pp. 391–93; Great Britain, *Abyssinian Campaigns*, pp. 72–73.



Liboi, then to Afmadoow via Bilis Qooqaani. After the fall of Afmadoow, British and Italian forces engaged in intense fighting in Jilib, Yoontoy, and Jamaame. Once the Italians evacuated Kismaayo and British troops crossed the Jubba River, the valley lay open.<sup>312</sup> The 12<sup>th</sup> African division quickly occupied the various Italian stations along the Jubba, eventually reaching Negelli in Ethiopia. British forces had reconquered their former territory of Jubaland by 14 February 1941, and on 25 February, with the surrender of Mogadishu, they took control of all of Italian Somalia.<sup>313</sup>

### 2.3 The politics of security in British occupied Somalia, 1941-45

After the Italian defeat, former Italian Somalia was placed under British Military Administration (BMA). The disbandment of the Somali irregular forces that had fought in the East African Campaign provoked far-reaching social consequences and was certainly the most important legacy of the Second World War in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands. The irregulars the British had recruited in the Northern Frontier Province ‘were employed most usefully keeping order in occupied territory’ during the first phase of the Military Administration.<sup>314</sup> When they were eventually discharged, a few years later, they returned to their home areas in the NFP.<sup>315</sup> Those who had fought in the *banda* on the Italian side had a very different experience. Scattered and dispersed by the British defeat, only few of these fighters surrendered, whereas most of them kept their guns. Some formed into raiding parties, periodically attacking British police and military forces on the Kenyan frontier, as well as harrying local Borana herders. Livestock rustling

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<sup>312</sup> KNA, DC/MDA 4/6, DC Mandera, ‘Mandera in the Italian War, 1940-1941’, 20

November 1941, pp. 11–2; OBL, MSS. Afr. s. 1715 (7), John Desmond Bannister, ff. 44–54; Ugo Pini, *Sotto le ceneri*, pp. 81–93.

<sup>313</sup> For an account of the British troops’ advance on Mogadishu, see Sylvia E. Pankhurst, *Ex-Italian Somaliland* (London: Watts, 1951), pp. 118–32.

<sup>314</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, PC/NFD 1/5/3, Wajir District Annual Report for 1941, p. 7.

<sup>315</sup> Interviews with Cabdullaahi Cali Maxamed ‘Suufi’, Wajir, 23 March 2016; and Ibraahim Cali Xuseen ‘Sirr’, Wajir, 22 March 2016.

around Wajir, Buna and Moyale increased markedly as a consequence of these activities, while in the ex-Italian territory the British found local Somalis in possession of very considerable quantities of Italian arms and ammunition.<sup>316</sup>

In an effort to tackle these problems and pacify the borderlands, the British Military Administration formed the Somalia Gendarmerie. This new force played a key role in the British attempt to assert a form of hegemony in ex-Italian Somalia. The kind of political order which emerged from this experiment, however, was fraught with problems. Other scholars, such as Alphonso Castagno and Annalisa Urbano, have documented the close relationship between the British Military Administration, the *Gendarmerie*, and the emergence of the main Somali nationalist party, the Somali Youth League (SYL).<sup>317</sup> These studies, however, concentrate on events around the capital of Mogadishu, whereas the formation of the *Gendarmerie* in the rural areas and its *modus operandi* outside Mogadishu has been largely overlooked.

Established in March 1941, the Somalia *Gendarmerie* was intended to restore security, particularly in the outlying districts of the ex-colony. In April, this force already numbered 1,300 rank and file, led by only fifteen British officers, but by the end of 1942 the force was nearly 3,000 strong.<sup>318</sup> As ‘the Administration had neither the time nor the means to create a fully trained police such as existed in neighbouring British territories’, the Gendarmerie first relied on a hundred Tanganyika police who ‘formed the nucleus of the urban division of the

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<sup>316</sup> Interview with Ibraahim Cali Xuseen ‘Sirr’, Wajir, 22 March 2016; KNA, DC/MDA 4/6, Mandera District Political Record Book, Asst. Supdt. of Police, ‘Situation report–N. E. Frontier’, 27 November 1942; Asst. Inspector of Police, Mandera, to DC Mandera, 13 May 1943; Sheldon to Spdt. i/c Northern Frontier Police, 22 May 1943.

<sup>317</sup> Castagno, ‘Somali Republic’, p. 522; Urbano, ‘Imagining the Nation’, pp. 61–4 and 110–1.

<sup>318</sup> Gandar Dower, K.C., *The First to Be Freed: The Record of British Military Administration in Eritrea and Somalia, 1941-1943* (London: HMSO, 1944), p. 50; Pankhurst, *Ex-Italian Somaliland*, p. 157; ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA.PP., 1931-45, Somalia, b. 5, fasc. 2, ‘British ran Italy’s Empire for £3,463,488 – Surprisingly low’, *Daily Telegraph*, 31 January, 1945.

new force' alongside 'the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Irregular Companies of Somalis who had participated in the war'.<sup>319</sup> The arrival of five hundred and forty policemen – five hundred from Nyasaland and forty from Uganda – gave the Gendarmerie a further boost. Locally, the newly established force recruited whomever they could find. Gandar Dower, a British officer involved in the running of the Gendarmerie, claimed that all the local recruits needed was an *esprit de corps*, fighting efficiency, and some 'knowledge of the methods of Somali looting'.<sup>320</sup> Although the officers of the BMA boasted about the Gendarmerie, the presence of African policemen who did not know the language of the population – and whom most Somalis regarded as invaders –, lack of 'training, and scanty supervision by experienced officers created difficulties and abuses'.<sup>321</sup>

The Gendarmerie was sent out to disarm the population. By the end of 1941, some 7,000 rifles and hundreds of thousands of rounds of ammunition had been collected in the south-western region alone. In 1942, the Gendarmerie was divided into two wings: a police force charged with tackling ordinary crime and a field force tasked with 'restraining the lawlessness of the tribes'.<sup>322</sup> In the outlying districts, the officers of the gendarmerie also had political and magisterial responsibilities and dealt with a variety of issues, from collecting customs duties to barrack-building, prison administration, locust control and agricultural work.<sup>323</sup> By the end of 1943, the Gendarmerie numbered 2,530 Somali and 540 (non-Somali) African ranks, and 120 British Officers.<sup>324</sup> While the number of Somali recruits increased, local antagonisms undermined the Gendarmerie. Although the British initially sought to recruit from all Somali clans, the Daarood became increasingly predominant within the force, raising antagonism by other groups. At the same time, those who had served for the Italians in the *banda* or other native forces were excluded from the Gendarmerie and left to fend for themselves. This

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<sup>319</sup> Pankhurst, *Ex-Italian Somaliland*, p. 157; Gandar Dower, *First to Be Freed*, pp. 50 and 52.

<sup>320</sup> Gandar Dower, *First to Be Freed*, pp. 50 and 52.

<sup>321</sup> Pankhurst, *Ex-Italian Somaliland*, p. 158.

<sup>322</sup> Gandar Dower, *First to Be Freed*, p. 53.

<sup>323</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/IV, FS, b.87, fasc. 3, Santangelo, 'Relazione riservata', 1946, p. 7.

<sup>324</sup> Pankhurst, *Ex-Italian Somaliland*, p. 157.

fuelled resentment against the gendarmes, who were frequently accused of abusing their powers to settle old scores. Italian sources claim that the poorly paid gendarmes sought to extort money from their former enemies.<sup>325</sup>

Discontent with the Gendarmerie was given a louder voice when political parties began to emerge among the Somalis, encouraged by the British Military Administration. The first Somali clubs had appeared before the Second World War in Italian Somaliland, but they remained small-scale organizations.<sup>326</sup> However, ‘the social and economic experience of the expanded Italian empire’, the war, and the promise of a new political order under British Military Administration stimulated Somali political activity.<sup>327</sup> As a result, the first Somali nationalist organization, the Somali Youth Club (SYC), was founded in Mogadishu on 15 May 1943. At its origins, the SYC was an urban self-help organization, mostly limited to Mogadishu. Established against a background of uncertainties, ‘especially high food prices in urban markets dominated by non-Somali Arabs and Indian traders’, and a rapidly growing population ‘due to large numbers of demobilized soldiery’, the SYC restricted its membership to Somalis between the ages of 18 and 32.<sup>328</sup> The Club’s members largely belonged to what a British report described as the emerging Somali ‘middle class’, composed of ‘small merchants and traders, artisans, the literate elements, and a few educated religious leaders’, but it also found strong support among the young Somalis who had joined the Gendarmerie.<sup>329</sup> The SYC became increasingly politicized in the mid-1940s, especially after the so-called Bevin Plan for a ‘Greater Somalia’ was put forward.

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<sup>325</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/IV, FS, busta 87, fasc. 3, Santangelo, ‘Relazione sulla situazione generale della Somalia Italiana all’ottobre 1946’, 20 November 1946, p. 5.

<sup>326</sup> Lewis, *Modern History of the Somali*, pp. 111–14.

<sup>327</sup> Cedric Barnes, ‘The Somali Youth League, Ethiopian Somalis and the Greater Somalia Idea, c. 1946–48’, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 1, No.2 (2007), pp. 277–91 (here p. 280).

<sup>328</sup> Barnes, ‘Somali Youth League’, p. 280.

<sup>329</sup> Castagno, ‘Somali Republic’, p. 521.

## 2.4 The Cold War, Somali nationalism, and the ‘pro-Italia’ movement, 1946-50

In June 1946, British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin proposed the unification of British Somaliland, former Italian Somalia, and the Ogaden region in one UN trusteeship under British administration. However, as Sarah Vaughan as pointed out, Bevin’s plan was controversial for two reasons.<sup>330</sup> First, it contradicted the 1942 and 1944 British-Ethiopian agreements which explicitly recognized Ethiopia’s sovereignty over the Ogaden and the Reserved Areas. Second, the Four Powers Commission of Investigation, whose creation was first envisaged by the Council of Foreign Ministers of the four Allied Powers in April 1946, was expected only to consider the disposal of the former Italian colonies (Italian Somalia, Eritrea, and Libya). The other three of the Four Powers were suspicious of British imperial interests in the Horn. Furthermore, Emperor Haile Selassie ‘played on Allied guilt feelings over the League of Nations’ failure to prevent Mussolini’s invasion of Ethiopia’.<sup>331</sup> As a result, the US, the Soviet Union, and France opposed Bevin’s plan in the UN. Nevertheless, British administrators in the region continued to endorse the Greater Somalia idea, which galvanized the Somali Youth Club (SYC), ‘driving its popularity, politicization, and expansion’.<sup>332</sup> SYC membership grew from about 1,000, primarily in Mogadishu, to more than 25,000 across the region.<sup>333</sup>

As the Club expanded in membership, ‘its initial social welfare role developed into a more ambitious programme for the unification and progress of

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<sup>330</sup> Sarah Vaughan, ‘Ethiopia, Somalia, and the Ogaden: Still a Running Sore at the Heart of the Horn of Africa’, in *Secessionism in African Politics: Aspiration, Grievance, Performance, Disenchantment*, ed. by Lotje de Vries, Pierre Englebert and Mareike Schomerus (Cham, Switzerland: Palsgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 91–123 (here p. 100).

<sup>331</sup> CIA-RDP97S00289R000100190006-3, Director of Central Intelligence, ‘The Ogaden Situation - Interagency Intelligence Memorandum’, 7 April 1980, p. 5  
[https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-  
rdp97s00289r000100190006-3](https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp97s00289r000100190006-3)

<sup>332</sup> Vaughan, ‘Ethiopia, Somalia, and the Ogaden’, p. 100.

<sup>333</sup> Barnes, ‘Somali Youth League’, p. 280; Vaughan, p. 101.

the Somali people'.<sup>334</sup> Besides promoting education and social improvement programmes, the SYC was determined to break down clan barriers among the Somalis. Although this represented a point of friction with the British, who exploited clan politics to rule the Somali-speaking territories, the BMA regarded the SYC as a useful auxiliary and, therefore, supported it. The relationship between the British and the Club became even closer after the latter was renamed as the Somali Youth League (SYL) in 1947. The SYL took a stand on four principal issues.<sup>335</sup> First, they advocated the union of the ex-Italian colony with the other Somali territories – British Somaliland, the NFD of Kenya, French Somaliland and Ethiopian Somaliland – to form one political administrative, social and economic unit. This they considered 'absolutely essential for the true welfare of all the inhabitants' of these territories.<sup>336</sup> In order to achieve this aim, the SYL rejected 'old-fashioned habits', such as tribal distinctions, clannism, and Sufi orders. Second, the SYL gave paramountcy to Somali interests, and pledged to reject any settlement that was prejudicial to those interests. Third, they demanded the modern education of Somali youth through schools and weekly informational sessions. Fourth, they promoted the teaching of the Somali language based on the Osmaniya script.<sup>337</sup>

The British Military Administration nurtured and encouraged the SYL not because they necessarily approved its programme, but because they deemed it useful to have an emerging Somali nationalist party with a progressive and modern outlook. Within the capital city of Mogadishu, where it was estimated that about seventy-five percent of the gendarmes were also members of the SYL, the Gendarmerie and the League were seen to be linked.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> Barnes, 'Somali Youth League', p. 280.

<sup>335</sup> Urbano, 'Imagining the Nation', p. 62.

<sup>336</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA.PP., uff. III, I vers., b. 1, fasc. 2, 'Somali Youth League Programme of the future of Somaliland', enclosed with Castellari to Ministry of Italian Africa, 26 August 1949.

<sup>337</sup> Ghazi Abuhakema and Tim Carmichael, 'The Somali Youth League Constitution: A Handwritten Arabic Copy (c. 1947?) from the Ethiopian Security Forces Archives in Harär', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 4, No.3 (2010), pp. 450–66 (p. 454).

<sup>338</sup> Urbano, 'Imagining the Nation', p. 61.

The debate within the General Assembly of the United Nations concerning the future disposition of the former Italian colonies led to renewed Italian interference in Somalia and to the formation of other (smaller) Somali political parties, usually classified as clannist or ‘tribalist’. These parties emerged largely in reaction to the rise of the SYL, which they saw as ‘pro-British’ and dominated by Samaale groups, especially Daarood. Anti-SYL and coincidentally anti-British, the so-called ‘tribalist’ parties were supported, politically and financially, by Rome.<sup>339</sup> As East-West tensions deepened during 1947, political calculations and financial considerations as well induced the British Government to consider giving an ‘encouragement to Italy’, for this had ‘to be retained on the right side of the iron curtain’, as the Head of the East Africa Department of the British Colonial Office Andrew Cohen put it.<sup>340</sup> Giving Italy international responsibility for its former colony was envisaged by Britain and the USA as a means to securely tie it to Western interests. In November 1947, the Four Powers Commission of Investigation for the former Italian Colonies, consisting of representatives of Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union, was eventually established in accordance with Annex XI to the Treaty of Peace with Italy. It was announced that the Commission would visit Somalia from 6 January to 3 March 1948 to ascertain the views of the local population regarding the political future of the ex-colony.<sup>341</sup> In preparation for the arrival of the Commission, new political organisations were formed, and existing parties intensified their activities. Some of the so-called ‘tribalist’ parties regrouped into a ‘pro-Italian’ coalition, the Somalia Conference (*Conferenza della Somalia*). The Ministry of Italian Africa paid ex-Fascist officials such as Vincenzo Calzia, who

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<sup>339</sup> Urbano, “‘That Is Why’”.

<sup>340</sup> Quoted by W. R. Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, the United States, and Postwar Imperialism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 285. Gianluigi Rossi, ‘Guerra Fredda e questione delle ex colonie italiane nel 1947’, *Africa: Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell’Istituto Italo-Africano*, 33, No.4 (1978), pp. 509–23 (here p. 513).

<sup>341</sup> For a discussion of the Four Power Commission’s findings see the article by the British member of the Commission: E.F. Stafford, ‘The Ex-Italian Colonies’, *International Affairs*, 25, No.1 (1949), pp. 47–55.

had been appointed Chief Secretary of Mogadishu's Municipal Administration in 1946, to gather information and channel funds to 'loyal' Somalis to encourage them to support the return of the Italians.<sup>342</sup>

Some eleven Somali political parties presented the Commission with their views about the future of the former Italian colony, 'along with Italian organizations and two minority communities'.<sup>343</sup> The Four Powers Commission gave local representatives only two choices: international trusteeship under either Britain or Italy. The demands of the Somali Youth League, though, went much further than this. The SYL asked the General Assembly of the United Nations to proclaim the immediate independence of Somalia. If, instead, it was considered best to place the former colony under the International Trusteeship system, the SYL would not raise objection on such decision 'provided that the restoration of Italian administration in any form or guise and even as Trustee under the supervision of the United Nations be completely excluded'.<sup>344</sup> In such case, the SYL preference was a direct United Nations Administration for a 'short period', leading the Somalis to complete independence. The League, however, left the door open for a 'short period' of collective administration or, alternatively, a single administration under UN supervision, provided that Italy be excluded. The SYL made it clear that they preferred 'complete extermination than return again under Italian domination'.<sup>345</sup> This notwithstanding, on 21 November 1949 the UN General Assembly voted for the establishment of the Italian Trusteeship Administration of Somalia, *Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana della Somalia* (AFIS). Even the Arab states, which had shown strong support for the emerging

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<sup>342</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/IV, FS, b. 87, fasc. 10, Santangelo to Ministry of Italian Africa, 'Consigliere di Governo Dr. Calzia Vincenzo. Rapporto informativo', 2 October 1948.

<sup>343</sup> Touval, *Somali Nationalism*, p. 81.

<sup>344</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA.PP., uff. III, I vers., b. 1, fasc. 2, 'Somali Youth League Programme of the future of Somaliland', enclosed with Castellari to Ministry of Italian Africa, 26 August 1949.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*



Somali nationalist movement, voted for Italy's return to Somalia in exchange for Libya's independence.<sup>346</sup>

## **2.5 Farming schemes, Italian interests, and political allegiances in the Jubba Valley, 1942-50**

Despite its efforts to modernize Somali political life, notably through the abolition of the colour bar in the civil service, the British Military Administration proved to be a rather inadequate agent of liberal reform. When Somalia was returned to Italian administration in April 1950, old conflicts concerning land issues, territorial ownership, and social status quickly revived. The lower Jubba Valley offers a good vantage point to explore how British policies and Italian interests influenced these conflicts during the 1940s.

The primary aim of the British Military Administration was to render Somalia as self-sufficient as possible in order to limit the financial burden on the British coffers in a time of war. Pressured by the severe shortage of grains which affected the whole East Africa in the early 1940s, the BMA directed a programme of staple crop production in which the lower Jubba Valley played a central role. As discussed in Chapter 1, the Italians had developed plantation agriculture in the Jubba Valley relying on a forced-labour scheme, locally known as *colonya*. The British officers who occupied Lower Jubba were horrified by the workings of this scheme, which they regarded as 'indistinguishable from slavery'.<sup>347</sup> However, the Gosha agricultural labourers who welcomed the British as liberators would soon discover that the reform of their circumstances would prove a difficult and protracted process. The BMA's determination to render Somalia self-sufficient in

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<sup>346</sup> A. A. Hersi, 'The Arab Factor in Somali History: The Origins and Development of Arab Enterprise and Cultural Influences in the Somali Peninsula' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, 1977), pp. 288–9.

<sup>347</sup> F. J. Rennel of Rodd, *British Military Administration of Occupied Territories in Africa during the Years 1941-1947* (London, 1948), p. 162; Gandar Dower, *First to Be Freed*, p. 60.

grain meant that a productive agricultural system had to be maintained in operation, and to do this they found themselves dependent upon the existing Italian concessionaires who relied on drawing compulsory labour from local communities to sustain grain output.<sup>348</sup>

Following the British offensive in early 1941, most of the Italian concessionaires had retreated back to Mogadishu, leaving the plantations to be looted. The crops were raided by the Gosha labourers, who then returned to their own villages along the Jubba River. By 1942, the only plantations still functioning under Italian management were at Afgooye and Jowhaar, in the Shabelle valley. Both these plantations were producing sugar cane, fruits and vegetables for Mogadishu's market. The British therefore directed their developmental efforts towards the Lower Jubba, and during 1942 and 1943 they channelled financial and administrative support to a series of agricultural schemes along the river valley which came to be known as the Juba Farmers Schemes.<sup>349</sup>

However, in order to manage the reorientation of the former banana plantations towards grain production, the British needed the Italian concessionaires who had fled during the war to return to their farms. The most experienced of the Italian farmers, administrators, and mechanics among the lower Jubba concessionaires had been interned as prisoners of war in Kenya. After some debate, the release of a small number of 'essential' workers for the Juba Scheme was agreed. Between the end of 1942 and May 1943, around a dozen Italian prisoners were released, to be returned to the Juba plantations and used on the British agricultural scheme. All those released were considered to be Fascists, and they included Lieutenant Celestino Gandolfi, Captain Moscatelli,

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<sup>348</sup> TNA, WO 230/87, Adshead to Under Secretary of State, War Office, 25 June 1945; ASDMAE, ASMAI/IV, FS, b. 87, fasc. 3, 'Relazione sulla situazione generale della Somalia Italiana all'ottobre 1946', pp. 35, and 42–3.

<sup>349</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/IV, FS, b. 88, fasc. 14, Luchini, 'Rapporto tecnico-economico sulla odierna situazione della agricoltura in Somalia', 30 September 1946, p. 2. For a detailed discussion of these schemes, see Menkhaus, 'Rural Transformation', pp. 278–89.

and the former *capo colonya* Alfredo Calligaris, all of whom had been interned on account of their ‘undesirable activities’.<sup>350</sup>

Some 30 former Italian plantations had been incorporated into the British scheme on the Jubba by 1943, receiving financial assistance in the form of advances for a total amount of £11,000 for the period May 1942-August 1943.<sup>351</sup> During the month of May 1943 alone, approximately 1,800 labourers were employed on these farms in the lower Jubba, including 150 children.<sup>352</sup> The BMA continued to provide loans to the concessionaires until the end of 1946, and bought the grains produced at the artificially high prices set by the wartime economy in East Africa.<sup>353</sup> Like British settlers in Kenya, the Italian concessionaires in the Lower Jubba region were therefore able to benefit from wartime conditions to improve their own economic position.<sup>354</sup> Owner of a big farm in Kismaayo, Lt. Col. Alberto Mazzi was among the beneficiaries of the BMA’s agricultural schemes. A former member of Marshal Rodolfo Graziani’s staff, Mazzi spent time as a Prisoner-of-War in Kenya before returning to the Jubba Valley in December 1944. Within a few years, he had become ‘popular with the British’, although it was known that he ‘distributed money in Jubaland for Italian propaganda’.<sup>355</sup> In 1946, Mazzi became the chairman of the Jubba

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<sup>350</sup> TNA, WO 230/87, Spencer, ‘Memo’, no date; Wickham to Political Branch, East Africa Command, 1 December 1942; E.L.S. Telegram, Nairobi to Mogadishu, 6 February 1943.

<sup>351</sup> TNA, WO 230/87, ‘Juba farms “Gu” Season Programme 1943’, enclosed with McKinstrey, ‘Memorandum on Juba farmers schemes’, 8 January 1943; Spencer to Ainslie, 24 January 1943; Spencer to Political Branch, East Africa Command, 5 February 1943.

<sup>352</sup> TNA, WO 230/87, ‘Extract from the monthly report for May 1943 for the South Eastern Province’, enclosed with Wickham to Civil Affairs Branch, East Africa Command, 22 June 1943.

<sup>353</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAI/IV, FS, b. 87, fasc. 1, ‘Quesiti vari / Relazione’, n.d.; Menkhaus, ‘Rural Transformation’, p. 284.

<sup>354</sup> Ian Spencer, ‘Settler Dominance, Agricultural Production and the Second World War in Kenya’, *Journal of African History*, 21, No.4 (1980), pp. 497–514 (p.498).

<sup>355</sup> TNA, FO 371/131458, ‘Personalities in Somalia’, enclosed with Mason to Bevin, 7 December 1948.

farmers association, *Società Agricoltori Giuba* (SAG). In the 1950s, he further expanded his economic interests under the Italian Trusteeship Administration, establishing the Jubba wood factory and revamping a banana processing plant in Marka.<sup>356</sup> Alberto Mazzi was also among the ex-Fascists who were paid by the Ministry of Italian Africa to support ‘pro-Italian’ political parties in Somalia.

In the post-war years, the Italian government advanced their own political and economic goals in Somalia through direct interference in local politics. One example was the Xisbiya Digil iyo Mirifle (HDM), the most important anti-SYL and (initially) pro-Italian party in the Jubba valley. Despite the Xisbiya’s open reference to the Digil and Mirifle (Saab) clan family, this party also included Arabs, Bantu groups, Barawaan and Baajuun from the coast, individuals of mixed descent, and a few Italian patrons.<sup>357</sup> This uneven alliance represented a reaction to the mobilisation by the Somali Youth League of Somali ethnicity, generally identified with the pastoralist Samaale, as Kenneth Menkhaus has rightly observed.<sup>358</sup> The Digil and Mirifle, who dominated the Xisbiya, claimed that the Samaale, who had always regarded the Saab as inferiors because of their involvement in agricultural labour, would ‘invade’ and occupy the land of the Saab.<sup>359</sup> The Gosha initially supported the Xisbiya, although they had long-standing grievances against all the main groups who were behind this party: first, the Digil and Mirifle, who had harassed the Gosha with raids and kidnappings to provide the Italian concessionaires with free labour for their plantations; second, the Arab merchants, who had thrown the Gosha into chronic debt; and, finally, the Italians, who had forced the Gosha into what was tantamount to slavery. Although the British East Africa Command reported that the SYL had only five hundred members in Kismaayo in 1947, support for the nationalist party in Lower

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<sup>356</sup> ‘Relazione sulle attività svolte nel 1958 dalla Camera di Commercio’, *Corriere della Somalia*, 16 March 1959, p. 3.

<sup>357</sup> TNA, FO 1015/51, ‘Memorandum on native clubs in Somalia’, 24 January 1947.

<sup>358</sup> Menkhaus, ‘Rural Transformation’, pp. 297–300. For an analysis of the so-called ‘pro-Italia’ movement see: Urbano, ‘That is Why’.

<sup>359</sup> Mohamed H. Mukhtar, ‘The Emergence and Role of Political Parties in the Inter-River Region of Somalia from 1947-1960’, *Ufahamu: Journal of African Studies*, 17, No.2 (1989), pp. 75–95 (p. 78); Castagno, ‘Somali Republic’, p. 524.

Jubba steadily grew in the following years, as unresolved socio-economic issues and the lived experience of violence played an increasingly important role in defining political alignment, as we will see in the next chapter.<sup>360</sup>

While the Somali Youth League aimed to remove the significance of clan affiliations in politics, the ‘pro-Italian’ parties claimed to represent the interests of the clans, as expressed by their chiefs, sheiks, and notables. The seven parties, including the Xisbiya, that regrouped into the Somalia Conference (*Conferenza*) claimed to represent ‘almost two thirds of the whole Somali population’ and identified themselves with ‘the principal tribes’ of the Hawiye and Digil.<sup>361</sup> Attached to this group, was the Majeerteen Progressive League (*Lega Progressista Migiurtina*). This included ‘a large part’ of the Daarood/Majeerteen, who represented ‘the remaining third of the entire population’ – or so the *Conferenza* claimed.<sup>362</sup> The Majeerteen Progressive League managed to secure a political constituency in Kismaayo.

In May 1949, Islaan Mahad Alle Maxamed (Islao Mahadalle in Italian sources), President of the *Conferenza*, and Yasiin Cali Sharmarke, leader of the Majeerteen Progressive League, were flown by the Italians to New York to deliver an anti-SYL and ‘pro-Italia’ speech at the UN. Yasiin Cali Sharmarke (Majeerteen/Cismaan Maxamuud), a former employee of the government’s motor pool in Mogadishu, claimed to represent several Daarood clans, not only Majeerteen, from the Lower and Upper Jubba regions, namely: the Cawlyahan of Baardheere, the Maxamed Subeer of Afmadoow, the Xarti of Kismaayo, the Ogaadeen of Jamaame, and the Mareexaan of Luuq.<sup>363</sup> In September 1949, ‘pro-Italian’ political parties, chiefs, sheiks, and notables sent a series of telegrams to the UN, asking for a prompt decision concerning the future of ex-Italian Somalia

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<sup>360</sup> TNA, FO 1015/51, East Africa Command, ‘Monthly Intelligence Report’, July 1947.

<sup>361</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA.PP., uff. III, I vers., b. 1, fasc. 2, Somalia Conference to King of NEGD, 20 August 1949.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>363</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, AA.PP., uff. III, I vers., b. 1, fasc. 2, ‘I delegati Somali all’ONU – loro discorsi’, 25 May 1949 and enclosure ‘Credenziali consegnate a Iassin Ali Scermarke’; handwritten notes enclosed with Moreno to Colonial Museum, 17 June 1949.

and requesting the establishment of an Italian Trusteeship Administration. Among the petitioners were chiefs, elders, and sheikhs from Luuq, Baardheere, *Basso Giuba*, and Kismaayo.<sup>364</sup> They claimed to represent the dominant groups in each area and, therefore, to express the will of the majority. The petitioners from Kismaayo, for instance, included four Xarti chiefs, two Ogaadeen, and one Shiikhaal.

The pro-Italian parties based their discourse on the notion that each area belonged to certain dominant clans, who ‘owned’ the territory over which their chiefs exercised their authority. This notion reflected the colonial practice of entrusting traditional clan chiefs with control over ‘their’ land and people within the territory assigned to their clan. During the international negotiations concerning the future of ex-Italian Somalia, the Italians relied on traditional authorities, including clan chiefs, ‘notables’ (*notabili*), and sheikhs, to advance their own interests, while these authorities used Italian support to assert their own status and strengthen the position of their clan vis-à-vis other groups. This provoked conflicts that later had profound effects on the politics of state formation in the Jubba valley, as we will discuss in the next chapter. Although the British and the Italians appeared to have conflicting visions of governance and political order in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands, the British policy of post-war development in the Northern Frontier Province also aimed to link ‘tribal’ identity to territory, provoking adverse political consequences. Wajir District is a case in point.

## **2.6 Post-war development and Somali politics in north-eastern Kenya: the case of Wajir District**

In the Kenya Colony, the end of the Second World War ushered in what David

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<sup>364</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 1, fasc. 2, Representative of the Italian Government in Somalia to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 27 September 1949, and enclosed telegrams.

Low and John Lonsdale have termed ‘the second colonial occupation’.<sup>365</sup> As new visions of governance now emphasised ‘the close interrelationship between economic and political development’, government activity greatly increased not only in Kenya but throughout British Africa in the late 1940s.<sup>366</sup> In the Northern Frontier Province, the British administrators put forward a new ecological model, which was intended to ‘rationalise’ the behaviour of pastoralists. Overstocking and overgrazing were identified as the two main threats to an economically viable situation for the NFP. To tackle these issues, the Government set up a Grazing Control Scheme in 1945 and a pilot control scheme three years later. This was part of the Dixey Scheme, a major colonial development programme for water and grazing improvement which was implemented in the Northern Frontier Province between 1948 and 1958 as part of the African Land Development Programme (ALDEV).<sup>367</sup>

Land degradation and the breakdown of tribal authority, due to the ‘disturbed conditions’ which had prevailed on the frontier for many years, were connected in the eyes of many British administrators.<sup>368</sup> The Dixey Scheme aimed to tackle this and to improve the pastoral sector in the NFP by demarcating ‘inter-tribal boundaries’ to allow for the formation of tribal grazing reserves. This new policy had a profound impact on the Somalis, particularly in Wajir District. Here, government plans for grazing control had three main components: first, the division of the District into three ‘tribal areas’ – one for each of the principal clans in the area, Ajuuraan, Digoodiya, and Ogaadeen – among which trespassing would not be allowed; second, the creation of an exclusion area around the Wajir wells, access to which could be controlled by regulation; and third, the

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<sup>365</sup> David A. Low and John M. Lonsdale, ‘Introduction: Towards the New Order 1945-1963’, in *History of East Africa. Vol. III*, ed. by D.A. Low and Alison Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976) pp. 1–63, (p. 12).

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>367</sup> Government of Kenya, *African Land Development in Kenya, 1946-1955* (Nairobi: Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Water Resources, 1956); Whittaker, ‘Frontier Security’, pp. 388, 400.

<sup>368</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 5/5/1, Edwards, ‘Report on the grazing areas of the Northern Frontier District of Kenya’, 20 November 1943.

improvement of water supplies in dry-weather grazing zones by the provision of bore-holes. Pastoralists of the Ajuuraan, Digoodiya, and Ogaadeen clans were thereby compelled to stay within their newly-demarcated tribal areas, and to use only the wells assigned to them by the British authorities. A new police force, the Grazing Guards, was created to encourage Somali 'cooperation' and monitor compliance with the regulations under the Dixey Scheme.

The introduction of the inter-tribal grazing boundaries elicited different responses among those Somalis affected, reflecting their self-interest. The Digoodiya, who the British colonial authorities acknowledged 'were the losers when these boundaries were promulgated', vehemently opposed the Grazing Control Scheme.<sup>369</sup> The introduction of the tribal grazing boundaries undoubtedly resulted in a 'diminution of the country over which the Degodia had previously roamed', while the area the clan was assigned lacked the salt bush which they needed to feed their camels.<sup>370</sup>

Most of the Ogaadeen, on the other hand, made significant gains through the Dixey reforms. The removal of the Digoodiya *sheegad*, whom they had 'hosted' for many years past, gave the Ogaadeen herders a larger area of grazing. These changes, however, brought conflicts to the fore. This became evident at the end of 1945, when the Reer Maxamuud/Dakatch, who were former *sheegad* to the Ogaadeen/Maxamed Subeer (although they were genealogically connected to the Digoodiya clan), were ordered to vacate the Ogaadeen area because of their genealogical connection with the Digoodiya. The Reer Maxamuud/Dakatch contested this expulsion, and from 1946 they resorted to legal action against the Government, sending various appeals to the Governor of Kenya, the Colony's Supreme Court, and the Secretary of State for the Colonies.<sup>371</sup> Although British sources acknowledge that the Reer Maxamuud/Dakatch had been registered as a

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<sup>369</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, PC/NFD 1/5/3, Wajir District Annual Report for 1946, p. 5.

<sup>370</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 2/5/2, Wajir District Handing Over Report 1945, Cornell to Derrick, p. 2; and 1947, Derrick to Hardy, p. 6.

<sup>371</sup> KNA, PC/GRSSA 4/2, PC Northern Frontier Province, to DC Wajir, 28 April 1949.



section of the Maxamed Subeer since the early 1920s, these appeals were formally rejected.<sup>372</sup>

Oral testimonies on the dispute between the Reer Maxamuud/Dakatch and the Government suggest that the conflict was heightened by a power struggle amongst the headman of the Reer Maxamuud/Dakatch, Cabdi Guleed, the chief of the Maxamed Subeer, Cabdi Oogle, and the chief of the Digoodiya, Axmed Liban.<sup>373</sup> Cabdi Guleed had only been accepted as headman for the Reer Maxamuud/Dakatch in the early 1940s, this section having previously been administered as part of the Maxamed Subeer/Ugaas Guleed. Cabdi Guleed's appointment came as a result of Cabdi Oogle's designation as chief of the Maxamed Subeer, the two clan leaders challenging each other's authority.<sup>374</sup> Cabdi Oogle had been recruited into the King's African Rifles in 1939 and worked in British intelligence during the war. He was considered a loyal subject and, in many ways, an obvious choice as chief of the Ogaadeen/Maxamed Subeer when the post became vacant in 1942.<sup>375</sup> However, two rivals had come forward for the post, Gasar Cunshur (also Maxamed Subeer/Ugaas Guleed) and Cabdi Guleed. Cabdi Oogle's appointment was viewed with resentment by these men, who saw his elevation as being thanks to 'his long association with the Europeans'.<sup>376</sup> Cabdi Guleed, however, refused to accept defeat and began campaigning for the Reer Maxamuud/Dakatch to have their own headman – a position he wished for himself. These simmering conflicts were further fuelled by the implementation of the grazing control scheme, which gave opportunities for political rivalries to be played out.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 2/1, Wajir District Handing Over Report, 1921, Sharpe to Bailey, p. 7; DC/WAJ 4/3, Wajir District Intelligence Report for January 1946, p. 1.

<sup>373</sup> Interviews with Bishaar Ibraahim Ismaaciil, Cabdullaahi Xaaji Cabdi Ibraahim and Axmed Gele, Wajir, 24 April 2014.

<sup>374</sup> Interviews with Bishaar Ibraahim Ismaaciil, Habaswein, 26 March 2016; Cabdullaahi Guleed and Mukhtaar Khaliif, Wajir, 25 March 2016.

<sup>375</sup> Interview with Cabdullaahi Xaaji Cabdi Ibraahim Aadan, Wajir, 29 March 2016.

<sup>376</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 2/5/3, Wajir District Handing Over Report, 1955, Elliott to Cashmore, p. 13.

<sup>377</sup> Interview with Cabdullaahi Xaaji Cabdi Ibraahim Aadan, Wajir, 24 April 2014.

Then, in 1946, Cabdi Guleed was dismissed for disobedience of Government orders, being accused of encouraging the Reer Maxamuud/Dakatch to trespass into the Ogaadeen area.<sup>378</sup> This marked the beginning of a bitter and long-lasting confrontation between the Reer Maxamuud/Dakatch and the Government which continued into the 1950s. The presence of the Reer Maxamuud *sheegad* in the Ogaadeen area, which had ensured social assimilation and peaceful coexistence for decades, was now considered to represent ‘a menace to internal security’.<sup>379</sup> The Government did not succeed in preventing trespass, but the continuation of the dispute divided the sub-sections of the Reer Maxamuud, increasing tensions between government-appointed and unofficially-recognised chiefs.<sup>380</sup>

The dispute over the introduction of the tribal grazing areas marked a political turning point in Wajir District, as the attempt to negotiate the identity of the Reer Maxamuud/Dakatch through judicial means intermingled with transformations of chiefship and the emergence of the Somali Youth League. According to the manifesto adopted by the League in 1947, the unification of all the Somalis should entail ‘free movement, grazing and watering between all the tribal, district and international boundaries’.<sup>381</sup> As a result, a large proportion of the Reer Maxamuud in Wajir joined the SYL in response to the implementation of the Dixey Scheme.<sup>382</sup>

British influence over the chiefs, however, generally hampered the growth of the League’s membership. Although, as we have seen, the British initially encouraged the development of the Somali Youth League in Somalia, as the party gained strength within Kenya’s borders British officials in the NFP vigorously

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<sup>378</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 2/5/2, Wajir District Handing Over Report, 1947, Derrick to Hardy, p. 11.

<sup>379</sup> KNA, DC/ISO 2/3/23, Turnbull to DCs Wajir and Isiolo, 25 April 1949.

<sup>380</sup> KNA, PC/GRSSA 2/13/7, DC Wajir, ‘Note on the Reer Mohamud, 1949’; Turnbull, ‘Notes on present position with regard to Reer Mohamud’, 25 February 1952; interviews with Cabdullaahi Guleed and Mukhtaar Khaliif, Wajir, 25 March 2016.

<sup>381</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 3/6, Hector to Hughes, ‘Somali Youth Club’, 19 April 1948.

<sup>382</sup> KNA, PC/NFD 2/5/3, Wajir District Handing Over Report 1949, Hector to Hughes, p. 7.

opposed it. To these colonial officials on the Kenyan side of the border, the SYL was undermining the authority of colonial chiefs at a time when government was seeking to impose increasingly ambitious and interventionist development projects.<sup>383</sup> As a consequence, many chiefs, headmen and clan elders in the NFP turned against the SYL, fearing that the policies of the party would undermine their authority and status. In August 1947, the main chiefs of the Ajuuraan tried to ban their people from joining the SYL.<sup>384</sup> The Ogaadeen chief Cabdi Oogle followed suit in April 1948, declaring:

I do not want the Somali Youth League in my country. It does not bring any benefit to my people. On the contrary, since the Youth League commenced its activities in 1946, my work as Government headman has been hindered, and my authority has been undermined. Several of the young men of my section have joined the Somali Youth League and no longer accord proper respect to the authority of the lawful government. They do not pay tax as they should, because their money is paid to the League, and they regard the League as the only authority which they will obey.<sup>385</sup>

The League subsequently accused several clan chiefs, including Cabdi Oogle, Cunshur Maxamed (both Ogaadeen/Maxamed Subeer), Xuseen Ido (Ajuuraan), and Maxamed Liban (Digoodiya) of being 'government stooges', who worked against the best interests of their people. The growing friction between the chiefs and the SYL led the British to proscribe the party in July 1948, its Wajir headquarters being closed down.<sup>386</sup>

The introduction of the grazing control schemes sought to fix the boundaries of the 'tribal areas' over which the chiefs held sway, strengthening the linkage between political authority and control over land. Chiefs became

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<sup>383</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 3/6, Hector to Hughes, 'Somali Youth Club', 19 April 1948.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>385</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 3/6, Abdi Ogle, 'Sworn statement made to the District Officer, Wajir', 8 April 1948.

<sup>386</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 1/3/1, Wajir District Political Record Book, Extract from Wajir District Annual Report for 1948.

instrumental in identifying ‘intruders’ (trespassers) in these tribal areas, but also in policing the colonial boundary with Somalia. Border controls became stronger, and Somali youths were now prevented from crossing Kenya’s Somali border, for fear that they would join the SYL and engage in anti-British activities. Under Kenyan law, those who wished to leave Wajir District needed a government pass, issued only by the District Commissioner, and this was now enforced with increasing rigour. A convincing reason for leaving the District had to be provided if a pass was to be issued, and, in practice, only those who had family or other strong connections were now allowed to legally cross into Somalia.<sup>387</sup> In an effort to verify the claims made by those applying for a pass, the British sought guidance from the local chiefs, but this opened the door to clientelistic practices and abuse of authority by government-paid chiefs.

