Founding, Forming and Formulating a Nation: The Genesis and Genealogies of Modern Somali Nationalism, 1887-1920

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ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a new historical examination of the genesis of modern Somali nationalism. Using an interpretative historical approach, the thesis argues that Somali nationalism was an urgent and demanding process instigated by religious intellectuals in the late nineteenth-century. It was then advanced by secular intellectuals in the mid-twentieth-century. Both drew on ideological trends of the day to imagine various visions and pursue plural paths of nationalism adaptable to the context of imperialism and colonialism at the time. The thesis proposes that the ideological instrument of Somali nationalism was inherently linked with multi-faceted local, regional and global secular and religious dynamics. The adoption of a local, regional and global lens reveals a previously unknown history of Somali nationalism that casts Somali nationalism in a new light. The thesis traces the path of religious and secular individuals and institutions, as they foster a collective national consciousness. Each individual or institution (forces, movements and organisations) made a unique contribution to the rise of Somali nationalism. The thesis finds that Somali nationalism encompassed a variety of local and non-local Somali individuals and institutions that were not isolated from regional and global changes. By placing Somali nationalism within the larger framework of regional and global history, the thesis traces the effects and impacts of the various colonial/imperial state formation projects as well as the recurring intertwined issues of the emergence of nationalist movements seeking to create an environment free of imperialism and colonialism. By assessing the notion of nationalism and its contribution to theoretical and global historical scholarship, the thesis addresses key questions of the politics and power behind the trends and trajectories of nationalist forces. The thesis connects the emerging re-examination of nationalism in African and Arab studies with Somali studies by using a comparative and thematic approach. For historians mostly concerned with the roots of African and Arab nationalist movements, the history of Somali nationalism would form an integral part of growing historical re-assessments.

Framed within the broader question of who first midwifed nationalism, the thesis charts new avenues for historical investigation of the history of Somali nationalism. Based on previously unused religious and secular sources, the thesis challenges the established position that modern Somali nationalism in the Somali Peninsula arose as a result of post-World War II politics. By giving due attention to the plurality of pre-war Somali nationalism shaped by countless cooperating and competing religious and secular nationalist movements, the thesis establishes that Somali nationalism pre-dates World War II by many decades. This finding unsettles the dominant historiographic narratives of the post-war politics concerning the synchronic aspects of Somali nationalism. While there were religious and secular dimensions to the earlier nationalist discourse about the history of nationalism, the thesis finds that returning to the genesis and genealogies of Somali nationalism awakened and inspired the post-war Somali nationalists who came to contest over the politics of nationalism on the basis of secular and religious lines. By questioning the dominant forces of secular nationalism, the thesis presents a distinctive perspective of Somali nationalism radically at odds with the singular nationalistic narrative of a hegemonic, overarching post-colonial power. However, the thesis does not intend to displace previous works on Somali nationalism, but rather complements them by broadening the scope of the historical exploration. Rather than depict Somali nationalism as one singular politic (as was the case in previous scholarship), the thesis argues for a pluralistic politic of Somali nationalism whose players consisted of diverse groups, both religious and secular in orientation. By giving due attention to the plurality of Somali nationalism, the thesis provides an important contribution to the scant scholarship on Somali nationalism. It also contributes to pluralising the history of nationalisms in general, concluding that the enduring legacies derived from Somali nationalist debates and discourses cannot be understood without deeper and dual historical analysis. The thesis determines that, even though Somali nationalism began as a reaction to imperialism/colonialism, Somali nationalists were mostly realistic (and at times unrealistic) in their approach to the imperial and colonial questions. In examining Somali nationalism through cultural, diplomatic, military/warfare, social and political history, the thesis explores how Somali nationalists engaged with imperialism and colonialism and how this engagement shaped their intellectual ideas and activities. To distinguish the different types of Somali nationalism, while underscoring the connections and disconnections between various forms of nationalisms, the thesis incorporates the Islamic religion and the Somali clan system into the political entity of nationalism among Somali society. The thesis concludes that the intersection between nationalism and clannism was not as strict as previously depicted, insofar as they forcefully clashed and competed but also calmly co-existed and cooperated.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father Dr Abdullahi Mohamed Barre who instilled in me a love of education and to the memory of my mentor Dr Jan-Georg Deutsch whose manner of intellectual engagement always cheered me up.

Preface and Acknowledgements

My maternal grandmother Madina Guuleed Farah Jiileey, popularly called 'Aseey' (the light-skinned) and some of her fellow Somali poetesses used to begin their *buraanbur* (the popular genre of Somali women poetry): '*Bisin waxaan laga billaabeynin barako ma leh*' (anything that is not prefaced with the name of Allah has no blessing). I follow in my grandmother's footsteps by beginning my thesis with: *Bismillaahi Raxmaani Raxiim*. My beloved and pleasant grandmother often used to say that I look like a doctor. But a Greek maxim referred erroneously to Shakespeare should be noted here, 'Some men are born great, some acquire greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them'.[1] Time will tell where I fit.

This thesis grew out of a curious long academic pursuit that became so riveting that I finally decided to abandon my original research proposal. I originally set out to examine the politics of Somali state-building projects, but I ended up investigating the history of the nation-building process in the Somali Peninsula. The reason was that I found out in the course of early research that before building a Somali state (or nation-state for that), the nation was forged, formed and formulated way before the (post)-colonial period. My family history and the encouragement of my friends forced me to explore this topic. The unexplored historical material I gathered throughout the years changed my argument, but not the direction of my thesis research: initially, as I planned to study the nation-state, I later decided to separate between the two and start the nation before moving to the state in a post-doc project.

While researching and writing the thesis, I lost some of my family members and friends. First, the death of my father and my supervisor simultaneously. In May 2015, early on my graduate studies, at the midst of framing my thesis to transfer from Probationer Research Student status to another status, I lost my father Dr Abdullahi Mohamed Barre 'Kaneeco' or 'Wirif' on 14 May 2015 and my first supervisor Jan-Georg Deutsch on 22 December 2016. Most recently, on 13 July 2020, my younger sister Bilan unexpectedly died of a car accident. These deaths became traumatic and were hard on me. The passing of my father completely changed my life, while the passing of my first supervisor changed my work. I am still grieving for those lost and not feeling well. I remember that the news of my father's sudden passing was broken to me

[1] Susan L. Fischer, '"Some are Born Great... and Some Have Greatness Thrust upon Them": Comic Resolution in El perro del hortelano and Twelfth Night', *Hispania*, 72, 1 (1989), 78-86.

while working at the Help Somalia Foundation as a Researcher. My father's passing caused my return to Somalia for the first time since I left as a young boy. While there, I grieved terribly over my father's death where I was assigned by siblings to lead his funeral proceedings.

With regards to my thesis, the passing of my supervisor particularly caused a period of headache, which was exacerbated by the assignment of one supervisor after another, altogether five, including one external one: Dr Deutsch, Dr Miles Larmer, Dr Tim Livsey, Dr Michael Walls and Dr Peter Brooke. I like to particularly thank the compassion and generosity shown to me by Deutsch and Peter. I remember my life dramatically changed between November and December 2016 when my supervisor first became ill and then suddenly passed away. My life changed to the better between February 2017 and June 2017. Miles Larmer acted as a temporary supervisor at that critical moment, but twice became one of my assessors, first during the transfer and second during the confirmation of status. In addition to my previous training as both historian and social scientist at the University of London (Goldsmiths) and London Metropolitan University, where I was supervised by one historian and one social scientists, respectively, I was supervised in Oxford by three historians and two social scientists and this has given me various insights that broadened my horizon.

One crucial experience that I gained from my graduate studies was that any successful completion of one's thesis depends largely on the encouragement (s)he receives from his or her supervisor. Deutsch was instrumental in my early adaption to Oxford life and without him it would have been very difficult to adapt it. I will never forget him and he will remain in my memory for the rest of my life. He was not only generous and kind to me, but also gave me rare moral support at difficult times. He used to point out both my strength and my weakness. While suggesting ways of improving my weaknesses, he often emphasised my strengths. He had a profound and lasting effect and impact on me. In his memory, I contributed to a book chapter about the historical memory of Northern Somalia (Somaliland) in a volume commemorating Deutsch's scholarly work. I also thank his widow, Heike I. Schmidt, for her encouragement and kind words. Instead of relieving her of the loss of her husband, she relieved me of my supervisor's passing.

I once asked Georg, as most of us would have liked to call him, which one he would have liked to be called: Jan-Georg, Georg or simply Jan and he said Georg. I think this was the second or third time I met him. I asked the question because I found people call him Georg, while his

profile page on the History Faculty – as that of St Cross's – wrote his name Jan-Georg. I sought his approval to call him Jan or Georg. If my memory serves me well, I think he said whichever way I pronounced it would be fine. This was how he used to make simplicity out of perceived complexity. In the winter of 2016, as we returned to his weekly seminar for his doctoral students and others, no-one probably noticed that Georg had cancer. Since Georg's passing, I have been feeling sadness and my heart shakes now to pay a tribute to a man whose loss was extremely hard on me. Georg was indeed a kind man who, when I sent him an email from Mogadishu in the summer of 2015, told me that he had followed the Somali news just for ensuring my security. He did not tell me how and from where. Georg earned his doctorate in history at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), the University of London, specialising in Eastern African history in general and in Zanzibari history in particular. Georg was unique in the way he taught. He was an ideal tutor and selfless scholar who was devoted to his students. He wanted not to direct but to empower his students, commenting on every issue with incisive insights. He taught me to think comparatively and critically. To ask curious questions was his biggest legacy, academic rigour. My approach to comparative historical analysis was his urge.

Since I began academically researching and writing up about Somali history in the summer of 2010, I immersed myself in associating with old Somali elders (as well as non-Somali elders who lived in the Somali Peninsula in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s). The academic but sometimes social interaction with them has an enduring effect on my life, both mentally, physically and professionally. They would often point out my younger age, how I looked so small to them and how I was like a child to them. Amusingly, they would sometimes refer to me '*cunuggaan*' (this child). But perhaps the most touching part of their engagement is the death of one after another. Today, in this turbulent time of the Covid-19 epidemic, hardly a month passes without getting a call informing me that one of them died last night or this morning. I had to call their families to pay my condolences and prepare hastily to attend their funeral. I would often sob, recalling so often my past with them. Naturally, many deaths touched me more than others. But the most shocking deaths that had shaken me happened in two consecutive years – 2015 and 2016, which I mentioned marked the death of my father and my first supervisor. I am indebted to all those elders, both men and women, who were interviewed in this thesis.