Following the closure of the SYL branches in the NFD, the chiefs reasserted their power. They interceded with government officials to obtain jobs and permits for their people, and to release detainees from prison. Somali nomads needed their chiefs’ ‘blessing’ in order to be allowed to enter the townships and to interact with the colonial administration. The nomads were forbidden from encamping in the townships and confined beyond a three-mile radius around inhabited centres.<sup>388</sup> They were not allowed to construct buildings nor to acquire commercial licenses; unmarried or divorced women were forbidden from staying in the townships.<sup>389</sup> The following anecdote, related by Somali informants in Wajir, effectively illustrates the nomads’ frustration at being segregated and marginalised and the chiefs’ complex role in negotiating the relationship between their own people and the colonial administration. In the late 1940s, the Provincial Commissioner, on a visit to Wajir District, called on the chiefs and asked them to voice their needs. A Digoodiya chief stated that he wanted forty men of his clan to be imprisoned. When asked by the other chiefs why he had made such a request, the Digoodiya chief replied: ‘We don’t speak English nor Swahili. We are

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<sup>387</sup> Interviews with Xaaji Maxamed Maxamuud, Yuusuf Ibraahim, and Isak MacallinXuseen, Garissa, 31 May 2015.

<sup>388</sup> Interviews with Cabdi Sabdoow Nuur, Wajir, 23 March 2016, and Isak Macallin Xuseen, Garissa, 31 May 2015.

<sup>389</sup> Interview with Khaltuuma Xasan Aadan, Wajir, 25 March 2016.

nomads. If these men go to prison, they will be able to speak English and Swahili by the time they are released, and, in the future, they may be able to help us in town'.<sup>390</sup> The chiefs often found themselves in a tricky, ambivalent position. They were expected to collect tax and to bring people for recruitment into the colonial troops and the tribal police. Consequently, tax collectors and tribal policemen were usually selected from among the chiefs' relatives. Various informants portrayed the chiefs and their acolytes as 'legalised gangs', several chiefs going as far as to humiliate and beat their own people if these attempted to resist government orders.<sup>391</sup> Cooperation with the colonial Government, therefore, gave 'tribal' chiefs greater power, but it was also likely to undermine their popularity and legitimacy amongst the local population. Nowhere was this tension more apparent than in the requirement for chiefs to regulate and restrict mobility.

Post-war development policies in the NFP were supposed to remedy the break-down of tribal authority, eliminating the 'state of flux' which had prevailed on the frontier for many years. These policies, however, fuelled simmering struggles over pastureland and political supremacy, further eroding the social basis of traditional authority. Moreover, clan identities hardened as a result of the enforcement of grazing boundaries, creating new fractures in the social and political fabric of the NFP. These fractures helped the Kenya administration prevent the development of the Somali Youth League but did not give the colonial Government greater authority or legitimacy in the longer run.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The Italian invasion of Ethiopia and the East African Campaign marked a watershed in the history of the Somalia-Kenya borderlands. Ethiopia's defeat, the creation of Italian East Africa, the collapse of the Italian Empire, and the temporary unification of the Somali-lands (except Djibouti) under British

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<sup>390</sup> Interviews with Xaaji Maxamed Maxamuud, Yuusuf Ibraahim, and Isak Macallin Xuseen, Garissa, 31 May 2015.

<sup>391</sup> Interview with Dubat Cali Camey and Axmed Maxamed Cabdiraxmaan, Garissa, 2 June 2015.

administration reconfigured the borderlands's social and political geography, and stimulated the emergence of new political imaginaries. As this chapter has shown, the Second World War represented a critical juncture which produced local dis-junctures as a result of the intersection of global transformations and local histories.

For some borderlanders, war was a positive experience: cross-border livestock trade temporarily boomed as an unintended consequence of the war economy, and military service provided both material advantages and recognition. This contributed to the appearance of a new kind of government-paid chiefs, as the case of Cabdi Oogle attests. However, war also produced new fault-lines of violence in the borderlands, as it was mainly fought on the ground by clan militias recruited by the Italians and the British, and created the problem of disbanded irregulars. This caused increasing insecurity and aggravated inter-communal tensions in the frontier.

In the post-war period, the politics of stabilisation and the imperatives of colonial 'development' became intertwined with the emergence of Somali nationalism. In former Italian Somalia, the British encouraged modernisation and, therefore, the creation of modern political parties. Had the Somali Youth League presented itself as a 'traditionalist' party, the British would have probably crushed it. They were not fully aware, however, of how Somali nationalism would rebound in the Northern Frontier District. There, Britain's post-war modernising project provoked tensions between the promotion of 'development' and British sovereignty. Moreover, British policies aimed at stabilising the frontier allowed 'tribal' chiefs to reassert their power in the NFD but also challenged traditional authority, undermining the chiefs' legitimacy and popularity among the borderlanders. In the late 1940s, contradictory British agendas intersected with Somali political aspirations, Italian interests, and the Cold War, defining the conditions for the emergence of possibilities and constraints in the process of decolonisation.

## **PART II**

### 3 AFIS, CLAN CONFLICT AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE, 1950-53

#### 3.1 The Italian Trusteeship Administration of Somalia

The Italian Trusteeship Administration of Somalia, *Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana della Somalia* (AFIS), replaced the British Military Administration on 1 April 1950. This brought the Italians back into the governance of Somalia, but it did not (formally) restore Italian colonial authority. AFIS operated under the authority of a United Nations mandate, and the Italian administration was subject to the oversight of the United Nations Advisory Council for the Trust Territory of Somaliland (UNACS). The initial members of this Council were Egypt, Colombia and the Philippines, whose representatives were charged with advising the Italian Administration in Mogadishu. The United Nations determined that Somalia should be given its independence within ten years of the commencement of the trusteeship, and so the prime purpose of the Italian Administration was to prepare Somalia for that transition, under the supervision of UNACS. The first step toward this goal was taken in April 1950, with the establishment of a national consultative body, the Territorial Council, giving Somalis a voice in the planning of their own future.

Despite the clarity of this UN brief, Italian policy throughout the Trusteeship years followed an ambiguous agenda. While the Administration granted new rights and increasing administrative autonomy to the Somalis, it also promoted economic and development policies that kept the country closely linked to its former Italian colonial metropole. This was complicated by the presence of Italian concessionaires, who reasserted their political and economic influence towards the end of the 1940s, and even gained new powers and authority under the Trusteeship Administration after 1950.

The early years of the Trusteeship, between 1950 and 1953, were characterised by riots of SYL supporters against the Administration, armed clashes in which clan issues merged with the struggle between nationalists and 'pro-Italians', and the Administration's violent repression of popular unrest. The



tumult of these years only gave way to a more settled politics after the 1954 municipal elections, in which the SYL clearly emerged as the major Somali political party. The SYL's status was then consolidated as the principal partner of the Trusteeship Administration in taking the country toward independence with the first general elections of May 1956. This saw the transformation of the Territorial Council into a seventy-member elected legislature with full statutory powers – essentially a 'government-in-waiting' – though still presided over by the Italian Administrator who retained the right of absolute veto. In these final years of Trusteeship, the elected legislature had to work closely with the Italian administration, a political reality that was often difficult for both parties.

This chapter will focus on the troubled early years of the Trusteeship administration, between 1950 and 1954, giving an account of the emergence of nationalist politics and how this impacted upon the Somalia-Kenya borderlands. We will begin with a discussion of the manner in which the Italian administration attempted to control and channel Somali politics through the rewarding of clients. The second section of the chapter will then describe how clan conflicts emerged in the frontier region in these years, setting the scene for rivalries that would reverberate into the next decade. The final section of the chapter will focus upon events in the Kismaayo area over 1952 and 1953, as local groups competed over control of the town and the Administration violently cracked down on dissent.

### **3.2 Rewarding political clients: veterans, recruits, and chiefs**

In the late 1940s, the political capture of the periphery by the SYL largely happened through the infiltration of the British-created Somalia Gendarmerie into the borderlands. Following the transfer of military powers from the British to the Italians, which occurred between 20 February and 1 April 1950, the security sector now became a principal bone of contention between Somali nationalists and Italy's Somali clients. Political competition between members of the British-inherited Somalia Police Corps (*Corpo di Polizia della Somalia*) and recruits of the newly-established Somalia Security Corps (*Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia*) thus marked the first years of the Italian Trusteeship Administration. The Somalia

Security Corps was placed under the orders of General Arturo Ferrara, who chose *Casa del Fascio* (the former office of the Fascist party in Mogadishu) as the Command's headquarters. The Somalia Security Corps was in charge of guaranteeing law and order during the transition from AFIS to the future Somali administration. As of 1 April 1950, the Security Corps was composed of more than 5000 Italian soldiers, whose number decreased to 3230 by the end of the same year.<sup>392</sup> Italian officers were tasked with training the Somali personnel of the armed forces and of the police. By 31 December 1951, the Security Corps comprised 1,108 Italian officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers, and 3,220 Somali non-commissioned officers and soldiers, divided into four battalions.<sup>393</sup>

The Somalia Police Corps was also responsible for maintaining law and order, and was composed of 2000 Somalis by the end of 1951; these men were trained and supervised by some 521 officers and agents of the Italian *Carabinieri* Corps.<sup>394</sup> In addition, a special corps of *Ilaloes* – a force that was similar to the British-created tribal police in Kenya – was established and placed under the direct authority of District Commissioners (*Residenti*). These *Ilaloes* were responsible for the maintenance of law and order in rural areas and along inland roads and caravan routes, and controlled the movement of nomadic groups, including, crucially, their access to water points, wells, and pastures.<sup>395</sup>

The Trusteeship Administration received thousands of volunteers for enlistment in the Somali battalions. Government-paid clan chiefs (*capi-qabiila*) readily involved themselves in this process, in an effort to gain some preferment for their own clients and to ensure that local matters would be in the hands of their own people. At the same time, ex-members of the defunct *dubat* bands were also keen to be reenlisted and reassigned to their old tasks with regard to frontier

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<sup>392</sup> Ministero degli affari esteri, *Rapport du gouvernement italien a l'assemblée générale des Nations Unies sur l'administration de tutelle de la Somalie, 1951* (Rome: Ministero degli affari esteri, 1952), p. 29.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

security.<sup>396</sup> Former members of the *zaptié* corps, a locally-raised constabulary force modelled on the Italian *Carabinieri*, and of the *dubat* bands were indeed readily re-enlisted into the companies of the new Somali battalions stationed in the Upper and Lower Jubba provinces, or assigned as interpreters to military posts in the Somalia-Kenya and Somalia-Ethiopia borderlands. To cite but a few of the more significant examples, Axmed Cali Yaxyaa (Arab), a former *dubat* commander, who had always supported the so-called ‘pro-Italian’ factions and had worked as a street cleaner in Luuq during the BMA period, offered his services to the Italians as an unpaid interpreter and was re-enlisted; former *Maresciallo* Xasan Xirsi (Hawiye/Habargidir) was assigned as an interpreter to the military garrison in Dooloow; former *Iusbasci* (commander) of the *zaptié* corps, Maxamed Cali (Arab), was assigned as an interpreter to the *Carabinieri* post in Kismaayo; former *Iusbasci* Xaaji Yuusuf Cabdi (Ogaadeen/Cawlyahan) was sent to Dooloow, while former *Bulukbasci* (deputy-commander) Maxamed Shire (Raxanweyn/Mirifle/Hadame) was sent to Luuq; and former *Iusbasci* Faarax Kulmiye (Hawiye/Habargidir/Sacad), who had served in the 1<sup>st</sup> *Dubat* Garrison in the Galla-Sidamo Governorate and had later moved to Moyale, and then to Ceelwaaq with his family and livestock, was re-enlisted as an interpreter with the military garrison stationed in Baardheere.<sup>397</sup> Former members of the defunct Italian Africa Police (*Polizia Africa Italiana*), most of whom were Hawiye/Abgaal, Hawiye/Murusade, and Raxanweyn were also reenlisted into the Somali Rifles (1<sup>st</sup> battalion) in Kismaayo.<sup>398</sup> As a result of such recruitment, the

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<sup>396</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 43, f. 415, Perfler to Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, ‘Notiziario’, 8 July 1950, p. 1.

<sup>397</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 37, f. 404, Conti, ‘Promemoria per il Capitano Degli Esposti’, 17 May 1950, enclosure, ‘Elenco graduati da inviare nei presidi interni’, n.d.; Conti to Comando della Compagnia Somala Territoriale, 11 July 1950 and 14 July 1950, and enclosure to the latter, ‘Stralcio relazione sulla visita compiuta dal Maggiore Muscarà ai Presidi interni’, n.d.; Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, Sezione Informazioni, ‘Esito informazioni’, 24 July 1950; Ferrara to Comando II Battaglione Somalo Fucilieri, 30 August 1950.

<sup>398</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 37, f. 403, ‘Elenco nominativo dei militari somali già appartenenti alla Polizia Africa Italiana’, 1950.

majority of the re-enlisted veterans assigned to the Upper and Lower Jubba regions were men who had been recruited by the Italians to fight against the Ethiopians, mostly from clans other than the locally-dominant Daarood (Ogaadeen, Majeerteen and Mareexaan).

Italian reports from this period tend to link political allegiance among the Somalis to clan membership. The genealogical division between the Daarood and the Hawiye clan families is generally assumed as the main political cleavage separating 'pro-British' (Daarood) from 'pro-Italians' (Hawiye), and distinguishing 'radicals' and 'moderates' within the SYL. However, these political cleavages based on lineage were the result of colonial policies, rather than being purely shaped by long-standing genealogical determinations; inter-clan rivalry was the result of government practice, not of primordial ethnicity. The Italian policy of clan-based military recruitment dated back to the 'pacification' campaigns of the 1920s and had been successively employed during the Italo-Ethiopian war in the 1930s. In their recruitment efforts, the Italians determinedly kept men from the Daarood and the Hawiye clans apart. The Trusteeship Administration largely relied on Italy's long-standing clients to assert control over territory and quell subversive forces, especially so in Somalia's frontier areas. Clans such as the Hawiye/Xawaadle and the Hawiye/Habargidir had long provided more soldiers to the former Italian colonial forces than had other groups, and so they were accordingly given preference with the enlistment of veterans.<sup>399</sup> By May 1950, this was clearly reflected by the clan affiliations of the Somalis who had been recruited: the Dir constituted only 3 per cent of the recruits, the Saab (Digil iyo Mirifle) 10 per cent, and the Daarood (led by the Majeerteen/Cumar Maxamuud and the Majeerteen/Cismaan Maxamuud, followed by the Mareexaan) 27 per cent; the Hawiye (led by the Abgaal and the Habargidir, followed by the Xawaadle) accounted for 60 per cent of all recruits.<sup>400</sup> As of 1 August 1950, the Somali soldiers enlisted included 342 Daarood, 50 Dir, 957

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<sup>399</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 37, f. 402, Ferrara to AFIS, Office of Internal Affairs, 29 September 1950, p. 3.

<sup>400</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 37, f. 402, Ferrara to the Administrator of Somalia, 19 May 1950.

Hawiye, 251 Saab, 117 Arabs and 4 Eritreans.<sup>401</sup> One month later, the number of Daarood increased to 374, while Hawiye and Saab totalled 1,048 and 406 respectively.<sup>402</sup>

Kismaayo provides an emblematic example of the political intricacies of the new security forces and the role that the Italians' most prominent allies would play in the 'capture' of the periphery; it also reveals the obsession of Italian officers with the supposed equation between clan identity and party politics. By 1950, there was a strong branch of the SYL in Kismaayo, mainly supported by Majeerteen clansmen who had migrated to the town. As there were twenty-six Majeerteen among the recruits of the Somali Rifles stationed in the town, the Italian captain of the company set up a surveillance and intelligence service, composed of external elements, to control them. The spies hired by the captain reported that a few Majeerteen soldiers had found some friends and relatives among the League's members in Kismaayo, and that some SYL activists were campaigning amongst the young recruits. Their propaganda, however, was essentially limited to protecting SYL supporters – whom the Italian captain portrayed as 'bourgeois troublemakers' – from a possible reaction of the security forces in the event of a political incident.<sup>403</sup> The League's members instructed the recruits not to shoot them, but to fire shots into the air. Despite Italian apprehensions, only seven men among the Somali soldiers stationed in Kismaayo were believed to have participated in a clandestine meeting of the SYL.<sup>404</sup>

Clan dynamics alone failed to determine political alignment within the security forces. According to Italian military reports, the most active supporters of the League in Kismaayo were members of the local Somalia Police; by contrast, several well-known Majeerteen and Mareexaan notables whose loyalty to the Italians could hardly be questioned figured among the soldiers who were stationed there. Most of these soldiers had been selected by the District authorities and had

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<sup>401</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 37, f. 402, Comando del Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, 'Forza arruolata alla data del I°-8-1950 divisa per gruppo gentilizio e cabila', n.d.

<sup>402</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 37, f. 402, Fornari to Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, 14 September 1950.

<sup>403</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 43, f. 415, Russo to Ferrara, 3 June 1950.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*

been compelled to fight with local members of the SYL who were opposed to their recruitment. In this way, Italian officers contributed to fuelling divisions between the Somalia Police and the Security Corps. They complained that the members of the Somalia Police received a better salary than the Somali soldiers who had supported the return of the Italians, although the Somalia Police – according to some Italian officers – were ‘notoriously treacherous, adherents of the SYL, anti-Italian’; the Police were accused of having extorted, black-mailed, stolen, killed, and perpetrated the worst acts of abuse under the British Military Administration.<sup>405</sup>

What we have discussed so far points to the fact that local political tensions, usually interpreted through the lens of genealogy, may be better explained by looking at the trail of hatred and resentment that the return of the Italians generated: a deep rift emerged between those who had opposed the Fascist colonial administration and those who had sided with it. Although the transfer of power from British to Italian hands happened relatively smoothly, the picture which emerges from archival sources, as soon as one shifts from the diplomatic to the local level, is that of a fractured society, enveloped in a climate of post-war retaliation. Between 1950 and 1952, the Italians dismissed most of the Somali employees who had worked for the British Military Administration, and attempted to suppress nationalist resistance in all major settlements across the country, using unwarranted violence against SYL supporters.<sup>406</sup> Inter-clan and inter-tribal tensions overlapped with political violence instigated by Italian officials, leading to deadly clashes in Baydhabo, Mogadishu, Afgooye, Caluula, Golweyn, Marka, Janaale, Jilib, Jamaame, and Kismaayo.<sup>407</sup> Both Italian and British sources tend to portray these conflicts as centuries-old manifestations of clan violence provoked by struggles over access to water and pastures. These interpretations, however, ignore two key aspects, namely the role of government-paid chiefs, and the

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<sup>405</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 43, f. 415, Antenucci to Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, 25 April 1950.

<sup>406</sup> Pankhurst, *Ex-Italian Somaliland*, pp. 439–47, quoting articles from *The New Statesman* and *The Nation* newspapers.

<sup>407</sup> Samatar, *Africa's First Democrats*, p. 54; Morone, *Ultima colonia*, p. 63.

aggressive attempts of certain groups to acquire territory through the exploitation of their colonial connections.

The Italian Trusteeship Administration used the appointment of government-paid chiefs to reassert the long-standing policy of identifying administrative divisions with specific 'tribal areas'. Continuing the colonial tradition, the Italian Administration saw these territorial units as the 'homelands' of the dominant (usually the most visible, often the most useful) clans in these areas, and registered chiefs and headmen for each of these clans, putting them on government payroll. This policy contributed to creating conflicts over the definition of tribal 'homelands' and the appropriation of territory, especially in those districts where different clans lived on each side of the Jubba river, such as in Luuq and Baardheere. The list of the senior chiefs who were registered by the Italian Administration in 1950 is revealing of the logic that the Italians used to extend political control in the Jubba valley. In Luuq and Baardheere, the top chiefs on the Administration's payroll belonged to the 'tribes' that were predominant on the left bank of the Jubba river: Macalin Weyn (Raxanweyn), Dir, Gasaargude, and Gabaweyn (a Somali-Bantu sub-clan of the Raxanweyn) in Luuq; and Dabarre (Raxanweyn), Cawlyahan, Eelaay (Raxanweyn) in Baardheere.<sup>408</sup> For the most part, these groups supported the Xisbiya Digil iyo Mirifle, which had benefited from the financial backing of the Italians and had sided with the Trusteeship Administration. In the Lower Jubba Province, the most senior chiefs on the Administration's payroll belonged to tribes the Italians regarded as allies: Shiikhaal, Ogaadeen/Maqaabul, Xarti/Dhulbahante, and Baajuun in Kismaayo; Gosha, Majindo, Mushunguli, Hawiye/Habargidir in Margherita (present-day Jamaame); Maay, Mushunguli, and Majindo in Jilib; and Ogaadeen/Maxamed Subeer and Jidwaaq/Bartiire in Afmadoow.<sup>409</sup> Governmental practices thereby became entangled in the complex web of clan and territorial

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<sup>408</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 2, fasc. 10, 'Bollettino Ufficiale dell'Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana della Somalia', I:8 (supplemento n. 1), 30 November 1950, Decree n. 112, p. 228.

<sup>409</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 2, fasc. 10, 'Bollettino Ufficiale dell'Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana della Somalia', I:8 (supplemento n. 1), 30 November 1950, Decree n. 97, pp. 212–213.

rivalries that they contributed to create. These rivalries led to identity and political polarization among clans, particularly in Kismaayo and Luuq, as we shall see.

Although competition for the control of key grazing areas or strategic wells was clearly a cause of conflict, many clashes were instigated by Italian-appointed chiefs who often acted out of self-interest. Writing to the Chairman of the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly in October 1953, the SYL leader, Cabdulaahi Ciise, openly accused Somali chiefs of fomenting ‘tribal’ conflicts through the rivalries their colonial affiliations promoted:

The aim of these ignorant elements, who receive a meagre pay from government, is to see that their tribes be involved in disturbances and, as a consequence, be fined heavily. [...] When the government imposes fines to the tribes who participated in the disturbances, the chiefs are instructed to collect the same. To enforce the tribal chiefs’ authority, some armed *ilaloes* (district police units) are placed at the disposal of the chiefs who also receive firearms and ammunitions if they so desire. With the assistance of the armed *ilaloes*, the chiefs collect from their tribesmen herds of camels, cattle, sheep and goats the value of which usually exceeds at least twice the amount of fine imposed by the government.<sup>410</sup>

Somali informants from the Afmadoow area have stressed the connivance of Italian-paid chiefs and *ilaloes*, who were recruited through the *capi-qabiila* from among the members of their own clan.<sup>411</sup> The appointment of government-paid chiefs and headmen who had Italian-armed *ilaloes* at their disposal created tensions within clans, as these newly appointed chiefs sometimes challenged the authority of the ‘traditional’ *suldaans*, as we shall see in the next chapter. Oral testimonies suggest that the *ilaloes* in Afmadoow treated ‘those who were not family’ – that is to say, those who did not belong to the dominant clan in that area

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<sup>410</sup> ASMSCC, 545, AFIS, Documenti Riservati, Abdullahi Issa to Chairman of the Fourth Committee, UN General Assembly, 30 October 1953, pp. 7–8.

<sup>411</sup> Interviews with Maxamed Aamiin, Nairobi, Islii, 25 May 2015, and Xasan Xaaji Shafad, Nairobi, Islii, 23 May 2015.



– ‘very badly’.<sup>412</sup> During the rains, groups of Ogaadeen from across the Kenyan border moved their animals to the Dhasheeg Waamo. The *ilaloes* in Afmadoow District, however, barred non-Ogaadeen clans from moving into this area. Only if the herders were from *sheegad* groups who abided by the conditions imposed by the Maxamed Subeer *Suldaan* were ‘trespassers’ left unmolested. Those individuals or groups who belonged to clans who were only marginally present in Somalia, such as the Digoodiya and the Murule, were regarded as trespassers by the *ilaloes* and were liable to expulsion or prosecution.<sup>413</sup>

Although the Italians did not demarcate tribal areas, unlike the British in north-eastern Kenya (see Chapter 2), the system of political control and state-sanctioned authority which emerged from the alliance between clan chiefs and *ilaloes* paid by the Italian Administration caused similar issues of inter-communal friction over territorial appropriation. This fostered stronger connections between kinship and territory which somehow embodied the rationale behind the colonial mapping of tribal identities. Rather than ancestral antipathy, colonial policies were the most significant factor in shaping conflicts over access to land and resources in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands.

### **3.3 Territorial appropriation and clan clashes on the frontier**

Between 1950 and 1953, clan clashes erupted on the Somalia-Kenya and Somalia-Ethiopia frontiers. These conflicts were entangled amidst the retaliatory violence provoked by vengeance against Italy’s ‘traitors’ and attempts to suppress ‘subversive’ emergent nationalist forces. Violence broke out in June 1950, following several arrests of SYL activists. At Dooloow, nine members of the SYL, including the party’s secretary, were imprisoned by the Italians, while fifteen prominent League members were detained at Luuq, and no less than eighty were incarcerated in Baydhabo.<sup>414</sup> According to a report by Faarax Kulmiye

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<sup>412</sup> Interview with Maxamed Aamiin, Nairobi, Islii, 25 May 2015.

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>414</sup> KNA, PC/GRSSA 2/10/22, ‘Monthly Intelligence Report – June 1950. Mandera District’, 1.

(Hawiye/Habargidir) – one of the former *dubat* who had been recently re-enlisted –, the SYL secretary in Baardheere wrote three telegrams (one to the Italian Administrator, one to the Mogadishu SYL, and one to the UN Advisory Council), complaining that the District Commissioner and the local police sergeant were deliberately hostile to his party.<sup>415</sup> The League's leaders in Baardheere reportedly accused the Italian authorities of supplying the Xisbiya Digil iyo Mirifle with hand-grenades and of sending the Digil-Mirifle to fight against the SYL. Faarax Kulmiye vigorously refuted these allegations, the *ex-dubat* reporting instead that everybody on the right bank of the Jubba River was against the Italian Administration. These people, mainly Mareexaan and Cawlyahan clansmen, had bought about thirty rifles in Ethiopia – he claimed –, and were waiting for the river level to decrease in order to raid all the livestock of the Digil-Mirifle on the other bank. It was also rumoured that the people on the west bank of the river were planning to burn down Baardheere, and then to flee to Ethiopia and Kenya.<sup>416</sup>

As tensions around the arrests of SYL members mounted in the Italian territory, on the Kenyan side of the border a series of raids and counter-raids occurred in April 1950 between the Mareexaan and the Murule. The Mareexaan crossed the border into Kenya and raided 160 Murule camels, the Murule then responding with a retaliatory raid at Ceelwaaq, capturing over 100 camels. Herders were wounded on both sides, but no deaths were reported.<sup>417</sup> In the following months, clashes erupted between Mareexaan and Gharri in which the casualties became more serious. In a major Mareexaan raid in July, a considerable number of deaths were reported on both sides. Then an armed contingent of Kenyan police intercepted the Mareexaan raiders as they fled toward the frontier; the police inflicted heavy casualties on the Mareexaan and successfully prevented large numbers of Gharri cattle from being driven into Somalia. Tacitly acknowledging the possible complicity of *ilaloes* in this raid, the Italian Administration subsequently reinforced the border post at Buur Hache with

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<sup>415</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 37, f. 401, Farah Kulmie to Guerra, 22 September 1950.

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>417</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 43, f. 414, Spatafora to AFIS, Directorate for Civil and Political Affairs, 27 April 1950.

twenty Somalia police, and withdrew the *ilaloes*.<sup>418</sup> This change, however, did not prove effective in calming the border region. Violent raiding continued into 1951, with further skirmishes between the Buur Hache Gharri and the Mareexaan. This time the violence was provoked by the Mareexaan making use of the Gharri wells in the area, allegedly with the consent and support of the police at Buur Hache.<sup>419</sup> Towards the end of 1952, tensions intensified further between the Mareexaan and the Gharri, who were struggling to gain control over a contested area along the border between Ceelwaaq and Mandera. According to Italian sources, though this area had once ‘belonged’ to the Gharri, they had been hard pressed by the Mareexaan, and eventually compelled to abandon the territory. The Gharri, determined to recover the grazing, then sought the support of their kin in Ethiopia’s Borana region to evict the Mareexaan interlopers, precipitating further bloody clashes.<sup>420</sup> As these events indicate, clan conflict over access to pasture and water was intimately linked to questions of territorial appropriation and sovereignty, government forces being all too often implicated in such conflicts as participants, either defending one side against another, or enforcing one claim against another.

Against this background, between 1950 and 1952, Dooloow became the focal point of a simmering frontier dispute between Somalia and Ethiopia. Significantly, this dispute revolved around the section of the border where the Somalia-Ethiopia frontier ceased to follow the Jubba River and diverted across open terrain toward the border with British Kenya. With no boundary line visible on the ground, there was far greater scope for dispute over territorial claims and counter-claims. Ambiguities in this particular area were all the greater because the southern section of the Somali-Ethiopian frontier had not been demarcated in 1950, when AFIS took over from the British Military Administration. Although

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<sup>418</sup> KNA, PC/GRSSA 2/10/22, ‘Monthly Intelligence Report – July 1950. Mandera District’, p. 1.

<sup>419</sup> KNA, PC/GRSSA 2/10/22, ‘Monthly Intelligence Report – October 1951. Mandera District’, p. 1.

<sup>420</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 96, f. 777, Joviero to Sezione Operazioni-Addestramento-Ordinamento, Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, ‘Bollettino Informazioni relativo al mese di novembre 1952, 30 November 1952, p. 7.

the UN General Assembly had recommended that the governments of Ethiopia and Italy expedite direct negotiations so that the frontier question could be settled, this had not, in fact, taken place. According to Italian reports, between 1950 and 1952, the Ethiopian authorities sought to exploit the uncertainty over the exact location of the border by committing several ‘acts of provocation’ in the Dooloow area.<sup>421</sup> Ethiopian presence there was strengthened through the establishment of a new police post, in 1951, near the bend of the Jubba River and close to the ferry port the Italians had established in the 1920s. The Ethiopian police at Dooloow periodically interfered with border trade; in September 1951, they apprehended Somali traders who were leaving Ethiopia and confiscated their livestock.<sup>422</sup> In 1953, a series of clashes occurred near Dooloow in which Ogaadeen/Cawlyahan from Ethiopia crossed into Italian-administered territory to raid groups of Raxanweyn. It is highly significant that Italian reports on these raids persistently refer to the Raxanweyn as ‘*our* [italic is mine] Rahanuin people’.<sup>423</sup>

Negotiations between Ethiopia and Italy to settle these disputes finally began in 1955 but had reached no satisfactory conclusion two years later, when the matter was referred to international arbitration. While these discussions were under way, the frontier represented by the ‘Provisional Administrative Line’, agreed upon by the British and the Ethiopians in 1950, was officially closed. This border problem remained unresolved and continued to affect Somali-Ethiopian relations even after Somalia reached independence in 1960.

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<sup>421</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 99, fasc. 299, Fornari to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate-General for Political Affairs, 9 September 1950; the Deputy Administrator of Somalia to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 4 January 1953, and enclosure n. 2, ‘Situazione confinaria nel settore di Dolo’, 29 September 1951; Anzilotti to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1 August 1955.

<sup>422</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 99, fasc. 299, the Deputy Administrator of Somalia to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 4 January 1953, enclosure n. 2, ‘Situazione confinaria nel settore di Dolo’, 29 September 1951.

<sup>423</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 99, fasc. 299, Martino to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate General for Somalia, 31 August 1953.

### 3.4 Struggling for control of Kismaayo, 1952-53

The years of the Italian Trusteeship Administration have generally been regarded as a period of peaceful transition, during which UN oversight restrained any temptation toward colonial excesses on the part of Italian officials. For a long time in Italy the post-war years in Somalia were portrayed as redemptive for Italian colonialism. This contributed to promote the self-absolving stereotype of ‘Italians, good people’ (*Italiani, brava gente*) which functioned as a kind of ‘ideological laundry’ to set aside ‘disquieting moments of national shame’ in post-Fascist Italy.<sup>424</sup> Viewing the AFIS years in the longer run of Somalia’s troubled modern history, Kenneth Menkhaus has described them as ‘the calm before the storms’.<sup>425</sup> While, in a relative sense, there is some truth in the contrast Menkhaus draws between these years and what was to come, especially after 1969, this contrast should not be allowed to mask the often turbulent events of the Italian Administration. Nowhere did the conflicts of the early 1950s reach a sharper pitch than in Kismaayo, where the politics of nationalism and territorial claim-making clashed with Italian attempts to ‘manage’ the transition. The next section will briefly discuss Kismaayo’s political troubles in 1952-53.

In the Lower Jubba Province, the Italian Administration encouraged the growth of a ‘pro-Italian’ political party, the Somali Progressive League. This party, strongly supported by members of the Daarood/Majeerteen/Cismaan Maxamuud sub-clan, began to extend its influence in the Jubba valley in January 1952, opening local branches in Luuq first, then in Baardheere, and finally in Kismaayo, which was by then a stronghold of the Somali Youth League.<sup>426</sup> In

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<sup>424</sup> Paolo Favero, ‘Italians, the “Good People”’: Reflections on National Self-Representation in Contemporary Italian Debates on Xenophobia and War’, *Outlines: Critical Practice Studies*, 12 (2010), pp. 138–53 (p.140). See also: Angelo Del Boca, *Italiani, brava gente? Un mito duro a morire* (Milan; Vicenza: BEAT, 2014).

<sup>425</sup> See Kenneth Menkhaus, ‘Calm between the Storms? Patterns of Political Violence in Somalia, 1950–1980’, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 7, No.4 (2014), pp. 558–72.

<sup>426</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 96, f. 777, Joviero to Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, ‘Bollettino informazioni relativo al mese di Gennaio 1952’, 31 January 1952, 6.

Kismaayo, the SYL immediately began organising and vigorously campaigning against the Somali Progressive League. According to Italian sources, this mobilisation quickly spilled over into manifestations of political intolerance, including threats and acts of violence. SYL activities allegedly ‘forced the local authorities to take vigorous measures against the perpetrators’.<sup>427</sup> As a result, five SYL members were arrested in Kismaayo in March 1952, including the Secretary of the party’s local section. Feeling that it had the backing and protection of the Italian Administration, the Somali Progressive League continued its expansion, despite mounting tensions, opening further new branches in Afmadoow and Yoontoy during April. That same month, further SYL actions were again suspected, when a well-known Arab in Kismaayo, Shariif Saalax bin Cumar, who had served as a member of the Mogadishu-based Territorial Council since 1951, was seriously wounded in a knife attack. Consequently, suspected SYL members were rounded-up by the Italian authorities, including three activists who had been sent by the League’s central committee to Kismaayo only a few days earlier to assist the newly-appointed local party secretary.<sup>428</sup>

Tensions escalated further in Kismaayo when a Somali Muslim cleric (*sheikh*) who, according to Italian reports, ‘belonged to the SYL’, allegedly preached a sermon advocating *jihad* against the Christians.<sup>429</sup> As a result, the police arrested the *sheikh* accusing him of incitement to crime. Four more SYL members were arrested when they broke into the office of the District Judge declaring that they would appeal against the arrests of SYL supporters that had followed the attack against Shariif Saalax bin Cumar. As the news of these further arrests reached the SYL headquarters in Mogadishu, three delegates were sent to Kismaayo to discreetly inquire into the actions of the Italian *Commissario* (Provincial Commissioner), *Signor* Wagner, whom they now suspected was using

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<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>428</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 96, f. 777, Joviero to Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, ‘Bollettino informazioni relativo al mese di Marzo 1952’, 30 March 1952, pp. 3–4.

<sup>429</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 96, f. 777, Costa to Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, ‘Bollettino Informazioni relativo al mese di maggio 1952’, 31 May 1952, p. 2.

his position to run a stern and oppressive campaign against the SYL in the port city.<sup>430</sup>

Over the following months, the Somali Progressive League attempted to consolidate its successes, co-opting local chiefs to rally support and instrumentalizing social cleavages, as well as clan identity, to foment opposition against the SYL. A second Italian-sponsored party, the African Union, also joined the political fray in the Jubba region, chipping away further at the SYL's position. Two leaders of the Somali Progressive League, Xaaji Muuse Samatar and Maxamed Warsame, led the political attacks on the SYL. The propaganda promoted by these two leaders claimed that the SYL had badly mishandled its relations with the Italian Administration, and that the Somali Progressive League was much better placed to build a strong and constructive relationship with the Italians. This message was reiterated to local chiefs, in an effort to persuade them to affiliate with the Somali Progressive League and cut their ties with the SYL. However, the message of Xaaji Muuse and Maxamed Warsame was not always well received: chiefs at Afmadoow declared that they did not recognize the Somali Progressive League and that they were capable of representing their own interests to the Italian Administration.<sup>431</sup> In search of a more recipient audience, the two SPL leaders exhorted the Italian concessionaires in the lower Jubba valley to expel those among their labourers who were known members of the SYL and to replace them with supporters of the Somali Progressive League.<sup>432</sup>

In this rather dirty campaign, clan politics was brought into play. During a meeting with all the Majeerteen chiefs of Lower Jubba, Maxamed Warsame suggested that they should make complaints against all the Hawiye who held official positions, with a view to having them dismissed from office. The SPL leader suggested that the chiefs should notify the Italian authorities that the Majeerteen did not want Hawiye people to live in 'their' territory. The Italian army officer in Kismaayo who reported these events described them as being

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<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>431</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 96, f. 777, Costa to Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, 'Bollettino Informazioni relativo al mese di maggio 1952', 31 May 1952.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*

typical of the old issue of ‘racial politics pitting Hawiye against Daarood’.<sup>433</sup> In this case, however, Warsame’s efforts to stir up clan antipathy did not succeed, as the Majeerteen chiefs, particularly Xaaji Xuseen Boqor and Xaaji Maxamed Cilmi, rejected the assumption that the Hawiye were enemy to the Majeerteen. Instead, the chiefs acknowledged that Kismaayo was part of a wider Trans-Jubba region, which was greater than the Majeerteen area and was home to many different clans. Kismaayo was ‘not Gaalkacyo’, the Majeerteen chiefs added.<sup>434</sup>

These dynamics reveal the significance of *xeer*, the name given to a specific and highly important form of Somali political contract (see Introduction). As Jama Mohamed has pointed out, *xeer* contracts did much more than reaffirm clan relationships: ‘agnates functioned as corporate political groups because they negotiated a social contract that defined the terms of their collective unity’.<sup>435</sup> Thus, ‘the blood relation was not sufficient to establish a political system’.<sup>436</sup> Drawing on Ioan Lewis’s description of *xeer*, it seems appropriate to regard ‘the Somali political and jural contract as a mechanism for... knotting the diffuse ties of agnation, as political unity is specifically required at different levels of segmentation’.<sup>437</sup> In other words, political and jural units were defined by contract within agnation, but contract could also override agnation. This could be seen in the case of the *Xeer Eji* in Lower Jubba. Gufu Oba has referred to ‘Eji’ as the name by which the Daarood Somalis in Jubaland were known to the Boran.<sup>438</sup> However, Khaliif Santuur, a son of Santuur Gooloo, who was the chief of the Ogaadeen/Maxamed Subeer in Kismaayo in the 1950s, has offered a strikingly different definition.<sup>439</sup> According to him, the Eji represented a variegated unity composed of different kinship groups who inhabited the Dhasheeg Waamo and the Kismaayo area, and coexisted peacefully under their own ‘law’, the *Xeer Eji*. According to Khaliif Santuur, Kismaayo’s council of elders represented all the Eji

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<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>435</sup> Mohamed, ‘Kinship and Contract’, p. 226

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>437</sup> Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy*, p. 195.

<sup>438</sup> Oba, ‘Colonial resource capture’, p. 507.

<sup>439</sup> Interview with Khaliif Santuur Gooloo, Garissa, 1 June 2015.



and brought together all the peoples who lived in the district, including the dominant Daarood clans and their various *sheegad*: Ogaadeen, Ashraaf, Shiikhaal, Gaaljecel, Cawrmale, Dir/Biimaal (Biyomaal), Xarti, Baajuun, Bantus, and Warday. Over time, however, the term ‘Eji’ became synonymous with ‘indigenous people’, as opposed to ‘newcomers’ (*gaalti* in Somali) from north-central Somalia and Ethiopia. As political struggle and competition over territory increasingly reinforced each other during the 1950s, the Eji’s cohesion began to crumble, opening the way to new divisions and tensions. This was particularly apparent in the aftermath of the violent crisis that erupted in Kismaayo during the summer of 1952 as a consequence of the rivalry between the SYL and the Somali Progressive League.

The crisis loomed in June 1952, when the SYL publicly accused Xaaji Muuse Samatar and Maxamed Warsama of having attempted to plot the murder of the secretary of the Kismaayo SYL branch. The plot was allegedly hatched as a means to prevent the SYL from campaigning among the Baajuun to convince them not to join the Somali Progressive League.<sup>440</sup> Although the SYL had made repeated complaints against the Italian Provincial Commissioner in Kismaayo, *Signor Wagner*, whom they accused of supporting and directing the actions of the Somali Progressive League, they were unable to get the Administration to take their complaint of a murder plot seriously. Therefore, they eventually decided to reinforce their campaign with a public demonstration.<sup>441</sup> This protest was timed to coincide with the planned visit of high-level AFIS representatives to Kismaayo later in the summer.

On 1 August 1952, Kismaayo’s apparent calm was shattered by an outburst of political violence that had far-reaching effects on political developments not only in the lower Jubba Valley, but in Somalia as a whole. The target of the SYL protests was *Signor Wagner*, the Italian Provincial Commissioner of Lower Jubba. Wagner was a prominent veteran of the Italian

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<sup>440</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 96, f. 777, Costa to Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, ‘Bollettino Informazioni relativo al mese di giugno 1952’, 30 June 1952, pp. 2–3.

<sup>441</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 96, f. 777, Joviero to Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, ‘Bollettino Informazioni relativo al mese di luglio – primo di agosto 1952’, 9 August 1952, p. 1.

colonial administration and an ardent Fascist, well known for his ‘harsh administrative methods’, which – according to British sources – had made him ‘deservedly unpopular’ among Somalis.<sup>442</sup> Serious disorders had occurred in Gaalkacyo, Wagner’s previous posting, during 1951.<sup>443</sup> The Kismaayo SYL arranged their protest to coincide with the arrival of the Italian Acting Administrator, Signor Canino, in the coastal town on 1 August 1952. Some 300 protestors gathered at the SYL headquarters in Kismaayo, demanding justice.<sup>444</sup> An SYL delegation asked to be received by the Acting Administrator, but the request was refused by Wagner. Three unarmed Italian *carabinieri* and an Arab police inspector then attempted to disperse the demonstration, but this only resulted in further inflaming the already angry crowd. When one of the *carabinieri* forcefully attempted to seize a banner from a group of women, fighting broke out. In the skirmish that rapidly ensued, the Italian lieutenant of the *carabinieri* was seriously wounded and three of his men stoned and stabbed to death.<sup>445</sup>

Antonio Morone has briefly mentioned this episode in his history of the Italian Trusteeship Administration, mainly focusing on the political consequences of the Kismaayo disturbances for the Administration’s strategy towards the Somali Youth League.<sup>446</sup> However, the dramatic crackdown which followed the disturbances was not mentioned by Morone, nor has it featured in other studies of the Trusteeship period. Nevertheless, the account of the Italian response contained in the archival record leaves no doubt as to the heavy-handed and sweeping character of the Italian reaction. According to one British report, the Italian Administration ‘behaved with considerable hysteria and undertook mass arrests

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<sup>442</sup> TNA, FO 371/102561, ‘Annual Report on the Trusteeship Territory of Somalia under Italian Administration for 1952’, p. 2.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>444</sup> ASMSCC, FAA, f. 709, a. 1, Ziccardi to Comando Gruppo Carabinieri della Somalia, 28 September 1952; Ripa di Meana to the Administrator of Somalia, 25 September 1952.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*; TNA, FCO, 371/96646, British Consul, Mogadishu, to Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 9 August 1952.

<sup>446</sup> Morone, *Ultima Colonia*, pp. 76–81.

all over the country, locking up anyone who [...] expressed sympathy with the demonstrators' – which, in fact, meant anyone with known sympathies for the SYL.<sup>447</sup> Round-ups and military operations to hunt down the culprits began immediately in the Kismaayo area.<sup>448</sup> Wagner requested military assistance, and a company of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Somali Battalion stationed in Kismaayo was brought onto the streets. Shortly after the attack, police squads were called in from the neighbouring areas and the following day two more platoons of military police were flown to Kismaayo from Mogadishu, and a further armoured platoon was also sent.<sup>449</sup> Within twenty-four hours after the incident, several raids had been carried out on SYL suspects, and a curfew had been imposed across the city. While some of those who were allegedly responsible for the killings succeeded in escaping across the border into Kenya, hundreds of SYL supporters, including women, were arrested and thrown in prison without trial.<sup>450</sup>

Police operations lasted for a further six weeks, through to 14 September 1952. According to the official Italian reports, 672 people were taken into custody in the first days of the crack-down. Of these, 427 were proven not guilty and released between 3 and 7 August, while the remaining 245 people arrested were kept in custody pending further investigations.<sup>451</sup> The real number of arrests, however, may have been considerably higher. Numerous oral accounts from Somalis who lived in Kismaayo at that time confirm that house raids continued for several weeks after the riot of 1 August. Young men and women were the principal targets in these round-ups, many being taken away from their families

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<sup>447</sup> TNA, FO 371/102561, 'Annual Report on the Trusteeship Territory of Somalia under Italian Administration for 1952', p. 2.

<sup>448</sup> ASMSCC, FAA, f. 709, a. 1, Ripa di Meana to the Administrator of Somalia, 25 September 1952, p. 9.

<sup>449</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 96, f. 777, Joviero to Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, 'Bollettino Informazioni relativo al mese di luglio – primo di agosto 1952', 9 August 1952, p. 3.

<sup>450</sup> ASMSCC, FAA, f. 709, a. 1, Ziccardi to Comando Gruppo Carabinieri della Somalia, 28 Sept. 1952, p. 2.

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.

and imprisoned.<sup>452</sup> In a speech to the UN General Assembly in December 1952, the SYL representative Cabdulaahi Ciise stated that ‘over 2000 Somalis including several hundred women were jailed’ in Kismaayo during the first week of August 1952.<sup>453</sup> The true number of people who were imprisoned may never be known.

At the peak of the arrests, on 22 August 1952, Maxamed Jaamac, a member of the SYL local branch, was shot dead by an Italian *Carabinieri* inside the main Kismaayo police station.<sup>454</sup> The shooting plunged the city into further turmoil; in the prevailing climate of fear and suspicion, divisions emerged among the local population. Oral testimonies recount that the Italian Administration exploited these fissures, putting supporters of the Somali Progressive League in charge of the informal investigation into the disturbances, and then offering to pay informants who came forward with information about the assaults and the organisation of the protest.<sup>455</sup> During the month following the attack, the African Union was able to take advantage of the troubles confronting both the other parties in Kismaayo, finding substantial support among the Ogaadeen and the Baajuun. According to Italian military reports, clan politics were again being ruthlessly exploited: the African Union aimed to promote the interests of the Ogaadeen and the Baajuun by seeking to oust the Majeerteen from what the two communities regarded as ‘their own’ territories, at a time when the Majeerteen

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<sup>452</sup> ASUSCC, s. 1167.19, Comando Generale dell’Arma dei Carabinieri, Ufficio Situazione, ‘Rapporto’, 7 October 1952, 7; interviews with Cabdalla Maxamed Cabdi, Nairobi, 28 April 2016, and Cabdi Caziiz Maxamed Maxamuud, Nairobi, 26 April 2016.

<sup>453</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 3, fasc. 14, ‘Copy of the statement of Abdullahi Issa, Representative of the SYL, to the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 21 Dec. 1952’, p. 2.

<sup>454</sup> *Ibid.*; interview with Cabdalla Maxamed Cabdi, Nairobi, 28 April 2016. The square, located near Kismaayo police station, was named after Maxamed Jaamac after independence.

<sup>455</sup> Interviews with Cabdalla Maxamed Cabdi, Nairobi, 28 April 2016, and Cabdi Caziiz Maaxamed Maxamuud, Nairobi, 26 April 2016.

were weakened by the Kismaayo crisis.<sup>456</sup> This was indicative of the pressure that was being put on the supporters of the SYL, some of whom deserted the party. Kismaayo's Xarti/Dhulbahante, for example, formerly staunch supporters of the SYL, shifted their allegiance to the African Union and expressed their willingness to cooperate with the Italian authorities. The Italian records also reveal that individuals from the Xarti/Dhulbahante clan were prominent among those who provided information about the perpetrators of the Kismaayo disturbances of 1 August.<sup>457</sup>

At the end of September, the Italian authorities had completed their investigations. Charges were filed against 170 people, accused of various crimes connected with the Kismaayo riot. Of these people, 159, including 32 women, were incarcerated without trial.<sup>458</sup> The SYL claimed that dozens among the accused were tortured during their incarceration, and that some of them were forced to drink seawater by the Italian *carabinieri* in Kismaayo's central prison.<sup>459</sup> Several young women, who were pregnant at the time of the arrest, were reported to have given birth whilst in prison; according to oral testimonies, one of these women named her new-born girl *Agosto* (August), in honour of the riot.<sup>460</sup>

The Italian authorities in Kismaayo were keen to take the most strident action against the SYL, but the Administration in Mogadishu would not allow the

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<sup>456</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 96, f. 777, Joviero to Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, 'Bollettino Informazioni relativo al mese di settembre 1952', 29 September 1952, p. 2.

<sup>457</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 96, f. 777, Joviero to Sezione Operazioni-Addestramento-Ordinamento del Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, 'Bollettino Informazioni relativo al mese di ottobre 1952', 31 October 1952, p. 1.

<sup>458</sup> ASUSCC, s. 1167.19, Comando Generale dell'Arma dei Carabinieri, Ufficio Situazione, 'Rapporto', 7 October 1952, 7; ASMSCC, FAA, f. 709, a. 1, Ripa di Meana to the Administrator of Somalia, 25 September 1952, p. 10.

<sup>459</sup> ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 3, f. 14, 'Copy of the statement of Abdullahi Issa, Representative of the SYL, to the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 21 Dec. 1952', p. 2.

<sup>460</sup> Interviews with Cabdalla Maxamed Cabdi, Nairobi, 28 April 2016, and Cabdi Caziiz Maaxamed Maxamuud, Nairobi, 26 April 2016.

banning of the party, which they considered would have been counterproductive. Nevertheless, this did not prevent local Italian administrators in Lower Jubba from punishing the SYL in every means under their power. The League's larger branches in Kismaayo, Jamaame, Afmadoow, and Jilib, along with several other centres in Lower Jubba were closed down under local orders. Even in Mogadishu, the SYL were expelled from their headquarters by the Italian Administration.<sup>461</sup> Although the Acting Secretary of UNACS offered to mediate following the riots, the offer was declined by the Italian Administrator, Giovanni Fornari, who refused to liaise with the leaders of the SYL until near the end of 1952. Although Fornari 'admitted privately that the Administration had perhaps acted with unnecessary severity', he declined to take any steps to remedy the situation, leaving Italian officials in Kismaayo to take their revenge.<sup>462</sup> The trial for the Kismaayo massacre only began in the spring of 1953 and ended the following August. Fifty people, including eight women, were eventually sentenced to prison; fifty-five people, who had already served over one year in jail, were acquitted.<sup>463</sup>

The Kismaayo crisis had far-reaching consequences, not only locally but also in Mogadishu. The Italian Administration used the crisis to co-opt the 'moderates' and isolate the 'extremists' within the Somali Youth League – moderation and extremism being measured depending on the degree of willingness to cooperate with the Italians.<sup>464</sup> Antonio Morone has argued that this strategy marked a turning point in the 'adjustment path' toward cooperation between the SYL and the Italian Administration, ultimately smoothing the way

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<sup>461</sup> ASMSCC, 545, AFIS, Documenti Riservati, 'Stralcio di reclamo della SYL all'ONU', 1952.

<sup>462</sup> TNA, FO 371/102561, 'Annual Report on the Trusteeship Territory of Somalia under Italian Administration for 1952, p. 2.

<sup>463</sup> ASUSCC, s. 1167.19, Ripa di Meana to Comando Generale dell'Arma dei Carabinieri, 8 September 1953; 'Copia conforme dell'originale del dispositivo di sentenza della Corte di Assise della Somalia in Chisimaio', 2 September 1953.

<sup>464</sup> ASUSCC, s. 1167.19, Comando Generale dell'Arma dei Carabinieri, Ufficio Situazione, 'Rapporto', n.d., 1; ASUSCC, s. 1167.19, Ripa di Meana to Comando Generale dell'Arma dei Carabinieri, 15 December 1952, p. 2.

toward the handover, in 1960, to an SYL leadership that was more moderate, and hence more compliant.<sup>465</sup> At the local level, the Kismaayo crisis revived and deepened the conflict between the Ogaadeen and the Xarti/Majeerteen. Further tensions over the respective zones of territorial influence arose between the two clans in the area north of Kismaayo in March 1953, leading to more clashes.<sup>466</sup> Over the following months, the Ogaadeen attempted to pressure the Italian authorities to ‘punish’ the Majeerteen – whom the Italians saw as staunch SYL supporters – by confining them to their ‘original area’ and thus halting their ‘persistent expansion’ north of Kismaayo.<sup>467</sup> By the end of the summer, though, the situation had normalized, after the Ogaadeen gave a ‘convincing demonstration’ of their ‘weight and rights’ in Kismaayo – as the Italian officer in charge of the local military post put it.<sup>468</sup> It was agreed by the Italian authorities that the Ogaadeen would exercise the function of ‘undisputed arbiters’ in the relationships between ‘local races’ in Lower Jubba, and that, from then on, there was to be only one *Suldaan* in Kismaayo: Cali Axmed Magan of the Ogaadeen/Maxamed Subeer. This example is emblematic of how the Italian Administration sought to assert its authority over the Trans-Jubba periphery by acknowledging, and thereby strengthening, the position of those groups who were powerful enough to control territory and people and, therefore, useful to the Italian Administration. The link between clanship and territory became stronger as a result.

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<sup>465</sup> Morone, *Ultima colonia*, p. 90.

<sup>466</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 124, f. 957, Joviero to Sezione Operazioni-Addestramento-Ordinamento del Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, ‘Bollettino Informazioni relativo al mese di marzo 1953, enclosure n° 1, 31 March 1953, p. 2.

<sup>467</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 124, f. 957, Joviero to Sezione Operazioni-Addestramento-Ordinamento del Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, ‘Bollettino Informazioni relativo al mese di luglio 1953, enclosure n° 1, 28 July 1953, p. 3.

<sup>468</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 124, f. 957, Joviero to Sezione Operazioni-Addestramento-Ordinamento del Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, ‘Bollettino Informazioni relativo al mese di settembre 1953, enclosure n° 1, 28 September 1953, p. 2.

### 3.5 The question of 'deegaan'

In this chapter we have examined the dynamics of domination and repression which characterised the first phase of the Italian Trusteeship Administration, and especially their effects in the Jubba Valley. In conclusion, we now need to consider how individuals and groups among the Somalis gradually appropriated the relationships of dependence within which they operated in these years, and how they began to use these relationships to acquire resources and authority. This involves the exercise of what John Lonsdale has termed 'agency in tight corners'.<sup>469</sup>

The Ogaadeen/Majeerteen dispute which raised tensions in Kismaayo District in 1953 was eventually overcome in the lead-up to the first municipal elections in 1954, when a group of SYL leaders were sent from Mogadishu to Lower Jubba to campaign amongst the Xarti and the Ogaadeen. According to an Italian military report, the SYL delegates made a strong appeal for 'racial solidarity' among the Somalis, calling on all Daarood to finally impose themselves and become the arbiters of political and administrative action in the region.<sup>470</sup> Italian officers thought that the SYL delegation was successful in achieving its aim, as 'Daaroodism' – the term used in Italian sources to designate inter-clan solidarity among the members of the Daarood clan family – appeared to be deeply felt and highly effective in mobilizing political action. It is safe to argue, however, that the emergence of a Daarood front in Kismaayo was more a product of the practices of the Italian Trusteeship Administration and of the competition between political parties, rather than the direct consequence of any genealogical solidarity.

As the Jubba Valley became a hotspot of political struggle and violence in the early 1950s, crystallising the Hawiye/Daarood cleavage, tensions between these two clan families in Lower Jubba reverberated in Mogadishu, re-inflaming

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<sup>469</sup> John Lonsdale, 'Agency in Tight Corners: Narrative and Initiative in African History', *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 13, No.1 (2000), pp. 5–16.

<sup>470</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 150, f. 1122, Joviero to Sezione Operazioni-Addestramento-Ordinamento del Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, 'Bollettino Informazioni relativo al mese di febbraio 1954, Allegato n° 1, 28 February 1954, p. 8.



the long-standing competition between Hawiye/Abgaal and Daarood over the control of the Banaadir region. For instance, renewed tensions emerged between these two groups in October 1953, when about seventy Hawiye, who had been hired by a private company to work in the Lower Jubba Province, were sent back to Mogadishu by the authorities in Kismaayo following strong opposition from the local labour force, largely composed of Daarood. This incited Abgaal representatives in Mogadishu to take reprisals by campaigning against the Daarood who worked and lived in what they regarded as ‘Hawiye territory’.<sup>471</sup>

Although it was very infrequent for whole clan families to be in conflict with one another, when members of a clan family resided as *sheegad* in the area of another clan family, tensions between entire clans could arise. This undoubtedly happened in the case of Hawiye and Daarood in Lower Jubba, as Alphonso Castagno has rightly observed.<sup>472</sup> Political competition during successive elections fuelled these tensions between entire clan families both in the Lower and Upper Jubba Provinces, as we will see in the next chapter. As political struggle in the Jubba valley centred on the competition between the SYL and the Xisbiya Digil iyo Mirifle (HDM), the League’s strategy in Upper Jubba was to ‘free’ the most recent Daarood *sheegads* within the Raxanweyn and Dir clans from the HDM’s political tutelage, as Federico Battera has noted.<sup>473</sup> Conversely, the HDM sought to attract the Hawiye *sheegads* within the Daarood clans in the Lower Jubba Province. In this way, the *sheegad* issue acquired a new political dimension in the 1950s in connection with the competition over land and the definition of ‘tribal territories’, especially during elections.

The Somali term *deegaan* is crucial for understanding these dynamics. Often translated as ‘land tenure’, *deegaan* is, in fact, a concept that encompasses the intertwined notions of livelihood security, group identity, and political

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<sup>471</sup> AUSSME, I-2, b. 124, f. 957, Joviero to Sezione Operazioni-Addestramento-Ordinamento del Comando Corpo di Sicurezza della Somalia, ‘Bollettino Informazioni relative al mese di ottobre 1953, Allegato n° 1, 31 October 1953, p. 2.

<sup>472</sup> Castagno, ‘Somali Republic’, p. 518.

<sup>473</sup> Federico Battera, ‘Islam e Stato, territorio e uso del suolo in Somalia: dal colonialismo all’età contemporanea’, *Storia urbana*, 25, No.95 (2001), pp. 93–117 (p. 109).

strength.<sup>474</sup> *Deegaan* ‘connotes exclusive control by a group sharing similar language, identity or clan affiliation of a land area and the natural resources found there. [...] *Deegaan* is synonymous with entitlement, security, usage and identity.’<sup>475</sup> The *sheegad* relationship was a means through which access to *deegaan* could be socially negotiated without resorting to violence. However, as competition over *deegaan* increased, so did tensions between ‘patrons’ and *sheegad*. Not only was ownership and control of *deegaan* at the core of local tensions and conflicts in the Somalia-Kenya borderland, but, through control of *deegaan*, clans had more political power and could claim greater representation at the state’s centre. As we shall see in the next chapter, competition over *deegaan* played a crucial role in the first general elections in 1956.

### 3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the complex ways in which the Somalia-Kenya borderland became a hotspot of dissent and violence during the first years of the Italian Trusteeship Administration, as the margins of the Trust Territory were being actively constructed as margins. The problems of sovereignty, entangled territorialities, and political dissent were particularly acute in the borderland, therefore the Italian Administration sought to make its power more heavily felt there than elsewhere in the Trust Territory. As a result of the combination of governmental practices and local agency, genealogical and territorial polarisation became intertwined phenomena, affecting political fault-lines and allegiances during the Trusteeship period. This was especially apparent near the junction of the Somalia-Kenya and Somalia-Ethiopia frontiers and in Kismaayo. In these areas, political allegiances were far from being simplistically determined by

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<sup>474</sup> Ibrahim Farah, Abdirashid Hussein and Jeremy Lind, ‘Deegaan, Politics and War in Somalia’, in *Scarcity and Surfeit: The Ecology of Africa’s Conflicts*, ed. by Kathryn Sturman and Jeremy Lind (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2002), pp. 320–56.

<sup>475</sup> Farah, Hussein and Lind, ‘Deegaan’, p. 343.

genealogical fault-lines; rather, they were shaped by long-standing governmental practices and, most importantly, by the lived experience of violence.

In its early years, the Italian Administration attempted to assert its power and authority by rewarding Italy's clients amongst clan chiefs, former soldiers and irregulars, and by supporting 'pro-Italian' political parties, while crushing the nationalist movement. Then, following the Kismaayo riot of August 1952 and its violent aftermath, the Italian Administration gradually began to co-opt 'moderates' from within the Somali Youth League to make them useful allies. Meanwhile, the Italian officials in the Jubba Valley exploited and fomented inter-communal rivalries for the purpose of manipulating Somali politics to their own advantage. They adopted the strategy of empowering those groups who were visible and powerful enough to appropriate territory as a means for asserting the Administration's authority and advancing Italian interests in the borderland.

This *modus operandi* was to play a crucial role in defining the modes of political participation in the second phase of the Italian Trusteeship Administration, after 1953, when outright repression gave way to political co-optation. As we shall see in the next chapter, electoral procedures further strengthened the interplay of struggles related to *deegaan*, clanship, and political allegiances, closing down space for political mobilisation and radical social change in the process of nation building. This generated new tensions, ultimately undermining the legitimacy of the emerging nation state in the Somalia-Kenya borderland. In this troubled context, however, new possibilities for agency also emerged, especially for those Somalis who could exploit the local affordances of cross-border trade and competing sovereignties.

## 4 ELECTORAL POLITICS AND THE BORDER, 1954-1960

### 4.1 Cold War politics and the SYL

In the midst of Somalia's political tumult of the early 1950s, the global Cold War had a significant impact on the Italian Trusteeship Administration, as it prompted the reconfiguration of political order across north-eastern Africa and the Middle East. This began in May 1953, with the signing of the first of two defence agreements between the Ethiopian and the US governments, giving Ethiopia access to armaments while the USA were able to use bases in the Horn of Africa.<sup>476</sup> In 1954, Britain then transferred the Somali-inhabited Haud and Reserved Area to Ethiopian control, an act that effectively recognised the Addis Ababa government as the West's guarantor of the stability of the Horn. At the same time, the creation of the Baghdad Pact, continuing tensions between Israel and Egypt, and the American refusal to provide the Egyptian government with arms on Gamal Abd el-Nasser's terms, led to a serious deterioration in Washington's relations with Cairo. In consequence, Egypt moved toward the Soviet bloc, signing an arms deal with the Czechoslovaks in the autumn of 1955. Earlier that same year, in April 1955, twenty-nine African and Asian countries met at the first Afro-Asian Non-Aligned Conference, in Bandung, to discuss the possible futures of the postcolonial world.

News of all of these developments was now broadcast to the eastern Africa region by *Sawt al-'Arab*, the 'Voice of the Arabs' – a Cairo-based Arabic-language radio service that was launched on the first anniversary of the Egyptian revolution, in July 1953. From the very beginning, as James Brennan has noted, broadcasts from the 'Voice of the Arabs' were widely listened to across East Africa, helping to collectively popularize a new political vocabulary of anti-

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<sup>476</sup> Jeffrey A. Lefebvre, *Arms for the Horn: U.S. Security Policy in Ethiopia and Somalia, 1953-1991* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, c1991), pp. 55–74.

colonialism and pan-Islamism.<sup>477</sup> This had considerable influence on the emerging nationalisms of the region, not least in Mogadishu and throughout Somalia. From 1952 onwards, ties to Nasser's Egypt, in particular, were strengthened, first with the establishment of an Egyptian mission composed of teachers from al-Azhar University in Mogadishu, and then with Egyptian assistance being given to the development of numerous private schools in Somalia and scholarships being awarded to hundreds of young Somalis to travel to Egypt for education in schools and universities.<sup>478</sup> In all of this, Cairo exploited its position inside UNACCS to enhance its influence over Somalia's politics.<sup>479</sup>

These shifts in power balance at the regional and global levels reverberated on Somali politics, progressively augmenting the influence of external powers and creating divisions within the nationalist party. As Somalia passed the half-way mark under the Trusteeship toward its planned independence, the SYL leadership increasingly sought to align itself with the Italian Administration in order to win elections and more readily access positions of political responsibility. In the first general elections, completed in February 1956, the SYL won a decisive victory, securing 43 of the 60 Somali seats (a further 10 seats being allotted to the European and Asian communities). Of the remaining 17 Somali seats, the Xisbiya Digil iyo Mirifle (HDM) took 13, while the Somali

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<sup>477</sup> James R. Brennan, 'Radio Cairo and the Decolonization of East Africa, 1953-64', in *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives*, ed. by Christopher J. Lee (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), pp. 173–95.

<sup>478</sup> Hersi, 'The Arab Factor in Somali History', pp. 288–89; Antonio M. Morone, 'Islamic Reformism and al-Azhar Mission in Somalia during the Nineteen-Fifties', *The Annual Review of Islam in Africa*, 12-13 (2015-2016), pp. 70–76.

<sup>479</sup> For more on this, see Antonio Morone, 'Somali Independence and Its Political Connections with Nasser's Egypt', in *The Horn of Africa Since the 1960s: Local and International Politics Intertwined*, ed. by Aleksis Ylonen and Jan Zahorik (London: Routledge, 2017).

Democratic Party (born out of the merger of six Samaale parties) secured 3 seats, and the Mareexaan Union one (in the border constituency of Luuq).<sup>480</sup>

Although these elections were officially heralded as a great success, the voting procedure was one of indirect elections based on the traditional local clan assembly, the *shir*: no voters' roll had been compiled, and so there was no register of voters.<sup>481</sup> This opened the door to a range of irregularities and undemocratic practices, including the pre-emptive negotiation between parties in certain constituencies to 'settle' the outcome prior to the polls. The first all-Somali Cabinet formed by the SYL leader, Cabdulaahi Ciise Maxamuud, in May 1956 was more the product of political deal-making than it was the outcome of electoral politics. In the meanwhile, Somalis were progressively promoted to posts of responsibility within the governmental system, the 'Somalisation' of the administrative service being completed in 1955 and that of the police in 1956.

As the target date for independence approached, the Italian Administration adopted an increasingly conciliatory stance toward the SYL, while the League retreated from its anti-Italian attitude. This marriage of convenience, however, created further tensions within the nationalist party. These internal difficulties were greatly aggravated by growing popular discontent with the performance of the SYL government: the SYL had made too many promises in the elections of 1956 that it now found difficult to deliver.<sup>482</sup> A severe economic slump, which followed the 1956 Suez crisis, made matters far worse, as did the mounting uncertainty around the international politics of the region in the context of the Cold War. This already grim situation further deteriorated on 16 April 1957, with the murder in Mogadishu of the Egyptian representative to the Advisory Council, Muhammad Kamal al-Din Salah. A Somali student and former scholarship-holder in Cairo was later found guilty of the murder. Although the youngster claimed that he had acted out of personal vengeance, allegations were spread that the murder

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<sup>480</sup> Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana della Somalia, *Le prime elezioni politiche in Somalia: 1956* [a cura di Guido Natali] (Mogadishu: Stamperia del Governo, 1957), pp. 245–48.

<sup>481</sup> Alphonso A. Castagno, *Somalia*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, International Conciliation, No.522 (1959), pp. 338–400 (p. 356).

<sup>482</sup> TNA, FO 371/125678, British Consulate, Mogadishu, to FO, 10 July 1957.

had been politically motivated, and both the Italian Administration and the SYL government were publicly accused of having been involved in what many saw as a political assassination.<sup>483</sup>

The SYL's annual congress, held in May 1957, reflected the climate of disaffection and discord then enveloping the government and the majority party. Widespread discontent with the ruling elite within the SYL, whom many rank-and-file supporters considered to be too subservient to the wider needs of the Italian administration and too complicit in the daily workings of the Government, provoked sweeping changes in the hierarchy of the party. Xaaji Maxamed Xuseen was now elected as President of the League. Though he had formerly led the party, Xaaji Maxamed had left Somalia in 1952 to take up a scholarship in Cairo, where he had remained for five years. During his time in Cairo, Xaaji Maxamed was a constant thorn in the side of both the Italian Administration and the SYL government in Mogadishu, publishing numerous critical press articles and making regular broadcasts on *Sawt al-'Arab*.<sup>484</sup> Perplexed by the complications this dramatic change in the party leadership created, the senior Italian Administrator of Somalia, Enrico Anzilotti, described the SYL as simultaneously comprising two quite different parties – the first a 'moderate' ruling party, and the second an agitating opposition party which espoused a revolutionary rhetoric.<sup>485</sup> The confrontation within the League reflected different viewpoints on Somalia's position in regional politics and in relation to the East-West rivalry of the Cold War, all of which was further fuelled by a variety of clan-based grievances. In his first speech in Mogadishu as the new SYL President, Xaaji Maxamed Xuseen caught the mood of these disputes but tried to unite his supporters behind a clearly

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<sup>483</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 89, f. 281, Italian Embassy, Cairo, to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 3 October 1957; TNA, FO 371/125678, Kendall to Watson, 14 October 1957; TNA, FO 371/131458, Kendall to Selwyn Lloyd, 13 November 1958, enclosure, 'Particulars', f.12.Morone, *Ultima colonia*, p. 101.

<sup>484</sup> Urbano, 'Imagining the Nation', p. 165.

<sup>485</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III (1948-60), I vers., b. 90, fasc. 282., Enrico Anzilotti, Administrator of Somalia, to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1 March 1958, 5.

articulated position, declaring that ‘he intended to try to eliminate capitalistic influence in the Government’ and proclaiming Greater Somalia to be the central policy of the SYL.<sup>486</sup> Xaaji Maxamed Xuseen stressed the importance of Muslim unity, and then, to the great alarm of observers from the West, he championed Somalia’s participation in the Bandung movement for Afro-Asian solidarity as an alternative to the relationship with Italy and her Cold War allies.

To the Somali Government and the principal Western powers (Italy, Britain, France, and the United States), Xaaji Maxamed Xuseen’s promotion within the SYL was highly problematic, all the more so because he could not simply be dismissed as a hot-headed agitator or an Egyptian pawn. As the British Consul in Mogadishu wrote in March 1958, the SYL President was ‘no empty demagogue or rabble-rouser’, but ‘a man with a mission; a strong personality and a gifted orator’, who appealed both to the intellectual and to the crowd.<sup>487</sup> Xaaji Maxamed Xuseen’s influence was such that the Government was on the verge of collapse and an open split in the League seemed imminent. This, however, was narrowly avoided, as in May 1958 the SYL Central Committee voted for the expulsion of Xaaji Maxamed from the party.<sup>488</sup> According to British sources, former Fascist official Gualtiero Benardelli (see Chapter 2) was ultimately ‘responsible for the rough and ready tactics used to throw the President of the SYL out of office’.<sup>489</sup> In June, the SYL Congress elected Aadan Cabdulle president of the League, by a bare majority of 44 to 42 votes. Shortly after his expulsion, Xaaji Maxamed Xuseen created a new party, the Great Somalia League (GSL).

The 1959 general elections were of paramount importance, as the term of office for the members of the new Legislative Assembly was established at five years, carrying Somalia into independence. The opposition parties vehemently

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<sup>486</sup> TNA, FO 371/125678, British Consulate, Mogadishu to Foreign Office, 9 December 1957.

<sup>487</sup> TNA, FO 371/131462, British Consulate, Mogadishu, to Foreign Office, 12 March 1958.

<sup>488</sup> TNA, FO 371/131465, Bruce to Foreign Office, 2 September 1958.

<sup>489</sup> TNA, FO 371/131458, Kendall to Selwyn Lloyd, 13 November 1958, enclosure, ‘Particulars’, f. 5.



protested against this provision and against the new electoral law, which sanctioned the distribution of seats before the vote in the absence of a population census and an electoral roll. The Greater Somalia League and the Somali National Union (SNU), formerly the Banaadir Youth Union, formed an alliance with other opposition parties to boycott the elections. A few days before the poll, street fighting occurred in Mogadishu between the police and supporters of the Great Somalia League and the National Somali Union. The police carried out mass arrests of GSL and SNU members (281 people in total), including the presidents of both parties. This provoked further clashes, during which two people were killed and more than twenty were injured by the police.<sup>490</sup>

The elections themselves were little more than a formality. Voting took place in only twelve out of the thirty districts of the Trust Territory: in the remaining eighteen districts, the SYL had been the only party to present a list – meaning that the SYL secured an absolute majority in the Assembly (57 seats out of 90) before the elections took place. The opposition, with the exception of seven members of the Xisbiya – which had meanwhile changed its name to Xisbiya Dastuur Mustaqiil Somaaliya (HDMS) – and two Liberal Party leaders, did not participate in the elections. The SYL took 83 seats, while two of the seven HDMS candidates were elected, along with two Liberal Party candidates.<sup>491</sup> The SYL's huge majority was strengthened further when, in the weeks following the elections, one HDMS deputy and the two Liberal Party deputies left the opposition to join the SYL ranks.<sup>492</sup>

Following a heated debate among high-ranking officials, Italy chose not to unreservedly endorse the 1959 general elections as a complete success nor to adopt a 'purely negative' stance toward the Somali Government, especially because the official report on the elections compiled by the Ministry of Internal

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<sup>490</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 221, fasc. 764, Jannuzzi to Italian Embassies, Addis Ababa et al., 3 March 1959; Jannuzzi, 'Appunto', 10 March 1959; and Franca to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 28 April 1959, 3–5; TNA, FO 371/138308, Kendall to Selwyn Lloyd, 26 February 1959, 2–3.

<sup>491</sup> Castagno, 'Somali Republic', p. 528

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*

Affairs had identified circumstances for which the Administration itself could be blamed.<sup>493</sup> Although Italian diplomats unofficially admitted that voting had been marred by intrigues, pressures, abstentions, and conflicts, they chose to ascribe the ‘mistakes’ and the ‘excesses’ that had taken place during the elections to ‘the relative inexperience of the Government and the Somali people’ with democracy.<sup>494</sup> Denying any responsibility and blaming the supposed African unfamiliarity with democracy – no matter how limited the democratic exercise had been in Somalia – was the easy way out.

The 1959 general elections signified the closure of Somalia’s political space, as SYL dominance now displaced the tumultuous multi-partyism of the previous years. The opposition parties petitioned various UN bodies to demand that the election be rerun before independence, which was planned for 1 July 1960. However, despite their unease with the processes of the election, the Italian Administration were now hemmed in by Cold War politics. Fearing that destabilizing (Egyptian and Communist) forces could make in-roads in Somalia and threaten Western interests in the region if a second poll was allowed, Italy, Britain, France, and the United States, with the tacit endorsement of the UN, all adopted a pragmatic and utilitarian stance. In deciding to bolster the position of the SYL, the Western allies brought Somalia to its independence knowing that its new national government lacked popular legitimacy and depended on external support.

## **4.2 The 1956 elections in the Lower Jubba Province**

The year 1955 marked a turning point in the political trajectory of the Italian Trusteeship Administration. Following an unflattering report by the 1954 UN

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<sup>493</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 221, fasc. 764, Jannuzzi to Italy’s Permanent Representative to the UN, 23 April 1959, enclosure, Governo della Somalia – Ministero per gli affari Interni, ‘Relazione Elezioni Politiche 1959’.

<sup>494</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 242, fasc. 828, Ortona to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9 April 1959, 3; and Ortona to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22 April 1959, 2–4.

Visiting Mission – ‘a bad-tempered and patronising document, but which contained too much truth to be ignored’, according to the British Consul in Mogadishu – a new team was appointed at the head of the Administration.<sup>495</sup> The new Administrator, Enrico Anzilotti, was a career diplomat and had no colonial experience. Concerned only with performing a task that, apparently, was ‘not to his liking’, his policy was one of withdrawal, ‘with a view to putting on to the Somalis as much responsibility as rapidly as possible’.<sup>496</sup> Towards the end of 1955, Mr Anzilotti declared that by June 1956 the whole of the administration of the interior of the territory would be in Somali hands and that the new Territorial Council due to be elected in February 1956 would begin life as a fully-fledged Legislative Assembly.

Although the Trusteeship Administration’s policy shifted from repression to selective co-optation, promoting the gradual opening of senior posts in all branches of the civil service to Somali officials, Italian settlers kept a firm grip on agricultural land and Somalia’s economy. In 1954, AFIS launched a seven-year development plan; this provided for a total expenditure of some 4 million US dollars, over half of which was meant for agricultural and livestock development.<sup>497</sup> The principal export asset, however, remained the banana industry. This was controlled by the Italians, who had been running it as an Italian state monopoly since the 1930s.<sup>498</sup> A 1953 technical report commissioned by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that the Italian government was

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<sup>495</sup> Great Britain, *Confidential Print: Africa, 1834-1966*, Further correspondence respecting Africa (General): part 10 (London, HMSO); FO 403/479, Gethin to Selwyn Lloyd, ‘Somalia: Annual Review for 1955’, 25 March 1956, p. 124.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>497</sup> Lewis, *Modern History*, p. 143.

<sup>498</sup> This topic occupies a conspicuous place in the scholarly literature on Italy’s colonial legacy in Somalia: Mark Karp, *The Economics of Trusteeship in Somalia* (Boston: Boston University Press, 1960); Donatella Strangio, *The Reasons for Underdevelopment: The Case of Decolonisation in Somaliland* (Berlin: Springer, 2012); Tripodi, *Colonial Legacy*, pp. 94–9; Umberto Triulzi, ‘L’Italia e l’economia somala dal 1950 a oggi’, *Africa: Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell’Istituto italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente*, 26 (1971), pp. 443–62.

aggravating the precarious state of Somalia's economy by exclusively prioritizing the cultivation of bananas destined for export to Italy for 'political reasons'.<sup>499</sup> A draft bill for the abolition of the Royal Banana Monopoly Company, *Regia Azienda Monopolio Banane* (RAMB), created in 1935, was therefore presented to the Italian Finance Minister in July 1954.<sup>500</sup> However, the ministerial apparatus managed to block the bill. RAMB only lost the 'r' for 'royal' (the Italian monarchy had been replaced with a Republic in 1946) and became AMB (*Azienda Monopolio Banane*). In 1955, the Banana Monopoly Company, under the protection of the Ministry of Finance, stipulated a new agreement with three associations of farmers in southern Somalia, including the Jubba Agriculturalists Association, *Società Agricoltori Giuba* (SAG); the Banana Monopoly Company undertook to purchase increasing quantities of bananas each year until 1960 at prices fixed by the agreement.<sup>501</sup> The Company's managing director, Edoardo Bottini, visited Somalia in the autumn of 1956.<sup>502</sup> Bottini, former principal private secretary to Giulio Andreotti, then Minister of Finance, had a reputation for wheeling and dealing; he was later accused of taking a bribe for each kilogram of bananas imported from Lower Jubba to Italy.<sup>503</sup> During his visit to Somalia, Bottini made a tour of the Italian farms in Lower Jubba and assured SAG members in Kismaayo that his visit, which had been 'encouraged by the Italian government and particularly by Minister Andreotti', was the best demonstration of Rome's willingness to support Italian banana producers.<sup>504</sup>

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<sup>499</sup> Ernesto Rossi, 'La lunga vita delle concessioni provvisorie', *L'Astrolabio*, 1, No.9 (1963), pp. 21–24 (p. 22).

<sup>500</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>501</sup> Ernesto Rossi, 'Ancora fascisti in Somalia', *L'Astrolabio* 1, No.7 (1963), pp. 15–22, (p. 20).

<sup>502</sup> 'A tutela dei produttori della Somalia: Importanti dichiarazioni del Consigliere Delegato dell'A.M.B. sulla continuità dell'attività bananiera', *Il Corriere della Somalia*, 1 December 1956, p. 1.

<sup>503</sup> Massimo Franco, *Andreotti: La vita di un uomo politico, la storia di un'epoca* (Milan: Mondadori, 2008), p. 153.

<sup>504</sup> 'Il dott. Bottini Consigliere Delegato dell'AMB fra gli agricoltori del Basso Giuba', *Il Corriere della Somalia*, 4 December 1956, p. 2.

The Banana Monopoly Company had a twofold purpose. On the one hand, the weaker Somalia's economy became as the result of unsustainable one-crop farming, the more easily Italian settlers would obtain the support of the future Somali government to perpetuate their privilege after the end of the Italian Administration. If banana exports had suddenly stopped, several thousand Somali workers, already suffering from very poor working conditions, would have lost their jobs, and Somalia would have been deprived of its main source of revenue, which was indispensable for paying for the industrial imports (mainly from Italy) the nascent country desperately needed. On the other hand, the banana economy could be used as a playing card in the Cold-War context to prevent communist countries from penetrating the Horn of Africa.<sup>505</sup>

By 1957, about half of the Trust Territory's revenue came from direct grants from Italy and most of the rest from Italian-subsidised exports of bananas.<sup>506</sup> Although 'this was an arrangement which [...] satisfied for the time being many different interests' – as Ioan Lewis put it –, this was also a deliberate policy of underdevelopment and economic dependence.<sup>507</sup> Moreover, with the revival of the banana export industry in the 1950s, land disputes became increasingly frequent, particularly in Jamaame District, where multiple incidents occurred in the spring of 1955.<sup>508</sup> In this area, about four thousand people had been allegedly 'deprived of their own land in favour of Italian individuals or Italian private companies' since the beginning of the Italian Trusteeship

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<sup>505</sup> ASDMAE ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AAPP, Uff. III (1948-60), I vers., busta 96, fasc. 293, Alberto Folchi, Italian Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 'Appunto per S.E. il Ministro', 11 March 1958.

<sup>506</sup> 'Bananas and influence in Somalia', *The Economist*, 16 February 1957, p. 542.

<sup>507</sup> Lewis, *Modern History*, p. 143.

<sup>508</sup> ASMSCC, s. 545, Relazioni AFIS, vol. 3, Gibelli to Spinelli, 'Promemoria', 16 April 1955; ASMSCC, s. 545, Relazioni AFIS, vol. 2, Gibelli to Secretary General of the Italian Trusteeship Administration, 'Relazione riservata – mese di aprile 1955', 12 May 1955.

Administration, according to an official statement by Cabdulaahi Ciise.<sup>509</sup> Recently declassified documents from the Historical-Diplomatic Archives of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirm the veracity of the land grabbing accusation, although they do not provide exact figures on the number of people who were dispossessed.<sup>510</sup> These factors, linked to Lower Jubba's political economy, influenced the conduct of the first Somali general elections in 1956 and, more generally, the way of doing politics in the Province.<sup>511</sup>

Lower Jubba provides a good case study to investigate how the political economy of decolonisation conditioned access to the political arena during the 1956 elections, and to examine the key role that the issue of *deegaan* played in the electoral process. The Province was divided into three electoral districts: Kismaayo, Margherita-Gelib (Jamaame-Jilib), and Afmadoow. This region was – and still is – characterised by the interlocking of different socio-economic, ecological and cultural systems encompassing nomadic pastoralism (from beyond Kismaayo's sand dunes up to Afmadoow), agro-pastoralism, sedentary and plantation agriculture (along the Jubba River), and the coastal economy gravitating around Kismaayo. This economic geography corresponded to an equally composite social setting, as we saw in Chapter 1.