When I started working on this thesis, I did not have the resources needed for graduate studies, nor enough money to live on. I asked for consultant jobs for a year or two, even part-time.

Writing this thesis was, as a result, a harrowing experience in my life. Downs were numerous than ups. I was not funded at all (and thus required to work alongside my graduate studies). Due to a lack of funding, I financed the research and writing the thesis from my pocket. As I have not found a scholarship at Oxford or elsewhere, I had to continue financing myself with agony and anguish. I paid by self for all the tuition fees of my studies, while working part-time and taking care of my family. Except some small travel grants from St Peter's College and the Faculty of History, the University of Oxford between 2015 and 2020, which I gratefully acknowledge, all my other travels for research fieldwork were sponsored by my family and friends. Both St Peter's and the Faculty were consistently supportive of my studies and provided an excellent setting for studying.

Professor M. A. Mohamed Salih and Professor Assefaw Bariagaber deserve special thanks for their elderly advice. They gave me an initial useful admonishment during a research conference in Uppsala University in early October 2014. Bearing in mind about the unique demands for studying at the University of Oxford, they ordered me to concentrate on my studies and admonished me to forget socialising with Somalis, because – as they aptly stated – 'the Somalis are good socialisers'. Their predictions were right. During my time at Oxford, I enjoyed intellectual discussions with a small but perfectly formed group of fellow students in modern history. Colleagues I would wish to single out were Rouven Kunstmann, Duncan Money, Katharina Oke, Sishuwa Sishuwa and Simon Stubbings. Duncan (Dan) showed me a moral support with his wonderful smiling greeting. I truly benefitted greatly from the African Studies Seminar, the Horn of Africa Seminar, the History Department Seminar and even the South African Seminar.

I benefitted from the academic inspiration and scholarly stimulation provided by Professor Mohamed Eno, Professor Charles Geshekter, Professor Hassan Omar Mahadallah and Professor Ali Jimale. I owe a debt of a gratitude to them for always providing unwavering support and guidance. Ali Jimale and Geshekter provided valuable support at a crucial (and also critical) moment in my academic and intellectual development. Some of the important primary documents I used in this thesis were generously and gratefully provided by Geshekter. I owe much to him. He has sent me huge boxes of rare primary documents he collected in the 1960s. He was so generous that when I offered to pay the postal fees he refused. An old man of his late 70s, he would say to me 'you will inherit me'. I actually inherited his knowledge.

I am particularly grateful for the intellectual and scholarly friendship of Dr Abdurahman Mo'allim Abdullahi 'Baadiyow', Dr Sarah Craze, Dr Afyare Abdi Elmi, Dr Markus Hoehne and Dr Duncan Money. I particularly thank Sarah Craze for the long-time friendship and generous assistance. Without her, this thesis would have turned out differently. Sarah generously took the time to read all parts of my thesis and provided comments and criticisms, suggesting detailed important revisions. She also provided the two maps (one colonial and post-colonial) in the thesis. I also thank Duncan who commented on parts of my thesis, while Geshekter commented on Part II which he cited in a subsequent article he recently published in *Bildhaan,* one of the Somali studies journals. My current supervisor Dr Peter Brooke read all parts of the thesis (some of them more than twice) and offered extremely invaluable advice. I benefitted greatly from his wise counsel. Thanks to David Brooks and Annalisa Urbano for their help and discussion about my thesis.

During the course of this thesis, I visited many places in Africa and Europe for research. In Addis Ababa, Bur'o, Djibouti, Dirirdhabe, Harar, Hargeysa, Jigjiga, Mogadishu, Nairobi, Rome and Stockholm, I am indebted to all Somalis and non-Somalis who welcomed me there. In Harar, I am grateful to the Mohamed family for adopting me as one of their own in 2016. I cannot wait to return to Harar as well as my favourite town Dirirdhabe. In Djibouti, I thank Salah Mahamoud Omar, Dr Hassan Rayaale and Abdillahi Rooble for their warm reception. In Jigjiga, I thank Ali Baashi for taking care of my safety. In Hargeysa, I thank Mohamed Ali Bile, Mohamed Abdullahi Dualeh and Dr Mohamed Guudle for their assistance and encouragement. In Nairobi, I thank Liban Muhidin Alim, Abdi Dheere, Dr Mohamed Sheikh Ali 'Doodishe', Abdiwahab Sheikh Mohamed and Dr Abdifatah Ismail Tahir for their friendship and reception. In Stockholm, I thank Hussein Fuje and his family for hosting me in their home. In Rome, I thank Bashir M. Hersi and Hassan Daa'uud for their assistance in the Italian archives as well as Alberto Bencivenga and his wife Susanne Bohne for hosting me at their flat and taking me in one cool evening to feed me in a wonderful nearby restaurant. I owe thanks to the helpful archivists of the Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS) and Archivio Ufficio Storico Stato Maggiore Esercito (AUSSME) who repeatedly told me I was the first Somali scholar to ever access to these archives. Special thanks go to Antonio Blasi and Crescenzo Paolo di Martino of the ACS.

I would like to thank a number of people whose help and support have been crucial at various steps of my graduate work. I must acknowledge the support these friends gave me: Abdirashid

Ibrahim Sheikh Abdirahman, Professor Abdiwahab Sheikh Abdisamad, Abdirizak Mohamed Sh. Aden, Professor Ali Jimale Ahmed, Abdirizak Coca Cola, Shariif Daawo, Ahmed Aden 'Ahmed Dheere', Harbi Elmi, Khalif Hassan Farah, Hussein Goley, Mohamed Abdulkadir Mohamud 'Haajir', Ali Mohamed Mohamud 'Ali Joqombe', Mehmet Köse, Abdihakim Hassan Idow, General Said Ahmed Kediye, Abdirizak Naftiihure, Nasrokin Hashi Nure, Abdirizak Omar Mohamed and Bakistan Ahmed Shiil. I thank Professor 'Funmi Olonisakin of the African Leadership Centre, King's College London, who rescued me from deep difficulties during the early of my studies. I also like to thank Dr Olawale Ismail of the African Leadership Centre, King's College London for providing with a small research grant. My graduate students at the University of Hargeisa, King's College London and Goldsmiths, the University of London, all deserve special thanks for their intellectual engagement.

I must offer thanks to all who helped directly or indirectly during my preparation for this thesis. After a long odyssey of researching, writing and revising this thesis, I am glad that I am finally submitting it! In early 2013, while doing my second Master's degree at the University of London (Goldsmiths), I met a black South African young lady who had studied at Oxford for her doctorate. She gave me advice which I regretfully failed to heed. She cautioned me against challenging established scholars until I had not done my graduate studies. This advice was driven by my mention of criticising some scholars in my thesis proposal. Indeed, I felt many counter punches since then.

Last, but not least, I must thank Fardowsa Mohamad Omar for her kindness filled with a sense of strong no-non-sense attitude. I love you Fardowsa because – even in the coldest weather – you warm me with your adoration and affection. I cannot wait for the day my children will read this work. I would conclude this part with the Somali aphorism, '*hadal yar iyo howl badan*' (make small talk but do much homework).

Anything remaining is Mea culpa.

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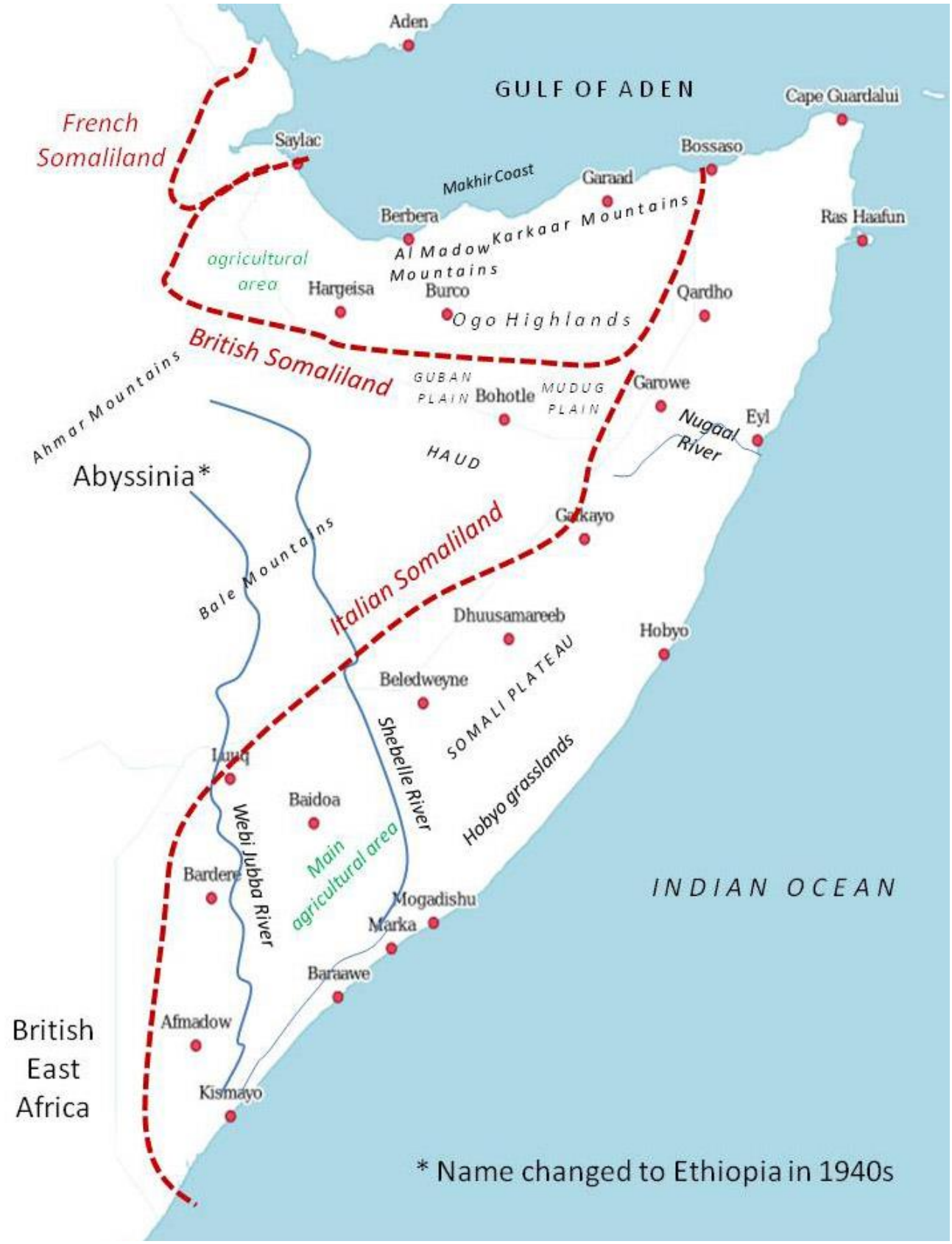

MAP III

The Post-Colonial Map of Somalia

Introduction

Bringing Somali Nationalism Back In

HISTORIANS, in their search for origins, tend to push back the beginning of whatever they are studying.[2] - Norman Hampson

Introduction

For Somali scholars, the complete collapse of their nation-state in January 1991 was both a curse and a blessing. It was a curse because violence and bloodshed affected most of the country and inhabitants began either fleeing or dying amid violence caused by the failure of the post-colonial Somali nation-state leadership.[3] It was a blessing because the pundits studying the history and politics of Somali society found the rare opportunity to pursue their research topics freely without the intervention and surveillance of the repressive apparatus of the post-colonial state.[4] Released from the state's oppressive clutches and confines, Somali scholars began to rethink topics that previously remained taboo under the old regime. It did not take long for them to produce a pioneering and path-breaking scholarly work. First came *The Invention of Somalia* in 1995. The editor, Ali Jimale Ahmed, collected together the voices of a young, new generation of male and female Somali and non-Somali scholars to reassess the beginning and the end of the idea of Somalia as Somalis knew it.[5] These scholars reconceptualised aspects of Somali society, including Islam in Somali history, the contradictions of slavery, the coming of colonialism, the creation of the state and the role of colonial anthropology and ethnography in creating a subjective understanding of Somali society. Fifteen years later in 2010, the editors Markus Hoehne and Virginia Luling followed the path navigated by Ahmed to gather a whole new generation of old and young Somali scholars to commemorate the prolific work of the famous Somalist British anthropologist Ioan Lewis.[6] With perceptive analysis, these scholars discussed such important themes as Islam, clan, colonialism, decolonisation and pastoralism. The increasing scholarly interest in the

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[2] Norman Hampson, *The Enlightenment: An evaluation of its assumptions, attitudes and values* (London: Penguin Books, 1982 [1968]), 15. The title of the Introduction was inspired by Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschmeyer and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
[3] Mohamed Haji Ingiriis, *The Suicidal State in Somalia: The Rise and Fall of the Siad Barre Regime, 1969-1991* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2016).
[4] Ali Jimale Ahmed, 'A History of Tigrinya Literature in Eritrea: The Oral and the Written 1890-1991, by Ghirmai Negash', *Research in African Literatures*, 43, 1 (Spring 2012), 58-64, 59.
[5] Ali Jimale Ahmed (ed), *The Invention of Somalia* (Lawrenceville, N.J.: The Red Sea Press, 1995).
[6] Markus V. Hoehne and Virginia Luling (eds.), *Milk and Peace, Drought and War: Somali Culture, Society and Politics – Essays in Honour of I. M. Lewis.* (London: Hurst, 2010).

conflict in Somalia had led to a fresh look at these topics. But both crucial volumes omitted the history of Somali nationalism.

The decision (or indecision) of the Somali scholars not to touch on the crucial issue of Somali nationalism was logical: in the 1990s and 2000s, Somalia was beset by bloody political conflicts, most of them fought on the basis of clannism.[7] To show that his earlier anthropological accounts on Somali clanship about how the clan conflict was biological and primordial had been a prophecy, Lewis triumphantly presented repeatedly the salience and superiority of clan in Somali society.[8] Even when the clanised conflicts were being displaced by religious conflicts, anthropologists continued to contradict each other about the roots and salience of the clan conflict.[9] The emphasis on state failure meant that they did not think that there was a nation-state conflict anymore, leaving the historical roots behind the creation of the nation-state conflict largely unaddressed. Only after the height of the civil war in Somalia rather slowed down in the 2000s did scholars begin challenging and critiquing the politics of Somali nationalism.[10] More than 20-plus attempts have been made since then to reconstitute the collapsed Somali nation-state, but all ended in failure. As a consequence of the protracted war, studies in post-state collapse have tended to portray Somali nationalism as a dead enterprise,

[7] However, the conflict in Somalia has been ongoing in a different shape and shade since the late 1970s. See Mohamed Haji Ingiriis, 'The Invention of Al-Shabaab in Somalia: Emulating the Anti-Colonial Dervishes Movement', *African Affairs*, 117, 467 (2018), 217-237; and Mohamed Haji Ingiriis, 'From Al-Itihaad to Al-Shabaab: How the Ethiopian Intervention and the "War on Terror" Exacerbated the Conflict in Somalia', *Third World Quarterly*, 39, 11 (2018), 2033-2052.

[8] Ioan Lewis, 'In the Land of the Living Dead', *Sunday Times*, 30 August 1992. Lewis pioneered the study of blood and bone in the Somali clan system and the ability of clan to take not only on emotional meanings but also on violent turns. This not only signals but also reveals the continuation of the colonial tradition of clan emphasis. Ioan M. Lewis, *Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society* (Trenton, N.J.: The Red Sea Press, 1994).

[9] Catherine Besteman, 'Primordialist Blinders: A Reply to I. M. Lewis', *Cultural Anthropology*, 13, 1 (1998), 109-120; Catherine Besteman, 'A Response to Helander's Critique of "Violent Politics and the Politics of Violence"', *American Ethnologist*, 26, 4 (2000), 981-983; Bernhard Helander, 'The Emperor's New Clothes Removed: A Critique of Besteman's "Violent Politics and the Politics of Violence"', *American Ethnologist*, 25, 3 (1998), 489-501; I. M. Lewis, 'Doing Violence to Ethnography: A Response to Catherine Besteman's "Representing Violence and 'Othering' Somalia"', *Cultural Anthropology*, 13, 1 (1998), pp. 100-108; and I. M. Lewis, 'Visible and Invisible Differences: The Somali Paradox', *Africa*, 74, 4 (2004), 489-515.

[10] Abdi M. Kusow, 'Contested Narratives and the Crisis of the Nation-State in Somalia: A Prolegomenon', in Abdi M. Kusow, *Putting the Cart Before the Horse: Contested Nationalism and the Crisis of the Nation-State in Somalia* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press, 2004), 1-14; Samuel Negash, 'Colonial Legacy, State Intervention and Secessionism: Paradoxical National Identities of the Ogaadeen and the Ishaaq in Ethiopia', in Bahru Zewde (ed.), Society, State and Identity in African History (Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies, 2008), 275-298; Peter J. Schraeder, 'From Irredentism to Secession: The Decline of Pan-Somali Nationalism', in Lowell W. Barrington (ed.), *After Independence: Making and Protecting the Nation in Postcolonial and Postcommunist States* (Ann Arbor: University Michigan Press, 2006), 107-138; and Inyani K. Simala and Michel Ben Arrous, 'Whose Self-Determination? Conflicting Nationalisms and the Collapse of Somalia', in Michel Ben Arrous and Lazare Ki-Zerbo (eds.), *African Studies in Geography from Below* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2009), 161-197.

apparently without consideration for its long historical perspectives.[11] As one Somali educational practitioner regretfully lamented in 1997: 'Somalia is no longer a nation or a nation-State, despite the fact that it displays many of the characteristics required of such institutions'.[12] The failures of the nation-state leadership to nurture nationalism echoed the popular perception of the 'black man's burden'. In his critique of the African nation-states, Basil Davidson, once one of the authoritative voices of Africa, made a bleak observation of the continent's political problems. 'Nationalism in Africa, or whatever was labelled as such', he argued, 'led to plenty of horrors and miseries [...].[13] Many Somalis, including elders whose oral historical testimonies form part of the bedrock of this thesis, put it more simply: 'how did we get into this mess'.[14] Now that the 30-years of the nation-state collapse (1991-2020) spans the 30-years of the unified nation-state (1960-1990), it is the right moment to rethink the history of nationalism.

Recent research studies have traced the current Somali conflict over the discourse of nationalism.[15] Thinking about the politics of the collapsed nation-state and rethinking the history of nationalism are two different tasks: the first task demands social scientists and the second task is for historians. To understand the deeper dynamics of the collapse and conflict, it is imperative to historicise the politics of Somali nationalism. Exploring the early history of Somali nationalism provides an answer to the state's collapse. This historical exploration informs the contemporary conflict and contributes a solution to the civil war in Somalia. The Somali need for nationalism to revive the collapsed stage stands as one of the many ironies in this thesis. Guided by Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities', this thesis is

[11] Heather Marie Akou, 'Nationalism without a Nation: Understanding the Dress of Somali Women in Minnesota', in Jean Allman (ed.), *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 50-63; Alice Bettis Hashim, *The Fallen State: Dissonance, Dictatorship and Death in Somalia* (Lanham, M.D.: University Press of America, 1997); Fiona Lortan, 'Rebuilding the Somali State', *African Security Review*, 9, 5-6 (2000), 94-103; and Anna Simons, *Networks of Dissolution: Somalia Undone* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995).

[12] Ali A. Abdi, 'The Rise and Fall of Somali Nationalism from Traditional Society to Fragile "Nationhood" to Post-State', *Horn of Africa*, Vol. XV, No. 1, 2, 3, 4 (Dec., 1997), 34-80, 34. For similar sentiments from Somali scholars, see Saeed Sheikh Mohamed, 'The Rise and Fall of Somali Nationalism', *Refuge*, 12, 5 (1992), 1-7; and Abdurahman Abdullahi (Baadiyow), 'The Rise and Fall of Somali Nationalism: Moderation and Radicalization in Pursuit of Perfect Unity' (unpublished paper). See also Said S. Samatar, *Somalia: A Nation in Turmoil* (London: Minority Rights Group Report, 1991).

[13] Quoted in Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (Oxford: James Currey, 1992), 165.

[14] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Mogadishu, Somalia, April-June 2016.