Throughout the summer and autumn of 1955, indirect elections, which took the form of *shirarka* (plural of *shir*, the traditional clan assembly), were held outside municipal districts. People in rural areas simultaneously voted for the renewal of their customary leaders, who would sit in the local District Council,

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<sup>509</sup> ASDMAE ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AAPP, Uff. III (1948-60), I vers., busta 3, fasc. 14, 'Copy of the statement of Abdullahi Issa, Representative of the S.Y.L., to the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 21 December 1952', p. 3.

<sup>510</sup> ASDMAE ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AAPP, Uff. III (1948-60), I vers., busta 246, fasc. 835, Prisco de Vito to Pio de Vito, undated; Pio de Vito to Luigi Bozzi, 5 April 1952; Luigi Bozzi to Pio de Vito, undated; 'Bollettino Ufficiale del Governo della Somalia Italiana'; Piero Franca, AFIS Secretary General, to Guido Borga, Director General for Somalia's Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 3 April 1958.

<sup>511</sup> This is explored in greater detail in Anna Bruzzone, 'State Formation and the Political Economy of Decolonisation in Somalia's Lower Jubba Province (1950-1960)', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, in press.

and to appoint the electoral representatives ('great electors') who would vote, together with people in municipal districts, in the election of the Legislative Assembly on 29 February 1956. As *sheegad* people had no political voice in the *shir*, they had no choice but to abide by the will of their patrons, who collectively selected the clan's representatives in the District Council and the district's electoral representatives. Moreover, the territorial demarcation of constituencies as well as the recognition of the groups entitled to vote in each *shir* – and, consequently, the territorial distribution of seats – were based roughly on the 'Italian map' of 'tribes', that is to say on the mapping of the territorial distribution of clans – 'tribes' in most Italian sources – that the Italian colonial administration had created.<sup>512</sup>

The 1956 elections, therefore, muddled up party politics with clan politics. In the electoral districts of Kismaayo and Jamaame-Jilib, characterised by a composite social environment, political parties competed for territorial control. Three parties presented candidate lists in Kismaayo, namely the Somali Youth League, the Xisbiya Digil iyo Mirifle, and the Bajuni Youth Fikirini party; two parties ran candidates in Jamaame-Jilib, the Xisbiya and the SYL. In Afmadoow, dominated by the Daarood/Ogaadeen clan, only one list of SYL candidates was presented.<sup>513</sup> The Trusteeship Administration's decision to adjust the stipend of the customary chiefs elected in each *shir* proportionally to the number of people participating in the election induced widespread irregularities.<sup>514</sup> Most of the *shirarka* held in Kismaayo and Afmadoow in September 1955 were annulled, because of the inflated number of registered participants.<sup>515</sup> Only a few assemblies, however, were re-held. In the great majority of cases, the Administration reached an agreement with local clan groups based on low estimates of the number of participants in each *shir*, thereby distorting the

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<sup>512</sup> Interview with Maxamed Maxamuud Ibraahim 'Goodir', Mogadishu, 13 April 2016.

<sup>513</sup> Amministrazione Fiduciaria, *Prime elezioni*, p. 206.

<sup>514</sup> ASMSCC, s. 545, Relazioni AFIS, vol. 1, Ripa di Meana, Chief Commissioner of Police, to the Administrator of Somalia, 12 September 1955, p. 5.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*, Ripa di Meana to Administrator of Somalia, 10 October 1955, p. 4.

numerical weight of the vote each electoral representative would cast, and, consequently, the number of seats assigned to each constituency.<sup>516</sup>

In various ways, the selection process for the 1956 elections was rigged. In Lower Jubba, the SYL limited its involvement in the designation of the District Council members, while making every effort to secure the highest possible number of electoral representatives voting for the party. The SYL reached a compromise with the chiefs, who were so keen to be re-appointed (and stay on the Administration's payroll), that they would willingly abstain from interfering in the selection of electoral representatives.<sup>517</sup> In the district of Jamaame-Jilib, the SYL and the HDM struck a deal: the Xisbiya would get the District Council members, while the electoral representatives would go to the League.<sup>518</sup> Once the *shirarka* had been concluded and the electoral representatives designated, both parties sought to consolidate their positions. In December 1955, prominent SYL leaders, including Xaaji Muuse Boqor (Daarood/Majeerteen), toured the Lower Jubba Province. Having been reassured by the electoral representatives that Kismaayo district's votes would go to the SYL, the visiting delegation managed to secure the nomination of a member of the League from Mogadishu, a Daarood/Majeerteen, as one of the two candidates at the top of the party list who would take the two seats assigned to Kismaayo in the Legislative Assembly.<sup>519</sup>

In some cases, those who were identified by party committees, due to political calculations, as suitable candidates were unwilling to sit in the Legislative Assembly.<sup>520</sup> For instance, Salaad Cabdi Maxamuud (Daarood/Majeerteen/Cismaan Maxamuud), the first candidate on the SYL list in Kismaayo, was initially very reluctant to accept nomination.<sup>521</sup> Salaad had previously served in the BMA's police force and had been convicted of misappropriation of funds. He had later become a trader, following the return of

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<sup>516</sup> *Ibid.*, Ripa di Meana to Administrator of Somalia, 10 December 1955, p. 4.

<sup>517</sup> *Ibid.*, Ripa di Meana to Administrator of Somalia, 11 July 1955, p. 3.

<sup>518</sup> *Ibid.*, Ripa di Meana to Administrator of Somalia, 21 November 1955, p. 4.

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*, Ripa di Meana to Administrator of Somalia, 16 January 1956, p. 4.

<sup>520</sup> Interviews with Maxamed Maxamuud Ibraahim 'Goodir', Mogadishu, 13 April 2016, and Cabdalla Maxamed Cabdi, Nairobi, 28 April 2016.

<sup>521</sup> Amministrazione Fiduciaria, *Prime elezioni*, p. 206.



the Italians, and had been eventually employed by the Italian shipping company Dogliani.<sup>522</sup> According to a well-informed source from Kismaayo, Salaad Cabdi initially thought that his job as a Dogliani employee was better than becoming a member of the Legislative Assembly. Unsure of his future as a political representative, Salaad Cabdi was afraid of losing his job. However, his employer, Dogliani, who was a member of the electoral committee of the Italian Community in Kismaayo for the election of the representatives of minority communities in the Assembly, pushed Salaad to accept the nomination.<sup>523</sup> The rationale was simple: if Salaad Cabdi Maxamuud was elected, Dogliani would have a backer in the Legislative Assembly.<sup>524</sup> Salaad Cabdi was subsequently elected as a Member of the Assembly, and appointed Minister of Financial Affairs in Cabdulaahi Ciise's first government in May 1956. Three years later, following the 1959 general elections, he became Assembly Member for Qardho (Bari region).<sup>525</sup>

The designation of Xuseen Cumar Xasan 'Jiis' (Ogaadeen/Bahgari) as the second candidate on the SYL list in Jamaame-Jilib, also reveals the set of criteria adopted for the selection of candidates.<sup>526</sup> Xuseen Cumar Xasan was a trader. He started his business with a small farm producing grains, and then acquired a big farm in Kamsuuma. All shops and guesthouses in the village belonged to him and the local people worked for him – 'he owned the place', according to a Somali informant.<sup>527</sup> He used to assist Sheekh Nuur, a 'holy man' who lived in Beled Kariim, a small village on the Jubba River's right bank, opposite Jilib. According to a Somali source from Kismaayo, Sheekh Nuur exercised dominating influence over the Bantu people in the area; Xuseen 'Jiis', on his part, arranged and paid for everything the sheikh needed.<sup>528</sup> Xuseen's farms were on Bantu land, which he

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<sup>522</sup> TNA, FO 371/131458, 'Leading personalities in Somalia' enclosed with Kendall to Selwyn Lloyd, 13 November 1958, p. 10.

<sup>523</sup> Interview with Cabdalla Maxamed Cabdi, Nairobi, 28 April 2016.

<sup>524</sup> Interview with Cabdalla Maxamed Cabdi, Nairobi, 25 July 2017.

<sup>525</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III (1948-60), I vers., b. 242, f. 828, 'Prospetto completo deputati eletti nel 1959'.

<sup>526</sup> Amministrazione Fiduciaria, *Prime elezioni*, p. 206.

<sup>527</sup> Interview with Cabdalla Maxamed Cabdi, Nairobi, 21 July 2017.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*

had bought – or, rather, grabbed – using violence. He used to threaten the Gosha – he allegedly killed one of them on his farm – but would also help them with money.<sup>529</sup> According to oral testimonies, clanship did not matter to Xuseen ‘Jiis’: ‘I’m not Ogaadeen, I’m *Jareer*’ [the Somali pejorative term for Gosha] – he would say sarcastically.<sup>530</sup> He wanted the Gosha people, who represented the numerically largest community in the area, to back him, and used his power to this effect. Moreover, he was well known amongst the Italian concessionaires. He worked for them as an agent, looking after their farms in the Jilib area.<sup>531</sup>

The Italian settlers, who feared they would have to leave Somalia after independence and wanted to protect their interests, used their money and influence locally to convince the Somalis to support the candidates who were most likely to ‘work for the Italians’ in the Assembly in Mogadishu. Xuseen ‘Jiis’ was elected as a member of the Legislative Assembly in the electoral district of Jamaame-Jilib in 1956 and was re-elected (rather, re-appointed as there was only one list of candidates) in Jilib in 1959.<sup>532</sup> He was one of the first Somalis to register a farm with the Jubba Agriculturalists Association (SAG) in 1957 and to be assigned a banana export quota (2,400 quintals).<sup>533</sup> The first candidate on the SYL list in Jamaame-Jilib, Sheekh Cabdi ‘Faghi’ Cadow (Dir/Biimaal), was also involved in the local plantation economy.<sup>534</sup> In the Jamaame-Jilib area, the Italians had been relying on the Dir/Biimaal for the provision of labour power since the 1920s and numerous Biimaal worked for the Italians as gangers, ‘*caporali*’. As Sheekh Cabdi’s nephew pointed out, ‘the Italians didn’t touch the Biimaal’, as ‘the *Jareer* worked for the Biimaal. We owned them. When the Italians needed people to work, the Biimaal sent the *Jareer*’.<sup>535</sup>

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<sup>529</sup> Interview with Axmed Cali Culusow, Nairobi, 20 July 2017.

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.*; Interview with Daahir Baashaal, Nairobi, 20 July 2017.

<sup>531</sup> Interview with Cabdalla Maxamed Cabdi, Nairobi, 28 April 2016.

<sup>532</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III (1948-60), I vers., b. 242, f. 828, ‘Prospetto completo deputati eletti nel 1959’.

<sup>533</sup> IAO, CDI, Somalia 3633, Società Agricoltori Giuba, ‘Elenco aziende registrate al 31/12/1959’.

<sup>534</sup> Interview with Maxamed Xasan Maxamed ‘Faghi’, Mogadishu, 13 April 2016.

<sup>535</sup> *Ibid.*

It may be argued that this was the rationale behind the selection of candidates: on the one hand, traditional authorities stood behind those party candidates who were well-connected and could act as power-brokers both locally and at the state's centre; on the other hand, those who were identified as suitable candidates, and therefore needed money to buy the chiefs' support, relied on the backing of Italian corporate groups in exchange for protecting Italian interests.<sup>536</sup> Thanks to this tactic, the SYL won all the seats that were allocated to the three electoral districts of Kismaayo, Jamaame-Jilib, and Afmadoow.<sup>537</sup>

### **4.3 The 1958 municipal elections**

Cold War politics drew foreign actors into Somali affairs further during the late 1950s, as east-west competition for influence in the Horn intensified. Far from being a purely a local affair, the municipal elections of October 1958 attracted a great deal of foreign interference. The polls followed months of covert negotiations between Italy, Great Britain, France and the United States regarding the extent of future foreign assistance to Somalia. Between February and May 1958, London and Rome came to an agreement on a joint strategy on Western aid to the Somali Government during the first years after independence. This strategy, which was intended to put pressure on the SYL to renounce radical aspirations and to stay within the Western camp, was then endorsed by France and the USA. Washington, in particular, stressed the need for some form of Western coordination in the public announcement of foreign aid offers, 'to ensure maximum impact on Somali voters' ahead of the municipal elections.<sup>538</sup> Between July and the end of September 1958, the Somali Government thus received formal offers of economic and technical assistance and of support to the cultural sector from the United States and Britain. However, on 12 October, a few days before the municipal elections, the Italian Administrator notified the Somali Prime Minister that Italian aid to Somalia for the first years after independence would

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<sup>536</sup> Interview with Yuusuf Sheekh Cabdi 'Hariiri', Mogadishu, 13 April 2016.

<sup>537</sup> Amministrazione Fiduciaria, *Prime elezioni*, p. 247.

<sup>538</sup> TNA, FO 371/131462, Washington to Foreign Office, 29 March 1958, p. 2.

amount to two million US dollars in total.<sup>539</sup> Administrator Di Stefano also reassured the Somali Prime Minister about Italy's intention to continue to absorb Somalia's banana production after 1960.

In the run-up to the municipal elections, political competition between the SYL, the newly created Great Somalia League (GSL), and the Xisbiya, which had changed its name to Xisbiya Dastuur Mustaqiil Somaaliya (HDMS), 'Somali Independent Constitutional Party', was particularly intense in the Lower Jubba Province. The Great Somalia League received significant support in Jamaame and Kismaayo, as a lot of jobseekers had drifted into these towns, particularly Kismaayo, from the surrounding rural areas but had quickly become disillusioned when no employment materialised. According to British intelligence sources, these people readily turned against the SYL government.<sup>540</sup> However, Xaaji Maxamed Xuseen claimed that the Ethiopian Consul-General, during a visit to the Lower and Upper Jubba Provinces, had given large sums of money to Daarood chiefs and had promised them that Addis Ababa would allow the SYL to reopen its branches in the Ogaadeen region, provided that they would continue to oppose the Great Somalia League.<sup>541</sup> Very large sums of money were indeed spent on the municipal elections. According to a confidential report by the British Consul in Mogadishu, the Italians were said to have spent a lot on the SYL, with smaller contributions from the Americans; the Ethiopians were reported to have given the anti-SYL Liberal Party generous financial aid; while the Americans had allegedly given substantially to the HDMS.<sup>542</sup>

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<sup>539</sup> Ministero degli affari esteri, *Rapport du gouvernement italien à l'assemblée générale des Nations Unies sur l'administration de tutelle de la Somalie, 1959* (Rome: Ministero degli affari esteri, 1960), p. 81.

<sup>540</sup> TNA, FO 371/131465, British Consulate, Mogadishu, to FO, 3 September 1958.

<sup>541</sup> TNA, FO 371/131465, Mogadishu to Foreign Office, 10 September 1958.

<sup>542</sup> TNA, FO 371/131465, Kendall to Audland, 13 October 1958. Regarding the creation of the trading company, named The National Trading Company Ltd., and its entanglement in politics see: ASMSCC, segnatura 545, Relazioni AFIS, vol. 2, Ripa di Meana to Secretary General, Italian Trusteeship Administration of Somalia, 30 May, 7 June, 10 June, and 22 August 1955.

Election results showed a relative swing away from the SYL, which won 416 seats out of 663 in forty-five municipalities, towards the HDMS and the GSL. This marked a gain of 36 seats in nine municipalities where it ran candidates. Both the Somali Prime Minister and the new Italian Administrator, Ambassador Mario Di Stefano, who had arrived in Mogadishu only in the autumn, were concerned about these results; they agreed that ‘there was no time to lose’, as the general elections were due to take place in March 1959.<sup>543</sup> The Ambassador knew that unless the upcoming elections produced a Government ‘prepared to wind up the mandatory period in friendly collaboration with the Italian Administration, the outlook for Italian interests in post-independence Somalia looked grim indeed’.<sup>544</sup> Therefore, against the advice of his predecessor’s councillors, Di Stefano chose to back the incumbent Somali Government whatever the cost. Cabdulaahi Ciise, realising that ‘he stood no chance of obtaining a working majority in the Legislative Assembly if the General Elections were free, decided to accept the proffered assistance’.<sup>545</sup>

#### **4.4 The 1959 general election in the Jubba Valley**

The 1959 general elections are perhaps best described as a sad farce. In the Lower Jubba Province, voting took place only in Jamaame and Kismaayo, where the SYL won all but one of the seats.<sup>546</sup> In Afmadoow and Jilib, the SYL candidates automatically became deputies, as no other party stood against the Somali Youth League.

All the Assembly members for Afmadoow were Daarood/Ogaadeen. Two of them, Sheekh Maxamuud Maxamed Faarax (Ogaadeen/Maxamed Subeer/Reer

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<sup>543</sup> TNA, FO 371/146956, British Consulate, Mogadishu, to FO, 18 March 1960, p. 2.

<sup>544</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>546</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III (1948-60), I vers., b. 221, f. 764, Jannuzzi, Director General for Somalia’s Affairs, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to Italy’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, 23 March 1959, p. 2.

Cabdulle/Malingur), an AFIS employee, and Cusmaan Maxamuud Ibraahim (Ogaadeen/Maxamed Subeer/Reer Cabdulle/Reer Caamir), a trader, had previously been elected in 1956.<sup>547</sup> Cusmaan Maxamuud was also well known as a participant in local smuggling networks, as he sold wild animal skins acquired from poachers who came in from Kenya.<sup>548</sup> Informants recall that candidates in Afmadoow had been chosen in such a way that each of the powerful sections within the Ogaadeen/Maxamed Subeer sub-clan, which was dominant in the area, was allocated a seat in the Assembly.<sup>549</sup> In Jilib, Xuseen Cumar Xasan ‘Jiis’ (Daarood/Ogaadeen/Bahgari) was returned unopposed, together with Cali Gaal Afrax (Hawiye/Abgaal), a government employee. Cali Gaal, like most Abgaal who lived in Lower Jubba, had arrived in Kismaayo in the late 1920s with the Italian colonial administration. At that time, he worked as a driver for the Italian colonial troops. Under the Trusteeship Administration, he managed the government’s transport fleet in Kismaayo together with his twin brother.<sup>550</sup> With the money he had earned from this job, Cali Gaal bought land and established a farm in Jilib, but he was not involved in the banana trade. Like Xuseen ‘Jiis’, Cali Gaal had powerful influence on the local Bantu people.<sup>551</sup> His family also owned a vast plot of land in Garas Balley (Lower Shabelle region).<sup>552</sup> Of the three Assembly Members for Jamaame, Cali Ciise Cali (Hawiye/Habargidir) and Xaaji Aadan ‘Caashir’ Samatar (Daarood/Majeerteen/Cumar Maxamuud) were traders, while Sheekh Ibraahim Cumar (Dir/Biimaal) was a district judge (*qaadi*).<sup>553</sup> Both Cali Ciise Cali and Xaaji Aadan ‘Caashir’ had started as foremen on the cotton

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<sup>547</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III (1948-60), I vers., b. 242, f. 828, ‘Prospetto completo deputati eletti nel 1959’.

<sup>548</sup> Interview with Cabdalla Maxamed Cabdi, Nairobi, 25 July 2017.

<sup>549</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>550</sup> Interviews with Axmed Gaal (Cali Gaal’s nephew) and Axmed Cali Culusow, Nairobi, 20 July 2017.

<sup>551</sup> Interview with Axmed Cali Culusow and Daahir Baashaal, Nairobi, 20 July 2017.

<sup>552</sup> Interviews with Axmed Gaal and Axmed Cali Culusow, Nairobi, 20 July 2017.

<sup>553</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III (1948-60), I vers., b. 242, f. 828, ‘Prospetto completo deputati eletti nel 1959’.

plantations of a powerful Italian company, *Società Romana*.<sup>554</sup> In Kismaayo, the SYL won two seats, while the Xisbiya Dastuur Mustaqiil as-Soomaal (HDMS) obtained one seat.<sup>555</sup> The two SYL seats in Kismaayo went to Ibraahim Cusmaan Abuukar ‘Unlaaye’, a big trader, and Ibraahim Xaaji Muuse, a government employee, both Daarood/Majeerteen. The Xisbiya candidate, Maxamed Aadan ‘Shaacir’ (Hawiye/Gaaljecel) was a trader and a former SYL supporter. The SYL, though, had discouraged him from standing as a candidate in Kismaayo in the 1959 elections, essentially because he was not Majeerteen, although his mother was.<sup>556</sup> Nevertheless, Maxamed ‘Shaacir’ ‘won, despite the odds against him’, as Cabdi Ismaaciil Samatar has remarked.<sup>557</sup>

‘Shaacir’'s victory constitutes an interesting case. In Kismaayo, the SYL had always designated Daarood/Majeerteen candidates (sometimes from other regions), as they constituted the dominant group, in terms of wealth and political power, in the district. This did not automatically imply, though, that they represented the numerical majority. The Majeerteen were the most ‘visible’ people in Kismaayo, due to their social connections and economic clout. However, Hawiye (or Hawiye-affiliated) groups, mainly Gaaljecel, Cawrmale, and Shiikhaal, and ‘fragments’ of the Digil/Dabarre and the Mirifle/Gelidle, who were *sheegad* to the Majeerteen and the Ogaadeen, largely contributed to the Daarood’s demographic weight in Kismaayo District.<sup>558</sup> Nonetheless, these groups had no political visibility, as being *sheegad* meant being represented by someone else. In 1957, tensions erupted in the Xarti ‘tribal area’ adjoining the southern stretch of the Kenya-Somalia border, in connection with the announcement of a pre-electoral census. The *sheegad* groups in the area insisted on their right to ‘retain their tribal authority’, independent of the Xarti elders.<sup>559</sup>

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<sup>554</sup> Interview with Cabdalla Maxamed Cabdi, Nairobi, 21 July 2017.

<sup>555</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III (1948-60), I vers., b. 242, f. 828, ‘Prospetto completo deputati eletti nel 1959’.

<sup>556</sup> Interviews with Maxamed Maxamuud Ibraahim ‘Goodir’, Mogadishu, 13 April 2016, and Cabdalla Maxamed Cabdi, Nairobi, 21 July 2017.

<sup>557</sup> Samatar, *Africa’s First Democrats*, p. 68.

<sup>558</sup> Interview with Maxamed Maxamuud Ibraahim ‘Goodir’, Mogadishu, 13 April 2016.

<sup>559</sup> TNA, FO 371/125678, Kendall to African Department, FO, 24 August 1957.

The Provincial Commissioner, Nuur Axmed Cabdulle ‘Kastelli’, tried to settle the dispute by imposing the SYL line of Somali citizenship as opposed to clan-based allegiances. This seriously annoyed the Xarti and the situation became so tense that the PC arrested fourteen elders, seven from each side, and called in the riot squads from Mogadishu to disarm the tribal police. The President of the Legislative Assembly intervened to restore law and order. The Gaaljecel and other *sheegad* groups in Kismaayo District were SYL supporters, but only Majeerteen candidates could make it to the top of the party’s list. This explains why in the 1959 elections the Hawiye, along with some Bantus and Warday, plus a few Ogaadeen who were disgruntled with the Majeerteen, regrouped behind Maxamed ‘Shaacir’ and the Xisbiya.<sup>560</sup> By exploiting the tensions between *sheegad* and their patrons, the Xisbiya managed to win a seat in Kismaayo.

The political geography emerging from the 1959 elections in Lower Jubba reflected socio-economic cleavages and the social division of labour in the region. The clan affiliation of the newly elected Assembly members was revealing in this respect. The Daarood/Majeerteen, who got two seats in Kismaayo and one in Jamaame, were mostly government employees and traders representing the Somali business elite in Kismaayo District. The Daarood/Ogaadeen, who got all the seats in Afmadoow and one in Jilib, were mostly pastoralists, sometimes agro-pastoralists, middlemen and traders who lived in the area comprised between the Jubba River and the border with Kenya. Ogaadeen traders and middlemen acted as intermediaries between rural areas in the interior and Xarti traders on the coast. Xarti and Ogaadeen were also those who benefited the most from the cross-border economy in Lower Jubba. In the late 1940s, a limited number of Ogaadeen/Maxamed Subeer and Xarti traders had been granted licenses by the British government in Kenya to bring a yearly quota of cattle into Lamu District.<sup>561</sup> Also, traders from north-eastern Kenya, especially Garissa, regularly sold ivory to Xarti traders in Kismaayo.<sup>562</sup> Majeerteen men often married

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<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*; Interview with Cabdalla Maxamed Cabdi, Nairobi, 21 July 2017.

<sup>561</sup> KNA, AE/19/36, D.C. Hague, Provincial Veterinary Office, Coast Province, ‘Memorandum on cattle trade between Somalia and Mombasa’, 2 September 1961, p. 1.

<sup>562</sup> Interview with Maxamed Yuusuf Xaaji, Nairobi, 4 May 2016.



Ogaadeen women to strengthen the connections between the two clans and buy livestock from the Ogaadeen more easily. As for the Hawiye/Abgaal, Hawiye/Habargidir and Dir/Biimaal elected in Jamaame and Jilib, they represented an emerging class of government employees, businessmen, and farm owners. Abgaal and Habargidir (Hiraab Hawiye) were the only clans in the Hawiye family who were not *sheegad* in Lower Jubba.

The political economy of the Province also played an important role in another respect. Although no major disturbances took place outside Mogadishu during the elections, some incidents occurred in Lower Jubba. On 6 March 1959, a man identified as a Great Somalia League (GSL) ‘extremist’, who admitted possessing a supply of four home-made bombs that were later recovered by the police, was arrested in Jamaame. He confessed that he had planned to carry out terrorist attacks during the elections. He had allegedly been instructed to blow up the fuel storage sites of the nearby Italian plantations, and to launch acts of sabotage against *Società Romana* and the American Protestant Mission in Tografa.<sup>563</sup> The suspected ‘terrorist’, as the Italian authorities labelled him, also confessed that other individuals, allegedly all supporters of the Great Somalia League, had received similar instructions. Twenty-one people were then arrested in Jamaame and sixteen hand-grenades were recovered in the area between Jamaame and Jilib on 6 and 7 March.<sup>564</sup> The fact that this area had been chosen as a ‘terrorist target’ was no coincidence. Resentment against the Government and the Administration had festered in Jamaame, as this District, which was at the heart of the settler economy in Lower Jubba, had been plagued by land conflicts and labour exploitation since the 1930s.

Luuq District also became a hotspot of political violence in the aftermath of the general elections. The combination of clan and territorial polarisation and of political factionalism was particularly problematic in the District, due to its complex social fabric and to trans-border movements. In April 1959, the Upper Jubba Regional Judge refused to validate election results in Luuq District. This

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<sup>563</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 221, f. 764, Jannuzzi to Italy’s Permanent Mission to the UN, 23 March 1959, 4-5; Di Stefano to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 8 March 1959.

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*, Di Stefano to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 13 March 1959.

decision followed complaints by members of the local branch of the Xisbiya Dastuur Mustaqiil as-Soomaal about severe irregularities which had allegedly been committed to the advantage of the SYL during the elections. It was found that several people from Baardheere, an electoral constituency that was ‘totally different from Luuq’ in terms of clan composition – the Regional Judge remarked – had gone to vote in Serenleh (which was part of Luuq’s constituency) for the SYL.<sup>565</sup> The Ogaadeen/Cawlyahan chief Bashiir Salad admitted that he had voted in Serenleh for the candidates of the Luuq branch of the SYL, instead of voting in Baardheere. Baardheere’s mayor, Shariif Cabdulaahi Shariif Cabdiraxmaan, who was also a member of the League’s local branch, confirmed that people from his town had voted for the SYL in Luuq, adding that this had followed an agreement between the local representatives of the SYL in Baardheere and Luuq. Cawlyahan members and sympathisers of the League in Baardheere had been publicly asked to vote for the party in Luuq – so that the votes of the Ogaadeen/Cawlyahan, who staked claims to territory in Serenleh, could outnumber the votes of other clans in the strategic Luuq constituency. Local SYL representatives later testified that many of them had voted more than once and that the same kind of irregularities, always to the advantage of the SYL, had occurred in Ceelwaaq.<sup>566</sup>

The vote re-run was scheduled to take place from 11 to 15 January 1960. The central leadership of the HDMS, which claimed to be the legitimate representative of the Digil iyo Mirifle, clearly recommended abstention from the elections. This notwithstanding, on 18 November 1959, two lists of HDMS candidates were presented in Luuq, each group claiming to be the sole and legitimate representatives of the HDMS. The District Commissioner accepted the first list which had been presented and rejected the other one. The situation became even more confused when some representatives of the Somali Youth League attempted to interfere in the internal squabbles of the HDMS, favouring the acceptance of one of the two lists. As a result of local negotiations between the

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<sup>565</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 242, f. 828,

‘Provvedimento del Giudice Regionale dell’Alto Giuba’, 9 April 1959, 1–3, enclosed with Gabinetto, AFIS, to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 28 April 1959.

<sup>566</sup> *Ibid.*

two opposing factions, a single list of four HDMS candidates was eventually presented. The frontrunner was Macalin Cumar Maxamed (Digil iyo Mirifle/Raxanweyn), who had already stood for election in March 1959. A few days later, the SYL presented a list of four candidates as well. The first two names on the list were those of the candidates who had been elected in March but whose appointment had been invalidated, Yuusuf Shire Barre and Xaaji Jaamac Cabdulaahi (both Mareexaan).<sup>567</sup>

On 5 January 1960, less than one week away from the election re-run, Macalin Cumar (Raxanweyn), the first candidate on the HDMS list, was stabbed to death. Faarax Xasan Maxamed, a 34-year-old unemployed Mareexaan from Dhuusamareeb (in the Galgaduud region in central Somalia) was identified as the perpetrator and immediately arrested. An after-dusk curfew was imposed in Luuq.<sup>568</sup> The murder of the HDMS candidate generated a lot of rumours and speculation. The opposition claimed that the killer was a member of the majority party, while the SYL contended that he had been sent by the opposition parties which boycotted the elections.<sup>569</sup> Macalin Cumar was a member of the faction led by the five HDMS candidates who had been elected to the Legislative Assembly in March 1959. This group was fiercely opposed by another faction within the HDMS that belonged to the so-called ‘Devil’s Pact’, which had boycotted the elections along with the GSL and the Somali National Union.<sup>570</sup> The police swiftly arrested six people, suspected of having ordered the killing of Macalin Cumar. Among these, five allegedly belonged to the SYL (one of them was the secretary of Luuq’s town hall, three others were employees of the district administration, and one was a school teacher). The sixth person apprehended was

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<sup>567</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 242, f. 828, Di Stefano to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate General for Somalia, 23 November 1959, pp. 2–4.

<sup>568</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 242, f. 828, Gasbarri to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate General for Somalia, 5 January 1960, p. 1.

<sup>569</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>570</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

a member of the HDMS.<sup>571</sup> Three more people were arrested a few days later. Among these was Xaaji Cabdi Jaamac ‘Fartaag’, second candidate on the SYL list and former member of the Legislative Assembly (he had been elected with the Mareexaan Union in 1956). Nearly all the people arrested belonged to the Mareexaan clan, the same of the alleged murderer’s.

Italian officials formulated three main hypotheses. First, the killing had been ordered and planned from within the SYL branch in Luuq or within the League’s inner group led by the second candidate on the party list, Xaaji Cabdi Jaamac. Second, the murder had been organized by the Great Somalia League, which had then cleverly managed to convince several SYL supporters who had a vested interest in the election re-run to get involved in planning the assassination. Third, the murder had been conceived and organized by the Great Somalia League, which had ordered the perpetrator to identify, after his arrest, members of the SYL as the murder’s instigators. To complicate matters further, it was reported that the members of the GSL branch in Luuq, most of whom were Mareexaan, had recently joined the SYL. They allegedly participated in all the League’s political and electoral meetings due to inter-clan competition and with the purpose of counteracting the Luuq chapter of the HDMS, which was considered by the members of the ‘Devil’s Pact’ to be a dissident faction.<sup>572</sup>

Although it has been impossible so far to determine which of the three Italian hypotheses was correct, the murder of the HDMS candidate is revealing of the dangerous tensions which resulted from the entanglement of inter-clan rivalries and competition between parties (and factions within parties) during and after the 1959 elections. These tensions emerged at the intersection of local struggles for control of *deegaan* – as a means of getting access to the negotiation of resources and power both in the borderland and the state’s centre – and of the on-going definition of the balance of power at the national level.

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<sup>571</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 242, f. 828, Gasbarri to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate General for Somalia, 7 January 1960, p. 1.

<sup>572</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 242, f. 828, Gabinetto, AFIS, to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate General for Somalia, 7 January 1960, pp. 2–3.

#### 4.5 Negotiating political authority across the border

As political parties depended on the support of clans, traditional authorities actively participated in negotiating the state, capitalising on shifting allegiances and trying to exploit the border's affordances to advance their own political and economic goals. The following two stories, involving *Suldaan* Cali Axmed Magan 'Sokor' (Ogaadeen/Maxamed Subeer/Reer Cabdulle) and Chief Xaaji Xasan (Daarood/Mareexaan/Cali Dheere), are revealing in this regard.

In December 1956, some representatives of the Ogaadeen clan who were living in Somalia crossed the border and went to Garissa and Wajir districts. Although according to the PC, Northern Frontier Province, none of them were important Ogaadeen tribal leaders, the delegation bore a letter from the Ogaadeen *Suldaan* Cali Axmed Magan 'Sokor'.<sup>573</sup> In that letter, the *Suldaan* imparted his view on the situation in Somalia and gave instructions to the Ogaadeen in the Northern Frontier Province regarding the stance they should adopt in dealing with politics in the Trust Territory. The letter pointed to the continuing competition between the Xarti and the Ogaadeen and announced that the delegation of Ogaadeen representatives would also visit Jamaame, Afmadoow, and Baardheere to shore up support for the clan. *Suldaan* Cali 'Sokor' warned the Kenya Ogaadeen, who were said to be willing to endorse the Somali Government, that the Xarti wished to 'take over the Government' and had sent a message to Gamal Abd el-Nasser 'to say that we [the Somali people] are fully behind him'.<sup>574</sup> Cali 'Sokor' urged the Ogaadeen in the Northern Province, particularly those who owned livestock, to support him and Ogaadeen interests in former Jubaland. The letter then stated that one of the *Suldaan's* sons had begun to send cattle to the Ogaadeen in Garissa and Wajir. The *Suldaan's* orders were to sell the cattle, transfer the proceeds to him, and not to sell any livestock to either Arabs or 'alien' Somalis (especially Xarti) who would then take it down the livestock route managed by the government-controlled African Livestock Marketing

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<sup>573</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 5/5/2, 'Copy of a translation of a letter from Sultan Ali Ahmed Magan', enclosed with Kennaway to Secretary for Defence, 9 January 1957.

<sup>574</sup> *Ibid.*

Organization (ALMO): ‘Do not let these traders come to your Bomas’ [livestock enclosures] – Cali ‘Sokor’ requested.<sup>575</sup>

According to British sources, the *Suldaan* was ‘disgruntled with the Italians and had asked the British Consul in Mogadishu John Gethin ‘to help him engineer the transfer of his people and their land apparently to Kenya’.<sup>576</sup> Dissatisfied with Gethin’s dismissive response to his request, the *Suldaan* decided to visit friends in Nairobi to discuss his idea. In April 1957, he requested a visa for visiting Kenya, but his application was refused.<sup>577</sup> By August, though, Cali ‘Sokor’ had obtained a passport. He reportedly intended to travel to Kenya by sea, visit Nairobi, and then proceed to Garissa and Wajir to see the DCs as well as the leaders of the Ogaadeen sections in those districts. Special Branch officers presumed that the purpose of the *Suldaan*’s visit was ‘connected with his search for an ally against the Herti tribespeople’, who represented the largest part of the cadre of officials in south-western Somalia.<sup>578</sup>

Since January 1957, the principal Ogaadeen chiefs in southern Somalia and the chiefs of Maxamed Subeer in the Northern Frontier Province had persisted in their wish to petition the Kenya Government on the subject of what Kennaway, Provincial Commissioner, NFP, termed ‘the movement for Ogaden unity’.<sup>579</sup> This was not simply rooted in the age-long competition between the Ogaadeen and Xarti clans in Lower Jubba, as British officials assumed; it was, rather, the result of conflicts over the appropriation of territory and of the subsequent displacement of people in the Kenya-Somalia and Somalia-Ethiopia frontiers. Writing to the Secretary for Defence in April 1957, Mr Kennaway remarked:

It would appear that the Ogaden leaders, particularly the Mohamed Zubeir, are interested in the unification of the Ogaden tribes in one area.

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<sup>575</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>576</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ5/5/2, Hampden-King to Neil, 13 April 1957.

<sup>577</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 5/5/2, Neil to Hampden-King, 25 April 1957.

<sup>578</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 5/5/2, Asst. Superintendent of Police, i/c Special Branch, NFP, to Ag. Senior Asst. Commissioner of Police, i/c Special Branch, 13 August 1957.

<sup>579</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 5/5/2, Kennaway, PC Northern Frontier Province to Secretary for Defence, 9 April 1957.

The fact that they claim to want British protection is purely incidental to this primary aim. This aim has been the subject of clandestine negotiations between Chiefs in Garissa District and Chiefs in the Jubba Provinces, since January this year. Superimposed on this movement for Ogaden unity is the matter of the Beledwein Ogaden Somali expatriates from Ethiopia, who are endeavouring to obtain support for the excision of their grazing lands from Ethiopia. There is considerable animosity directed by the Ogaden against the Herti and Hawiya particularly over such matters as stock, trading, water supplies and the like. Such animosity is of little political significance.<sup>580</sup>

In his remarks, the Provincial Commissioner overlooked some important factors, namely the local implications of ongoing political developments in Somalia, the way in which these were challenging the authority of some traditional chiefs, and conflicts linked to the control of *deegaan*. Oral testimonies suggest that tensions had emerged between *Suldaan* Cali ‘Sokor’ and other Ogaadeen chiefs in Lower Jubba following the return of the Italians. Cali ‘Sokor’ initially supported the SYL. He was a nationalist, though also a ‘nomadic conservative’, and did not like the Italian Trusteeship Administration.<sup>581</sup> Cabdisalaan Sheekh, a former soldier who had fought in the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and belonged to the same sub-clan (Maxamed Subeer/Reer Cabdulle) as *Suldaan* Cali ‘Sokor’, had been awarded honorary knighthood, with the title of ‘*cavaliere*’.<sup>582</sup> The *Suldaan* was younger than Cabdisalaan Sheekh, who was a member of the council of elders and the commander of the Ogaadeen clan’s militia in Afmadoow. The son of a ‘holy man’ and closely associated with the Italians, Cabdisalaan sought to challenge Cali Sokor’s authority, giving orders to the *capi qabila* and the *Suldaan* as well.<sup>583</sup>

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<sup>580</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>581</sup> Interview with Khaliif Santuur Gooloo (Ogaadeen/Maxamed Subeer), Garissa, 1 June 2015.

<sup>582</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>583</sup> Interviews with Xasan Xaaji Shafad, Nairobi, Islii, 23 May 2015, and Maxamed Aamiin, Nairobi, Islii, 25 May 2015.

The tension between the customary authority of the *Suldaan* and the authority of the clan heads who had been appointed by the Italian Trusteeship Administration was also noticeable in the relationship between Cali ‘Sokor’ and the Ogaadeen chief Santuur Gooloo. The latter (also Ogaadeen/Maxamed Suuber/Reer Cabdulle) represented the Ogaadeen Suldaan, who reportedly preferred to stay in rural areas, in Kismaayo; he therefore claimed authority over all the Ogaadeen groups in the town, taking positions that were sometimes in contrast with the *Suldaan*’s views – according to Santuur’s son Khaliif.<sup>584</sup> Determining precisely the scope of the authority of Cali ‘Sokor’ and Santuur Gooloo is problematic, as the current ‘revival’ of traditional authorities in Jubaland, in connection with the implementation of federalism, has made historical claims to chieftaincy a hot issue. What is clear, though, is that Santuur Gooloo, like Cabdisalaan Sheekh, had a privileged connection with the Italians. He was a former militia leader (*‘capo banda’*) who had fought in the Italo-Ethiopian war. After Ethiopia’s defeat, he had been sent to Turin, in Italy, in his quality of representative of the *banda* fighters of *Basso Giuba*, as a token of the Italian Government’s appreciation for his service. After he returned to Kismaayo, Santuur Gooloo was elected *ugaas* (clan-head) by the Ogaadeen, ‘because he could speak Italian and had a good relationship with the Italians’, oral testimonies suggest.<sup>585</sup> In the context of the difficult relationship between the *Suldaan* and the chiefs recognised by the Italians, the appeal for Ogaadeen unity across the Somalia-Kenya border gave *Suldaan* Cali ‘Sokor’ the opportunity to re-assert his own authority as the clan’s paramount chief, presenting himself as the champion of the Ogaadeen cause.

As political turmoil following the appointment of the first Somali Government enveloped the Trust Territory in 1957, the Ogaadeen chiefs were not the only ones who approached the British Consul in Mogadishu and British officials in Kenya to discuss the possibility of placing their people under British authority. In March 1957, a delegation of Mareexaan chiefs visited the District Commissioner, Mandera, and declared that they wanted the British government to

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<sup>584</sup> Interview with Khaliif Santuur Gooloo, Garissa, 1 June 2015.

<sup>585</sup> *Ibid.*



return to Jubaland. The deputation consisted of the ‘Senior Chief’ of the Mareexaan Xaaji Xasan (Daarood/Mareexaan/Cali Dheere), chief Hiri Jaamac, and an ex-member of the King’s African Rifles (KAR), Khaliif Shire. While openly discussing the possibility of alienating themselves from Somalia, the Mareexaan delegates explained the motivation behind their request as ‘distrust of the SYL government which was Egyptian controlled, bankrupt, dishonest and only gave jobs to their own boys’.<sup>586</sup> As the DC Mandera reported, the Mareexaan chiefs stated that:

They realized that for many years they would need outside assistance both financial and technical and that as they had had experience of British Governments since before 1914 they wanted their progress to be under British tutelage. They were ready to do whatever was required and were awaiting orders. [...] Khalif Shire... said that all the HDM were with the Marehan in this affair.<sup>587</sup>

Chief Xaaji Xasan visited Mandera several times during the year and reaffirmed his friendship with the Kenya Government.<sup>588</sup> In 1958, though, he entered politics in Somalia, when the SYL, fearful that the Mareexaan would desert to the Great Somalia League, offered him (who was semi-illiterate) ‘an important post’ in the Somali Government, on condition that he prevented the Mareexaan in Luuq District from joining the GSL. ‘To earn this sinecure, he was last seen floating around in the PC Mogadishu’s jeep with a satisfied smirk canvassing for the SYL’ – the DC Mandera observed in his annual report for 1958.<sup>589</sup> Although he did not get a ministerial post, Xaaji Xasan managed to navigate political tensions across the Kenya-Somalia border juggling multiple allegiances.