[15] Peter James Chonka, 'Imagining the Somali Lands: Nationalism in a Transnational Public Sphere, and the Political Reconfiguration of Somalia' (unpublished PhD dissertation, the University of Edinburgh, 2017).

an attempt to reinstate the old unsettled topic of the history of Somali nationalism.[16] Given the contemporary and historical gravity of the theme of nation-state collapse, this thesis examines the extent that Somali nationalism provided the basis for the Somali nation's formation. Nationalism, like Ilham Khuri-Makdisi's globalisation, 'meant shared concerns, shared resistance, and the emergence of a shared (or very similar) vocabulary'.[17] Despite all its flaws and fluctuations, the concept of the nation (which implied people have to be nations before becoming a state) became the main idea behind the state formation and hyphenated together as a nation-state, not state-nation, the nation thus became the basis for the state.[18] As such, nationalism was initially imagined to mean nationhood, not statehood, for Somalis. Terms like *ummadnimo* (nationhood), *qarannimo* (statehood), *dalka* (state) and *dadka* (people), all finally referred to one single Somali term called *wadannimo* (nationalism). Useful into the battle of formation of the nation through the perspective of (what they viewed as) real *Soomaalinnimo* (Somaliness), nationalism borne out of the work of men and women was of essential importance to the foundation of the nation-state, but not so for the formulation of the nation. While the Somali public has largely been divided on how to reconstitute the nation-state, Somali studies have demonstrated that the conflict over the nation-state warrants a historical exploration.[19] The thesis argues the key turning points in the rise of Somali nationalism was between 1887 and 1943. It is concerned not only with chronological history but also the key features of the advent of nationalism.

Somali Nationalism and Saadia Touval

The fact that the study of Somali nationalism has been subject to only a few scant studies makes it one of particular historical interest. There was a small academic outbreak of publications around the subject of Somali nationalism in English in the early 1960s, but this literature dried

[16] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).
[17] Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 166.
[18] Lawrence Krader, *Formation of the State* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968); and Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1977).
[19] Mohamed Haji Ingiriis, 'Many Somalia(s), Multiple Memories: Remembrance as Present Politics, Past Politics as Remembrance', *African Identities*, 14, 1 (2016): 348-369. For attempts at resurrecting the Somali nation-state, see Walter S. Clarke and Robert Gosende, 'Somalia: Can a Collapsed State Reconstitute itself?', in Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror* (Washington: Brooking Institution Press, 2000), 129-158.

up by the early 1970s because of the heightened political crisis in Somalia.[20] There are three major academic English studies about the subject of Somali nationalism. The first work, *Somali Nationalism*, was produced in 1963, when Somali nationalism was still at the peak. Written by Israeli international relations scholar Saadia Touval (an instantly recognisable name in Somali studies), this pioneering work explained the 'inception of Somali nationalism in the 1940's' and ends in the early 1960s.[21] A political scientist by training, Touval examined Somali nationalism at a time when Somalia was developing a post-colonial configuration. Although an excellent work of scholarship, *Somali Nationalism* focused largely on political conflicts within the post-war and post-colonial nationalist movements and individuals who led them. Since the publication of *Somali Nationalism*, no other book-length scholarly work has been dedicated to the theme of Somali nationalism.[22] The second work, 'The Origin and Essence of Somali Nationalism', by the Somali political scientist Hassan Omar Mahadallah, was researched during the height of the civil war in Somalia. Submitted in 1997 for Tulane University in the United States as a political science doctoral dissertation, this work examined the causes and nature of Somali nationalism in the post-war/post-colonial context.[23] Mahadallah was the first Somali scholar who extensively assessed the post-war politics of Somali nationalism. The third work, the Italian scholar Annalisa Urbano's doctoral dissertation in history and political science for the University of Edinburgh in Scotland in 2012, called 'Imagining the Nation, Crafting the State: The Politics of Nationalism and Decolonisation in Somalia (1940-60)', was completely dedicated to post-war Somali nationalism, especially the role of Somali political movements and their interaction with two different colonial regimes.[24] Although all these studies constitute an important contribution to Somali Studies, they offer no historical investigations beyond the post-war/post-colonial period. They focused on the patterns of nationalism, but not on the nationalist thoughts of the nationhood. However, the importance of historical analysis on influential political science scholarship in Somali studies was also characteristic in African studies.[25]

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[20] I. M. Lewis, 'Pan-Africanism and Pan-Somalism', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1, 2 (1963), 147-162; and Said S. Samatar, *Oral Poetry and Somali Nationalism*: *The Case of Mahammad 'Abdille Hasan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[21] Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism: International Politics and the Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 70.

[22] *Ibid*.

[23] Hassan Omar Mahadallah, 'The Origin and Essence of Somali Nationalism' (unpublished PhD dissertation, Tulane University, 1997), 7.

[24] Annalisa Urbano, 'Imagining the Nation, Crafting the State: The Politics of Nationalism and Decolonisation in Somalia (1940-60)' (unpublished PhD dissertation, the University of Edinburgh, 2012).

[25] Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*, new edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); David L. Laitin, *Nations, States, and Violence* (Oxford: Oxford

Touval was the most famous scholar of Somali nationalism. Leaving aside the historicity, he neither used oral sources, nor used the existing archival colonial sources, but he nicely elucidated the politics of Somali nationalism from 1943 up to 1963. Touval's term 'Somali Nationalism', itself a misnomer, is enough to suggest an insularity of Somali nationalism. The very term 'African nationalism' popularised in the late colonial period also obscured 'the mixed-up character of African political movements'.[26] However, to his credit, Touval had inspired a new generation of historians and political scientists who continued to explore Somali nationalism largely from the post-war perspective.[27] Keren Weitzsberg's recent work on Greater Somalia added an important contribution to Somali studies. Weitzsberg and Urbano have taken the study of Somali nationalism in more nuanced directions by emphasising the importance of historical analysis. However, Weitzsberg's otherwise pioneering and path-breaking study and Urbano's otherwise excellent study were occluded by reducing the historical scope.[28] Recent historical studies of African nationalisms have also rarely discussed the emergence of nationalisms beyond the post-war period. The main reason for all the preoccupation of the post-war period is the assumption that African nationalism emerged in that era. Elie Kedourie, the British historian of Africa and Asia, wrote that 'nationalism on this continent [Africa] appear[ed] only after World War II'.[29] This thesis argues that Somali nationalism emerged well before the post-war period. Tracing the role of various forces and movements in Somali society, the thesis explores Somali nationalism in the context of the era of the late nineteenth-century and mid-twentieth-century, an era in which Somalis confronted multiple colonial regimes. This is to take away from the preoccupation of World War II to extend to the process of nationalism to World War I and earlier. As there is no previous historical assessment of Somali nationalism within an early colonial framework in the

University Press, 2007); Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); and Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

[26] T. Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (London: Frederick Muller, 1956), 25. See also James C. Coleman, 'Nationalism in Tropical Africa', *American Political Science Review*, 48, 2 (1954), 404-426; and Martin L. Kilson, 'Nationalism and Social Classes in British West Africa', *The Journal of Politics*, 20, 2 (1958), 368-387.

[27] Cedric Barnes, 'The Somali Youth League, Ethiopian Somalis and the Greater Somalia Idea, *c*.1946-48', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 1, 2 (2007), 277-291; Abdi Sheik-Abdi, 'Somali Nationalism: Its Origins and Future', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 15, 4 (1977), 657-665; Jama Mohamed, 'Imperial Policies and Nationalism in The Decolonization of Somaliland, 1954-1960', *The English Historical Review*, 117, 474 (2002), 1177-1203; and Antonio M. Morone, *L'ultima Colonia: Come l'Italia è Tornata in Africa, 1950-1960* (Roma: Editori Laterza, 2011).

[28] Urbano, 'Imagining the Nation, Crafting the State', and Keren Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders: Greater Somalia and the Predicaments of Belonging in Kenya* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2017).

[29] Elie Kedourie, 'Introduction', in Elie Kedourie (ed.), *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (London: Weidenfeld, 1970), 1-152, 107.

'foundational moment of its genesis',[30] the thesis investigates some important issues that previous studies did not examine: How and why did Somali nationalism first emerge as an idea from the peripheral Somali border with Ethiopia (see Part I)? How and why did Somalis resort to insurgency to confront colonial regimes in the Somali Peninsula (see Part II)? Running through all these periods emerges the question of what was the nature of historical Somali identity: a civic, ethnic, linguistic or religious via cultural versus political and elite versus popular?

The thesis traces the emergence of Somali nationalism to the early formation of imperial regimes in the Horn of Africa. This extends the historical scope and connects the ignored nineteenth-century with twentieth-century to rehabilitate an understudied period, roughly 1890s to 1940s. By focusing on the period of 1887 to 1941, the thesis argues that Somali nationalism had its roots in the early years of imperial-building rather than during the late colonial period, and much of this has been hidden in the Somali literary-cultural tradition.[31] In so doing, the thesis has a dual purpose: to enrich the historical discussion and to contribute to the recent historical turn of the historiography of nationalism.[32] Historicising Somali nationalism and the context in which it emerged provides a unique view into the transformative potential for Somali actors and activities to change Somali society. The thesis presents theoretically-informed analyses of the historical processes that led to the evolution of Somali nationalism, bringing together various disciplines – from anthropology to history and political science, to better understand the intersection between traditional meaning and modern practice of nationalism. Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz suggested 'to explain processes in their proper historical context'.[33] Amitav Ghosh once said that history is like a river running in one direction, but that he is only interested in the fish swimming in all the different directions.[34] In *Historians on History*, John Tosh reminds us that the first aspiration of historical work 'is one to which nearly all historians would own: to discover what happened in the past and what it

[30] Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean*, 171.
[31] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Mogadishu, Somalia, April-June 2016.
[32] James R. Brennan, *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2012); Harcourt Fuller, *Building the Ghanaian Nation-State: Kwame Nkrumah's Symbolic Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Meredith Terretta, *Nation of Outlaws, State of Violence: Nationalism, Grassfields Tradition, and State Building in Cameroon* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2014); and Joseph L. Venosa, *Paths toward the Nation: Islam, Community, and Early Nationalist Mobilization in Eritrea, 1941-1961* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2014).
[33] Patrick Chabal & Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (James Currey, Oxford, 1999), xvii.
[34] Quoted in Mahmood Kooria and Sanne Ravensbergen, '"I Find it Very Claustrophic to be Stuck in a Small Place": An Interview with Engseng Ho', *Itinerario*, 42, 2 (2018), 151-163, 162.

was like to live in the past'.[35] Historians should not judge the past through the lenses of the present. Past has its own past and present has its own present. Even though historians are not actual judges, they could at least be judges in the holes of history. 'Without a healthy working through of the past', Jeffrey K. Olick argues, 'there can be no escape from its grip, which thrashes us about in a miasma of "repetition compulsion" and fragmented identity'.[36]

Putting a longer historical perspective then reveals that nationalism was not only a post-war phenomenon, but a broader historical trend that signals a new dimension to the deepening Somali national formation. One of the most important aspects of Somali intellectual history is the unexpected emergence of a set of nationalist concerns and concepts. During the late nineteenth-century, political unity had to occupy a central place when the Somali Peninsula was invaded by alien Christian rules. Yet, this important episode was often footnoted in the historical scholarship of Somali nationalism. Historians of the Horn of Africa have rarely examined nationalism through the optical prism of the early colonial period.[37] Casting Somali nationalism in a fresh historical light reveals that Somalis have not just been searching for nationhood, but also nation-statehood. While Somali nationalism made various discursive vicissitudes since the late nineteenth-century, historians have yet to fully address how the shifting meaning of nationalism changed local nationalist politics and how the competing forms of nationalism were contested since then.[38] The organisation, evolution and gradual growth of Somali nationalism entail and even oblige the *longue durée* approach – a longer historical process originated from the *Annales* school of French historiography – to offer an extended examination and lengthy-time perspective to understand the origins of Somali nationalism.[39] Only extended historical research would be useful to address this challenge in order to assess the history of Somali nationalism deeper or, more broadly, what Jean Marie Allman calls 'nation times'.[40] An in-depth historical analysis of Somali nationalism broadens the scope of

[35] John Tosh, *Historians on History* (Harlow: Pearson, 2000), 2.
[36] Jeffrey K. Olick, 'From Usable Pasts to the Return of the Repressed', *The Hedgehog Review*, Summer 2007, 21.
[37] Few exceptions include Heather J. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003).
[38] Barnes, 'The Somali Youth League', 277-291; and Annalisa Urbano, 'Between Occupation and Liberation: Italian Somalia under British Rule, 1941-1945', in Ashley Jackson, Yasmin Khan and Gajendra Singh (eds.), *An Imperial World at War: Aspects of the British Empire's war experience, 1939-1945* (London: Routledge, 2017), 30-45.
[39] Michael Harsgor, 'Total History: The Annales School', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 13, 1 (1978), 1-3; and Traian Stoianovich, *French Historical Method: The* Annales *Paradigm*, foreword by Fernand Braudel (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976).
[40] Jean Marie Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine: Asante Nationalism in an Emergent Ghana* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 47.

the growing historiography on nationalism in Africa, Asia, America, Europe and elsewhere.[41] As John Lonsdale noted: 'Historical processes are best understood over the longest possible spans of time'.[42]

The Islamic Dimension in Somali Nationalism

Scholars of Somali nationalism have generally viewed modern Somali nationalism through the lens of secular dimension, taking out the multifaceted aspects of nationalism.[43] Somali scholars have noted that what strengthened the cultural nationalism was Islamic faith, but they did not study beyond the emergence of the Dervish movement in 1877.[44] Of all other ideologies, Islam was the most important ideology in assisting the formation of Somali national consciousness.[45] As Touval, in an essay elsewhere, pointed out: 'There are strong cohesive ties – tradition of common ancestry, common language and cultural heritage, and Islamic religion' that bind Somalis, and form the basis of their national consciousness'.[46] While some scholars recognised that Somali nationalism was inextricably interlinked with Islam, the point was not examined in detail.[47] As Part I and Part II point out, any scholarship of Somali nationalism has to consider religious nationalism not as a challenge but as an alternative to secular nationalism, even though the post-war Somali politics discarded and rendered religious nationalism impractical.

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[41] Elie Kedourie (ed.), *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (London: Weidenfeld, 1970); and Lloyd Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America: Politics, Cultures, and Identities since 1775* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

[42] John Lonsdale, 'Anti-Colonial Nationalism and Patriotism in Sub-Saharan Africa', in John Breuilly (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (Online Publication, 2013), 1-13, 1.

[43] Touval, *Somali Nationalism*; Mahadallah, 'The Origin and Essence of Somali Nationalism'; and Urbano, 'Imagining the Nation, Crafting the State'.

[44] Samatar, *Oral Poetry and Somali Nationalism*; and *Abdi Sheik-Abdi, 'Somali Nationalism', 657-665*. Abdirahman Baadiyow adds an Islamic element as well as non-clan emphasis of it to argue that Somali nationalism was not only confined to the realisation of the internal Somali unity, but it also aimed to incorporate other Somali Peninsula in the Horn of Africa into one single nation-state. However, the Islamic element has not been given sufficient weight well beyond the Dervish period. *Abdurahman Abdullahi (Baadiyow), Making Sense of Somali History, Vol 1 (London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers, 2017); and* Abdurahman Abdullahi, 'Tribalism, Nationalism and Islam: The Crisis of the Political Loyalties in Somalia (MA Thesis, Islamic Institute, McGill University, 1992).

[45] Ali Jimale Ahmed, 'Of Poets and Sheikhs: Somali Literature', in Kenneth W. Harrow (ed), *Faces of Islam in African Literature* (James Curry, London, 1991), 79-89; and Ali Abdirahman Hersi, 'The Arab Factor in Somali History: The Origins and Development of Arab Enterprise and Cultural Influences in the Somali Peninsula' (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1977).

[46] Saadia Touval, 'The Somali Republic', *Current History*, 38, 271 (1964), 156-162, 156.

[47] David D. Laitin and Said S. Samatar, *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State* (London: Gower, 1987), 44-47; I. M. Lewis, *The Modern History of Somaliland: From Nation to State* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965), 16-17, 16-17; I. M. Lewis, 'Modern Political Movements in Somaliland, I', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 28, 3 (1958), 244-261; I. M. Lewis, 'Modern Political Movements in Somaliland, II', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 28, 4 (1958), 344-363; and Touval, *Somali Nationalism*, 84 & 104-105.

Cooper has acknowledged that religious forces became part of 'another piece to be integrated into the coming together of a nation'.[48] After all, as Anthony Smith has argued, nationalism could be an instrumental element in the formation of nations.[49] The scholarship on Somali nationalism attributed the evolution of national awakening to the emergence of secular nationalist movements during the post-World War II period.[50] The notion of nationalism was formulated in a way that well-represented for the secular élite class. Such a reading belies the complex interaction cultural, historical, political and religious factors that originally gave rise to national consciousness.[51]

Almost absent in the scholarship of Somali nationalism is the religious reception of Sufi nationalism as a counterpart and parallel agent of secular nationalism. In exploring the under-researched historical frontier between intellectual and religious history as shaped by critical dynamics of imperialism and colonialism, the thesis is unique not only in accommodating Sufi nationalism but also in integrating it with secular nationalism. Assessing how religious scholars and Somali scholars influenced the emergence of secular nationalism and various notions of nationalisms, the thesis offers a parallel perspective on the views of both Sufism and secularism in Somali nationalism. By bringing both voices together and by putting Sufi and secular nationalism into a single framework, the thesis provides a fresh outlook and a unique glimpse of Somali nationalism as well as Somali history. To combine all these factors, the thesis shows how the origins of Somali nationalism were the outcome of much deeper and older historical dynamics. In the Somali political spectrum, Islamic ideas have never existed without clashing with ideas of secularism propagated by religious nationalist thinkers and secular nationalist thinkers. This clash points to the ways in which secular nationalists later became paralleled or on par with Sufi nationalists, leading to a bifurcated nationalism in the form of Sufi nationalism and secular nationalism.[52] But one should forget not that Sufi nationalist forces preceded the

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[48] Frederick Cooper, 'The Dialectics of Decolonization: Nationalism and Labor Movements in Post-War French Africa', in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 406-435, 406.

[49] Anthony D. Smith, 'Gastronomy or Geology? The Role of Nationalism in the Reconstruction of Nations', *Nations and Nationalism*, 1, 1 (1995), 3-23.

[50] Barnes, 'The Somali Youth League'; Mahadallah, 'The Origin and Essence of Somali Nationalism'; Touval, *Somali Nationalism*; and Urbano, 'Imagining the Nation'.

[51] In his seminal work, *Imagined Communities*, Anderson leaves out altogether the bearing of the religious factor in the emergence of modern nationalism of the peripheral peoples. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. For a corrective critique, see Edward A Tiryakian, 'The Missing Religious Factor in Imagined Communities', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 55, 10 (2011), 1395-1414.

[52] The term bifurcated nationalism was inspired by Mahmood Mamdani's bifurcated state. Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 8, 16-28.

secular nationalist forces (see Part I). Although they had a larger powerbase as well as social and spiritual capital, Sufi nationalist forces possessed less power and resources than their fellow secular nationalist forces.[53] By analysing ideas and activities of the religious and secular Somali nationalists, the thesis offers an understanding of the thin complicated line between imperialism and colonialism and their interaction with nationalism.

'Go Global': Globalising Somali Nationalism

Somalia has been absent in the broader historiographies of African studies and Asian studies, because it was assumed as unique. The field of Somali studies has, in effect, been marginal to African studies and Arab studies, much more so to global studies (this was also the case for Maghrib studies in North Africa).[54] Although Somali nationalism, to some, may seem a matter of only local interest, in truth it has wider implications for African studies, Arab studies and Asian studies. The emergence of Somali nationalism has often been understood as an episode of local history, but not as part of regional and global history. The history of Somali nationalism should also be placed in comparative perspectives in a wider trans-national context to make the thesis relevant to not only the Horn of Africa, but also to other parts of Africa, Asia and elsewhere. The comparisons illuminate one historical case by relating it another.[55] Therefore, the thesis intends to accomplish more than simple comparisons. In a situation where Somali history is considered a narrow subject, remote from Global History, broad comparisons are all too important and deepen our understanding. The Somali case also invites comparisons within the Islamic world. Whether differences are more significant than similarities are not important. Rather, the useful thing is the relevance of similar conjectures and conjunctions to enrich the analysis. But by placing the history of Somali nationalism with a wider context, the thesis draws comparisons from other global experiences to challenge the view of the Somali nationalism as unique and exceptional. If all other nationalisms are common, why is only Somali nationalism exceptional? By inserting Somali studies into African studies and Arab studies, the thesis reveals how Somali nationalism had encountered and engaged with other nationalists in Africa, Arabia and Asia.