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<sup>586</sup> TNA, FO 371/125678, Hill, DC Mandera, to PC Isiolo, 20 March 1957, p. 1.

<sup>587</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>588</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 44, PC/NFD 1/3/3, Mandera District Annual Report for 1957, p. 6.

<sup>589</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 44, PC/NFD 1/3/3, Mandera District Annual Report for 1958, p. 8.

The British position with regard to the delegations of the Mareexaan and the Jubaland Ogaadeen to the Northern Province was to dismiss the whole matter as ‘a commonplace of Somali intrigue’:

They are a thorough and independent lot who think only in terms of the welfare of their stock and who have a poor opinion of the Somalia politicians; they realize that no amount of SYL pressure is going to secure them the entrée into Kenya, but feel that once they had placed themselves under our administration they could soon wheedle us into allowing them access to the waters and grazing they now covet.<sup>590</sup>

The British administrators failed to grasp the political significance of the attempt by the Ogaadeen and Mareexaan chiefs to negotiate power and authority by juggling in a trans-border space. British officials also underestimated the key role of trade in the dynamics of political brokerage on the Kenya-Somalia frontier. Both chief Xaaji Xasan and Khaliif Shire were involved in cross-border trade, as we shall see in the next section.

#### **4.6 Cross-border trade and political allegiances among the Kenya Somalis**

In the 1950s, ‘informal’ cross-border trade expanded in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands. The ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ realms often overlapped, with the result that the so-called ‘second economy’ was not purely a subversive economy. ‘Illegal’ cross-border trade used corridors opened by the state and depended on the collusion between agents who operated within both the formal and informal economies. Most of these agents were government-licensed traders or government employees who acted as middlemen, juggling multiple roles and allegiances. The districts of Mandera and Garissa provide good examples to illustrate these dynamics.

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<sup>590</sup> TNA, FO 371/125678, Chief Secretary to Mathieson, 24 April 1957, p. 2.

In the early 1950s, when clashes between clans were frequent on the frontier, the British officials in Mandera used trade to keep an eye on Somali policemen across the border and obtain information. Officially, in 1950 there was no trade with either Somalia or Ethiopia, but policemen from the neighbouring frontier posts were permitted to make small weekly purchases. For instance, the *Ilaloos* (Italian-created tribal police) from Malka Re (an important crossing place on the Dawa River near the Kenyan border) were allowed to buy goods in small quantities in Mandera on Saturday mornings, but they had first to retail their ‘local gossip’ to the District Commissioner.<sup>591</sup> In 1952, the DC discontinued the practice of allowing them to buy tea and sugar unless they had been ‘particularly helpful in returning lost, strayed, or stolen camels.’<sup>592</sup> Similarly, the Somali policemen who were stationed at Buur Hachi (opposite Ceel Waaq) were permitted to make purchases in the Ceelwaaq *dukas* provided that they first reported to the officer in charge of the Kenya Police.<sup>593</sup>

Up to 1955, the state of tension between Somali clans in Kenya and the Mareexaan ‘precluded anything save minor trade in milk, hides and skins, ghee, and millet’ in Mandera.<sup>594</sup> The only imports from Somalia were salt from Luuq, in exchange for soda, and Mareexaan prostitutes, according to British reports. Then, from 1955 to 1959 some Mareexaan from Somalia were permitted to obtain eight bags of sugar and eight boxes of tea per month from Mandera, thanks to ‘a pro Somali [British] Consul in Mogadishu’ – the District Commissioner reported, with a tad of irritation, in 1959.<sup>595</sup> The Mareexaan chief Xaaji Xasan had a weekly shopping concession for one bag of sugar and one box of tea. The same applied to ex-KAR Khaliif Shire, who was now in charge of the Luuq *Ilaloos*, although he

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<sup>591</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 517, Reel 7, MDA/3, Mandera District Handing Over Report, November 1950, Baron to Gordon, p. 4; Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 4, PC/NFD 1/3/2, Mandera District Annual Report for 1950, p. 15.

<sup>592</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 517, Reel 7, MDA/5, Mandera District Handing Over Report, July 1952, Shaw to Wilkinson, p. 6.

<sup>593</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>594</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 517, Reel 8, MDA/8, Mandera District Handing Over Report, May 1959, Walter, p. 10.

<sup>595</sup> *Ibid.*

was stationed at Malka Re near the Kenyan border.<sup>596</sup> The two police outposts in Malka Re and Buur Hachi also had a concession of one bag of sugar per month. In 1956, the weekly shopping day extended to barter trade by Luuq and Mandera traders. Trans-frontier trade increased in the following years, to the extent that the British administration worried that it was beginning to ‘get out of hand’. The DC in Mandera subsequently made arrangements with his Somali counterpart in Luuq for greater control. The Somali DC apparently ‘was only too anxious to assist’, as most of the Trust Territory’s revenue was obtained from custom duties and other cesses, since there was no Poll Tax there.<sup>597</sup> In 1959, ‘everything was done to discourage the trade administratively’, but with little success.<sup>598</sup>

Most of the Mandera and Ceelwaaq traders were either members of influential Gharri families or ‘aliens’ (many of whom were former government employees) who had connections in Somalia. To cite but a few examples, Maxamed Sheekh Cali (Gharri/Darawa), brother of probably the most influential ‘holy man’ in the NFP, Xaaji Cabaas Sheekh Cali, was ‘Mandera’s No. 1 trader’.<sup>599</sup> He had three plots in the township in his name and one in Xaaji Cabaas’s name, and was awarded the entire Government contract in 1959. Maxamed Sheekh Cali was also the leading buyer of hides and skins in Mandera District. His brother Xaaji Cabaas was the official collector of *ziyāra* (pilgrimage) donations for the whole Province. He also collected donations from the Mareexaan and in Ethiopia, although he was ‘probably of less qur’anic knowledge than the Wajir kathi’ – according to the Mandera DC.<sup>600</sup> Maxamed Sheekh Cali had another half-brother, Abtidoon Wahab Sheekh Cali, who reportedly had the best-run and best-built *duka* in Ceelwaaq. A livestock trader, Abtidoon also had a ‘flourishing hides and skins banda’ across the Somali border.<sup>601</sup> Abtidoon Sheekh Ibraahim, the son and heir of a well-known sheikh from Baraawe (in southern

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<sup>596</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 517, Reel 8, MDA/8, Mandera District Handing Over Report, May 1959, Walter, p. 8.

<sup>597</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>598</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>599</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix C, p. 2.

<sup>600</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>601</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix C, p. 4.

Somalia), had a hides and skins *banda* and was ‘fond of clandestine deals with the Marehan’.<sup>602</sup> Cali Sigaara (Xarti/Warsangeli), a very successful businessman who lived in Moyale, had a shop in Mandera, which was run by one of his nephews from Somalia, and another shop at Malka Murri, which supplied the Kenya Police post there. Employed as a clerk in Cali Sigaara’s *duka* at Malka Murri was Xaaji Jaamac Maxamed, a Majeerteen who was allegedly involved in ‘all the Herti rackets and machinations’.<sup>603</sup> Another Xarti/Majeerteen, Warsame Saalax, ex-police sergeant, had livestock with the Mareexaan and a relative with a *duka* across the Somali border. This shop was reportedly ‘filled with Kenya goods smuggled across by Warsame’.<sup>604</sup> Sergeant Calasow Cali (Hawiye/Abgaal) worked as a night watchman for the Kenya Meat Commission in Nairobi and had a wife who occupied his plot in Mandera township. Every time she went to Nairobi to visit his husband, she returned with goods ‘for smuggling to Somalia’, according to the Mandera DC.<sup>605</sup>

The Kenya Government did not allow the importation of any slaughter livestock into the Colony except for ‘a limited number of permits issued by the District Livestock Officer at Lamu’, these being granted only to certain long-established traders from Somalia.<sup>606</sup> Since the mid-1940s, large quantities of slaughter livestock had been brought into Kenya from across the Somali border below Kolbio (Garissa District) *en route* for the market at Mokowe, in Lamu’s hinterland. The fact that this trade was ‘officially encouraged by the Coast Province’ meant that there was a ‘continual stream of illegal immigrants’ to and from across Garissa District – the DC had lamented in 1950.<sup>607</sup> This ‘formal’ trade corridor also provided an easy outlet for the smuggling of ivory, leopard skins,

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<sup>602</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>603</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix C, p. 3.

<sup>604</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>606</sup> KNA, CL/13/5, O’Hagan to British Consulate, Mogadishu, 9 January 1959.

<sup>607</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 46, PC/NFD 1/7/4, Garissa District Annual Report for 1950, p. 6.

sugar and tea, which found a ready market in Somalia.<sup>608</sup> Sometimes, in order to meet the demand for slaughter livestock from the Kenya Meat Commission (KMC) in Mombasa, the Government turned a blind eye to the fact that several Xarti and Ogaadeen traders who brought cattle for sale at Lamu had no passes. The livestock traders who returned from Lamu were reportedly assisted by groups of Ogaadeen/Cabdalla, Booni and Bantu ‘Riverines’ in getting contraband products back to Somalia through Kolbio and the Boni forest.<sup>609</sup> British officials in Garissa recorded a ‘continuous stream of traffic across the Abdulla section of the Boundary’ and, consequently, considered the Cabdalla to be ‘much more open to subversive influences’ from Kismaayo than the other Ogaadeen in the District.<sup>610</sup>

Trade corridors also functioned as networks of political exchange. Several ‘alien’ traders in the NFP were known to be involved in political activity in support of the Somali Youth League. To cite but one among many examples, Yaasiin Maxamed Aadan (Xarti/Majeerteen), a police superintendent in Mandera, acted as a buyer for his father, who had a *duka* in the township, and allegedly carried *miraa* in his vehicle when travelling to Isiolo.<sup>611</sup> Portrayed as a ‘leading light of the Young SYL’, Yasiin Maxamed attracted the interest of the British officials in Mandera: ‘he is known as a contact man and consideration is being given to use him on our side’ – the District Commissioner wrote in November

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<sup>608</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 517, Reel 4, Section 3, Garissa District Handing Over Report, Mills to Browning, 11 March 1953, p. 3.

<sup>609</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 46, PC/NFD 1/7/4, Garissa District Annual Report for 1952, p.3; Garissa District Annual Report for 1953, p. 2.

<sup>610</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 46, PC/NFD 1/7/4, Garissa District Annual Report for 1956, p. 4.

<sup>611</sup> *Miraa* is a vernacular term for khat, a herbal stimulant. The khat trade in colonial Kenya has been documented by David Anderson and Neil Carrier, ‘Khat in Colonial Kenya: A History of Prohibition and Control’, *Journal of African History*, 50, No.3 (2009), pp. 377–97. See also Paul Goldsmith, ‘The Production and Marketing of Miraa in Kenya’, in *Satisfying Africa’s Food Needs*, ed. by Robin Cohen (London: Lynne Rienner, 1988); Neil Carrier, *Kenyan Khat: The Social Life of a Stimulant* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

1956.<sup>612</sup> Yasiin Maxamed used to visit Isiolo to purchase goods along with another Majeerteen from Wajir, Cabdi Ciise. The DC in Isiolo suspected that the hidden purpose of these visits was making and keeping local contacts, collecting money, and carrying mail for the Somali Youth League.<sup>613</sup>

Political events in Somalia were being watched with increasing interest in the Northern Frontier Province. Radio Cairo was listened to regularly in the townships. Most of the Xarti and Arab traders in Mandera and Ceelwaaq closely followed Somali politics.<sup>614</sup> In 1958, it was reported that the Great Somalia League had made an entrance in Garissa.<sup>615</sup> In Mandera, the Xarti, theretofore Somali Youth League supporters, shifted to the Great Somalia League, following the SYL's loss of power as a result of the 1958 municipal elections. The Xarti's political enthusiasm, though, was reportedly quelled by the arrest of Xaaji Maxamed Xuseen in December 1958 (see the opening section of this chapter).<sup>616</sup>

Xarti and Arabs were not the only ones with an interest in Somali politics. In his annual Report for 1958, the Mandera District Commissioner reported the 'slight wooing' of the Gharri by the SYL after the party's mediocre results in the municipal elections.<sup>617</sup> According to the DC, the Gharri, who were regarded as 'half Boran', had theretofore been cold-shouldered by the SYL, which drew its support mainly from Samaale clans, and 'consigned' to the Xisbiya Digil iyo Mirifle. The Gharri responded to the League's attempt to seduce them saying that they were not interested, unless they got a school, a hospital and more wells in Buur Hachi for their exclusive use. As this was most unlikely – the District Commissioner commented – the 'policy' of the Gharri, except a few people in

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<sup>612</sup> KNA, DC/ISO/2/4/17, DC Mandera, to DC Isiolo, 14 November 1956.

<sup>613</sup> KNA, DC/ISO/2/4/17, Brayne-Nicholls, DC Isiolo, to DCs Mandera and Wajir, 29 October 1956.

<sup>614</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 44, PC/NFD 1/3/3, Mandera District Annual Report for 1958, p. 3.

<sup>615</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 46, PC/NFD 1/7/5, Garissa District Annual Report for 1958, p. 1.

<sup>616</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 44, PC/NFD 1/3/3, Mandera District Annual Report for 1958, p. 3.

<sup>617</sup> *Ibid.*

Ceelwaaq who were expected to ‘cross into Somalia in March [1959] to vote’, was to ‘wait and see’.<sup>618</sup>

The so-called ‘corner tribes’ in Mandera District were also following politics in Somalia and taking sides. The ‘corner tribes’, classified as ‘minor tribes’ in British sources, were mostly composed of freed or runaway slaves who had once settled along the Jubba River and had lived by cultivating the fertile soil on the river’s banks. The majority of them had arrived in Mandera District with the Italians in 1940. After the Second World War, the British administration had allowed them to stay, on condition that they did not become livestock owners. The ‘corner tribes’ included several groups: the Gurre Murre, at one time Gharri slaves who had then tried to be accepted as Gharri (they were cultivators and some of them worked as government labourers, but their main source of income was making palm wine ‘illegally’); the Gabaweyn, who came from a stretch of the Jubba river between Dooloow and Luuq (also palm wine brewers and cultivators); the Warabeya, metal workers who were permitted to live with other tribes as smiths and claimed a connection with the Xarti (they used to ‘illegally’ travel to Somalia by night and ‘smuggle hides and skins and anything else’ – according to the Mandera DC Mr Walter);<sup>619</sup> the Sharmoge, who came from Somalia’s inter-riverine region and were of Raxanweyn origin (they were cultivators, but preferred to own livestock); the Shabelle, so named because they had once lived on the Wabi Shabelle (former Ajuuraan slaves, they were allowed to cultivate *shambas* and were treated more favourably than the other ‘corner tribes’ owing to their longer residence in Mandera District); and the Shiikhaal, ‘holy men’ who used to ‘attach themselves to other tribes and become rich’.<sup>620</sup> Increasingly involved in Somali politics, the ‘corner tribes’, who maintained strong

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<sup>618</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>619</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 517, Reel 8, MDA/8, Mandera District Handing Over Report, Walter, May 1959, p. 33.

<sup>620</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 517, Reel 7, MDA/5, Mandera District Handing Over Report, Shaw to Wilkinson, July 1952, pp. 33–35.



connections with the Luuq area, supported the HDM and were 'exuberant' at the results of the 1958 municipal elections, according to British sources.<sup>621</sup>

This picture contrasts with the prevalent view, asserted in colonial reports and scholarly literature as well, that people in the Northern Frontier Province were isolated from political developments outside the Province's boundaries and that politics was simply a matter of 'alien' traders.<sup>622</sup> Somalis in the NFP became further interested in Somalia's political life in connection with the 1959 general elections. This, however, did not translate into disruption of law and order, contrary to what British officials had expected. A paper by the Special Branch of the Kenya Police on SYL activity in the Colony between January and July 1959 identified 'relatively little Somali Youth League activity', although a number of cells allegedly existed in parts of the Northern Frontier Province: 'such activity as has occurred has had no visible effect upon security in the Colony and no serious attempt appears to have been made to re-establish the organization on a sound basis in defiance of Government policy' – the document stated.<sup>623</sup>

Political support and funds for the Somali Youth League went, rather, the other way around, from Kenya to Somalia. In Moyale, for instance, followers of the SYL were believed to have held clandestine meetings in February, March, and April 1959. These meetings were reported to have been attended by SYL members from Ethiopian Moyale; some Shs: 2,000/- had allegedly been collected and sent by courier to Somalia via southern Ethiopia. Reports of private meetings and collections of money by SYL followers in Isiolo could not be confirmed, despite extensive investigations. It was alleged, though, that money for the SYL had been collected under the guise that it would be used to set up a social club in Isiolo and that receipts bearing the facsimile of the SYL badge had been issued. In Muddo Gashi (Isiolo District), a number of local Somalis were believed to have

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<sup>621</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 44, PC/NFD 1/3/3, Mandera District Annual Report for 1958, p. 4.

<sup>622</sup> See, for instance, Turton, 'Somali Resistance to Colonial Rule', pp. 138–40.

<sup>623</sup> TNA, FCO 141/6717, Office of the Director of Intelligence and Security, 'Somali Youth League Activity in Kenya. Review of the Period 1.1.59-31.7.59. Appreciation by the Ag. Director of Intelligence and Security', 31 July 1959.

held a meeting to discuss the formation of a SYL cell. Money for the Somali Youth League was reportedly collected in this area and sent to Kismaayo in April and May 1959.<sup>624</sup> During that year, several Somalis (most of whom were township dwellers) in Garissa District made moves towards affiliation with political parties in Somalia. However, ‘the rivalry between the SYL and the GSL left them rather at a loss’, the same people ‘being wooed one month by one party and the next by the other’ – the Garissa DC observed.<sup>625</sup> Interestingly, there were fewer reports of political contacts across the border during 1960 than in the year before. The days when the GSL and the SYL were sending representatives into Garissa District were apparently over, as the Somali authorities had plenty to do to put their own house in order in the run-up to Somalia’s independence.<sup>626</sup>

The political parties which were created in the Northern Frontier Province in 1960, once the Kenya Government lifted the ban on political activity, were not the offspring of parties based in Somalia. The emergence of political activism in the NFP was rooted in social and economic processes which were locally embedded, as we shall see in the next two chapters.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

During the second half of the 1950s, policies aimed at gradual internal self-government and eventual independence reinforced the linkage between clanship, territory, and political allegiance in the Trust Territory of Somalia. The effects of these policies were particularly acute in the Jubba Provinces, as the river valley had been marked by a long history of migrations, heterogeneous settlement, assimilation, and conflict. Electoral politics, in particular, aligned with the fundamental assumption in Somali clan politics that might is right, buttressing the

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<sup>624</sup> TNA, FCO 141/6717, Special Branch, ‘Somali Youth League Activity in Kenya. Review of the Period 1.1.59-31.7.59’, pp. 2–4.

<sup>625</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 46, PC/NFD 1/7/5, Garissa District Annual Report for 1959, p. 1.

<sup>626</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 46, PC/NFD 1/7/5, Garissa District Annual Report for 1960, p. 5.

idea that ‘nobody can represent me better than my family’. As a result, the political game was ridden all along. Modernisers called for the liquidation of ‘tribalism’ because otherwise the unity of the Somali people would never materialise. However, clan politics and the monetised system of patronage that characterised it was the way in which modern politics existed in the periphery of the state in-the-making. In consequence, the emerging nation state acquired a two-faced character. The institutions and symbols of the nation state masked an underbrush of clientelism and patronage.

If clan competition, issues over *deegaan* (clan ‘homelands’), and patronage ended up framing the national political space, this was not an atavistic residue of ‘tradition’ but the outcome of social and political settlements in which the state itself played a role. In the transition to independence, the Italian Trusteeship Administration empowered the Somali Youth League to crush dissent, while putting pressure on the nationalist party to protect Italian interests and keep the country in the Western camp. In the economic realm as well, the Administration’s policies undermined the foundations of the emerging nation state. In Lower Jubba, the Italian-controlled banana economy widened the regional differentiation characteristic of the colonial state, thereby discouraging the integration of a new national economy, and ensured the reproduction of a long-standing system of domination. In consequence, state-building became embedded in inequalities, exclusionary practices, and corruption. Interestingly, this history of marginalisation and violence still reverberates in the present: the Jubba Valley, with the exception of Kismaayo, is nowadays an al-Shabaab stronghold.

In the Somalia-Kenya borderland, tensions emerged between what Philip Abrams has defined the ‘state-system’, ‘a palpable nexus of practice and institutional structure centered in government’, and the ‘state-idea’, an ideological project, an exercise in legitimizing ‘something which if seen directly and as itself would be illegitimate, an unacceptable domination’.<sup>627</sup> In the final years of the Trusteeship Administration, divisive and undemocratic ways of doing politics

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<sup>627</sup> Philip Abrams, ‘Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State’, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 1, No.1 (1988), pp. 58–89 (pp. 76, 82).

which somehow reproduced entrenched inequalities and colonial forms of domination created new divisions in the borderland's social and political fabric. At the same time, state-building was framed in the idiom of nationalism, emphasizing the cultural and political unity of the Somalis across territorial boundaries and calling for the (re-)unification of the Somali territories. This resulted in an ambiguous definition of citizenship: Who is Somali? Who does belong to the political community of the Somali nation and who does not? These questions have remained unresolved up to the present time.

The dynamic of differentiation that resulted from the colonial desire to know who was who and from the politics of state formation in Somalia produced unintended effects in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands. Instead of favouring social stability and political control, this dynamic of differentiation fostered political imagination and the formation of communities that straddled territorial boundaries. The borderlanders had their own ideas about what their future should look like. They juggled across the border to negotiate political authority and resource access, to trade or smuggle, and to attempt to influence the balance of power at the centre of the nascent Somali state. Against the background of entangled territorialities and multiple loyalties, 'a plurality of communities of trust' emerged in the process of decolonisation.<sup>628</sup> It was practically impossible for the borderlanders to develop 'a systemic trust in the state as impersonal arbiter of conflict or impartial redistributor of public resources'.<sup>629</sup> In north-eastern Kenya, the Somalis and their allies saw secessionism as the solution to the lack of trust in their relationship with the state.

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<sup>628</sup> Bruce J. Berman and John M. Lonsdale, 'Nationalism in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa', in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*, ed. by John Breuilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 308–317 (p. 315).

<sup>629</sup> *Ibid.*

## **PART III**

## 5 DECOLONIZATION, TRADE, AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN THE NFD, c.1955-62

### 5.1 British policy and the ‘Somalia threat’, 1955-60

Historical narratives of Somali secessionism in north-eastern Kenya usually take 1960 as their starting point. That was indeed an eventful year. It saw the formation of the Somali Republic and the holding of the first Lancaster House Constitutional Conference, which opened discussion on Kenya’s path to independence. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that transformations which occurred in the 1950s are central to understanding the emergence of political activism and insurgency in the Kenya-Somalia borderland. In order to grasp these transformations and their far-reaching repercussions we need to look beyond the boundaries of the Northern Frontier Province.

The acceleration of the ‘Somalisation’ of the provincial and district administration in the Trust Territory of Somaliland at the end of 1955 raised fears of ‘a serious breakdown in law and order’ among British officials in the NFD, especially in Mandera District.<sup>630</sup> The British administrators suggested that their Somali counterparts ‘might either be too weak to control acts of aggression by Somali tribes over the border into Kenya, or alternatively be actively sympathetic’.<sup>631</sup> The Provincial Commissioner, Northern Frontier Province, anticipated that ‘raids by tribespeople... on a large scale’ were ‘the almost foregone conclusion’.<sup>632</sup> These fears fed into a growing debate over which policy the Kenya administration should adopt towards the colony’s Somali neighbours and the SYL, given the role that this party was likely to play in Somalia’s future.

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<sup>630</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 5/5/2, Kennaway, ‘Brief memorandum for the Commander in Chief in connection with his proposed tour of the Northern Frontier District’, 27 February 1956, p. 2.

<sup>631</sup> TNA, FCO 141/6717, Gethin to Watson, 7 February 1956, p. 2.

<sup>632</sup> KNA, DC/WAJ 5/5/2, Kennaway, ‘Brief memorandum for the Commander-in-Chief - proposed tour of the Northern Frontier District’, 27 February 1956, p. 2.

Towards the end of 1955, British officials in Kenya began considering whether there was any way by which they could ‘come to terms with the League’.<sup>633</sup> Nevertheless, they remained entrenched in their conviction that the SYL had not changed since 1948 and constituted a potential threat to peace and good government. The Chief Secretary, Richard Turnbull, former Provincial Commissioner, NFP, made his point clear in a response he wrote to the British Consul in Mogadishu, John Gethin, who was suggesting a revision of British policy towards the SYL:

Politically speaking we cannot entirely ignore that in 1947 and 1948 the Youth League made a determined attempt to subvert the authority of the Government and to spread their campaign of disaffection not only in the Somali areas but also amongst the Galla, the Samburu, and the Turkana. The League from your point of view is a natural, and even admirable, expression of Somali nationalism; to us it represents a force which, if allowed free rein, might well cause serious disruption of the administration of our northern areas. We recognize that we shall have to sup with these people, but we are determined to go on using as long a spoon as possible.<sup>634</sup>

In the eyes of the British Consul in Mogadishu, the interests of Kenya as Turnbull saw them were in contrast with other British interests:

...I would submit [...] that the more we can persuade them [the Somalis] that there is on their doorstep a large and effective country with many problems [...] similar to their own, from whom they could learn something and even get assistance – and with whom they can play football – instead of turning northwards to Egypt, the greater advantage to us politically. [...] The movement for political activity among Somalis in the Northern Frontier District will gradually gather momentum regardless of what you do – the SYL will find material for underground activity in the NFD if you oblige them to make use of it, in

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<sup>633</sup> TNA, FCO 141/6717, Turnbull to Gethin, 28 December 1955.

<sup>634</sup> *Ibid.*

growing quantities. Up to the present they have been well inclined towards the British and prepared to overlook the hostile attitude of the Kenya Government; had they wished to be hostile in their turn they could have given support to Mau Mau activities and increased your problems quite considerably. Although there is always talk of SYL “activity” [...] I have never been told of any serious organization or activity organized from this end. [...] Please do not think that I am suggesting that you should allow SYL branches to be opened up in Kenya. All I ask is that you should treat the SYL of Somalia like anybody else and be reasonably forthcoming. I sincerely believe that this is in the interest of Kenya as well as in all our interests.<sup>635</sup>

Although Gethin’s words may now sound far-sighted and somewhat prophetic, they remained unheard, as two bugbears influenced the perception of the SYL among British officials in Kenya: Mau Mau and communism. Writing to the Secretary for African Affairs in December 1955, the Provincial Commissioner, NFP, enclosed the translation of the content of an undated secret Italian document he had reportedly seen during a visit to Mogadishu in 1954, warning of supposed similarities between the SYL and Mau Mau:

Secretariat of League is... composed of hard and fanatical elements. [...] – 30% Hard Core extremists – rest content to follow (cf. Mau Mau). [...] Power ambitions of leaders – supported by hooligan element – infiltration into all spheres of public life including Government offices – unscrupulous – resort to violence – danger to governing authority – dangerous source of spread of Communism. (all except last point very reminiscent of Mau Mau).<sup>636</sup>

As we saw in Chapter 4, the SYL was being increasingly tamed under the Italian Trusteeship Administration. The assessment by British officials in Kenya of the party’s subversive character proved a gross exaggeration, as did

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<sup>635</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>636</sup> TNA, FCO 141/6717, PC Northern Province, to Secretary for African Affairs, 22 December 1955.



assumptions that the SYL was a breeding ground for communist infiltration in Somalia, which Italian administrators repeatedly excluded.<sup>637</sup>

‘I hope it will be possible to persuade Kenya officialdom that the modern SYL is far from that of 1948’ – John Gethin wrote to the FCO’s African Department in February 1956.<sup>638</sup> Mr. Gethin repeatedly attempted to convince the Colonial Office of the potential advantages of making ‘a greater effort to “sell” East Africa to the Somalis’.<sup>639</sup> The British ambassador in Mogadishu suggested that the British Government should build momentum from the enthusiasm shown by many Somalis for the Afro-Asian Peoples’ Solidarity movement, strengthening the African side of the Afro-Asian block. Gethin’s suggestions, though, were rejected, as they clashed with the prevailing racial categories within the colonial administration. British officials in both Kenya and the Somaliland Protectorate considered that ‘the Somali’ could not and should not be drawn into a closer relationship with the people of East Africa because he was racially and culturally different.<sup>640</sup>

The Kenya administration *de facto* endorsed and sustained racial essentialist beliefs among the Kenya Somalis, emphasising the divide between ‘the Somali’ – regarded as a Muslim migrant of Arabic descent –, on the one hand, and the Bantu and the Nilotic, on the other hand. Writing to the Colonial Office in April 1957, the acting Chief Secretary in Nairobi recorded the prevailing perception among the Kenya Somalis that they were ‘inherently superior to any of

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<sup>637</sup> ASDMAE, ASMAE, Dir. Gen. AA.PP., Uff. III, I vers., b. 220, f. 763, Directorate-General for Somalia, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to Italian Embassy, Washington, 26 January 1959; b. 221, f. 767, ‘Rapporto su alcune questioni riguardanti la Somalia e i rapporti italo-somali (in relazione al viaggio del Ministro delle Finanze On.le Paolo Emilio Taviani – 2/12 agosto 1959)’, 4, enclosed with Directorate-General for Somalia to Directorate-General for Political Affairs, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9 September 1959.

<sup>638</sup> TNA, FCO 141/6717, Gethin to Watson, 7 February 1956.

<sup>639</sup> TNA, FO 371/125678, Gethin to Watson, 13 February 1957, p. 2.

<sup>640</sup> TNA, FO 371/125678, Office of the Chief Secretary to Mathieson, 24 April 1957, p. 1; correspondence enclosed with Mathieson to Watson, 1 August 1957: Stebbing to Hall, 25 June 1957; Office of the Chief Secretary to Mathieson, 24 April 1957.

the local chaps', admitting: 'I can't help having a certain sympathy with them'.<sup>641</sup> Moreover, essentialist perceptions played a crucial role in defining political representation, as the 1955 report of the commissioner appointed to enquire into the best methods for the selection of African representatives to the Legislative Council shows. The commissioner, Walter Coutts, did not visit the NFP in view of the fact that 'the tribesmen had expressed a wish that until such time as the Province could be represented by its own member their interests should continue to be cared for by the Government through the PC.'<sup>642</sup> Mr. Coutts sympathised with the feelings of the 'tribesmen' who – he commented – 'ethnographically are quite distinct from the Africans in the rest of Kenya.'<sup>643</sup> British administrators actively participated in articulating concerns about political representation as a matter of ethnicity and race, hardening identity fault-lines between 'northerners' and down-country people.

Although the prospect of a generalised breakdown of law and order following the Somalisation of the local administration in the Jubba provinces did not materialise, the Somali scare grew bigger among British officials with Somalia's independence approaching. In 1957, the Kenya administration resolved to take 'precautionary measures' against 'the threat of raids, mass infiltration, and internal disturbance' along the Kenya-Somalia border.<sup>644</sup> These measures included the permanent stationing of one Company of the KAR at Wajir; the improvement of frontier roads with two light maintenance units; the establishment of four new Kenya Police posts at Rhamu (Mandera district), Finno (between Ceelwaaq and Mandera), Diff (Wajir district), and Liboi (Garissa district); the building, reconstruction, and improvement of six airfields at Buna, Rhamu, Finno, Sololo, Liboi, and Diff; the revival of the Provincial and District Security Committees; and the surveying, demarcation, and clearing of the Kenya-Somalia

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<sup>641</sup> TNA, FO 371/125678, Office of the Chief Secretary to Mathieson, 24 April 1957, p. 2.

<sup>642</sup> Government of Kenya, *Report of the Commissioner Appointed to Enquire into Methods for the Selection of African Representatives to the Legislative Council* (Nairobi: Government Printer, 1955), p. 28.

<sup>643</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>644</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/11, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1957, Kelly, p. 2.

border.<sup>645</sup> Further measures against the so-called ‘Somalia threat’ were taken the following year. More airstrips were completed at Kolbio (Garissa district), Khorof Harar and Habasween (Wajir district); another Police post was set up at Kolbio, while ‘the machinery for collection of intelligence was established by the posting of Special Branch officers at Garissa, Wajir, Mandera and Moyale, with headquarters at Isiolo’.<sup>646</sup> By the end of 1958, the backbone of what would become the infrastructure of counterinsurgency in the lead-up to Kenya’s independence had been put in place.

In the meanwhile, the Somalis in the NFP were watching political developments across the border with growing interest, anticipating that, thanks to the success of the SYL and the revitalization of the Greater Somalia idea, the former NFD would secede and unite with Somalia straight after the country’s independence. However, during a tour of the NFP in July 1958, the Governor of Kenya made it clear to the Somalis that ‘they were British citizens of Kenya’: their flag was the Union Jack and ‘they would remain under the protection of this flag’.<sup>647</sup> The acting Provincial Commissioner, NFP, confirmed that ‘there would be no changes in the frontier’, adducing as evidence the fact that ‘the boundary had been redemarcated and new police posts, with roads and airfields, had been established.’<sup>648</sup>

Having secured the frontier against the supposed threat of a soon-to-be independent Somalia, the Kenya administration eventually accepted the fact that they had to make a few political concessions if they wanted to avoid being compelled to do so by forthcoming developments across the border. After lengthy debate and insistent requests from the Somali Government, eight former leaders of the SYL, mostly from Garissa, who had been restricted at Lodwar since the Kenya administration had banned the League in July 1948 were released on bond in February 1959. They were allowed to return to specified areas of the Northern

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<sup>645</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>646</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/12, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1958, Kelly and Walters, p. 3.

<sup>647</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/12, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1958, Kelly and Walters, p. 2.

<sup>648</sup> *Ibid.*

Frontier Province, but their movement remained restricted.<sup>649</sup> Early in 1960, political activity in the NFD was legalised and the proscription on the SYL was lifted, without provoking a revival of the League. Instead, home-grown political parties emerged, first among the Somalis in down-country Kenya then among the people of the NFP. This political awakening was linked to events and socio-economic transformations which occurred in the 1950s. The rearrangement of group solidarities that accompanied these transformations played a crucial role in defining the positions that people later adopted in the secessionist struggle.

## **5.2 Social relations, identities, and politics in the NFD, 1954-60**

Besides tingeing the lenses through which British officials looked at the SYL, the anti-Mau Mau campaign played a key role in shaping collective identities and crystallising group loyalties in the Kenya-Somalia borderland. Although a few scholars have acknowledged that the Kenya Somalis were not insulated from the Mau-Mau insurgency, their accounts have missed out on the Emergency's most significant implications for the people of the NFP. Keren Weitzberg has mentioned the involvement of 'Somalis living in Naivasha, Nyeri, Thika, and other towns' in the Mau Mau movement to show the assimilation of Isxaaq and Xarti Somalis into Kenyan politics and challenge the perception that Mau Mau was 'a purely "Kikuyu affair"'.<sup>650</sup> Weitzberg has drawn, in part, on first-hand accounts cited by Saalax Cabdi Sheekh alleging that Somali traders supplied the Mau Mau insurgents with food, clothes, and ammunition thanks to their access to markets in Ethiopia.<sup>651</sup> However, both British reports and oral testimonies show that the NFP, especially Isiolo District, was absorbed into counterinsurgency on

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<sup>649</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/12, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1958, Kelly and Walters, 6; TNA, FCO 141/6781, Special Branch H.Q. 'Somali Youth League Activity in Kenya. Review of the period 1/1/59-31/7/59', 4; Ag. Director of Intelligence to Permanent Secretary for Defence, 6 July 1959.

<sup>650</sup> Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*, pp. 87–88.

<sup>651</sup> Salah Abdi Sheekh, *Blood on the Runaway: The Wagalla Massacre of 1984* (Nairobi: Northern Publishing House, 2007), p. 95.

the 'loyalist' side through intensive recruitment campaigns and screening operations.

The Mandera and Moyale police divisions provided men for 'special effort duties' in down-country Kenya in connection with the Emergency throughout 1953.<sup>652</sup> The following year, Mau Mau activities in Meru district resulted in Isiolo being brought into the anti-Mau Mau campaign. This required 'the maximum effort by all security forces in Isiolo'.<sup>653</sup> Twelve mounted *dubas* (tribal police) were also brought down from Moyale to deal with Mau Mau incursions.<sup>654</sup> By the end of 1954, Isiolo district 'had taken over control (for anti-Mau Mau purposes) of virtually the whole of the Meru Northern Grazing Area lying to the north-west of the Nyambeni Hills.'<sup>655</sup> The Provincial Commissioner, Mr. Kennaway, reported that the people of the NFP, except a few Turkana employed on farms in Laikipia, continued to remain 'aloof from Mau Mau'.<sup>656</sup> While the Commissioner conceded that 'the odd Rendille' was probably 'coerced into taking one or more Mau Mau oaths' and that some of the Boran who had inter-married with Meru might also have taken the oath, he excluded that the people of the Province were actively involved in the insurgency:

In spite of frequent rumours from Down-country that arms and ammunition were being obtained by the Mau Mau from the Northern Province, and even Ethiopia, not one single case has been brought to light, in spite of the utmost vigilance. [...] As regards ammunition, it is more likely that supplies emanating from old Army and Italian camp sites have found their way to Mau Mau.<sup>657</sup>

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<sup>652</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/10, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1953, Kennaway, p. 29.

<sup>653</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 45, PC/NFD 1/4/4, Isiolo District Annual Report for 1954, p. 1.

<sup>654</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/10, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1954, Kennaway, p. 34.

<sup>655</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>656</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>657</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/10, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1954, Kennaway, pp. 1–2.

In his Annual Report for 1954, Mr. Kennaway commended the loyalty of the Isiolo Somalis, who – despite ‘their fiery spirits’ – had ‘served with distinction in many Police and Military units engaged against Mau Mau.’<sup>658</sup> The District Commissioner, Isiolo, also excluded that the Boran and the Somalis had been ‘contaminated’ by the Mau Mau movement, although this had been ‘followed with a sympathetic interest by many Somalis’.<sup>659</sup> When, in July 1955, the leader of the Xarti section, Maxamed Faarax Shaacur, was accused of harbouring a Mau Mau gang and sentenced to one year in prison, this provoked ‘considerable concern’ among the Isiolo Somalis, who ‘were at great pain to dissociate themselves’ from the incident and ‘to assert their loyalty to the Crown.’<sup>660</sup>

The British recruited both Somalis and Boran from across the NFP to participate in the anti-Mau Mau campaign.<sup>661</sup> According to Cabdulaahi Cali Maxamed ‘Suufi’, a Somali pastoralist from Wajir who was recruited in the KAR to fight against the Mau Mau in 1954, at least fifteen young men were recruited in Wajir district during the Emergency.<sup>662</sup> Some Boran elders I interviewed in Isiolo cited their participation in the anti-Mau Mau campaign as evidence of their loyalty to the Crown, a loyalty that – in their eyes – the British administration betrayed a few years later, siding with their former enemies: ‘The British betrayed us. We fought with them against the Mau Mau... They liked us to be their devil’ – a Boran interviewee who was recruited during the Emergency stated.<sup>663</sup> The anti-Mau Mau campaign drew the loyalty line, separating those who had fought for the British from down-country ‘Africans’ and strengthening the alliance between Somalis and Boran in Isiolo District.

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<sup>658</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/10, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1954, Kennaway, p. 18.

<sup>659</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 45, PC/NFD 1/4/4, Isiolo District Annual Report for 1954, 2; *Ibid.* Isiolo District Annual Report for 1955, p. 2.

<sup>660</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>661</sup> Interviews with Hassan Wako Wario, Isiolo, 2 March 2016; Jatani Wako Wario, Maua, 6 March 2016; and Cabdulaahi Cali Maxamed, Wajir, 23 March 2016.

<sup>662</sup> Interview with Cabdulaahi Cali Maxamed, 23 March 2016.

<sup>663</sup> Interview with Hassan Wako Wario, Isiolo, 2 March 2016.

In 1955, the Boran initiated a movement to change their legal status. They no longer wished to be classified as Africans under the law and sought equal status with the Somalis. The movement started in Nairobi, where the few Boran urbanites resented the fact that they ‘were obliged to carry passes and forbidden to reside outside certain areas, and that in prison they could not enjoy the better food and privileges accorded to the Somali’.<sup>664</sup> Subsequently, the Isiolo Boran took the matter up first with the District Commissioner, then, having failed to make any progress, with the Provincial Commissioner. Ex-headman Wako Hapi, who had been convicted for ‘subversive activities’ and exiled to Marsabit a few years earlier, was reportedly ‘in consultation with a political body in Nairobi’.<sup>665</sup> Born in Garba Tulla to a former chief, Wako Hapi had moved first to Muddogashi, where he had learned to speak Somali, then to Sericho, becoming a trader and marrying a Somali lady.<sup>666</sup> According to a Boran informant, Wako Hapi had been convicted following a power struggle with the newly appointed chief Xaaji Galma Dido, son of the late Boran paramount chief Dido Doyo.<sup>667</sup> Xaaji Galma championed the movement for obtaining Somali status, thereby strengthening his influence over the Uwaso Boran.<sup>668</sup> Both Wako Hapi and Xaaji Galma Dido were to become leading figures in the campaign for the secession of the NFP alongside the Somalis, as we shall see in the next section.

Although the claim for equal status with the Somalis was eventually dropped, the District Commissioner, Isiolo, saw it as a sign that the Boran were ‘becoming a little more conscious of the outside world’.<sup>669</sup> The District

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<sup>664</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 45, PC/NFD 1/4/4, Isiolo District Annual Report for 1955, p. 3.