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[53] For the élite competition between Sufi and secular nationalists in Sudan, see Giorgio Musso, 'The Making of a Fragmented Nation: Sufi Turuq and Sudan's Decolonization', *Oriente Moderno*, 97, 1 (2017), 133-153.

[54] See, for example, Edmund Burke, 'Theorizing the histories of colonialism and nationalism in the Arab Maghrib', in Ali Abdullatif Ahmida (ed.), *Beyond Colonialism and Nationalism in the Maghrib: History, Culture and Politics* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 17-34.

[55] John A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 3.

Given the greater tendency of Somali people to take a worldly perspective on their local domestic politics, it is intriguing to note how scholars of Somali nationalism have constrained the Somali perspective to remain locally.[56] Somali society was not isolated from the outside discourses as some scholars had previously suggested. Previous historical studies have failed to examine the regional, much less examine global, aspects of Somali nationalism. Somali scholars have lately begun engaging with African studies; some historians of Somali society have exceptionally introduced their studies by discussing the emerging global issues of African history without comparing and contrasting their studies with those global dynamics.[57] By drawing parallels to and from Africa, Arabia, Asia and elsewhere, the thesis advances Somalia in African studies but also in Arab studies. To globalise Somali history (and Somali studies in general), the thesis shifts dynamics from local to a global dimension to pioneer a more global perspective of Somali nationalism by interlocking numerous local and external individuals and institutions that shaped the emergence of Somali nationalism. This is again to stress the place of Somali history in the Global History, as part of 'thinking from the south' to the east, north and west to emphasise the globality of not just Somali nationalism but other nationalisms everywhere. Only of late have anthropologists and historians begun to make scholarship of African nationalism global.[58] These new trends in a 'global turn' in African studies have not yet affected the historiography of Somali studies. By combining a history of diplomacy, a history of ideas and a history of politics, the thesis is not only concerned with historical trends, but also touches on a range of conceptual and theoretical aspects of Somali nationalism, as epitomised by the *uluma* activities and ideas (see Part1) and the Dervish movement (Part II). When read together, the two Parts of the thesis pose a challenge to historians of the entanglement between nationalism and other related concepts.

Methodological Approaches and Sources

Using an interdisciplinary approach and different historical research methodologies, the thesis combines methodologies drawn from various fields in a manner that is as deepening as it is

[56] Touval, *Somali Nationalism*, 85.
[57] Robert L. Hess, *Italian Colonialism in Somalia* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966); and Urbano, 'Imagining the Nation, Crafting the State', 58.
[58] Victoria Bernal, 'Eritrea Goes Global: Reflections on Nationalism in a Transnational Era', *Cultural Anthropology*, 19, 1 (2004), 3-25; and Meredith Terretta, 'Cameroonian Nationalists Go Global: From Forest 'Maquis' to a Pan-African Accra', *The Journal of African History*, 51, 2 (2010), 189-212.

enriching. The thesis employs a range of tools with a wide array of material in multiple languages. Using a range of religious and secular sources ensures balance and clarity to the religious aims and secular objectives of Somali nationalists. The primary sources of the thesis essentially draw from archival and oral evidence. The thesis has been strongly shaped and sharpened by a sustained and systematic exploration of archival fieldwork for more than ten years. Navigating new material from hitherto unused and heretofore unexplored archival and untapped oral sources, the thesis utilises the sources in four languages: Arabic, English, Italian and Somali. The thesis unearths unknown colonial sources long thought extant or non-existent in the study of Somali history. Since the state collapse, historians have largely been overlooked the history of Somali society, not just because the contemporary analysis of the crisis proved more relevant, but because it has become difficult for scholars to conduct fieldwork in Somalia.[59] One of the disastrous legacies of the civil war in Somalia was the devastation of the Somali National Archives in January 1991 when all public institutions were either damaged or destroyed. Thus, other alternative archives used in this thesis were Kaydka Radio Muqdisho (Radio Mogadishu Archive), Mogadishu, Somalia; Kenya National Archives and Documentation Services (KNADS) in Nairobi, Kenya; the National Archives and Library of Ethiopia (NALE) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS) in Rome, Italy; Archivio Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito (AUSSME), in Rome, Italy; the Records of the Africa Bureau of the Bodleian Libraries in Oxford, the UK; the India Office Records of the British Library in London, the UK; the Archives and Special Collection of the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, the UK; and the United Kingdom National Archives (UKNA), both in the Colonial Office (CO) and in Foreign Office (FO), in London, the UK. All these archives and libraries hold regular reports of colonial armies and intelligence agencies, which were salient to situate Somalis and non-Somalis' perspectives, perceptions and beliefs from the subaltern viewpoint.[60] A critical but careful

[59] The lack of ground fieldwork in Somalia is featured in the historical work of Scott S. Reese, *Renewers of the Age: Holy Men and Social Discourse in Colonial Benaadir* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Urbano, 'Imagining the Nation, Crafting the State'; and Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*.

[60] The term Subaltern studies was 'culled from the writings of Antonio Gramsci, a Marxist oriented thinker' and 'the greatest thing African studies and history can gain from the subaltern studies is its notion of sources and the methodology of extracting them. The subaltern studies group were innovative in terms of the methodology used. Because there were no ready archives for the kind of research they set out to do[,] they used the official archival repositories in such a way that the consciousness and voice of the Indian peasant could actually be read and extracted'. Sylvester Gundona, 'Reflections on Post-Colonial African Historiography', in Toyin Falola, Maurice Amutabi and Sylvester Gundona (eds.), *Africa After Fifty Years: Retrospections and Reflections* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 2013), 3-20, 18-19.

reading of the colonial record can help to correct some misleading historical assumptions of Somali nationalism found in the existing literature.

Rather than privileging archival accounts, the thesis examines these archival sources alongside oral sources to illuminate colonial regimes both from below and above. Archival sources alone do not capture a nuanced history of Somali nationalism. The constraints, as well as contractions of the colonial and post-colonial archives, have been noted by a considerable number of scholars. Achille Mbembe argues that the archive has its limits to preserve the memory and hold the past.[61] To avoid the influences of the colonial archives, as was characterised by other studies, the thesis goes beyond 'the text'.[62] Karin Barber argues that, despite how people think of 'text' as exclusively 'written words', writing per se is not what confers textuality.[63] Researching a complex historical conundrum like Somali nationalism requires more than archival textures to ensure a triangulation of research material. The thesis utilises a variety of oral sources to evaluate Somali nationalism. The use of oral sources detaches us from the heavy dependence on the colonial archives. Cultural historians, such as Carlo Ginzburg, have noted the one-sidedness and arbitrary nature of using one single source.[64] As long as there are no any ample indigenous written recorded sources comparable to archival written sources, oral sources are the only alternative sources that have the potential to complement, corroborate, counter and criticise the colonial archive. However, archive(ity) and orality conflict and need for reconciliation; what was stored in the archives is often varied from elastic oral sources narrated from the point of view of the natives. If the archival sources largely represented the position of the colonial state, the oral sources mainly represented the position of the colonial society. Although the archival and oral sources often do not easily adjust one to the other in perspective, representing multiple views and voices, they are, admittedly, 'equal but distinct forms of recording the past'.[65] Colonial narratives and colonised narratives 'have both served to obscure,

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[61] Achille Mbembe, 'The Power of the Archive and its Limits', in Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, Michèle Pickover, Graeme Reid, Jane Taylor, Razia Saleh (ed.), *Refiguring the Archive* (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 19-26.

[62] For various uses of going beyond the text, see Rupert Cox, Andrew Irving and Christopher Wright (eds.), *Beyond text? Critical Practices and Sensory Anthropology* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016); and Dennis C. Grube, 'Civil Servants, Political History, and the Interpretation of Traditions', *The Journal of African History*, 60, 1 (2017), 173-196.

[63] Karin Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons, and Publics: Oral and Written Culture in Africa and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1.

[64] Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller*, translated by (Baltimore. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980). First published in Italian as *Il formaggio e I vermi* in 1976, this work is not only a recommended but compulsory reading for many cultural history courses.

[65] Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 52.

erase, or silence other perspectives, narratives and or voices'.[66] It is therefore imperative to recover such erasures, obscureness and silences to reconstruct history.[67] The thesis thus discovers a nuanced hidden picture of Somali nationalism derived from oral testimonies and archival works circulated in Arabic, Italian and Somali which have not been translated into English or any other language. The combination of archival and oral material helps to reconstruct the history of the emergence of Somali nationalism.

There are oral sources that could somewhat be deployed as alternative sources which can make use when exploring early Somali history. The use of oral sources in the field of African history was due to the methodological innovation of Jan Vansina.[68] Oral history – whether poetry or personal histories – consists of oral tradition and oral testimony, which intrinsically are useful for understanding the internal façades of any dynamics.[69] The distinguished American historian Lee Cassanelli pointed out that 'oral history is an excellent place to search for massive changes' in Somali society.[70] Somali oral poetry is an excellent source to evaluate 'changes in historical consciousness' as well as events that shaped the Somalis' very existence.[71] A careful and critical historical investigation requires a variety of other oral sources, like what Berber calls 'verbal text'.[72] By collecting poetry in both oral and written form, the thesis utilises poetry from the memories of poets who privately recorded their poems or the poems of other poets. 'Oratory and the ability to compose poetry', the Welsh-Somali scholar Anita Suleiman (also Anita Adam) explained, 'are much valued skills in Somali society, and those who have been significant in Somali history have usually possessed these qualifications'.[73] As Vansina also observed: 'It is not surprising then that different renderings of Somali or Rwandese dynastic

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[66] Joel S. Kahn, *Other Malays: Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in the Modern Malay World* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2006), xv.
[67] Kahn, *Other Malays*, xii. Harry F. Wolcott warns himself what would happen when one merely quotes from those who concur with him on certain issues, cautioning himself thus: 'On important points or issues, I have endeavoured to include references to the work of others, by no means restricting citations only to those who agree with me'. Harry F. Wolcott, *Ethnography: A Way of Seeing* (Lanham: Alta Mira Press, 2008), 2.
[68] The importance of oral sources among societies and in places where written sources are limited (or almost non-existent) is explained in Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1985); and Jan Vansina, *Living with Africa* (Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 1994). For a critical analysis of oral data, see White, *Speaking with Vampires*.
[69] Martin A. Klein, 'Studying the History of Those Who Would Rather Forget: Oral History and the Experience of Slavery', *History in Africa*, 16 (1989), 209-217; and Marie Rodet, 'Listening to the History of Those Who Don't Forget', *History in Africa*, 40 (2013), 27-29.
[70] Lee Cassanelli, 'The Partition of Knowledge in Somali Studies: Reflections on Somalia's Fragmented Intellectual Heritage', *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* 9 (2009), 4-17, 12.
[71] *Ibid*.
[72] Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts*, 200.
[73] Anita Suleiman, *Somali People of the Horn of Africa* (London: Haan, 1991), 4.