<sup>665</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 45, PC/NFD 1/4/4, Isiolo District Annual Report for 1956, p. 2.

<sup>666</sup> Interviews with Gufu Gollo, Isiolo, 2 March 2016; Giro Ukka Kampe, Isiolo, 9 March 2016; and Cismaan Ibraahim Axmed, Garba Tulla, 8 March 2016.

<sup>667</sup> Interview with Giro Ukka Kampe, Isiolo, 9 March 2016.

<sup>668</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/12, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1957, Kelly, p. 16.

<sup>669</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 45, PC/NFD 1/4/4, Isiolo District Annual Report for 1956, p. 9.

Commissioner, however, regarded the increasingly close relationship between the Boran and the Somalis as a scheme devised by the Ogaadeen, who – he believed – wanted the ‘Boran country’ for themselves and used ‘brotherhood’ to achieve their goal. Still, brotherhood was becoming real, no matter what:

“We are brothers”, the Aulihan say to the Boran. “Our grazing is open to you and yours to us”. The Boran like this approach, for are they not trying to achieve equal status with Somalis? Here is a demonstration of true brotherhood.<sup>670</sup>

This episode challenges the engrained perception that the ‘ingenuous’ Boran were drawn into politics in 1960 by a few hot-headed ‘alien’ Somalis. By the time the secessionist campaign began, the Somalis and the Uaso Boran had become brothers, with all the bonds, tensions, and conflicts that brotherhood entails.

The on-going definition of allegiances and group solidarities was linked to the gradual transformation of the material base of pastoral society in the Kenya-Somalia borderland, a process in which livestock trade played a key role. The Emergency meant the temporary elimination of the Central Province market for livestock from the NFP and, for long periods, Emergency regulations were used by the British administration to justify a monopoly of exports from the Province by the African Livestock Marketing Organization (ALMO).<sup>671</sup> This, established in 1952, was the main instrument of a new policy intended to destock the colony’s arid lowlands and provide cheap meat for the agricultural areas around Mount Kenya and for a meat canning factory at Athi River.<sup>672</sup> The people of the NFP were dissatisfied with the new marketing measures, as they considered the price offered by ALMO for slaughter livestock to be too low. Both Somalis and Boran saw in the existence of ALMO and the Kenya Meat Commission (KMC) ‘a

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<sup>670</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>671</sup> Dahl, *Suffering Grass*, p. 198.

<sup>672</sup> R.J.M. Swynnerton, *A Plan to Intensify the Development of African Agriculture in Kenya* (Nairobi: Government Printers, 1954), pp. 31–33.



scheme by Government to make them dispose of their stock at uneconomic prices.’<sup>673</sup>

Nevertheless, after slowing down as a result of the Emergency, livestock trade sharply picked up in 1958. Livestock exports from the NFP increased by 30 percent to a high record, from 46,019 total units in 1957 to 62,231 in 1958.<sup>674</sup> The cash income from NFP exports continued to increase from £454,000 in 1958 to £500,000 in 1959.<sup>675</sup> The provincial fleet of double-decked Diesel lorries increased from 36 to over 50; their range was extended to Ceelwaaq and Rhamu (in Mandera district), where the KMC instituted regular government-controlled livestock sales.<sup>676</sup> In consequence, Garissa traders ‘prospered, searching out markets for themselves’, one consignment of 300 head of livestock even reaching Dar es Salam. Garissa alone exported 81,942 sheep and goats and 9,631 cattle in 1958, becoming the wealthiest district in the Province.<sup>677</sup> In 1960, the district exported what was believed to be a record-high figure of 17,203 head of cattle, the majority of which were sold to the KMC at Mombasa.<sup>678</sup>

The intake by the KMC of slaughter livestock from Garissa was progressively increased at the expense of the cattle import quota from Somalia (see Chapter 4). This was discussed at a meeting in Malindi in August 1958 attended by Provincial and District officers from the Coast Province and the NFP. Although the Somalia quota could not be abolished outright without risking jeopardising the Mombasa meat supply and Lamu’s economy, it was decided to gradually reduce the intake from Somalia, initially by 50 cattle per month, raising

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<sup>673</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/10, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1954, Kennaway, p. 19.

<sup>674</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/12, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1958, Kelly and Walters, pp. 1, 56.

<sup>675</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/12, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1959, Walters, p. 3.

<sup>676</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>677</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/12, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1958, Kelly and Walters, p. 57.

<sup>678</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/12, Northern Frontier District Annual Report for 1960, Walters, p. 4.

the NFP quota accordingly.<sup>679</sup> Further arrangements were made in March 1959; these provided that ‘the quota of cattle for Mombasa from the NFP would be increased from 900 to 1200 per month.’<sup>680</sup>

The increase in livestock exports from the Northern Frontier Province was accompanied by modest though significant ‘progress in the developmental sense’.<sup>681</sup> The demand for education gathered momentum. Until the late 1950s, the Government African Intermediate Primary school at Wajir, established in 1948, was the only school above the primary level in the whole NFP. In 1958, the Northern Province Trust Fund and the Ethiopian Border Raids Trust Fund provided grants totalling £15,000 for the completion of primary schools at Garissa, Marsabit, and Mandera.<sup>682</sup> As no Kenya development funds were available and the Trust Fund was insufficient, voluntary collections were authorised for the establishment of intermediate schools at Marsabit and Isiolo, and for the completion of a primary school at Garba Tulla.<sup>683</sup> Subsequently, the demand for education increased steadily throughout the Province, rapidly outstripping the capacity to provide both teachers and accommodation.<sup>684</sup>

Trade expansion nourished social interactions. Traders from across the NFP, all the way up to Mandera, began travelling to Isiolo more frequently. In 1956, Barclays Bank opened a branch in Isiolo Township.<sup>685</sup> ‘Alien’ Somali

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<sup>679</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/12, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1958, Kelly and Walters, p. 57.

<sup>680</sup> KNA, CL 13/5, Department of Veterinary Services, Provincial Veterinary Office, Coast, to Director of Veterinary Services, Veterinary Research Laboratory, 17 March 1959.

<sup>681</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/12, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1959, Walters, p. 4.

<sup>682</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/12, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1958, Kelly and Walters, p. 5.

<sup>683</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>684</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/12, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1959, Walters, p. 3.

<sup>685</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 45, PC/NFD 1/4/4, Isiolo District Annual Report for 1956, p. 3.

traders would now go to Garba Tulla central market to buy livestock from up north which they sold in Isiolo and neighbouring areas, buying foodstuff, tobacco, and *miraa* from the Meru.<sup>686</sup> Somali traders would sell food and clothes to the Uaso Boran in exchange for livestock, rhino horns, leopard skins and other game trophies. According to oral testimonies, Boran and Samburu – to whom killing game was a matter of bravery and honour and, therefore, had primarily a symbolic value – did not have a sense of the monetary value of the game trophies they sold to ‘alien’ Somali traders.<sup>687</sup> Several of these built up their capital stocks through cross-border smuggling and poaching, benefiting from the thriving black market between the NFP and Kismaayo.<sup>688</sup> As a Boran informant from Isiolo put it, Somali traders ‘were the link between people here and the “outside world”’.<sup>689</sup>

Social assimilation was not limited to the ‘Somalisation’ of the Isiolo Boran but was, rather, a two-sided affair. It happened that Somali pastoralists who went to Isiolo as employees of Somali traders from Garissa, Wajir, and Mandera looked for work as herdsmen in Garba Tulla. Some of them, especially Ajuuraan from Wajir, were adopted by Boran families and given livestock, becoming part of Boran clans and marrying Boran ladies.<sup>690</sup> One of the wealthiest traders in Isiolo district, Samatar Sheekh Cumar, was the son of an Isxaaq livestock owner, Sheekh Cumar Ismaaciil, who had been adopted by the Boran/Warjidda.<sup>691</sup> Samatar, therefore, was both Boran and Somali, which endowed him with total freedom of movement, making him a successful businessman. Shared use of rangelands, trade, and intermarriage between Somalis and Boran accentuated differences between the *Badòle* (Boran from Marsabit and Moyale) and the *Uasòle* (Boran in the Uaso Nyiro area, most of whom had immigrated from Wajir

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<sup>686</sup> Interviews with Xuseen Maxamed Jaamac, Isiolo, 10 March 2016, and Xasan Guuleed Cabdulle, Nairobi, 20 April 2016.

<sup>687</sup> Interviews with Xuseen Maxamed Xaaji Cabdala ‘Maziwa’, Isiolo, 3 March 2016, and Ali Wako Godana, Isiolo, 1 March 2016.

<sup>688</sup> Interviews with Maxamuud Ismaaciil, Isiolo, 7 March 2016, and Xuseen Maxamed Xaaji Cabdala ‘Maziwa’, Isiolo, 3 March 2016.

<sup>689</sup> Interview with Ali Wako Godana, Isiolo, 1 March 2016.

<sup>690</sup> Interview with Gufu Gollo, Isiolo, 2 March 2016.

<sup>691</sup> *Ibid.*

in the mid-1930s), gradually bringing the *Uasòle* closer to the Somalis than to the *Badòle*.<sup>692</sup> Despite recurrent conflicts over pastures, the Boran and the Somalis ‘needed each other’.<sup>693</sup>

Being neighbours influenced the way people thought about, interacted with, and classified the world around them. Religion was a key component of social assimilation. Most people in Sericho and Muddogashi received a religious education in qur’anic schools (*dugsi*) set up by Somali *shuyuukh*, mostly Ashraaf, whom the Boran kept in high esteem.<sup>694</sup> Pupils graduated after four years, and the teacher (*macalim*) normally received one cow for each successful student or more than one if the pupil was particularly good.<sup>695</sup> In this way, Ashraaf teachers and ‘holy men’ acquired not only prestige but also large quantities of livestock, some of them becoming prosperous traders.<sup>696</sup>

Against a background of deepening social and commercial interactions, people in the NFP townships became increasingly interested in politics, as a result of both developments in Somalia and the Lennox-Boyd Constitution of 1957-58, which increased the number of African members in Kenya’s Legislative Council and provided for one nominated representative for the Northern Frontier Province. Three ‘alien’ Somalis were initially identified as suitable candidates for the LegCo nomination, namely Axmed Faarax (Isxaaq/Habar Yoonis), BEM, chief of Moyale township and former District clerk; Xaaji Cabdalla Faarax (Isxaaq/Habar Awal), an Isiolo trader, son of a Somali lady from Kismaayo (whose father had been hired by Lord Delamere and transferred to Kenya) and a European soldier who had been stationed at Kismaayo; and Cali Aadan ‘Lord’ (Xarti/Warsangali), a Nairobi-born trader, who was employed by Cali Sigaara (see Chapter 4) as a shop-

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<sup>692</sup> Interview with Godana Doyo, Isiolo, 10 March 2016.

<sup>693</sup> Interview with Ali Wako Godana, Isiolo, 1 March 2016.

<sup>694</sup> Interviews with Gufu Gollo, Isiolo, 2 March 2016, and Ali Wako Godana, Isiolo, 1 March 2016.

<sup>695</sup> Interview with Hassan Wako Wario, Isiolo, 2 March 2016.

<sup>696</sup> Interview with Hassan Wako Wario, Isiolo, 2 March 2016; KNA, DC/ISO 4/1/13, Wabera to PC Northern Province, ‘Monthly Report for February, 1963’, 16 March 1963, p. 6.

manager in Wajir and had carried on his own business in the NFP as a wholesaler and transporter since 1940.<sup>697</sup>

Public opinion seemed to fix on Cali Aadan ‘Lord’, who was also the secretary of the Wajir Muslim Association and had been a member of the Somali Youth League.<sup>698</sup> Although both Axmed Faarax and Xaaji Cabdalla Faarax had potential to become political brokers, as it was easy for them to deal with the British, the former was regarded as too moderate, while the latter, being ‘half-European’, was considered as ‘belonging to neither camp’, according to British sources.<sup>699</sup> Nevertheless, the administration’s choice fell on Axmed Faarax, who declined the appointment for personal reasons. The second choice fell on Shariif Kullatein (Arab), who had been the Principal of Wajir School since 1950. As his appointment, though, was ‘contrary to the popular desire’ for Cali Aadan ‘Lord’, Shariif Kullatein ‘soon found that the respect and popularity which he had earned during his seven years’ service in Wajir, was changing to hatred and contempt’.<sup>700</sup> By the end of 1958, Axmed Faarax’s affairs had improved sufficiently for him to agree to accept nomination and Shariif Kullatein was kindly invited to resign.

In the meanwhile, ‘alien’ Somalis in Nairobi became increasingly involved in Kenyan politics. A Somali National Association (SNA) was formed in Eastleigh in November 1958, as the forthcoming independence of Somalia and the impact of African nationalism ‘induced in Somali communities a feeling of

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<sup>697</sup> Interviews with Xasan Guuleed Cabdulle, Nairobi, 20 April 2016; Xuseen Maxamed Xaaji Cabdalla ‘Maziwa’, Isiolo, 3 March 2016, and Nairobi, 17 March 2016; and Haashi Cali Aadan ‘Lord’, Nairobi, 25 April 2016.

<sup>698</sup> ‘Death of MLC’, *Daily Nation*, 21 December 1961, p. 2; ‘Death of Mr. Ali Aden Lord’, *East African Standard*, 21 December 1961. Cali Aadan’s father, a trader from Laasqooray (Somaliland) and former employee of Lord Delamere, was nicknamed ‘Lord’ because of his favourite refrain: ‘This is what Lord Delamere said...’. Interview with Haashi Cali Aadan ‘Lord’, Nairobi, 25 April 2016.

<sup>699</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/12, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1958, Kelly and Walters, p. 3.

<sup>700</sup> *Ibid.*

insecurity'.<sup>701</sup> Both the SNA president, Maxamed Cali Guleed, and vice-president, Axmed Warsame Cali, were Isxaaq, while the party's secretary, Ibraahim Xasan Iido, was Xarti/Dhulbahante. The SNA leaders intensified their contacts with African politicians in Nairobi, which suggested that some Somalis at least hoped 'to use the nationalist bandwagon for their own ends.'<sup>702</sup> Maxamed Cali Guleed reportedly sent a personal donation of Shs. 3,000/- to the African Elected Members' defence fund in June 1958. The SNA president was on good terms with Tom Mboya and was 'trying to interest him in Somali affairs'.<sup>703</sup> Belonging to an educated elite, Maxamed Cali Guleed entertained friendly relations with Mwai Kibaki as well.<sup>704</sup> By February 1959, both Maxamed Cali Guleed and Axmed Warsame Cali had become members of the Nairobi Peoples' Convention Party, according to British intelligence sources.<sup>705</sup> Although not everyone within the SNA appreciated cooperation with the Kenyan nationalists, Maxamed Cali Guleed reportedly met Tom Mboya in August 1959, asking for his assistance in obtaining a Somali elected representative in LegCo, the removal of the pass system in the Northern Frontier, and help for Ogaadeen Somalis who had been fined for entering Kenya.<sup>706</sup>

Support from the Kenyan nationalists, however, did not materialise and the SNA remained the expression of a Nairobi-based trading elite, failing to secure a political constituency in the NFP. There, gradual socio-economic change and political events across the border were provoking subtle shifts in power balance, preparing the ground for the emergence of political parties. In Garissa, Chief Cumar Shuuriya (Ogaadeen/Cabdalla) saw his authority challenged by the growing prestige of Chief Macalin Maxamed Sanbul (Ogaadeen/Cabudwaaq),

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<sup>701</sup> TNA, CO 822/1304, 'Extract from Special Branch Summary No. 12/58', December 1958.

<sup>702</sup> TNA, CO 822/1304, 'Extract from Special Branch Summary No. 2/59', February 1959.

<sup>703</sup> TNA, CO 822/1304, 'Extract from Special Branch Summary No. 6/58', June 1958.

<sup>704</sup> Interview with Xuseen Maxamed Jaamac, Isiolo, 10 March 2016.

<sup>705</sup> TNA, CO 822/1304, 'Extract from Special Branch Summary No. 2/59', February 1959.

<sup>706</sup> TNA, CO 822/1304, 'Extract from Special Branch Summary No. 8/59', August 1959.

who was extending his influence across all sections of the Garissa Somalis, including the Cabdalla. In 1958, the District Commissioner, Garissa, reported:

He [Chief Macalin] is now without doubt the most powerful Political figure in the District. [...] It appears that he is anxious to consolidate his position as the leading Garissa Somali, in order to be able to bargain with both the British Administration and the Somalia Government from a position of strength. During the year he has moved away from the “Sitting on the fence attitude” to one where he must be regarded with respect as an independent leader.<sup>707</sup>

One of Chief Macalin’s sons, Deeqoow, was emerging as a political activist. Although he was only nine years old in 1947, Deeqoow Macalin Sanbul had been involved with the SYL before it was banned. As a teenager, Deeqoow had an uneasy relationship with his father and could not understand why a *Suldaan* had to take orders from the District Commissioner.<sup>708</sup> In 1954, he became assistant clerk at Wajir but resented the fact that Somali pastoralists like him were not allowed to stay in townships overnight.<sup>709</sup> When, in October 1957, he was convicted for theft, a copy of a report by the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party was found among his property. During his interrogation, he stated that he intended to show the report to his friends, acting in a way that ‘was provocatively anti-British’, according to a Special Branch report.<sup>710</sup> Deeqoow’s political activism was motivated, first and foremost, by anti-colonial sentiments, which he later transferred into the secessionist campaign, becoming one of its leaders.

Trade development in Garissa favoured the emergence of a new type of chiefs, most conspicuously exemplified by Yuusuf Xaaji Cabdi

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<sup>707</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/12, Northern Frontier Province Annual Report for 1958, Kelly and Walters, p.39.

<sup>708</sup> Interview with Deeqoow Macalin Sanbul, Garissa, 28 July 2017.

<sup>709</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>710</sup> TNA, CO 822/1304, ‘Extract from Kenya Special Branch HQ Intelligence Summary No. 10/57’, October 1957.

(Ogaadeen/Cabdalla). Owner of the first ‘local’ Somali shop (opened in the mid-1950s) in Garissa Township, Yuusuf Xaaji participated in the expanding livestock trade between Garissa, Lamu and Mombasa, sending cattle and shoats to the KMC in 1959.<sup>711</sup> Along with a few other emerging Cabudwaaq and Cawlyahan businessmen, Yuusuf Xaaji was also indirectly involved in the *sub rosa* trade with Kismaayo.<sup>712</sup> This trade was conducted by smugglers who sold livestock, ivory tusks, and game trophies to middlemen in Kismaayo and supplied traders in Garissa with goods, especially ‘Banaadir’ cloth, from Somalia. The livestock trade with Lamu, though, was the most lucrative business for Yuusuf Xaaji Cabdi, who actively engaged in political activity as soon as this was legalised in the NFP in 1960.

In Wajir, livestock marketing did not expand as significantly as it did in Garissa. Nevertheless, in the late 1950s, successful government-controlled livestock sales were organised periodically by the KMC and, for the first time in the district’s history, ‘local’ Somali pastoralists were allowed to work as auctioneers and to obtain livestock trade licenses to participate in the KMC auctions. Among the newly licensed traders was Maxamed Yeroow Xasan (Digoodiya), an ex-military man; Maxamed Nuur Cali (Digoodiya), a town-boy coming from Tarbaj; and Xaaji Daqaane (Ogaadeen/Maxamed Subeer), a religious leader.<sup>713</sup> These traders, with others, created the Wajir Trading Company, which became both a successful commercial operation and, covertly, a base for the organization of Somali politics. The Company’s members were the first Wajir pastoralists who became actively involved in party politics.

### **5.3 The local dynamics of political mobilisation, 1960-61**

The commencement of the Lancaster House talks in London in February

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<sup>711</sup> KNA, CL/13/5, District Livestock Officer, Garissa, to Provincial Veterinary Officer, Mombasa, 6 February 1959, 23 February 1959, and 31 July 1959. Interview with Maxamed Yuusuf Xaaji, Nairobi, 4 May 2016.

<sup>712</sup> Interview with Maxamed Yuusuf Xaaji, Nairobi, 4 May 2016.

<sup>713</sup> Interview with Cabdulaahi Cali Maxamed ‘Suufi’, Wajir, 23 March 2016.



1960, leading toward Kenya's independence, had an immediate impact in the NFP. By March, Wajir 'was seething with politics, and a political party, the Northern Province People's Progressive Party (NPPPP), was in formation demanding the immediate secession of NFD to Somalia'.<sup>714</sup> The party's headquarters, though, were temporarily captured by Isiolo.<sup>715</sup> By the end of 1960, another political party, the Northern Frontier Democratic Party (NFDP) was created in Garissa. Both parties were keen on secessionism for the people of the NFP. A member of the Wajir Trading Company, Maxamed Nuur Cali, coined the slogan for the nascent secessionist movement: *Kula Suusac* – a mixture of Swahili and Somali terms literally meaning '[let's] eat fermented camel milk'. Locally, the slogan was understood to say: 'we will be better off if we keep our own lifestyle'.<sup>716</sup> Support for secessionism and unification with the new Somali Republic, formed by the unification of former Italian Somalia and British Somaliland on 1 July 1960, grew rapidly throughout the NFP.

However, neither of Kenya's major political parties, the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), was willing to negotiate away the territorial integrity of the future state by supporting secessionism, although they had alternative visions of statecraft and governance for post-independence Kenya. Endowing the Northern Frontier Province with a degree of power and autonomy as a federalist region within Kenya was the only concession that KADU, which supported *majimboism* (regionalism), was willing to make. The aims of the Kenyan Somalis, though, went further than *majimboism* would then allow, as the political future of the NFD became a bargaining chip in the negotiations between the British Government and the emerging Kenyan political elite.<sup>717</sup>

The issue of the future of the NFD brought together local histories and power struggles at various levels, intersecting high and local politics. The debates

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<sup>714</sup> Keith Kyle, *The Politics of the Independence of Kenya* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), p. 157.

<sup>715</sup> KNA, DC/ISO 3/1/8, Fullerton to PC, Northern Province, 'Wajir District Monthly Report – May 1960', 14 June 1960, p. 1.

<sup>716</sup> Ibrahim Ali Hussein 'Sir', interview, Wajir, 22 March 2016.

<sup>717</sup> Kyle, *Politics of Independence*, pp. 156–58 and 170–71.

around nationhood and self-determination were closely interlinked with social issues, like inter-generational conflict over authority, and access to land and resources. Inter-generational struggle was particularly evident in Isiolo township, where tensions within the local branch of the NPPPP reflected the younger generation's challenge of traditional authority within the 'alien' Somali community. Cabdi Latiif Ayah (Isxaaq/Habar Jecelo), the chairman of the Isiolo branch of the NPPPP, was a young livestock keeper, regarded by elders as one of those 'idle' urbanites who engaged in politics because they 'had nothing to do'.<sup>718</sup> 'Only in their dislike of "Kenya", in their opposition to control of grazing in the Leasehold, and their opposition to ALMO are young and old at one' – the District Commissioner, Isiolo, recorded in 1960.<sup>719</sup>

Amidst pending land disputes, the registration of voters for the first Kenyan general elections, to be held in February 1961, became a hotly contested issue in Isiolo District, providing the NPPPP with an opportunity to strengthen its base among the Boran. Livestock raids had occurred between Boran and Samburu in December 1959, leaving a legacy of mistrust and hostility between the two groups. The Boran were still resenting the fact they had been found primarily responsible for the disturbances and ordered to pay over Shs. 15,000/-. When, in August 1960, they learned that they had been grouped together in the same electoral constituency as the Samburu, 'this indeed seemed insult added to injury' – the District Commissioner commented – and 'contributed largely to the boycott of the electoral registration which followed in September.'<sup>720</sup> The fact that the constituency boundary had been fixed following the so-called 'Somali Line' (see Chapter 1) was interpreted as a trick to mark the territorial limit of secession, compelling those who lived to the west of it to 'permanent association with

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<sup>718</sup> Interviews with Xasan Guuleed Cabdulle, Nairobi, 20 April 2016, and Maxamuud Ismaaciil, Isiolo, 7 March 2016.

<sup>719</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 45, PC/NFD 1/4/5, Isiolo District Annual Report for 1960, pp. 4–5.

<sup>720</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 45, PC/NFD 1/4/5, Isiolo District Annual Report for 1960, p. 5.

Kenya.<sup>721</sup> As a result, ‘an almost 100% boycott of the registration of electors as a protest against the delineation of the electoral constituencies and the grouping of the Somalis and Boran with the Samburu and Turkana’ was among the NPPPP’s major achievements in Isiolo in 1960.<sup>722</sup> The party also protested against the ALMO monopoly, demanding open livestock sales, and engaged lawyers to pursue the claims that the Boran had risen against the Samburu as a result of the 1959 raids.

The idea of secession took root among the Uaso Boran. Towards the end of 1960, a branch of the NPPPP was formed at Garba Tulla and Jatani Wako Wariyo became one of its leading figures. Son of a chief who had converted to Islam and gone on pilgrimage to Makkah, Jatani Wako Wariyo was a livestock trader. Because of his business, he used to deal with various groups, namely Boran, Isiolo Somalis, Meru, and Somalis from Wajir, Garissa, and Muddogashi.<sup>723</sup> Another Uaso Boran with a similar profile, Wako Hapi (mentioned in the previous section) was elected president of the NPPPP during a provincial meeting, attended by representatives from all districts of the NFP, which was held in Wajir in January 1961. The NPPPP vice-presidency was given to Alex Kholkholle, a Rendille from Marsabit, thus ensuring the party a foothold in that district as well. The above-mentioned Deeqoow Macalin Sanbul, son of the Ogaadeen/Cabudwaaq chief of Garissa, was elected secretary-general of the NPPPP, while Cabdi Rashiid Khaliif, son of the newly appointed Digoodiya/Reer Maxamuud chief of Wajir Khaliif Axmed, became the party’s treasurer. These appointments were intended to give the NPPPP a cross-ethnic identity, thereby strengthening solidarity among pastoralists and increasing the party’s social and political capital. During the same meeting, it was unanimously decided that the NPPPP would boycott the upcoming general elections. On Nomination Day, Cali Aadan ‘Lord’ was thus returned unopposed as an independent, having broken with

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<sup>721</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 40, PC/NFD 1/1/12, Northern Frontier District Annual Report for 1960, Walters, pp. 1–2.

<sup>722</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 45, PC/NFD 1/4/5, Isiolo District Annual Report for 1960, pp. 3–4.

<sup>723</sup> Interviews with Hassan Wako Wario, Isiolo, 2 March 2016, and Jatani Wako Wario, Maua, 6 March 2016.

the NPPPP over the election issue.<sup>724</sup> He then became the first member of the Legislative Council for Northern Province East.

Despite the row over the election boycott, Cali Aadan ‘Lord’ maintained a close relationship with the NPPPP and, in May 1961, he led the party’s delegation that went to Nairobi to present a petition to the Governor, Sir Patrick Renison. The petition’s message was clear: should it happen that Britain did not give the Northern Province the right to self-determination before it handed over power to Kenya, the inhabitants of the NFD feared ‘neglect, bad administration and disregard of their rights as citizens at the best, and oppression, servitude, brutality, and civil war’ at the worst.<sup>725</sup> Emphasizing the otherness of ‘the native inhabitants of the Colony’ – regarded as ‘alien in religion, language, race, background, custom and pastoral and social tradition’ – the petitioners expressed their concern that in an independent Kenya ‘they would not be permitted to continue their traditional way of life undisturbed’.<sup>726</sup> In the event that any other group attempted to impose its own way of life on the people of the NFD, this ‘could only lead to bloodshed and riot’ – the petition stated.<sup>727</sup>

While the secessionist movement was seeking to harness political capital by building a common identity among pastoralists, a split emerged between politicians and chiefs in Wajir, although, officially, they remained united in their demand for secession. The chiefs feared that the politicians would seize power from them unless they made a determinate effort to retain their traditional leadership, while the politicians argued that politics was not the concern of the chiefs.<sup>728</sup> Concerns about leadership also differentiated the Northern Frontier Democratic Party from the NPPPP. When the NFDP opened a branch in Wajir in 1961, a few people who had theretofore supported the NPPPP defected to the new

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<sup>724</sup> KNA, DC/ISO/3/1/8, Wajir Monthly Report, Wright, January 1961, p. 1.

<sup>725</sup> “Why the Northern Province Wants to Join up with Somalia,” *Daily Nation*, 20 May 1961, p. 7.

<sup>726</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>727</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>728</sup> KNA, BB/1/195, ‘Secret minutes of meeting of District Commissioners, Northern Province, held at the Provincial Commissioner’s Office, Isiolo, from 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> October 1961’, 18 October 1961, p. 3.

party; among these was Maxamed Yeroow Xasan (Digoodiya), one of the first licensed traders among the ‘local’ Somalis, and Ibraahim Maayo (Ogaadeen/Maxamed Subeer). The latter had spent several years in Kismaayo, where he had been employed first as a soldier then as a translator, before becoming a trader. He had returned to Wajir following a dispute with Xarti businessmen in Kismaayo.<sup>729</sup> Ibraahim Maayo bragged that ‘he knew how things worked in Somalia’.<sup>730</sup> Until the beginning of 1963, the NPPPP and the NFDP had the same position on secession. Oral testimonies, however, suggest that, although the supporters of NFDP (very few compared to those of the NPPPP) initially supported the idea of secession, they disapproved the way in which the NPPPP was being led.<sup>731</sup>

In Garissa, where the NFDP was first established, tensions emerged between the two secessionist parties early in 1961, when chief Macalin Sanbul led a group of Ogaadeen/Cabudwaaq elders on a journey to Kismaayo to settle an old *diya*-payment issue but the trip ‘turned into a full-scale affair with a visit to Mogadishu’.<sup>732</sup> Chief Macalin Sanbul was received by the President, the Prime Minister and various Ministers of the Somali Republic and was accommodated in the best hotel in the capital. The NFDP, which had its power base among the Ogaadeen/Cabdalla and was led by Yuusuf Xaaji Cabdi (mentioned in the previous section), thus feared to be marginalised in the secessionist campaign and began canvassing for support among the Orma along the Tana River.<sup>733</sup>

The argument that the NPPPP leadership was not representative of the ‘local people’ gradually shaped an autochthony discourse within the NFDP. The supporters of this party, mainly chiefs and elders who feared to lose their authority, claimed that those who were driving the NPPPP were not ‘locals’, but ‘alien’ Somalis, thereby internalizing the categorization used by the British

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<sup>729</sup> Mohamed Ibrahim Mayo, interview with author, Wajir, 21 March 2016.

<sup>730</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>731</sup> Interview, Mohamed Yusuf Haji, Nairobi, 4 May 2016.

<sup>732</sup> KNA, PC/GRSSA 2/21/5, DC Garissa, to PC Northern Province, ‘Monthly Report for Garissa District – January 1961’, 20 January 1961, pp. 1–2. *Diya* means ‘blood money’ in Somali.

<sup>733</sup> *Ibid.*

administrators. As the main financiers of the NPPPP were traders who belonged to ‘alien’ Somali clans, these, especially the Xarti, were increasingly perceived by rival corporate groups as those who were calling the shots in the secessionist campaign.

Tensions between ‘native’ and ‘alien’ Somalis also drove competition between Wajir and Isiolo to host the headquarters of the NPPPP. Although a Xarti/Warsangeli, Ismaaciil Xaaji, was among the NPPPP founders in Wajir, ‘alien’ Somalis were more numerous in Isiolo than in Wajir. Here, ‘local’ Somalis, especially among the new livestock traders, formed the majority of NPPPP supporters. The Xarti, therefore, hoped to control the party from Isiolo.<sup>734</sup> Wajir, however, managed to temporarily capture the NPPPP headquarters.

The issue of autochthony acquired particular salience in Mandera and Ceelwaaq, where NPPPP branches were registered in 1961. NPPPP supporters accused the colonial administration of discriminating against local people in labour recruitment in favour of people ‘imported’ from other provinces.<sup>735</sup> The Somali National Association also complained to the Chief Secretary about ‘open discrimination’ allegedly practiced by the Ministry of Works in Mandera and Ceel Waaq, denouncing a government policy intended ‘to satisfy certain people of certain Province, (at our expense) to calm them down politically.’<sup>736</sup> The Ministry concerned responded to these accusations explaining that preference was given to people from down-country tribes because there were no locals sufficiently qualified to replace them.<sup>737</sup> This explanation, however, failed to quell popular discontent and feelings continued to run high in Mandera District. In December 1961, the Assistant Meteorological Observer, a Nyanza man, ‘met his end at the hands of some Ethiopian Garre Murre’, while the Kikuyu Hospital Assistant at Ceel Waaq Dispensary was faced with a lot of criticism from the ‘locals’ and

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<sup>734</sup> Cabdi Sabdoow Nuur, interview, Wajir, 23 March 2016.

<sup>735</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 44, PC/NFD 1/3/3, Mandera District Annual Report for 1961, p. 2.

<sup>736</sup> KNA, HAKI 1/325, Guled to Chief Secretary, 21 June 1961.

<sup>737</sup> KNA, HAKI 1/325, Watkins to Permanent Secretary for Works, 21 July 1961.

several demands were made for his replacement.<sup>738</sup> Hostility, though, was partly fuelled by the attitudes of government employees: ‘I think it is true to say that where the down-country people behaved themselves and did not get involved in heavy drinking and “*fitina*” – the District Commissioner observed – they were tolerated, but not so any who did not go out of the way to help and be friendly to the locals.’<sup>739</sup>

While the NPPPP was gaining strength in Wajir, Garissa, Mandera, and Isiolo, becoming the largest political party in the NFP, ‘pro-Kenya’ parties emerged in Marsabit, Moyale and Garissa. Among these, the Northern Province United Association (NPUA) was the most prominent. The NPUA, which had its headquarters in Marsabit and sub-branches in Moyale, assembled Boran, Gabbra and Burji groups against secession. In the attempt to extend its power base to Isiolo District, the NPUA attacked the secessionist movement on the grounds that ‘the Somalis in the NFD were not the real natives of the province, which belonged to the Boran, Turkana, Rendille, Warda, and Samburu tribes’.<sup>740</sup> The NPUA, though, failed to appeal to the Uaso Boran – in Garba Tulla the party had only three members.<sup>741</sup> Another smaller anti-secession party, the Northern Province People National Union (NPPNU) was formed in Garissa to champion the interests of non-Somali communities living along the Tana River. These parties adopted an ‘explicitly nativist rhetoric’ to voice the concerns of ‘minority groups’ that ‘remained unconvinced by the promise of equality within the Somali Union – due, most likely, to remembered histories of being driven off land or forced into oppressive relations of clientship’ – as Keren Weitzberg has pointed out.<sup>742</sup> The nativist rhetoric was also encouraged by Ethiopia, which supported the NPUA politically and financially.

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<sup>738</sup> OBL, Micr. Afr. 515, Reel 44, PC/NFD 1/3/3, Mandera District Annual Report for 1961, McCartney, p. 7.

<sup>739</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>740</sup> ‘Conspiracy on Somali divisions alleged’, *East African Standard*, 29 September 1961, p. 4.

<sup>741</sup> Interview with Cismaan Ibraahim Axmed, Garba Tulla, 8 March 2016.

<sup>742</sup> Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*, p. 119.

#### 5.4 The internationalization of the NFD issue, 1960-62

At a time when the whole region's geopolitical landscape was being redesigned, anti-secession parties gave Ethiopia leverage in the NFP and on Kenyan politics more broadly. During 1961, NPPPP leaders repeatedly accused Ethiopia of supporting the creation of anti-secessionist parties and of conspiring with African leaders in Kenya with the aim of perpetuating the division of the Somali territories.<sup>743</sup> British sources confirm that in Moyale the Ethiopians 'were carrying out a fairly large-scale campaign to convince the Boran of the necessity for Boran unity and opposition to any demands for secession to Somalia'.<sup>744</sup>

Addis Ababa also supported the United Ogaden Somali Association (UOSA). Created in Eastleigh in 1960, the UOSA had only a few members, most of whom were Ogaadeen/Maxamed Subeer from 'outside' the NFP – according to Deeqoow Macalin Sanbul.<sup>745</sup> Officials at Government House were convinced that the UOSA was patronised by the Ethiopian Consul-General in Kenya and was 'totally bogus'.<sup>746</sup> This notwithstanding, the UOSA was very vocal. It complained to the Governor about the lack of representation of 'indigenous' Somalis in the Legislative Council, accusing the NPPPP of being 'only a party of the people who had immigrated to the Northern Province from alien territories'.<sup>747</sup> The UOSA claimed that the Ogaadeen were the 'indigenous Somalis' of the Northern Province of Kenya and owed 'their loyalties to Kenya only'.<sup>748</sup> While rejecting unification with Somalia, the UOSA claimed that the lands which encompassed

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<sup>743</sup> 'Ethiopia told: Stop 'spying'', *East African Standard*, 3 March 1961, p. 5; 'Critic of Nairobi Somalis', *East African Standard*, 22 September 1961, p. 13; 'Conspiracy on Somali divisions alleged', *East African Standard*, 29 September 1961, p. 4.

<sup>744</sup> KNA, BB/1/195, 'Secret minutes of meeting of District Commissioners, Northern Province, held at the Provincial Commissioner's Office, Isiolo, from 13th – 14th October 1961', 18 October 1961, p. 4.

<sup>745</sup> Interview with Deeqoow Macalin Sanbul, Garissa, 28 July 2017.

<sup>746</sup> KNA, HAKI/1/326, Private Secretary, Government House, handwritten note, 24 June 1960; Assistant Secretary 1, Government House, Note 'Ref. (1/1)', 23 June 1960.

<sup>747</sup> KNA, HAKI/1/326, Ali Abdi, for the United Ogaden Somali Association, to H.E. the Governor of Kenya, 14 June 1960.

<sup>748</sup> *Ibid.*



the NFP, former Jubaland, and Ethiopia's Ogaden Province were 'the property of Ogaden tribe' and should, therefore, be 'united to make a separate Region'.<sup>749</sup> In a December 1961 letter to the British Parliament, the Association emphasised that 'the Ogaden countries are very rich and bigger than Somalia. There is much water, livestock and etc., with a trading Custom Department at Kismayu. So it can depend on itself'.<sup>750</sup>

Contrary to the widely held perception that the secessionist movement was an emanation of the Somali Republic, it was not until the autumn of 1961 that the Somali Government began to fund the NPPPP. In October, Maxamuud Yuusuf Aadan 'Muro' (Daarood/Majeerteen), Member of the Somali National Assembly and Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Sheekh Maxamuud Maxamed Faarax (Ogaadeen/Malingur), Secretary-General of the SYL, visited Isiolo, Garba Tulla, Wajir, Garissa, and Nairobi on a 'fact-finding mission'.<sup>751</sup> Maxamuud Yuusuf Aadan 'Muro' had been a frequent though clandestine visitor to the NFP since the 1950s. He used to travel from Mogadishu to Wajir via Kismaayo illegally, relying on the support of local people who provided him with passes – according to his grand-son Cabdi Casiis.<sup>752</sup> The two-man delegation spent about So. 10,000 (So. 20=£1) on propaganda during the visit and left a further sum of So. 25,000 with the Somali Consul-General in Nairobi for a similar purpose. However, the report that Maxamuud 'Muro' prepared for the Somali Government after he returned to Mogadishu was 'somewhat pessimistic in tone' and assessed 'support for secession in the NFP as about 50%', in comparison to an alleged 80% some months earlier – according to British sources.<sup>753</sup> This drop was blamed partly on Ethiopian propaganda and partly on the ineffectiveness of the Somali Consul-General, who apparently was 'not very active in contacting

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<sup>749</sup> KNA, HAKI/1/326, Ali Abdi et al. to British Parliament, through Colonial Secretary, 11 December 1961.

<sup>750</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>751</sup> TNA, FCO 141/6721, Grant to PC Northern Province, 12 December 1961; interview with Deeqoow Macalin Sanbul, Garissa, 28 July 2017.

<sup>752</sup> Interview with Cabdi Casiis Maxamed Maxamuud, Nairobi, 26 April 2016.

<sup>753</sup> TNA, FCO 141/6721, Chancery to Ministry of Internal Affairs, Kenya, 28 October 1961.

NFP Somalis'.<sup>754</sup> Following the mission report, the Somali Government began to provide the NPPPP with financial assistance on a regular basis.<sup>755</sup>

The nature and extent, though, of the Somali Republic's support to the secessionist campaign was still a matter of debate in Mogadishu, as there were differences of opinion among government officials. During a visit to Nairobi in July 1961, Cismaan Axmed Xasan, senior Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 'advised the Somali community to associate themselves with the Africans and with African politics' and to support the creation of an East African Federation.<sup>756</sup> British sources reported him as saying that 'if the Federation was a success Somalia might join it a few years hence'.<sup>757</sup> According to Cismaan Axmed Xasan, 'the pressure for secession of the Northern Frontier was unnecessary'; although 'the inevitable outcome would be secession', the whole matter was under discussion in the Somali Government.<sup>758</sup>

A delegation of fifteen representatives from the NFP, including politicians and chiefs from each of the Province's districts, went to Mogadishu in September 1961, seeking moral and material support for the secessionist campaign. The delegation stayed in the Somali Republic for nearly three months and attended the session of the Somali National Assembly, at which a motion was passed asking the Somali Government to bring pressure to bear on the British Government to find a speedy settlement of the Northern Frontier Province problem before Kenya became independent. Nevertheless, the Somali Prime Minister Cabdirashiid Cali Sharmarke confidentially warned the NFP representatives that the future of the Somali Republic looked bleak, as the country's economy and security were in jeopardy, according to Deeqoow Macalin Sanbul, who was part of the delegation.<sup>759</sup> Somali ministers allegedly shared their fears that the project of unification of the Somali lands, although enshrined in the Constitution of the Somali Republic, could not be achieved, as foreign interests in the Horn of Africa

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<sup>754</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>755</sup> Interview with Deeqoow Macalin Sanbul, Garissa, 28 July 2017.

<sup>756</sup> TNA, FCO 141/6721, Director of Intelligence to Permanent Secretary, 27 July 1961.