poetry differ very little from each other'.[74] The observation – that Somali society yields prominence to poetry – makes examining Somali poems essential to providing fresh perspectives. Poetry is thus an important component in this thesis for accumulating primary data and the poems used in this thesis offer unparalleled insights into the contested and conflicted ways of Somali nationhood trajectories. If we consider Somali culture and social life, poetry is an important medium of communication if utilised with a critical approach.[75] Anyone seeking to examine and explore the Somali past cannot ignore employing poems to cull from hints both for comparison and for a conclusion. Even though filled with emotions and exaggerations to occurrences, oral poems provide insights and arguments – for instance, how people saw important events as well as reacted and responded to it. Somali poems about war and conflict are beset with excitements and any historian should take care of when using as a historical source. The thesis travels a bit further by treating poems as both a historical document and an evidentiary material to analyse historical events that shaped the Somali Peninsula. Weitzberg has highlighted that 'these poems and songs also provide very important insights into idioms, metaphors, and discursive practices that cannot be easily grasped through the archives alone'.[76] Scholars of Somali poetry have amply demonstrated the socio-political utility of oral Somali poetry.[77] Proverbs and poetry were gathered to explain and illuminate historical trajectories. As Jacques Le Goff argued: 'When poetry is identified with memory, this makes the latter a kind of knowledge and even of wisdom, of *sophia*'.[78] Historically oral people who used to document their historical events in poetry rather than in prose, the Somalis do not have the culture of literacy of recording history. As a result, there are no much primary sources before colonialism produced by Somalis other than fragmentary and extant *qasiidooyin* (religious poems) authored by great sheikhs, such as Sheikh Aweys Mohamed Al-Muhyiddiin

[74] Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, 15.
[75] For penetrating studies on the Somali oral tradition and poetry, see Ali Jimale Ahmed and Taddesse Adera, *The Road Less Travelled: Reflections on the Literatures of the Horn of Africa* (Trenton, N.J.: The Red Sea Press, 2008); B. W. Andrzejewski and I. M. Lewis, *Somali Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964); and John W. Johnson, 'Orality, Literacy and Somali Oral Poetry', *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 18, 1 (2006), 119-136.
[76] Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*, 17.
[77] Reese, *Renewers of the Age*, 23. See also B. W. Andrzejewski, 'Developments in the Study of Somali Poetry, 1981-1986', *Northeast African Studies*, 10, 2/3 (1988), 1-13; and Johnson, John W. (2006) 'Orality, Literacy and Somali Oral Poetry', *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 18 (1), 119-136.
[78] Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 64. Emphasis original.

Al-Barawi.[79] Some efforts were also made to consult unexplored indigenous contemporaneous Somali sources written by Somalis themselves.[80]

From the reflections and revelations of various Somalis, the thesis explores the history of Somali nationalism as it was from the public Somali point of view, not how it was framed through nationalistic or colonial viewpoint. As Muhammad Khan has reminded us: 'Striking a balance between objectivity and subjectivity in relation to the past is never an easy task'.[81] One of the important methods of bringing balance perspectives is to collect oral histories. The thesis achieves to include extensive use of oral interview testimonies to provide a Somali point of view of Somali nationalism. The Somali side of the stories has always been omitted in previous scholarship on Somali nationalism. Seán Street has suggested that 'Somali history and culture are for the most part carried in the memories of individuals, and the concept of physical storage of the past is largely alien'.[82] Rather than conducting a structured methodology in interviewing interviewees, the thesis draws upon a certain amount of semi-structured interviews with Somali elders from what Julie MacArthur calls 'the last colonial generation'.[83] The interviewees were selected based on their knowledge of the imperial-building, colonial-building and nation-building processes by asking exploratory questions on specific dates, occasions and events that became turning points.[84] All interviews were conducted in the Somali language to enable interviewees to better express themselves.[85] Thus, as a Somali, I did not encounter the

[79] See, for example, Shaykh 'Abdullahi b. Mu'allim Yusuf al-Qutbi, *al-Majmu'a al-Mubaraka al-Mushtila 'ala kutub khamsa* (Cairo: Matba'at al-Mashhad al-Husayni, c. 1919); Al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman bin Shaykh 'Umar, *Jala' al-'aynayn fi manaqib Al-Shaykhayn, Al-Shaykh Al-Waliyyi Hajji Uways Al-Qadiri, Wa-Al-Shaykh Al-Kamil Abd Al-Rahman al-Zayla'i* (Cairo: Matba'at al-Mashhad al-Husayni, 1954); Al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Umar, *Jawhar Al-Nafis fi Khawass al-Shaykh Uways* (Cairo: Matba'at al-Mashhad al-Husayni, 1964); and Shaykh 'Abd Al-Rahman Al-Zayla'i, *Al-Majmu'a Al-Mushtamila* (Djibouti: al-Maktaba al-Islamiyya, 1972).

[80] Mohamed Haji Mukhtar, 'Arabic Sources on Somalia', *History in Africa*, 14, 1 (1987), 141-172; B. W. Andrzejewski and I. M. Lewis, R. S. O'Fahey, 'New Arabic Documents from Somalia', *Sudanic Africa: A Journal of Historical Sources*, 5 (1994), 39-56; and M. H. I. Galaal, 'Arabic Script for Somali', *The Islamic Quarterly*, I, 2 (July 1954), 114-118.

[81] Muhammad Khan, 'Islamic Thought in 20th century Bosnia and Herzegovina', *The Muslim News*, 26 September 2014. And, as Jill Rosenthal notes, when utilising oral interviews, 'it is necessary to account for possible biases in personal recollections, particularly as many memories may have been influenced by nostalgia'. Jill Rosenthal, 'From "Migrants" to "Refugees": Identity, Aid, and Decolonization in Ngara District, Tanzania', *The Journal of African History*, 56, 2 (2015), 261-279, 269.

[82] Seán Street, *The Memory of Sound: Preserving the Sonic Past* (London: Routledge, 2015), 124.

[83] Julie MacArthur, *Cartography and the Political Imagination: Mapping Community in Colonial Kenya* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2016), 24.

[84] After outlining my research project and explaining my aims and interests, I sought interviewees' consent to record an interview starting with their personal histories, memories and views on the nation-building process. I should mention that I was successfully obtained my application for Research Ethical Approval Letter (CUREC 1A). Following their consent, I complied with the guidelines of the University of Oxford to protect the anonymity of the interviewees when asked. I designed my interview to ensure my questions were culturally appropriate.

[85] On 21 October 1972, the military regime in Somalia forcefully officiated the Latin script as the standard written Somali. The Latin script was chosen in place of Arabic. See, for example, Somali Democratic Republic, *National*

languages and colour barriers that most researchers encounter in the field.[86] During focus group historical discussions, some elders quickly identified my Mogadishu accent in the Somali language, although others could not. They eagerly assessed my pronunciations of certain Somali words to find out from where in Somalia I hailed. It is often difficult in Somali settings for one to welcome or host without revealing his or her clan identity for the sole purpose of trust-building. At one interview setting, the elders tried to figure out about my clan but could not recognise from my dialect. When I told them, they began to enumerate the list of government officers from my clan who visited them before the state collapse. They also pointed out to me one young man whose father was from my clan while his mother was from theirs. The young man still lived with them, but he told me his father died during the civil war. One crucial observation in the field is that the oral history all elders provided during the days when they were tense was different from the oral history they provided during the days they were not. This raises the question of how important the emotional and mental state of the informants is to the historical discussion. Their individual or shared regrets and lamentations provide perfect lenses through which to contextualise and illustrate how the nation preceded the state and why nationalism emerged as an ideology in the first place. The venue of historical discussion was commonly a male-dominated domain, so women interviewed in this thesis was small in comparison with male interviewees. The nature of masculinity in Somali nationalism became more visible as nationalism took new turns at the dawn of the twentieth-century. As Cassanelli has contended: 'The historian who seeks to reconstruct larger patterns of historical change must find a unit of analysis that takes into account both the data provided by tradition and the setting in which the events described took place'.[87]

To collect necessary oral data for the thesis, I spent extensive research period in Somalia (including the breakaway state of Somaliland), Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Italy.[88] Multi-sited historiography was important for understanding complex issues that demanded research

Campaigns 1971-1972 (A Record of Activities) (Mogadishu: Ministry of Information & National Guidance, October 1972); and Hussein M. Adam, 'Language and Cultural Development in Somalia', The Frantz Fanon Research and Development Center, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, February 2nd to 5th 1978.

[86] See, for example, Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*, 15.

[87] Lee V. Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society: Reconstructing the History of a Pastoral People, 1600-1900* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 39.

[88] If Donald Trump did permit me to enter into the U.S. (as I had done before in the summer of 2008), I planned to stay four weeks with my cousin in Washington D.C. to conduct oral research with Somali elders around the metropolitan area and simultaneously carry out archival research at the U.S. State Department archives and the Library of Congress in Washington.

in multiple sites.[89] The most difficult site for fieldwork was war-torn Mogadishu. From a security perspective, the challenges of fieldwork research in contemporary Somalia are undoubtedly understandable. Until 2013, when the hashtag of the Mogadishu 'rising' emerged, it has been unthinkable for expatriate researchers due to the current armed conflict to venture into Mogadishu for research purposes.[90] Still (southern) Somalia remains insecure and unpredictable to conduct a field research work as difficult excavating archives and gathering oral sources.[91] Since Mogadishu has not fully emerged out of the ruins of the civil war, doing fieldwork research in the war-torn city requires care and caution. For the first time in thirteen years, I travelled to the city unexpectedly in the summer of 2015 to lead the funeral prayer of my father who passed away suddenly in May of that year. Despite regular suicide attacks on the public and private properties, I stayed in a hotel and later at a house a few blocks away from the presidential palace and Radio Mogadishu. In the second trip to Somalia (including Somaliland in the North) in the spring and the summer of 2016, I discovered in the relatively peaceful town of Hargeysa uncatalogued rare documents of Somalia assumed to be lost during the war, such as bank and budget reports. I returned to Mogadishu and Hargeysa in 2017, 2018 and 2019. In Somalia, the historian does not confront the bureaucratic and professional problems often encountered by other historians of Africa. As in neighbouring Ethiopia and elsewhere in Africa, for example, the current government in Somalia is too weak to compel researchers to follow the 'official line' and sanction one single 'official' history.[92] In the Somali context, I have gained extensive experience researching on many different aspects. Even when a risk-assessment session later concluded that it was unsafe for me to travel to Mogadishu, I continued my research study from a distance by using IMO, WhatsApp, Skype and Viber to conduct interviews. Combining all these oral sources provided fresh perspectives and insights that led to unique empirical, historical and theoretical contribution.