<sup>757</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>758</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>759</sup> Interview with Deeqoow Macalin Sanbul, Garissa, 28 July 2017.

were too strong and a united Somalia would represent a threat to both the West and the East.<sup>760</sup> Moreover, the NFP delegates found that political factionalism was undermining the state they wanted to become part of. The secessionists apparently were under no illusion that they were going to win. What was at stake, though, was not whether they would win or lose. To them, it was a matter of ‘honour and dignity’ – as Deeqoow put it.<sup>761</sup> Although the outcome of the delegation’s visit to Mogadishu ‘somewhat dampened enthusiasm for immediate secession of the NFD and its unification with the Somali Republic’, temporary disillusionment was somewhat compensated by increasing financial support from the Somali Government.<sup>762</sup>

Cali Aadan ‘Lord’, who had also been part of the delegation, died shortly after his return from Mogadishu and was replaced by Cabdi Rashiid Khaliif, the NPPPP treasurer, in February 1962. In the by-election, Cabdi Rashiid secured 1034 votes against 590 obtained by his rival, the vice-president of the NPPPP Alex Kholkholle (Rendille), who stood as the party’s official candidate.<sup>763</sup> Oral testimonies suggest that the majority of the ‘local people’ in Wajir voted for Cabdi Rashiid Khaliif, whereas most of the ‘alien’ Somalis and the other NPPPP leaders (who wished to strengthen Boran and Rendille support for the secessionist cause) voted for Alex Kholkholle.<sup>764</sup> Despite this split vote, in the Legislative Council Cabdi Rashiid spoke for three parties: the NPPPP, the NFDP, and the People’s National League (PNL), an off-shoot of the NFDP which had its headquarters in Garissa.

As a member of the Legislative Council, Cabdi Rashiid Khaliif attended the plenary session of the second Lancaster House conference in February 1962.

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<sup>760</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>761</sup> Interview with Deeqoow Macalin Sanbul, Garissa, 30 May 2015.

<sup>762</sup> KNA, BB/1/195, ‘Secret minutes of a meeting of District Commissioners, Northern Province, held at the Provincial Commissioner’s Office, Isiolo, 28<sup>th</sup> February – 1<sup>st</sup> March 1962’, n.d., pp. 3–4.

<sup>763</sup> ‘New Kenya MLC’, *Daily Nation*, 3 February 1962, p. 2.

<sup>764</sup> Interviews with Khaltuuma Xasan Aadan, Wajir, 25 March 2016; Nuur Aadan Cabdi, Wajir, 24 March 2016; Maxamed Yuusuf Xaaji, Nairobi, 4 May 2016; and Deeqoow Macalin Sanbul, Garissa, 28 July 2017.

Meanwhile, an official delegation from the NFP, consisting of leading figures from each of the Province's six districts, flew into London, accompanied unofficially by representatives of the three secessionist parties (NPPPP, NFDP, and PNL). By admitting to the conference an official delegation of pro-secession representatives from the NFP, 'the British Government appeared to give tacit acknowledgment that there was a case to answer' and to go against the wishes of Kenyan leaders and Addis Ababa, as John Drysdale has rightly observed.<sup>765</sup> During the conference, the British Government indicated that they would give effect to the will of the majority of the inhabitants of the NFD before Kenya's self-governing constitution came into operation. As a consequence, the Northern Frontier District Commission was established. The British Government, however, did not consult the delegates from the NFP about sending an independent commission to the area to ascertain the people's opinion. The British proposal was accepted by Cabdi Rashiid Khaliif 'in place of a referendum under United Nations auspices', which the pro-secession delegation from the NFP preferred.<sup>766</sup>

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<sup>765</sup> Drysdale, *Somali Dispute*, p.106.

<sup>766</sup> *Ibid.*, p.109.



Delegates from the Northern Frontier Province with Somali government officials in Mogadishu, September 1961. Courtesy from Deeqoow Macalin Sanbul.

First row (bottom), from left to right: Cabdi Megaag, First Secretary of the Somali Embassy in Nairobi; Xaaji Maxamed Sheekh Cali, chief from Mandera; Deeqoow Macalin Sanbul, Secretary of the NPPPP. Second row, from left to right: Aadan Jiiraan, NFDP politician from Wajir; Maxamuud 'Jijiile', Minister of Internal affairs of the Somali Republic; Axmed Faarax, former appointed member of the Legislative Council (1958-1961), from Moyale; Chief Macalin Sanbul from Garissa; Maxamed Xaaji Ibraahim Cigaal, Minister of Education of the Somali Republic; Yuusuf Xaaji, President of the NFDP, from Garissa; Haadi Sheekh, chairman of the Mandera branch of the Northern Frontier United Congress Party; chief Jatani Guyo from Moyale. Third row (top): Cabdirashiid Khaliif Axmed, treasurer of the NPPPP (sixth one from the left); Cabdi Latiif Ayah, chairman of the Isiolo branch of the NPPPP (seventh one from the left); Chief Xaaji Galma Dido (eighth one from the left).

## 5.5 The Northern Frontier District Commission and its implications

The announcement of the creation of the Northern Frontier District Commission revamped the demand for secession, on the one hand, and increased political activity on the anti-secession front, on the other hand. At Garissa, for instance, the Orma under Chief Guyo Dube broke away from the Northern Province Peoples'

National Union and formed their own party, the Northern Province Peoples' National League (NPPNL).<sup>767</sup> A branch of KANU was registered in Isiolo, but apart from assembling numbers of Turkana and Meru to parade before the Commission appeared to achieve little.<sup>768</sup> KANU sought to capitalise on long standing land disputes between Meru and Somalis – in 1961 a group of Meru even petitioned the Governor asking that the Somalis be evicted from the Isiolo area – to assemble the Meru against secession and challenge the NPPPP.<sup>769</sup> A minor riot occurred in Isiolo on 26 August 1962, when the KANU Youth Wing organised an anti-secession rally among the Meru and the Turkana. NPPPP supporters broke up the rally and took to the streets, moving to the centre of the township. A General Service Unit (GSU) of the Kenya Police restored order using tear gas and twenty-eight people were injured.<sup>770</sup>

Mr G.C.M. Onyiuke, QC, from Nigeria, and Major-General M.P. Bogert, CBE, from Canada, were appointed as members of the Northern Frontier District Commission. They toured the NFP during October and November 1962. The NPPPP and the NFDP prepared a joint memorandum which made three demands, namely 'secession from Kenya forthwith, the establishment of a Legislative Assembly, followed by independence and reunification with the Somali Republic by an Act of Union'.<sup>771</sup> The commissioners started at Garissa where they established a 'pattern of enquiry' followed in successive districts. The principal means they employed were public gatherings (*barazas*) at which the leaders and other representatives of the NFP people 'could address the Commission in the

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<sup>767</sup> KNA, PC/GRSSA 2/21/5, DC, Garissa, to PC, Northern Province, 'Garissa District Monthly Intelligence Report for August 1962', 11 September 1962, p. 1.

<sup>768</sup> KNA, DC/ISO 2/1/16, Isiolo District Annual Report for 1962, p. 2.

<sup>769</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3; 'Meru seek to evict Somalis from Isiolo', *East African Standard*, 19 May 1961, p. 13.

<sup>770</sup> KNA, DC/ISO 2/1/16, Isiolo District Annual Report for 1962, pp. 1–2. Drysdale, *Somali Dispute*, p. 124.

<sup>771</sup> Government of the Somali Republic, *The Issue of the Northern Frontier District: A Report on Events Leading to the Severance of Diplomatic Relations between the Somali Republic and the United Kingdom* (Mogadishu: Ministry of Information, 1963), p. 37.

presence of a large audience'.<sup>772</sup> Thirty-five public *barazas* were held. The Commission also received written and oral petitions from a variety of political groups, including the NPPPP, the NFD, the NPUA, the NPPNU, and the PNL, as well as individual submissions from chiefs and elders, traders, and religious leaders.

In its final report, the NFD Commission described having heard two bodies of opinion. The so-called 'Somali Opinion', which advocated the amalgamation of the NFD with the Somali Republic, was shared by all who gave evidence to the Commission in Wajir and Mandera districts and the majority of petitioners in Garissa district, plus some groups of Ajuuraan and Boran from Moyale and Isiolo. The 'Kenya Opinion', which advocated that the NFD should remain part of Kenya, was expressed most forcefully in Marsabit, but also in some areas in Moyale and Isiolo districts, and by the Bantu riverine people and most of the Orma in Garissa district. The report argued for a religious explanation: 'we noted that the division of opinion almost exactly correspond to the division between Moslem and non-Moslem'.<sup>773</sup> This argument implied that the commissioners could not believe that the non-Muslim Rendille 'genuinely' wanted to join the Somali Republic.<sup>774</sup>

Evidence indicates, though, that religious belonging was not a self-evident motive for political mobilisation. It was, rather, the result of ongoing social processes and acted as a catalyser. This was particularly evident in Isiolo District. The number of families of 'holy men' and sheikhs arriving in Garba Tulla each year had increased from an average of two between 1944 and 1958 to five in 1959 and six in 1960, eventually reaching a record-high of fifteen in 1962.<sup>775</sup> Oral testimonies suggest that what the Uaso Boran feared the most was being marginalised and trampled on by a hostile Kenyan government. Islam provided the best guarantee against marginalisation: 'all faithful Muslims are brothers' –

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<sup>772</sup> Great Britain, *Kenya: Report of the Northern Frontier District Commission* (London: HMSO, 1962), p. 1.

<sup>773</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>774</sup> *Ibid.*; Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*, p. 118.

<sup>775</sup> KNA, DC/ISO 4/1/13, Wabera to PCs Eastern and North-Eastern Provinces, 'Monthly Report for March, 1963', 18 April 1963.

‘innamal mu’minuuna ikhwatun’ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ – the tenth verse of the Qur’anic chapter (*surah*) ‘Al-Hujuraat’ says. As Hassan Wako Wariyo, the younger brother of the Boran leader of the NPPPP in Garba Tulla, put it: ‘We fought against our fears. [...] We told ourselves: if we go and fight, we will die. If we don’t go, we will die anyway.[...] We fought for our land.’<sup>776</sup> Religious belonging increased the Boran’s resolve to fight for secession but was not the main motive for mobilisation.

The NFD Commission concluded that the ‘Somali Opinion’ was decisively predominant. The British Government, however, was by now unwilling to keep its pledge to act on majority opinion in the Northern Frontier Province.<sup>777</sup> Publication of the NFD Commission report was delayed until the Regional Boundaries Commission had defined the territorial areas over which future regional authorities would exercise their jurisdiction, the results of both Commissions being made public at the end of December 1962. The conclusion reached was that, despite the findings of the NFD Commission, ‘British interests would be best served by keeping all of the NFD districts within Kenya after independence’.<sup>778</sup> Moreover, secession would have angered the Ethiopian Government, which was strengthening its military ties with the United States. There was also a possibility that oil might be found in the NFP, which was one more reason to keep the province within Kenya.<sup>779</sup>

As the British Government anticipated that the publication of the reports by the Regional Boundaries and NFD Commissions might cause disturbances in certain areas, two companies of the King’s African Rifles were deployed on 17 December in the Northern Frontier Province. The repositioning of forces by the Kenya Government, nicknamed Operation LATE FORK, was run concurrently

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<sup>776</sup> Interview with Hassan Wako Wario, Isiolo, 2 March 2016.

<sup>777</sup> Kyle, *Politics of Independence*, p. 184.

<sup>778</sup> Whittaker, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Kenya*, p. 34.

<sup>779</sup> KNA, BB/1/218, Dowson to PC Northern Province, 22 November 1957; Ag.

Permanent Secretary to PC Northern Province, 13 August 1958; Ag. PC Northern Province to DC Mandera, 17 September 1958; Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Industry to Permanent Secretary for African Affairs, 2 December 1958; Governor of Kenya to Secretary of State, 28 February 1961.



with a joint Army-Royal Air Force signals exercise, Operation DIAL ZERO.<sup>780</sup> This was aimed at practicing certain aspects of Operation INSTALMENT, by which the police and armed forces, with the support of ancillary troops of the British Army, were expected to ‘cooperate in the restoration of law and order if necessary’.<sup>781</sup> During Exercise DIAL ZERO, the headquarters of the 70 Infantry Brigade, King’s African Rifles, and a small Royal Air Force headquarters were established at Isiolo, ‘and two battalion headquarters were located one at Wajir and the other at Garissa.’<sup>782</sup> Counter-insurgency measures had been envisaged since the summer of 1962. Contrary to British expectations, though, there was no immediate breach of the peace in the NFP. The secessionist movement developed into an insurgency largely as a consequence of the reactions it prompted from the British and Kenyan governments, which deliberately closed political space, thereby pushing the secessionists into violent confrontation, as we shall discuss in the next chapter.

## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has shown the importance of looking at the transformations that the social and economic fabric of the Northern Frontier Province underwent in the second half of the 1950s and the early 1960s for understanding the possibilities

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<sup>780</sup> KNA, BB/43/30, ‘Draft – 70 Inf Bde KAR - Ex DIAL ZERO - Ex Instructions’, enclosed with Fitzalan-Howard to Biggs, 17 November 1962; Dentto PCs, 7 December 1962; Brigadier Commander, 70 Inf Bde KAR, ‘Ex DIAL ZERO/Op LATE FORK, December 1962; TNA, FCO 141/7040, GOC, East Africa Command, ‘East Africa Defence Committee. Report on the Army in East Africa’, Part II, para 10, enclosed with East Africa Defence Committee, Meeting agenda, 23 April 1963.

<sup>781</sup> TNA, FCO 141/7129, Gov to SoS, 29 July and 9 August 1963; PS, ‘Use of British forces in the N.F.D.’, 8 August 1963; Chairman, East Africa Command, to Commander-in-Chief, Mid-East, 9 August 1963.

<sup>782</sup> TNA, FCO 141/7040, GOC, East Africa Command, ‘East Africa Defence Committee. Report on the Army in East Africa’, Part III, para 26, enclosed with East Africa Defence Committee, Meeting agenda, 23 April 1963.

and constraints that framed political options in the borderland in the process of decolonisation. Recruitment for the anti-Mau Mau campaign produced a cleavage between the NFP northerners who fought for the British and down-country ‘Africans’, reinforcing the assumption of racial superiority amongst the Kenya Somalis and strengthening the alliance between the Somalis and the Uaso Boran. At the same time, British policy towards the so-called ‘Somalia threat’ curtailed the possibilities for self-determination for the Kenya Somalis. The British established the backbone of what was to become the infrastructure of counterinsurgency on the Kenya-Somalia frontier as early as 1958, before the secessionist movement began. However, new possibilities seemed to emerge with the gradual transformation of the material base of pastoral society, particularly through the expansion of livestock trade, which fostered social interaction and economic exchanges in the NFP, and with the legalisation of political parties in 1960. All these transformations played a fundamental role in defining the positions that the borderlanders later adopted in the secessionist insurgency.

Within this context, religious belonging was not a self-evident determinant of political behaviour but, rather, a catalyser for political mobilisation. Islam was a key component of social and cultural assimilation amongst the borderland Somalis and their neighbours and acted as a glue within the secessionist movement, although its effectiveness in overshadowing political divisions depended on contextual factors. Whilst the independence movement in Somalia and the first Somali Republic did not put Islam at the forefront of political discourse, the fear of religious marginalisation played an important role in the development of ‘aspirational secessionism’ in the Kenya-Somalia borderland.<sup>783</sup>

The issue of the future of the former NFD brought local histories to the surface, at the intersection of the high politics of decolonisation and the deep politics of grassroots mobilisation. Debates around nationhood and self-

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<sup>783</sup> The term ‘aspirational secessionism’ is borrowed from Mareike Schomerus, Pierre Englebert, and Lotje de Vries, ‘Africa’s Secessionism: A Breakdance of Aspiration, Grievance, Performance, and Disenchantment’, in *Secessionism in African Politics: Aspiration, Grievance, Performance, Disenchantment*, ed. by Lotje de Vries, Pierre Englebert, and Mareike Schomerus (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 11.

determination were entwined with inter-generational conflict over authority and, most importantly, with issues of access to land and resources. Pending land disputes influenced political alignment, bringing the issue of autochthony into political discourse. Even within the secessionist movement, the idiom of autochthony was used to articulate concerns about the movement's leadership, reflecting a deepening division between the Northern Frontier Democratic Party, basically led by government-paid chiefs, many of whom were involved in trade, and the Northern Province People's Progressive Party. The autochthony argument was also used by the so-called 'pro-Kenya' parties to discredit the secessionist claim of those whom they saw as immigrants from alien territories.

The anti-secession parties, particularly in Marsabit and Moyale, gave Ethiopia leverage in the NFD and in Kenyan politics more broadly, contributing to the internationalization of the NFD issue. It was this new dimension that prompted the Somali Government, within which different views regarding the future of the NFD and the modalities of secession persisted, to fund the NPPPP at the end of 1961. The regional dimension also influenced the ambiguous attitude of the British Government towards secession. Concerns about the threats to regional stability and political calculations related to the Cold War eventually convinced London that British interests would be better preserved by keeping all the former NFD within Kenya after independence. The path to the future was not as open as the NFD Somalis had hoped, as we will see in the next chapter.

## 6 COLONIAL RESPONSE AND THE POLITICS OF INSURRECTION

### 6.1 Popular discontent and the 1963 general election

Following the publication of the reports of the NFD and Regional Boundaries Commissions, a delegation from the Northern Frontier Province led by Cabdi Rashiid Khaliif visited the Somali Republic. From Mogadishu airport, Cabdi Rashiid warned the British Government that, if secession were not to be granted, the people of the NFD would ‘die in order to achieve their aims’.<sup>784</sup>

It was decided that the Secretary of State for the Colonies Lord Duncan Sandys would make an announcement on the future of the NFD on 8 March 1963. In anticipation of possible disturbances, 70 Infantry Brigade KAR together with British supporting detachments were placed at notice on 4 March to implement Operation Instalment (see Chapter 5) and one Beaver aircraft was positioned at Nanyuki.<sup>785</sup> Lord Duncan Sandys announced from Government House in Nairobi that a seventh Region of Kenya, the North Eastern Region (NER), would be formed, consisting of the districts of Mandera (plus that part of Moyale corresponding to the Ajuuraan grazing area), Wajir, and Garissa, excluding the Orma and Riverine tribes. In this way, ‘the British Government merely committed themselves to an administrative decision’ – the Somali Government protested.<sup>786</sup> The Somali Republic consequently severed diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom.

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<sup>784</sup> TNA, CO 822/3030, Mogadishu to Foreign Office, Cipher 2, 4 January 1963.

<sup>785</sup> TNA, FCO 141/7040, GOC, East Africa Command, ‘East Africa Defence Committee. Report on the Army in East Africa’, Part II, para 11, enclosed with East Africa Defence Committee, Meeting agenda, 23 April 1963.

<sup>786</sup> Government of the Somali Republic, *The Issue of the Northern Frontier District*, p. 48.

The Colonial Secretary's announcement provoked intense indignation, which erupted into violence in Mandera, Ceelwaaq, and Rhamu. In Mandera, about two hundred men, women, and children regrouped in front of the Fort, screaming anti-British slogans and 'wearing white head-bands splashed with red (white for mourning, red for blood).'<sup>787</sup> Three non-authorized demonstrations were held at Isiolo, but no disturbances occurred, except when 'the Union Jack was accidentally pulled down'; the flag, though, was 'handed over by the culprit to the TP officer on duty nearby' – the District Commissioner, Daud Dabasso Wabera, reported.<sup>788</sup> According to witnesses who were present at the scene, however, things went differently. Wabera was a Gabbra from Marsabit who had been appointed District Commissioner in Isiolo in January 1963. He was the first African to hold such a post in the Northern Frontier Province. Oral testimonies indicate that he took decisive action to prevent a British officer from shooting the protesters who were tearing down the Union Jack on purpose.<sup>789</sup> The protesters, NPPPP supporters from Garba Tulla, were led by Jatani Wako Wariyo (mentioned in Chapter 5).<sup>790</sup> Daud Dabasso Wabera, who knew them one by one, allegedly got hold of the British officer's arm, imploring him not to shoot.<sup>791</sup> Although Wabera worked on the Government's side, he saved the lives of the protesters, as he saw them, first and foremost, as his kin, according to oral testimonies.<sup>792</sup> It seems that, following this incident, British officials in Isiolo didn't look too kindly on Wabera.

A mass rally attended by secessionist chiefs, headmen and political leaders from across the North Eastern Region was held in Wajir between 19 and 22 March 1963 to decide whether or not the traditional authorities of the NER should

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<sup>787</sup> KNA, PC/GRSSA 2/21/8, DC Mandera, to PC Northern Province, 'Monthly Report – Mandera District, March 1963', 4 April 1963, p. 2.

<sup>788</sup> KNA, DC/ISO 4/1/13, Wabera to PC Northern Province, 'Monthly Report for March, 1963', 18 April 1963, p. 1.

<sup>789</sup> Interviews with Maxamuud Ismaaciil, Isiolo, 7 March 2016, Cismaan Ibraahim Axmed, Garba Tulla, 8 March 2016; and Giro Ukka Kampe, Isiolo, 9 March 2016.

<sup>790</sup> Interviews with Cismaan Ibraahim Axmed, *supra*, and Maxamuud Ismaaciil, *supra*.

<sup>791</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>792</sup> *Ibid.*

stop cooperating with the Governor. Thirty-four chiefs handed in notice of their collective resignation, which was refused on the grounds that only individual resignations could be accepted by the Kenyan Government.<sup>793</sup> Subsequently, confidential discussions were held locally, in which British officials encouraged the rebellious chiefs to revert their decision to resign.<sup>794</sup>

Following the Wajir rally and the mass resignation of chiefs, Alex Kholkholle was arrested and restricted to an area in Kwale district, Coast Province, on 27 March. The restriction order against Kholkholle, the first to be served in the NFD since 1948, was issued on the grounds that ‘his continued presence in the Province would have constituted a threat to security in that area’.<sup>795</sup> A profile of Kholkholle prepared by the Special Branch a few weeks earlier emphasised that, in 1961, he had made several public speeches ‘urging audiences to throw off the “Colonialist yoke”’, reportedly stating, on one occasion, that ‘this would be achieved by force and the British flag replaced by that of the Somali Republic.’<sup>796</sup> In August 1962, he had ‘announced publicly that he was ready to die in order to achieve secession and that the Somalis would have to spill blood before they could fly their own flag’.<sup>797</sup> The fact that Alex Kholkholle envisaged the secessionist struggle primarily as an anti-colonial struggle made him a dangerous extremist in the eyes of the British administration. His restriction, though, did not quell the demand for secession, to the contrary.

Elections were scheduled for late May 1963, but the NPPPP indicated its intention to boycott them. As the secessionist party fielded no candidate, and other candidates also eventually withdrew, no representatives were returned to either of the national legislatures or the Regional Assembly in the North Eastern Region. In Isiolo Township, the two KANU candidates for Senate and for the Regional

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<sup>793</sup> ‘Secession “Master Plan” – Somali chiefs in crisis talks’, *Daily Nation*, 22 March 1963, p. 1.

<sup>794</sup> KNA, PC/GRSSA 2/21/8, DC Mandera, to PC Northern Province, ‘Monthly Report – Mandera District, March 1963’, 4 April 1963, p. 2; DC/ISO 4/1/13, Wabera to PC Northern Province, ‘Monthly Report for March, 1963’, 18 April 1963, p. 3.

<sup>795</sup> ‘NFD leader is held’, *Daily Nation*, 28 March 1963, p. 1.

<sup>796</sup> TNA, CO 822/3288, Special Branch, ‘Alessio Kholkholle’, 13 March 1963.

<sup>797</sup> *Ibid.*

Assembly, both Meru government employees, were returned unopposed on Nomination Day, while Adan Wako Bonaya, a Boran from Garba Tulla, and Erastus Mwangi Muteru, Kikuyu, contested the House of Representatives seat, the former on an NPUA/KANU-sponsored ticket and the latter as an independent.<sup>798</sup>

A serious riot occurred in Isiolo during the polling, on 24 May. According to British sources, about 1,000 Somalis encircled the polling booths armed with rocks, slings, and knives and clashed with groups of people who were waiting to vote. Tear gas failed to restore order and ‘officers opened fire on the demonstrators who were slinging stones at the police’.<sup>799</sup> Four Somalis, including a woman, were killed and nine were injured.<sup>800</sup> Following the incident, one company of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, KAR, was sent to Isiolo to support the police and one platoon was deployed at Garba Tulla. A dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed on Isiolo for three days and a further daylight curfew order was enforced ‘on persons of Somali and Boran origin’.<sup>801</sup> Between 24 May and 3 June, the KAR company in Isiolo was employed in patrolling and ‘in joint operations with the police and GSU’ in the Isiolo and Garba Tulla areas.<sup>802</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the Isiolo riot, restrictions orders were issued against three secessionist leaders, Wako Hapi, Maxamed Faarax Muuse Shaacur and Xirsi Xaaji Jaamac (two Xarti/Majeerteen from Isiolo).<sup>803</sup> Their removal from the NFD, however, had been decided more than two weeks before the riot occurred.<sup>804</sup> Portrayed as ‘leaders in the policy of non-co-operation with

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<sup>798</sup> KNA, DC/ISO 4/1/13, DC Isiolo, to PC Eastern Province, ‘Monthly Report – April, 1963’, 21 May 1963, p. 1.

<sup>799</sup> Drysdale, *Somali Dispute*, p. 150.

<sup>800</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, Acting Governor to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 24 May 1963; FCO 141/7040, GOC, East Africa Command, ‘East Africa Defence Committee. Report on the Army in East Africa’, 14 October 1963, p. 3.

<sup>801</sup> TNA, FCO 141/7040, *Ibid.*

<sup>802</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>803</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, Acting Governor to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 24 May 1963.

<sup>804</sup> KNA, BB/1/195, PC, Eastern Province, ‘Secret Minutes of a meeting of District Commissioners, NFD, held at the District Commissioner’s Office, Wajir on the 8<sup>th</sup>

the Kenya Government and in the boycott of elections’, the three secessionists were accused of using intimidation and advocating violence to achieve their goals. Although it was agreed that the Government’s press statement would ‘naturally emphasise’ that the sole reason for restriction was the preservation of law and order in the area, ‘the chief danger’ – the Acting Governor admitted – had always been ‘the subversion of Chiefs and Kenya Government employees in the area’.<sup>805</sup> The riot only made ‘the question of publicity much easier’.<sup>806</sup>

Following the May 1963 general elections, Kenya was granted internal self-government and Jomo Kenyatta was appointed Prime Minister in June.

## **6.2 Shadows under the sun: an unsolved double murder**

In the afternoon of 28 June 1963, Daud Dabasso Wabera and the pro-secession chief Xaaji Galma Dido, together with six headmen and elders, a driver, and a tribal policeman, were heading back to Garba Tulla after visiting Sericho trading centre. At about 4.00 p.m., seven miles north of Muddogashi, they were halted by a civilian Land Rover blocking the track and caught in an ambush. Two Somali gunmen shot Daud Dabasso Wabera and Xaaji Galma Dido to death and drove off in their Land Rover. After crashing through a road barrier and rifle fire at Wajir and being pursued to the Kenya-Somalia border at Weel Garaas unsuccessfully, they crossed into Somalia. Two days after the incident, the Governor of Kenya Malcom MacDonald reported to the Secretary of State for the Colonies that ‘this was a deliberate, planned assassination by two expatriate Mijertein Somalis’.<sup>807</sup> The two killers, however, were not ‘expatriates’: one, Maxamed Maxamuud Faarax, was an ex-inspector of the Kenya Police who had been dismissed from

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May, 1963’, 13 May 1963, p. 4; TNA, CO 822/3055, Acting Governor to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 16 May 1963.

<sup>805</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, Acting Governor to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 18 May 1963.

<sup>806</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, Acting Governor to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 24 May 1963.

<sup>807</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, MacDonald to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 30 June 1963.



service and had been living in Nanyuki and Isiolo, while the other, Maxamed Gele, was an ex-KAR soldier from Isiolo.<sup>808</sup>

Writing to Lord Duncan Sandys three days after the murder, the Governor indicated what he considered to be the possible motive for the crime:

The Regional Government Agent [Wabera] had arranged a public meeting for the next day, 29<sup>th</sup> June, at Garba Tulla, which was to be attended by Chiefs and other leaders from both Marsabit and Isiolo districts. The primary object of the meeting was to encourage co-operation with the Government in the maintenance of law and order and the proper conduct of administration. Since the success of the meeting would have been a blow to the pro-secessionists, it is possible the immediate motive for the crime lay here.<sup>809</sup>

Although it is widely accepted that Xaaji Galma Dido was killed by accident, neither the instigators nor the motive of Wabera's murder have ever been identified. Daud Dabasso Wabera had developed close connections with Boran and 'alien' Somalis in Isiolo before being appointed as District Commissioner. In 1961, he had been converted to Islam by Xaaji Cabdalla Faarax (mentioned in Chapter 5). Wabera's appointment 'had been a political choice' – as Hannah Whittaker has pointed out –, intended to quell the demand for secession amongst the Boran and to draw those Somalis with whom he had connections into cooperation with the Kenyan Government.<sup>810</sup> The political task he had been assigned, though, did not prevent Daud Dabasso Wabera from developing genuine relationships with the secessionists, even when this entailed going against the wishes of other government officials, as we discussed in the previous section. Oral testimonies suggest that 'he was like a son' to the people of Isiolo, who regarded him as 'a good Muslim'.<sup>811</sup>

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<sup>808</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>809</sup> TNA, FCO 141/7129, Governor of Kenya to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1 July 1963.

<sup>810</sup> Whittaker, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, p. 39.

<sup>811</sup> Interview with Maxamuud Ismaaciil, Isiolo, 7 March 2016.

Daud Dabasso Wabera allegedly offered the ‘alien’ Somalis to give them land titles if they refused to join the secessionist campaign.<sup>812</sup> The Isiolo Special Leasehold Area, where most of them lived, was governed by the Trust Land (Isiolo) rules. These prohibited the occupation of land or the possession, herding, or grazing of livestock in that area without permission from the Settlement Officer, and the construction of any permanent building. Xaaji Cabdalla Faarax allegedly encouraged his kinsmen to accept the District Commissioner’s offer, but the Somali elders refused, for fear that land registration would hamper their freedom of movement and prevent them from keeping livestock.<sup>813</sup> Oral testimonies indicate that Daud Dabasso Wabera also attempted to convince Xaaji Cabdalla Faarax and Maxamuud Maxamed ‘Jabaani’, a Xarti trader and transporter, to stand as candidates in the 1963 general elections.<sup>814</sup> Wabera, however, failed on this front as well. Xaaji Cabdalla and Maxamuud ‘Jabaani’, who feared consequences and wanted to safeguard their business interests, declined the invitation.<sup>815</sup> Apparently, the District Commissioner even proposed Jatani Wako Wariyo to stand for the senatorial seat, which the NPPPP leader, after some temporizing, refused.<sup>816</sup>

Hannah Whittaker has mentioned that ‘in some popular accounts...the death of Wabera is understood as the result of a conspiracy between the Somali and some colonial employees at Isiolo’, but she has dismissed the alleged involvement of British officials in Wabera’s assassination as ‘highly

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<sup>812</sup> Interviews with Maxamuud Ismaaciil, Isiolo, 7 March 2016; Xuseen Maxamed Xaaji Cabdalla ‘Maziwa’, Isiolo, 3 March 2016, and Xuseen Maxamed Jaamac, Isiolo, 10 March 2016.

<sup>813</sup> Interviews with Naasir Cali Guleed, Isiolo, 5 March 2016, and Xuseen Maxamed Jaamac, Isiolo, 10 March 2016.

<sup>814</sup> Interviews with Naasir Cali Guleed, Isiolo, 5 March 2016, Xuseen Maxamed Xaaji Cabdalla ‘Maziwa’, Isiolo, 3 March 2016.

<sup>815</sup> Interview with Axmed Naasir Xaaji Cabdalla, Isiolo 10 March 2016.

<sup>816</sup> Interviews with Hassan Wako Wario, Isiolo, 2 March 2016; Giro Ukka Kampe, Isiolo, 9 March 2016; and Xuseen Maxamed Xaaji Cabdala ‘Maziwa’, Nairobi, 17 March 2016.

improbable'.<sup>817</sup> Nevertheless, oral testimonies suggest that Leslie Thomas Pridgeon, the Regional Commissioner of Police, Eastern Region, participated in planning and organising the murder of Daud Dabasso Wabera.<sup>818</sup> Pridgeon allegedly provided the killers with the guns (obtained from Lokitaung) for the execution. Other sources indicate that the money for the killing did not come from the Xarti/Majeerteen community to which the killers belonged.<sup>819</sup> Some people in Isiolo believe that the Provincial Commissioner, Peter Walters, was also involved in (or least aware of) the assassination plan. According to a Somali who worked as a Police Constable in the Report Office in Isiolo at that time and was later appointed to the Special Branch, the killers visited Pridgeon and Walters on several occasions in the weeks preceding the murder of Wabera, which was very unusual and seemingly inexplicable.<sup>820</sup>

Several testimonies suggest that Pridgeon's relations with the District Commissioner were not good and became rather hostile following the 24 May riot in Isiolo. Wabera was reportedly shocked by the shooting of Somali protesters – he allegedly broke down in tears – and threatened to take Pridgeon to court.<sup>821</sup> British sources indicate that, after the police prepared its report on the Isiolo deaths, it became Wabera's duty to decide 'whether an inquiry should be held in addition to the investigation made by the police and, if he considered that an inquiry should be held, to hold it'.<sup>822</sup> On 18 June, after spending 'some time in deliberation', Wabera informed the Superintendent of Police that:

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<sup>817</sup> Whittaker, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, pp. 40–41.

<sup>818</sup> Interviews with Maxamed Xaaji Cabdalla 'Maziwa', Isiolo, 3 March 2016; Hassan Wako Wario, Isiolo, 2 March 2016; Xasan Guuleed, Nairobi, 20 April 2016; Naasir Cali Guleed, Isiolo, 5 March 2016; Giro Ukka Kampe, Isiolo, 9 March 2016; Godana Doyo, Isiolo County Governor, Isiolo, 10 March 2016; Xaaji Ibraahim Cali Xuseen 'Sirr', Wajir, 22 March 2016.

<sup>819</sup> Interview with Naasir Cali Guleed, Isiolo, 5 March 2016.

<sup>820</sup> Interview with Xaaji Ibraahim Cali Xuseen 'Sirr', Wajir, 22 March 2016.

<sup>821</sup> Interviews with Xasan Guuleed, Nairobi, 20 April 2016, and Xaaji Ibraahim Cali Xuseen 'Sirr', Wajir, 22 March 2016.

<sup>822</sup> KNA, GH/6/2, Ainley to the Deputy Governor of Kenya, 3 July 1963.

... a judicial inquiry should be held by a Magistrate into the cause of the deaths of four deceased persons killed on the day and at the time of the riot on the 24<sup>th</sup> May, 1963, and trial of 37 or 34 rioters now held in remand in Nyeri Prison. I consider it is highly desirable for avoiding allegations of lack of impartiality that such inquiry into the deaths of and the trial of the rioters should be held by another Magistrate and not either by 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Magistrate Isiolo or myself (1<sup>st</sup> Class Magistrate). I further consider it will be a security risk for such an inquiry to be held in Isiolo or Meru. I consider it should be held either at Nyeri or Embu. I have retained a copy of your (Police) Inquiry file for my record and would be grateful if a copy of the Magistrate's Inquest file could be sent to me as soon as the inquest has been finalised.<sup>823</sup>

On 22 June, the Director of Criminal Investigation Mr. McBrierley discussed Wabera's letter with the Attorney General by telephone. McBrierley subsequently met with the Registrar, Supreme Court, who took up the matter with the Chief Justice with a view to appointing a magistrate to inquire into the deaths of the four people who died during the riot in Isiolo.<sup>824</sup> Four days later, Wabera was murdered.

The judicial enquiry into the causes of the death of the four people who were killed during the riot was envisaged as an inquest and was conducted by the Resident Magistrate, Nanyuki, late in July 1963. The Magistrate found that:

Two of the people died from gunshot wounds as a result of the Police opening fire on the crowd, but he returned a verdict of justifiable homicide, without in fact being able to identify any particular policeman as having fired any of the fatal shots. Of the other two people who died one had been struck by a number of blunt instruments which could have been stones thrown from the crowd or Police batons, but there was no evidence to decide which, while the other (the woman) had no apparent external injuries and no post mortem had been

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<sup>823</sup> KNA, GH/6/2, Wabera to Superintendent of Police, 18 June 1963.

<sup>824</sup> KNA, GH/6/2, McBrierley to Deputy Public Prosecutor, 24 June 1963.

performed upon her; the Magistrate returned open verdict in respect of the deaths of these two.<sup>825</sup>

The double assassination of Daud Dabasso Wabera and Xaaji Galma Dido has remained an unsolved case. The enquiry of the Criminal Investigation Department into the two murders reached the conclusion that these were well planned, but no evidence was obtained to indicate who ‘the instigators of the incident’ were or what precisely the motive was.<sup>826</sup> Elements who had different agendas but who all regarded Wabera as a thorn in the flesh might have colluded in organising his elimination. What is certain is that Wabera’s murder precipitated the escalation to violence, as political assassinations often do.

### **6.3 Military escalation, fractured politics, and insurrection**

Following the murders of Daud Dabasso Wabera and Xaaji Galma Dido, the political climate in Isiolo was increasingly tense. The Boran threatened that, if the authorities achieved no results in bringing the assassins to book within ten days, ‘they would themselves take retaliatory measures against the Somalis’.<sup>827</sup> Nevertheless, there were no serious incidents in Isiolo District. On 30 June, a group of NPPPP officials led by Deeqoow Macalin Sanbul visited Garba Tulla to apologise to the Boran for the death of Xaaji Galma Dido, ‘to offer to seek out the culprits in Somalia, to make compensation by way of a cash payment, and to educate the Senior Chief’s children in Mogadishu’.<sup>828</sup> A request from the British

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<sup>825</sup> KNA, GH/6/2 and TNA, CO 822/3055, Governor to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 25 July 1963.

<sup>826</sup> KNA, BB/1/156, Extract from Weekly Intelligence Report No. 10/63 covering the period 30<sup>th</sup> July to 5<sup>th</sup> August, 1963, enclosed with Director of Intelligence to OC Police Division, Marsabit et al. 9 August 1963, p. 5.

<sup>827</sup> KNA, GH/6/2, MacDonald to HBM Ambassador, Addis Ababa, ‘Eastern and North Eastern Regions of Kenya: Weekly Situation Report, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> July, 1963’, 9 July 1963, p. 1.

<sup>828</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Government for the arrest and handing over of the two alleged killers was transmitted, through the US Ambassador in Mogadishu, to the Government of the Somali Republic. The President Aadan Cabdule Cismaan assured the US Ambassador that ‘his Government had not inspired or incited the assassination’, but he refused to extradite the assassins.<sup>829</sup>

British officials believed that it was quite possible that the whole Boran tribe ‘may unite in opposition to the Somalis and withdraw completely from the secessionist movement’.<sup>830</sup> This did not happen though. If, on the one hand, some Boran had become ‘suspicious of Somali motives’ and were now ‘questioning the wisdom of continued alignment with the secessionists’, on the other hand, this emerging group of ‘sceptics’ had no strong leadership and little unity of purpose, while the majority of NPPPP supporters, led by Jatani Wako Wariyo, was still strongly in favour of secession.<sup>831</sup> Jatani, however, issued a press statement deploring the attitude of the Somali Government with regard to the return of the alleged assassins.<sup>832</sup>

Following the arrival of the new Regional Government Agent (RGA) in Isiolo, the Special District Administration Ordinance was vigorously enforced with the assistance of the police and GSU, leading to the arrest of 122 persons, ‘largely Somalis’, of whom 100 were convicted. The only Somalis permitted to reside in Isiolo were Isxaaq and Xarti whose names appeared in the tax register. The RGA subsequently requested six ‘alien’ Somali chiefs to sign ‘bonds to be of

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<sup>829</sup> KNA, BB/1/156, Extract from Weekly Intelligence Report No. 9/63 covering the period 23<sup>rd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1963, para 30, enclosed with Director of Intelligence to Raynor, 2 August 1963.

<sup>830</sup> KNA, BB/1/156, Extract from Weekly Intelligence Report No. 10/63 covering the period 30<sup>th</sup> July to 5<sup>th</sup> August, 1963, enclosed with Director of Intelligence to Officer-in-Charge Police Division, Marsabit, 9 August 1963, p. 5.

<sup>831</sup> KNA, BB/1/156, Extract from Weekly Intelligence Report No. 9/63 covering the period 23<sup>rd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1963, para 24, enclosed with Director of Intelligence to Raynor, 2 August 1963.

<sup>832</sup> KNA, DC/ISO 4/1/13, Resident Commissioner Isiolo, to Civil Secretary, Eastern Region, ‘Monthly Report – Isiolo District, July 1963’, 10 August 1963, p. 2.

good behaviour and keep the peace in relation to other tribesmen living in the District'; three chiefs refused to sign the bond and were accordingly arrested.<sup>833</sup>

The British Government, in time-honoured fashion, adopted a carrot-and-stick approach. In July 1963, a plan for the development of water supplies, veterinary, education and health facilities in the NER was announced.<sup>834</sup> At the same time, the Governor 'reached complete and good-humoured agreement' with Kenyan ministers on a number of actions that – he admitted – 'might be described as 'repressive': the opening of new police stations and military posts and the deployment of more forces to the NER; the banning of the carrying of arms by the Somalis; the conduct of an army exercise in the region, as a show of strength; the banning of public meetings; and the compulsory registration of 'alien' Somalis in the region.<sup>835</sup> Meanwhile, Operation Instalment was being kept under regular review.<sup>836</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, KAR, subsequently carried out a flag march and training exercise in the Eastern and North Eastern Regions between 10 and 17 July.<sup>837</sup> Finally, in the summer of 1963, Kenyan Ministers signed a Military Defense Agreement with Ethiopia, giving Addis Ababa 'a card of entry into the NFD in the event of any overt move there from Somalia'.<sup>838</sup>

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<sup>833</sup> KNA, BB/1/156, Extract from Weekly Intelligence Report No. 10/63 covering the period 30<sup>th</sup> July to 5<sup>th</sup> August, 1963, enclosed with Director of Intelligence to OC Police Division, Marsabit et al. 9 August 1963, 5; DC/ISO 4/1/13, Resident Commissioner Isiolo, to Civil Secretary, Eastern Region, 'Monthly Report – Isiolo District, July 1963', 10 August 1963, p. 3.

<sup>834</sup> TNA, FCO 141/7129, Governor to Secretary of State, 27 and 29 July 1963.

<sup>835</sup> TNA, FCO 141/7129, Governor to Secretary of State, 5 July 1963; KNA, GH/6/2 Civil Secretary, North Eastern Region, to Permanent Secretary, 9 July 1963.

<sup>836</sup> TNA, FCO 141/7129, Governor to Secretary of State, 29 July and 9 August 1963; Permanent Secretary, 'Use of British forces in the N.F.D.', 8 August 1963; Chairman, East Africa Command, to Commander-in-Chief, Mid-East, 9 August 1963.

<sup>837</sup> TNA, FCO 141/7040, East Africa Command, 'East Africa Defence Committee. Report on the Army in East Africa', 14 October 1963, p. 3.

<sup>838</sup> TNA, FCO 141/7136, Russell to Scrivener, 27 November 1963.

During a *baraza* with chiefs and politicians from across the North Eastern Region which was held in Garissa on 23 July, the Governor announced that a meeting would soon be held between the Governments of Great Britain, the Somali Republic and Kenya. This news, however, was poorly received by the chiefs and politicians of the North Eastern Region, who accused the British Government of indulging in a policy of procrastination, with the aim of leaving the final decision on the NFD issue to the Kenyan Government after independence.<sup>839</sup> Meanwhile, the announcement of Kenya's Independence Day, on 12 December 1963, brought 'a sense of both frustration and fear amongst the secessionist leaders'.<sup>840</sup>

Following the meeting with the Governor, a delegation of secessionists from the NER left Garissa for Somalia at the end of July.<sup>841</sup> The delegates, led by chief Macalin Sanbul, were finally allowed to meet the Minister of Interior Maxamuud Cabdi Nuur 'Juuje', Maxamuud Yuusuf Adan 'Muro', and the Minister of Defence Hilowle Macalin Maxamed on 3 August, after a one-week stay in Kismaayo. The secessionists informed the Somali officials that they had been notified about the proposed meeting between the British, Somali, and Kenya Governments, emphasising that the future of the NFD was a matter between the British Government and the people of the ex-District and that such talks, therefore, should not take place without NFD representation. Although the Somali ministers stated that it was their intention to ask for NFD representation at the talks and that their government 'was prepared to give assistance from the background' to the people of the NFD, they made it clear that the Somali

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<sup>839</sup> KNA, BB/1/156, Extract from Weekly Intelligence Report No. 9/63 covering the period 23<sup>rd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1963, enclosed with Director of Intelligence to Raynor, 2 August 1963, para 20.

<sup>840</sup> KNA, GH/6/2, 'Eastern and North Eastern Regions of Kenya (NFD) Weekly Situation Report', 17-23 July, 1963.

<sup>841</sup> KNA, BB/1/156, Extract from Weekly Intelligence Report No. 9/63 covering the period 23<sup>rd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1963, enclosed with Director of Intelligence to Raynor, 2 August 1963, para 23.



Government 'would not openly demand secession'.<sup>842</sup> The delegates were informed that the Somali Republic 'could not give armed assistance at the present time', as it 'was not strong enough to deal with what was tantamount to war', according to British intelligence sources.<sup>843</sup> The Somali Republic was already struggling to negotiate its position in the Cold War context, and Ethiopia's Ogaden Province was strategically more important than the NFD.

The Conference between the Governments of Great Britain, Kenya, and the Somali Republic on the future of the former NFD was held in Rome from 25 to 28 August 1963. The leader of the British delegation Peter Thomas, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, announced that Her Majesty's Government was not in a position to cut up a colony on the eve of independence and that it would not countenance the secession of any portion of the NFD. The conference ended in a deadlock.<sup>844</sup>

As the issue of secession became increasingly engulfed by Cold War politics, the people of the NFD found themselves standing between a rock and a hard place. In Garissa and Wajir, the chiefs who supported the NFDP, such as Yuusuf Xaaji and Khaliif Axmed (Cabdi Rashiid Khaliif's father), began to cooperate with the Kenyan Government. The leaders of the NFDP accused the Xarti, whom they saw as Mogadishu agents, of holding a dominant and domineering place in NFD politics and in the NPPPP in particular, to the detriment of the interests of the 'local' people.<sup>845</sup> The NFDP consequently changed its position on secession: it now advocated regional autonomy for the

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<sup>842</sup> TNA, FCO 141/7129, Regional Special Branch Officer, North Eastern Region, to Director of Intelligence, 'Secessionist Activities – NFD', 6 August 1963, p. 1.

<sup>843</sup> TNA, FCO 141/7129, Regional Special Branch Officer, NE Region, to Director of Intelligence, 'Secessionist Activities – NFD', 6 August 1963, 2; KNA, BB/1/156, Extract from Weekly Intelligence Report No. 11/63, enclosed with Director of Intelligence to Raynor, August 1963, para 33.

<sup>844</sup> Drysdale, *Somali Dispute*, p. 162; Whittaker, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, p. 44.

<sup>845</sup> KNA, GH/6/2, 'Supplement' enclosed to Civil Secretary, North Eastern Region, to Permanent Secretary, 9 July 1963; Special Branch, 'The tribes and political parties of the former Northern Frontier District', 29 July 1963.

NER but opposed the region's unification with the Somali Republic. The chiefs who supported the NFDP argued that promoting a 'good link' with the British and the Kenyan government was the only way to improve infrastructure and social services and bring development to the NER.<sup>846</sup> These chiefs, who constituted a small minority among a population that strongly supported secession, feared for their futures and even their lives. They reached the conclusion that they would get no benefit from joining Somalia; instead, if they accepted to cooperate with the British and the Kenyan Government, they would be able to secure their position and to retain some influence and authority.<sup>847</sup>

Meanwhile, the supporters of the NPPPP became more and more entrenched in their position, as the British and the Kenya Government squeezed political space. In September 1963, chief Macalin Sanbul resigned his position, and political temperature rose in Wajir.<sup>848</sup> As tensions between NFDP and NPPPP supporters deepened, representatives of the Digoodiia clan reportedly held a meeting in Wajir at which it was decided that political pressure should be brought to bear on the Reer Maxamuud section to force them into more active support for the secessionist campaign.<sup>849</sup> The chief of this section, Khaliif Axmed, favoured co-operation with the Kenya Government. Moreover, the Reer Maxamuud comprised the bulk of the limited support that had been forthcoming for Cabdi Rashiid Khaliif's proposed new party, the Frontier Independence Party (FIP), which advocated regional autonomy within Kenya as the best immediate solution to the NFD problem. On the day following this meeting, a group of about thirty Digoodiia supporters of the NPPPP threw stones at the house of Chief Khaliif Axmed; the chief's backers resisted and, in the fight that ensued, four people were

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<sup>846</sup> Interviews with Maxamed Ibraahim 'Maayo', Wajir, 21 March 2016, and Maxamed Yuusuf Xaaji, Nairobi, 4 May 2016.

<sup>847</sup> Interviews with Ibraahim Cali Xuseen 'Sirr', Wajir, 22 March 2016, and Cali Xasan Yuusuf 'Ananug', Eastleigh, 28 April 2016.

<sup>848</sup> KNA, PC/GRSSA 3/21/26, RGA, Garissa, 'Garissa District Monthly Intelligence Report, September 1963', 15 October 1963, p. 1.

<sup>849</sup> KNA, BB/1/156, Extract from Weekly Intelligence Report No. 16/63 covering the period 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> September 1963, enclosed with Director of Intelligence to Walters, 20 September 1963, para 25.

injured.<sup>850</sup> Strong police patrols and a dusk-to-dawn curfew restored the situation to normal. A few days later, an attempt was made to burn down Chief Khaliif's house.<sup>851</sup>

Tensions between pro- and anti-secession groups escalated in the Eastern Region as well. On 20 September, Axmed Nuur Maxamuud Cali, a well-known political figure in Isiolo, was murdered in Marsabit District by a group of Gabbra. Divisions between the Boran in the outlying area of Isiolo District, on the one hand, and the Boran and the Sakuye in the secessionist stronghold of Garba Tulla, on the other hand, also deepened. Upon his return from the Rome Conference, Cabdi Latiif Ayah, the leader of the Isiolo branch of the NPPPP, signed a bond to be of good behaviour under the Special District Ordinance: 'the solid front of alien Somali resistance broke finally' – the Regional Government Agent commented.<sup>852</sup> By the end of September 1963, twenty-one influential leaders had been bonded in Isiolo and all but two sub-sections of Isxaaq and Xarti were covered. As routine policing resulted in further arrests of non-'alien' Somalis, Digoodiya and Ajuuraan 'illegal immigrants' were removed from Isiolo District.<sup>853</sup> In October, numbers of Isxaaq in Isiolo township came out in favour of participation in the Regional Assembly.<sup>854</sup> Oral testimonies suggest that Isxaaq and Xarti businessmen were now concerned with trying to protect their interests and their lives.<sup>855</sup>

A group of NPPPP delegates, who had been chosen to represent the majority view on the issue of the NFD, visited Mogadishu in October 1963. The delegates from the NER, however, received a cold reception: 'it was evident that

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<sup>850</sup> 'Retaliation', *Daily Nation*, 14 September 1963, p. 2.

<sup>851</sup> 'Wajir Arson Attempt', *Daily Nation*, 19 September 1963, p. 13.

<sup>852</sup> KNA, DC/ISO 4/1/13, Resident Commissioner Isiolo, to Civil Secretary, Eastern Region, 'Monthly Report – Isiolo District. September, 1963', 3 October 1963, p. 2.

<sup>853</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>854</sup> KNA, DC/ISO 4/1/13, Resident Commissioner Isiolo, to Civil Secretary, Eastern Region, 'Monthly Report – Isiolo District. October, 1963', 5 November 1963, p. 1.

<sup>855</sup> Interviews with Ali Wako Godana, Isiolo, 1 March 2016; Hassan Wako Wario, Isiolo, 2 March 2016; and Xuseen Maxamed Xaaji Cabdalla 'Maziwa', Nairobi, 17 March 2016.

the Somali Government leaders found their presence in Mogadishu an embarrassment’ – a source close to the delegation reported.<sup>856</sup> The Prime Minister Cabdirashiid Cali Sharmaarke reassured the NPPPP representatives that the NFD issue was being discussed at a ‘high level’ and advised them to return to Kenya. Nevertheless, the delegation ‘gained the impression that there were wide differences of opinion among Somali Government officials’: while the President, the Minister of Defence and the Interior Minister ‘advocated seeking a solution by negotiation’, the Prime Minister favoured a militant approach.<sup>857</sup> In November, though, after negotiations with West Germany, the USA, and Italy over a tripartite program for the supply of military aid failed, the Somali Republic accepted a multi-million-dollar proposal for military cooperation from the Soviet Union, which boosted the Somali Government’s support for the secessionists.<sup>858</sup>

Meanwhile, the British agreed with the Kenyan administration that the NER would be given another opportunity to elect a Regional Assembly and parliamentary representatives either before or immediately after independence. On 2 November, shortly after announcing his intention to stand for one of the Lower House seats, Cabdi Rashiid Khaliif was kidnapped and taken to Mogadishu.<sup>859</sup> According to oral testimonies, when Cabdi Rashiid joined the anti-secession camp in the summer of 1963, speculations that he had sold the land to Kenya spread in Wajir. As a result, he was progressively marginalized, as most people could not understand why he had changed his mind and thus refused to listen to his ideas. Oral testimonies suggest that ‘even the Digoodiya, his own people, turned against him.’<sup>860</sup> Moreover, all the other clans in Wajir became hostile towards the Reer

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<sup>856</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, Director of Intelligence, ‘Somali activity – North East Region.

Tabulation of recent trends of events’, 6, enclosed with MacDonald to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 23 November 1963.

<sup>857</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, TNA, CO 822/3055, Director of Intelligence, ‘Somali activity – North East Region. Tabulation of recent trends of events’, 7, enclosed with MacDonald to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 23 November 1963.

<sup>858</sup> TNA, FCO 141/7136, Washington to Foreign Office, 21 November 1963.

<sup>859</sup> ‘NFD kidnap report’, *Daily Nation*, 5 November 1963; ‘Khalif in Somalia?’, *Daily Nation*, 6 November 1963.

<sup>860</sup> Interview with Cali Xasan Yuusuf ‘Ananug’, Eastleigh, 28 April 2016.

Maxamuud because of Cabdi Rashiid, who was considered guilty of trying to ‘confuse people’.<sup>861</sup> As escalating tensions intermingled with long-standing inter-clan rivalries, the Reer Maxamuud were blamed for creating problems. As one of Cabdi Rashiid’s kidnappers, a Reer Maxamuud, stated: ‘we decided to take Cabdi Rashiid to get some peace’.<sup>862</sup>

While Cabdi Rashiid Khaliif was being taken to Mogadishu, Deeqoow Macalin Sanbul was removed from the NER and restricted to Kajiado District. Chief Macalin Sanbul fled to Somalia soon afterwards.<sup>863</sup> Early in December, ‘a warrant was issued for his arrest and the seizure of all his property’.<sup>864</sup> According to British sources, in September Macalin Sanbul had met with the Provincial Governor of Kismaayo, to whom he had given a list containing the names of twenty-eight Kenyan Somalis from Garissa who had previous military or police experience. The Provincial Governor had allegedly advised that those who were on the list should report to Bilis Qooqaani, where they would be issued with rifles and grenades, but had declined to make automatic weapons available.<sup>865</sup> Around mid-November, numbers of young men left Garissa District for Somalia to join Macalin Sanbul, who was reportedly based at Dunyali, a few miles from the Kenya-Somalia border. He was believed to have about 120 men under his control.<sup>866</sup>

Meanwhile, Captain Cabdulaahi Maxamed of the Somalia Special Branch reportedly visited Buulo Xaawo to assess the degree of support for secession

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<sup>861</sup> Interview with anonymous (identity withheld), Rongai, 26 April 2016.

<sup>862</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>863</sup> Interview with Deeqoow Macalin Sanbul, Garissa, 28 July 2017.

<sup>864</sup> ‘Ex-Somali chief a shifta leader’, *Daily Nation*, 7 December 1963.

<sup>865</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, ‘The Security Situation – N.E. Region. Interference & Complicity by the Authorities in Somalia’, 3, enclosed with MacDonald to Secretary of State, 27 November 1963.

<sup>866</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, Director of Intelligence, ‘Somali activity – North East Region. Tabulation of recent trends of events’, 2, enclosed with MacDonald to Secretary of State, 23 November 1963; ‘The Security Situation – N.E. Region. Interference & Complicity by the Authorities in Somalia’, 3, enclosed with MacDonald to Secretary of State, 27 November 1963.

among Kenyan Somalis and met the Gharri chief Maxamed Jarri from Mandera at Buur Hache police post, on Somali soil, early in November. Captain Cabdulaahi allegedly informed the Gharri chief that fifty rifles and one hundred grenades were available at Buur Hache for insurgents in the Ceelwaaq area.<sup>867</sup> According to British sources, Chief Maxamed Jarri subsequently returned to Somalia with about one hundred men from his Gharri/Sabdawa clan. It was reported that nine of the NPPPP delegates who had visited Mogadishu in October and were still in Somalia arrived in Buur Hache and joined the insurgency.<sup>868</sup> Pistols and automatic weapons were allegedly being brought to Buur Hache from Baydhabo and issued in conjunction with the local Somali police.<sup>869</sup>

Between 13 and 20 November, a series of small-scale attacks took place against police posts along the Kenya-Ethiopia and Kenya-Somalia borders. A small party of Somalis armed with rifles and grenades attacked Rhamu police post, along the Kenya-Ethiopia border, injuring five policemen.<sup>870</sup> Another attack was made against the GSU camp at Weel Mareer, in the eastern part of Wajir District, near the Somalia border. A few police posts and the Shell B.P. seismographic camp in Garissa District were also targeted and a grenade was thrown at the camp of the 3<sup>rd</sup> KAR Company stationed at Garissa.<sup>871</sup> During these attacks, all repelled by Kenyan security forces, a few Kenya policemen were

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<sup>867</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, Director of Intelligence, 'Somali activity – North East Region.

Tabulation of recent trends of events', 2, enclosed with MacDonald to Secretary of State, 23 November 1963.

<sup>868</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, 'The Security Situation – N.E. Region. Interference &

Complicity by the Authorities in Somalia', 4, enclosed with MacDonald to Secretary of State, 27 November 1963.

<sup>869</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, Director of Intelligence, 'Somali activity – North East Region.

Tabulation of recent trends of events', 6, enclosed with MacDonald to Secretary of State, 23 November 1963.

<sup>870</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, Director of Intelligence, 'Somali activity – North East Region.

Tabulation of recent trends of events', 1, enclosed with MacDonald to Secretary of State, 23 November 1963; 'The Security Situation – N.E. Region. Interference & Complicity by the Authorities in Somalia', pp. 1–2, enclosed with MacDonald to Secretary of State, 27 November 1963.

<sup>871</sup> *Ibid.*

wounded but no one was killed. British intelligence sources estimated the strength of ‘*shifita*’ groups from across the border at approximately five hundred men.<sup>872</sup> These were known to operate from three main centres, namely Buulo Haawo (opposite Mandera Township), Haraadi (in the Buur Hachi area opposite Ceelwaaq), and Dunyali (opposite Garissa District). The camp at Dunyali was reported to be under the command of Macalin Sanbul.<sup>873</sup> Somali military vehicles containing approximately seventy men arrived at Buulo Haawo on 24 November, according to British sources.<sup>874</sup> New hit-and-run attacks were carried out against the police posts at Finno and Ceel Waaq at the beginning of December.<sup>875</sup> Small groups of insurgents also began to ambush KAR convoys.

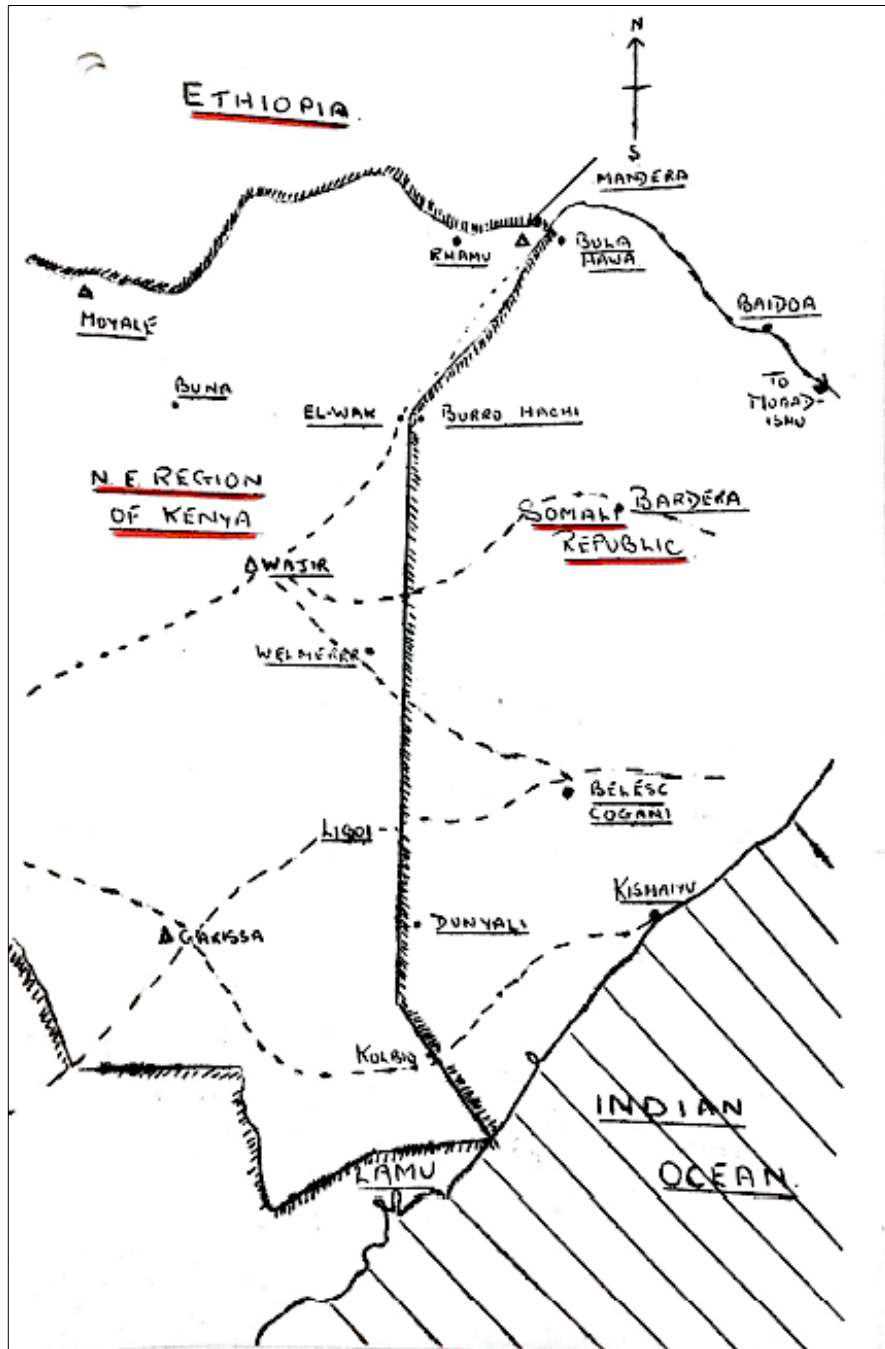
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<sup>872</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, ‘The Security Situation – N.E. Region. Interference & Complicity by the Authorities in Somalia’, 2, enclosed with MacDonald to Secretary of State, 27 November 1963.

<sup>873</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, H.Q. East Africa Command to War Office, 25 November 1963, 1; East Africa Command to War Office, 26 November 1963.

<sup>874</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, East Africa Command to War Office, 26 November 1963.

<sup>875</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, East Africa Command to War Office, secret cable, 3 December 1963.



Map 7: Sketch Map of the Area Concerned by 'Shifita' Activity.  
 Source: TNA, CO 822/3055, enclosed with MacDonald to Sandys, 23 November 1963.

While 'shifita' activity intensified, politics continued to fracture, as pressure mounted on the people of the ex-NFD. The Civil Secretary of the NER held a *baraza* in Wajir on 7 December attended by nearly all the Region's chiefs (except those who had resigned). The chiefs accepted to pay taxes, obey the laws of Kenya, co-operate with development plans, hold local Government elections,



and ‘do everything possible to defeat Shifta’.<sup>876</sup> Although the chiefs maintained that their ultimate aim was union with Somalia, they agreed that ‘under present circumstances, it would be desirable to remain part of Kenya for the time being’.<sup>877</sup> Political parties other than the NPPPP supported the chiefs’ statement.

Meanwhile, the borderland was increasingly militarized with the help of British forces. By 3 December, a platoon of KAR had been deployed in company detachments at Garissa, Wajir, and Mandera and a twin Pioneer aircraft had been stationed at each of these places.<sup>878</sup> As the Regional Government Agent, Garissa, recorded: ‘the European population of Garissa continues to increase. Apart from the increase in Regional Staff, we have been reinforced by the KAR and the RAF.’<sup>879</sup> In early December, the Governor Malcom MacDonald asked Lord Duncan Sandys for British military support to the Kenya Government in the North Eastern Region on the grounds that ‘refusal to provide essential support by the British troops would lead to a very serious, and possibly disastrous security situation’.<sup>880</sup> In his telegram, the Governor summarised the nature and extent of the support required: ‘RAF aircraft for mobility and for air-dropping’; ‘Army Air Corps aircraft for reconnaissance and casualty evacuation’; Royal Army Medical Corps; Royal Engineers; Royal Army Service Corps for air dispatchers; Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, whose assistance would be required in the event of large scale transport activities.<sup>881</sup>

Within a fortnight of Kenya’s Independence Day, celebrated on 12 December 1963, the Kenyan Government declared a state of emergency in the North Eastern Region, officially marking the beginning of the so-called *shifta*

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<sup>876</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, MacDonald to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 9 December 1963.

<sup>877</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>878</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, MacDonald to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 3 December 1963; CINC, Middle East, to Ministry of Defence, 26 November 1963.

<sup>879</sup> KNA, PC/GRSSA, 3/21/26, Resident Commissioner Garissa, ‘Garissa District Monthly Intelligence Report, November 1963’, 7 December 1963, p. 1.

<sup>880</sup> TNA, CO 822/3055, MacDonald to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 3 December 1963.

<sup>881</sup> *Ibid.*

war. As Jomo Kenyatta now ‘seemed to offer the best protection’ for British interests, Britain struck a series of defence agreements with the Kenyan Government.<sup>882</sup> As a consequence of these deals, the Royal Air Force remained in the country to assist in counter-insurgency operations. Richard Catling, who had arrived in Kenya in 1954 during the Emergency, stayed in post as Inspector-General of Police until the end of 1964.<sup>883</sup>

Amidst struggles for hegemony and competing visions of political order and regional stability, a cluster of overlapping conflicts emerged in the Kenya-Somalia borderlands by the time Kenya gained independence. Jomo Kenyatta’s government, with the support of British forces, responded to these intertwined conflicts with counterinsurgency campaigns. These created systemic political violence in north-eastern Kenya and shaped the mode of existence of the post-colonial state in this periphery. Although the *shifita* war officially ended in 1967, forms of state-sponsored political violence extended into the 1970s and 1980s. The Wagalla massacre, in which Kenyan security forces killed several hundred Digoodiya Somalis in Wajir District in February 1984, is the most blatant evidence of this.<sup>884</sup> The systemic political violence counterinsurgency created has left an indelible scar on the collective memory and the identities of the borderlanders and, to some extent, still characterizes state-society relations in the Kenya-Somalia borderland today.

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<sup>882</sup> Branch, *Kenya*, p. 39; Daniel Branch, ‘Violence, Decolonisation and the Cold War in Kenya’s North-Eastern Province, 1963–1978’, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 8, No.4 (2014), pp. 642–57 (pp. 646–47).

<sup>883</sup> David Throup, ‘Crime, Politics, and the Police in Colonial Kenya, 1939–63’, in *Policing and Decolonisation: Politics, Nationalism and the Police, 1917–65*, ed. by David M. Anderson and David Killingray (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 127–57, (pp. 151–52).

<sup>884</sup> For more on this, see David Anderson, ‘Remembering Wagalla: State Violence in Northern Kenya, 1962–1991’, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 8, No.4 (2014), pp. 658–76; Sheikh, *Blood on the Runaway*.

## 6.4 Conclusion

Secessionism in north-eastern Kenya represented the imagined solution to marginalisation; in it was ‘embedded the idea that things will need to change’.<sup>885</sup> The borderlanders who fought for secession tried to pursue what they saw as the unfinished agenda of decolonization. They attempted to define the relationship between the local, the national, and the global on their own terms, by affirming an identity under threat.

Secessionism brought up vital questions of identity and history. This chapter has shown that the various positions the borderlanders took in the lead-up to insurgency were not pre-determined by self-contained identities. Rather, they were influenced by the shrinking of possibilities, the carrot-and-stick approach the British used in the course of 1963 to break the secessionist front, and the lived experience of violence. These contextual dynamics provoked a clash of social imaginaries. The ideas of a trans-territorial Somali identity and of a borderless community of pastoralists clashed with the hardening of territorialised ethnic and clan identities, as the issue of secession intermingled with issues of land and resource access, power, and leadership. This, however, was not solely a product of local forces.

External factors, particularly British policy and the impact of the Cold War on the political landscapes of Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia, played a fundamental role in shaping the local dynamics of political mobilisation and insurgency. The British response to the threat of insurrection after the publication of the NFD Commission’s report pushed the NPPPP leaders towards armed struggle and shaped the counterinsurgency practices of the post-colonial state in Kenya. The support the Somali Republic now received from the Eastern bloc enabled the Somali government to back the insurgents and provide them with rear bases in Somali territory. This interplay of local and external forces created a cluster of conflicts which exploded into the *shifita* war.

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<sup>885</sup> Schomerus, Englebort, and de Vries, ‘Africa’s Secessionism’, p. 11.

## **Conclusion: The borderlanders and the state, an ambivalent but vital relationship**

This thesis has begun to trace out the actual histories of the state in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands. It has highlighted the differences and the similarities between British and Italian colonialisms, especially with regard to patterns of governmental practice, in the colonies of Kenya and Italian Somalia. It has shown how the borderlanders responded to colonial interventions through adaptation, dissent, or resistance, and how European policies reacted to the borderlanders' initiatives.

If, on the one hand, the frontier remained porous and border control largely nominal, on the other hand, the maintenance of what Julie MacArthur has called a 'hybrid regulatory order' entailed the regular use of force and normalized violence in these borderlands.<sup>886</sup> This occurred on either side of the border, regardless of the difference in the borderlanders' experiences of state power: an experience of coercion on the British-ruled side and one of predation on the Italian-ruled side. British rule in North-Eastern Kenya resembled more what Tobias Hagmann has termed 'garrison rule' – that is to say the pattern of control, characterized by regular military coercion, by which the Ethiopian Empire (and later the Ethiopian state) controlled its Somali periphery – than British indirect rule.<sup>887</sup> As David Anderson has noted, after independence the Kenyan state simply maintained 'garrison government' in the country's north-eastern region, strengthening this pattern of control as the campaign against the *shifita* insurgency developed.<sup>888</sup> On the Somali side of the frontier, war – against the Ethiopian Empire first, then against Britain during World War II – and plantation agriculture shaped the pattern of domination by which the Italian colonial government

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<sup>886</sup> MacArthur, p. 120.

<sup>887</sup> Tobias Hagmann, 'The Return of Garrison Rule in the Ethiopian Ogaden, 2006-2012', paper presented at the Center for African Studies, University of Florida at Gainesville, 16 March 2013.

<sup>888</sup> Anderson, 'Remembering Wagalla', p. 660.

exploited manpower and resources in the borderland. Despite the differences between the British and Italian modes of governance, colonial officials on both sides of the border devolved power and the means of violence to government-paid chiefs and headmen, thereby transforming power relationships within borderland communities as well as ‘traditional’ forms of authority.

This thesis has shown how the borderlanders navigated different systems of colonial rule, at times capitalizing on the ‘hybrid forms of frontier governmentality unevenly imposed across the region’, at other times circumventing or resisting state control and influence.<sup>889</sup> However, this study has challenged the argument that Somali pastoralists essentially escaped the state, perfecting in what James Scott has termed ‘the art of not being governed’.<sup>890</sup> In her recent analysis of the struggles over different conceptions of sovereignty which have marked the history of the Kenya-Somali frontier, Julie MacArthur has argued that Somali histories of ‘state evasion’ resonate with Scott’s ‘formulation of “statelessness” not as disorganization but as political strategy [...], as a coherent expression of sovereignty without a state’.<sup>891</sup> While MacArthur has rejected both the idea of absence of sovereignty and that of ‘ordered anarchy’ to account for this form of statelessness, she has argued that the Somalis’ avoidance of governance was ‘an alternative that... predated and existed outside of the state as sovereign’.<sup>892</sup> Indeed, the reach and power of the colonial state should not be overstated. Both Weitzberg and MacArthur have persuasively shown that the Kenya-Somalia frontier remained ‘ill-defined and relatively open, reflecting the strategically partial exercising of colonial sovereignty’.<sup>893</sup> Nonetheless, in their struggle for hegemony over these frontiers, colonial states fundamentally altered the social and political dynamics of territorial appropriation, increasingly linking ethnic and clan identities to territory and creating a contested space of entangled

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<sup>889</sup> MacArthur, p. 109.

<sup>890</sup> James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2009); Branch, *Between Hope and Despair*, p. 26; MacArthur, p. 109.

<sup>891</sup> MacArthur, p. 117.

<sup>892</sup> MacArthur, p. 117.

<sup>893</sup> MacArthur, p. 123; Weitzberg, ‘Unaccountable Census’.

territorialities. The borderlanders embedded these transformations in the production of politics. If decolonization put ‘increasing emphasis on bounded spaces of sovereignty’, prompting ‘an investment in the territorialisation of political identities’, this phenomenon was rooted in decades of colonial rule in the borderlands.<sup>894</sup>

This thesis has shown that the territorialisation of identities (whether based on ethnicity or lineage) accompanied colonial attempts to extend and consolidate territorial control over the Kenya-Italian Somalia frontier since the end of the First World War. The double process of territorialisation of ethnicity and ethnicization of territory which occurred, although in different forms, on both sides of the frontier, influenced the formation of political identities and shaped the ways in which local groups expressed their political grievances and asserted their goals vis-à-vis each other and the states that competed for sovereignty over the frontier. Struggles over the appropriation of territory entailed struggles over land, power, and authority. These struggles, which occurred at the intersection of local, regional and international politics, shaped the conditions of historical possibility in the borderlands.

While competing against each other for access to land and resources, both material and symbolic, borderlanders became linked to the state (understood here as an ensemble of institutions, practices, representations, and people) by a multiform – often ambivalent – relationship: a relationship of dominance and resistance at times, of avoidance or cooperation at other times; a conflictive yet vital relationship. The state was not doomed to fail or intrinsically fragile in these borderlands as a consequence of cultural specificity or due to the political ecology of the frontier. Historically contingent power relations shaped politics in these borderlands in a way that undermined state legitimacy and the borderlanders’ trust in state institutions. State formation was not a unidirectional process from the state’s centre to the periphery, from which the borderlanders attempted to escape. Rather, the allocation of state resources and the negotiation of state-sanctioned political authority influenced socio-economic organisation and political options in

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<sup>894</sup> MacArthur, p. 124.

the periphery, while peripheral politics, in turn, shaped the character of the emerging nation state in both Somalia and Kenya.

The borderlands' economy, particularly trade, played a fundamental role in shaping and transforming the local power relations through which the state was negotiated. This thesis has rejected both the ideas that trade was autonomous from the state and that it necessarily challenged state sovereignty. Implying the mobility of goods and people, trade networks tended to circumvent or defy territorial boundaries. Nonetheless, cross-border flows exploited the economic differentials produced by different modes of governance and different state regulations. Moreover, the borderlanders involved in trade – traders, merchants, brokers, smugglers and middlemen – needed to work out arrangements with government officials in order for trade networks to function. These arrangements, though, were fragile and had to be constantly renegotiated, thus creating an ambivalent relationship between traders, most of whom were also smugglers, and government officials. Depending on context, this relationship took different forms: competition, accommodation, avoidance, compromise, or collaboration. Furthermore, the colonial state, on each side of the frontier, used trade routes and commercial networks to extend government control and assert its sovereignty over the borderlands.

This thesis has retraced the history of state-society relations in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands through the study of localized encounters between pastoralists, farmers, traders, chiefs, brokers, and colonial government officials. It has shown how these different players participated in negotiating, manipulating, and remodelling political authority and state functions. It has demonstrated that the ways in which the state was locally negotiated profoundly influenced 'identity work'. As Charles Tilly wrote, 'the word identities belongs in the plural'.<sup>895</sup> Identities are time-bound and cannot be understood apart from the context in which they form. As an old Arab proverb says: 'Men resemble their times more

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<sup>895</sup> Charles Tilly, '(Review of) Peter Sahlins. Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees', *American Historical Review*, 96, No.3, pp. 863–4 (p. 863).

than they do their fathers'.<sup>896</sup> This thesis has examined how the borderlanders worked out their identities and allegiances between two critical junctures, namely the redrawing and eventual fixation of the colonial border following the cession of Jubaland, and the creation of independent nation states in Somalia and Kenya. In so doing, it has shown that territorial appropriation, by blending resource access and power relations with issues of authority and belonging was at the heart of the production of politics in these borderlands.

There are similarities in the way in which blood-based identities – be they genealogical, ethnic, or national – became linked to territory on each side of the border, despite the differences between the British and Italian patterns of rule. In Kenya's north-east, political identities became entangled in a combined process of territorialisation of ethnicity and ethnicization of territory. In the trans-Jubba region, genealogical and political identities became intertwined with *deegaan* (clan 'homelands'), matching clan to a territorial base and blending political competition for acquiring bargaining power at the state's centre with competition for access to land and resources. As a result, on both sides of the frontier, governmental practices conflated the issue of access to land and resources with historical claims to territory. As Catherine Boone and Christian Lund have noted, land issues are not only about land, but, rather, they implicate the construction of authority over territory, resources, and persons.<sup>897</sup>

This thesis has revealed the link between identity, control over access to land, and political authority, highlighting the role of historical claims to territory in defining identity in these borderlands. Whenever the stakes of politics rose, the key question became: who came first? Whenever the borderlanders felt that their status was insecure or threatened, they resorted to what Boas and Dunn have called 'tales of origin'. This term denotes 'discursive constructions that shape perceptions and inform people's actions by linking identity and space in specific

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<sup>896</sup> Cited in Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, translated from the French by Peter Putnam (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1954), p. 35 and Amin Maalouf, *On Identity* (London: Harvill, 2000), p. 85.

<sup>897</sup> Christian Lund and Catherine Boone, 'Land Politics in Africa: Constituting Authority over Territory, Property and Persons', *Africa*, 83, No.1 (2013), pp. 1–13.



ways'.<sup>898</sup> The rationale behind these tales is: 'This is ours because we were here first'. The recourse to these tales is an attractive response to uncertainty. However, discourses concerning first comer/late comer status are like a Pandora's box: they have no end. It is always possible to find someone who was there before the others.

Tales of origin, however, provided an answer to the question of visibility. Colonial governance and later the emergence of independent nation-states heightened the importance of 'being visible' for the borderlanders. Only those groups who were visible could stake historical claims to territory and, hence, access resources, including the state. Only those who were visible could participate in the negotiation of political authority and state sovereignty. At the end of colonial rule, 'being visible' became key to the definition of citizenship, to defining who could enter the struggle for resources and who could not. This is where my analysis of the historicity of genealogical claims to territory in the Somali-speaking lands diverges from Barnes's. In the Somalia-Kenya borderlands, the dual identification with genealogy and territory was rarely a claim to a parochial identity, a protective local/subaltern reaction against a hegemonic nationalist project. Rather, Somali local elites (on both sides of the border) saw autochthony narratives linking genealogy and territory as a means to enter the struggle for resources – be they land, water points, trade licenses, or political representation – and to manage their relationship with the state. On both sides of the frontier, the borderlanders used claims to territorial belonging as a means of becoming visible in the process of state formation. For instance, although the assertion of Somali national and Muslim identities was supposed to temper the vigour of the autochthony argument, Somali nationalists acknowledged the relevance of this discourse and the importance of the claims it involved. In fact, the leaders of both the SYL and the NPPPP who were appointed, selected, or elected in a particular area were chosen from among the members of the kinship groups who were seen as those to whom the land 'traditionally' belonged.

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<sup>898</sup> Morten Bøås and Kevin Dunn, *Politics of Origin in Africa* (London: Zed Books, 2013), p. 2.

By examining how and why specific groups of borderlanders turned to one identity or another, this thesis has emphasised the historical contingency of identity formation in these borderlands. It is generally acknowledged that tense and volatile situations provide opportunities for the manipulation of identities; the history of identity formation in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands is no exception. This is particularly visible in the malleability of kinship. As Abdurahman ‘Baadiyow’ has noted, kinship ‘criss-crosses the lines of social stratification and those of integration within the state in a permanent process of interweaving’.<sup>899</sup>

This thesis has demonstrated that in the tumultuous transition from colonialism to independence, genealogy and ethnicity *per se* proved less salient than ‘*terroir*’ in shaping identities and allegiances in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands. The French term *terroir*, which can be loosely translated in English as ‘locality’, denotes an appropriated territory, constructed by a group of individuals exercising a degree of power (via set regulations) and sharing social representations and an intimate relationship with the ‘places’ that shape its identity. So far, the history of the Somalia-Kenya borderlands has been approached primarily through the lenses of Somali nationalism or segmentary politics. This thesis has shown that the history of these borderlands is, above all, a history of *terroirs*. It has thus challenged the conception of Somali nationalism as a non-territorial or trans-territorial phenomenon, showing the relevance of boundaries, whether material or symbolic, in shaping social relationships and politics in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands. Moreover, this study has demonstrated that Somali nationalism was not a monolithic entity, but, rather, it included different ‘nationalisms’, which reflected various imbrications of interests and different visions of citizenship, the nation, and the state. Discourses about autochthony, citizenship, and sovereignty intertwined with inequalities of status and power in drawing the boundaries of belonging and defining political allegiances in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands.

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<sup>899</sup> Abdurahman Abdullahi (Baadiyow), ‘Revisiting Somali Historiography: Critique and Idea of Comprehensive Perspective’, *Journal of Somali Studies*, 5, No.1 & 2 (2018), pp. 31–59.

By showing the fundamental role that colonial transactions and exogenous factors played in the process of state formation, this thesis has challenged Christopher Clapham's argument that state failure in the Horn of Africa stems from the region's anomalous 'non-colonial' past and, therefore, is primarily a product of endogenous forces.<sup>900</sup> It has argued against the idea that the Somalia-Kenya borderlands – and the Somali-speaking lands more broadly – represent an exceptional case in the context of African History. Situating the borderlands and the borderlanders within the broader academic debate on the state in Africa, this thesis has rejected the prevailing argument that state fragility in this region is due to the imported origin of the state and to the failure of adapting its institutions. Rather, this thesis has revealed the ambivalent, yet mutually constitutive relationship between society and state in the Somalia-Kenya borderlands.

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<sup>900</sup> Christopher Clapham, *The Horn of Africa: State Formation and Decay* (London: Hurst & Company, 2017).

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