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[89] The term multi-sited historiography is inspired by George E. Marcus, George E. Marcus, 'Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24 (1995), 95-117, 99.

[90] Laura Hammond, 'Somalia Rising: Things Are Starting to Change for the World's Longest Failed State', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 7, 1 (2013), 183-193; and Mohamed Haji Ingiriis, 'How Somalia Works: Mimicry and the Making of Mohamed Siad Barre's Regime in Mogadishu', *Africa Today*, 63, 1 (2016), 57-83.

[91] The fieldwork was particularly a challenge for security reasons, when I was on the ground in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. *Human Rights Watch*, 'Press Release: 'Somali Journalist Seriously Wounded by Car Bomb – Country's New Leadership Should Ensure Credible Investigation', 13 March 2016; and Mohamed Haji Ingiriis, 'Being and Becoming a State: The Statebuilding and Peacebuilding Conversations in Southern Somalia and Somaliland', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 39, 1 (2020), 1-33.

[92] Claire H. Griffiths, 'Contesting Historical Divides in Francophone Africa: Post-Slavery? Post-Imperial? Post-Colonial?', in Claire H. Griffiths (ed.), *Contesting Historical Divides in French-Speaking Africa* (Chester, UK: University of Chester Press, 2013), 1-21; and M. Anne Pitcher, 'Forgetting from Above and Memory from Below: Strategies of Legitimation and Struggle in Postsocialist Mozambique', *Africa* 76, 1 (2006), 88-112.

PART I

RATIONAL NATIONALISM

'When you see the Amhara, the European is a *Haji*', 1887-1889

Introduction

> 'If we look at Europe – which today is the ideal to look up to in this connection – we will find no nation willing to be submerged in another. The English want to remain English, the French to remain French, the Germans do not want to anything but German, the Italians anything but Italian, the Russians bend all efforts to remain Russian, and so on.[93]

The Somali people, whose social structure was anchored on a clan genealogical system, found the notion of nationalism in front of their feet as a result of imperial invasion in 1887. For them, the late nineteenth-century was a 'transitional era of Somali history' that was turned into a 'lamentable period'.[94] Faced with two simultaneous regional and international imperialisms (Ethiopian and European), the Somalis sought to maintain themselves as 'Somali' in the *fin de siècle* Horn of Africa.[95] The dangers of the twin forces of imperialism and colonialism meant, as noted by the African-American black nationalist Martin Delany, that 'the claims of no people are respected by any nation until they are presented in a national capacity'.[96] The roots of modern Somali nationalism arose from the intricately interconnected phenomena of imperialism and colonialism. Just as the imposition of imperialism on the colonised world increased by the end of the 1880s, lobbyist movements in Western Europe emerged to advocate and argue that 'national survival required imperial expansion'.[97] Given the 'age of high imperialism[s]' aimed at expanding imperial regimes and establishing colonies, emerging anti-imperial activities strongly influenced global nationalisms.[98] This was evident in the Horn as

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[93] Shakib Arslan, 'Islam and Nationalism', in Elie Kedourie (ed.), *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (London: Weidenfeld, 1970), 331-337, 331.

[94] Lee V. Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society: Reconstructing the History of a Pastoral People, 1600-1900* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 255; and *Keren Weitzberg, We Do Not Have Borders: Greater Somalia and the Predicaments of Belonging in Kenya (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2017), 31.*

[95] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Addis Ababa, 22-27 March 2016; and Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Dirirdhabe (Dire Dawa), a chartered town in eastern Ethiopia, 28-30 March 2016.

[96] Martin R. Delany, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States, Politically Considered* (New York: Arno, 1852), 210.

[97] John Darwin, 'Nationalism and Imperialism, c.1880-1940', in John Breuilly (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (Online Publication, 2013), 1-13, 2-8.

[98] Cemil Aydin, 'Pan-Nationalism of Pan-Islamic, Pan-Asian, and Pan-African Thought', in John Breuilly (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (Online Publication, 2013), 1-16, 6. While colonialism was the process over which a nation exercised its authority over peripheral people, imperialism was the process over which

early as the middle of the nineteenth-century when, according to visiting British intelligence agent Lieutenant Charles Cruttenden, a Somali clan chief told him, '[y]ou are the kings of this world in wisdom … [a]nd what are we in comparison! Thank heaven, our world is to come! [*sic*]'.[99]

The history of how imperial powers managed to partition (and penetrate deep into) the Somali Peninsula is a topic frequently discussed in academic and public discourses. The politics of the colonial partition of Somali society has attracted quite a few scholarly works and there is no uniform historical account.[100] Having invaded and entered from five fronts, the Ethiopian and European imperialists carved up the Somali Peninsula into five colonial territories. The first to arrive were the French who settled in the northwest of the Somali Peninsula in 1883 and named it *Côte Française des Somalis* (French Somali Coast or French Somaliland, present-day Djibouti). Next, the British took the northern Somali Peninsula in 1884 and created British Somaliland. Third, the Italians arrived in southern Somali Peninsula in 1885 and named their region *Somalia Italiana* (Italian Somaliland). Fourth, the Ethiopians arrived in the western Somali Peninsula in 1887 and named it the 'Ogaden' after one of the largest clans there, but this naming proved controversial because the name reinforced inter-clan disputes among Somalis. Nearly thirty Somali clans inhabited the Somali region in Ethiopia, so conferring the name of one clan 'Ogaadeen' to the whole region was resented by other clans.[101] Fifth and finally, the British arrived in the deep southwest of the Somali Peninsula in 1890 and formed the Northern Frontier District (NFD) which initially included Jubaland under the rubric of the

a nation extended its authority over peripheral people. According to the Chinese philosopher and politician Sun Yat-sen, imperialism was a 'policy of aggression upon other countries by means of political force'. Sun Yat-sen, 'The Principle of Nationalism', in Elie Kedourie (ed.), *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (London: Weidenfeld, 1970), 304-317, 305.

[99] The India Office Records, 'Cruttenden, C J Memoir on the Western or Edoor tribes inhabiting the Somali coast of NE Africa; with the southern branches of the family of Darrood, resident on the banks of the...', British Library, IOR/V/27/69/28: 1848; and C. J. Cruttenden, 'Memoir on the Western or Edoor Tribes, Inhabiting the Somali Coast of N.-E. Africa, with the Southern Branches of the Family of Darrood, Resident on the Banks of the Webbe Shabeyli, Commonly Called the River Webbe', *Journal of The Royal Geographical Society of London*, 19 (1849), 49-76, 71. For a related account, see The India Office Records, 'File 1017 Aden: Lt Cruttenden's Memoir of the Somali tribes', British Library, IOR/R/20/E/32, Item 3: Jul 1848-Sep 1848.

[100] For the colonial partition of the Somali Peninsula, see John Drysdale, *The Somali Dispute* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964); Abdisalam Issa-Salwe, *The Collapse of the Somali State: The Impact of the Colonial Legacy* (London: Haan, 1996); and Christian Vigner, 'The Colonial Dismemberment of Somalia', Hussein M. Adam (ed.), *Somalia and the World: Proceedings of the International Symposium held in Mogadishu, October 15-21, 1979* (Mogadishu: State Printing Press, 1980), 330-351.

[101] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 22-27 March 2016; and Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Dirirdhabe (Dire Dawa), a chartered town in eastern Ethiopia, 28-30 March 2016.

British East African Colony of Kenya.[102] The British wanted to secure their grip on the Somali coast and keep the French at bay, while the French had the alternate aim of ruling the Red Sea Coast. The Italians though hoped to conquer and create a colony in Ethiopia. The Italian imperial plan was proved at the Battle of Adwa in 1896, when Italy had attempted to forcefully impose a protectorate over Ethiopia. Italy was unexpectedly defeated in what 'entirely changed the aspect of [world] affairs'.[103] The Adwa defeat was glorified in global historiographies, with some describing it as 'one of the great military victories of all time'.[104] The discrepancies in how the Ethiopians treated the three European colonial powers were directly connected to how the Ethiopians understood the colonial imperial structure, but the Somalis were caught between a rock and a hard place.

In her perceptive study on colonial Kenya, Julie MacArthur (referring to Gideon Were) aptly termed the coming of colonialism as 'the age of confrontation'.[105] In the late nineteenth-century, anti-colonial nationalistic activities commonly sprang up as a strategy of resistance against colonisers in many colonised peoples. 'Nationalism', Jürgen Osterhammel persuasively pointed out, 'contained elements of an ideology of resistance: resistance against imperial rulers and over-mighty neighbours'.[106] Elie Kedourie also argued that 'nationalism in Asia and Africa is… intimately connected with the existence of European imperialism and colonialism'.[107] In comparing and contrasting with these positions, the intellectual history of modern Somali nationalism was shaped by the arrival of European and Ethiopian imperialism. While nationalism elsewhere in the Horn first evolved as a challenge to the formation of European imperial rules, the Somali anti-colonial nationalism was broad and plural compared with other African anti-colonial nationalist struggles, because it first began as a reaction against Ethiopian

[102] On French Somaliland, see Roger Joint-Daguenet, *Histoire Moderne des Somalis: Les Gaulois de la Corne de L'Afrique* (Paris: L'Hartmattan, 1994); and Henri Le Pointe, *La Colonisation Française au Pays des Somalis (Paris: Librairie Jouve et Cie, 1914); on* British Somaliland, see Charles Geshekter, 'British Imperialism in the Horn of Africa and the Somali Response 1884-99' (unpublished PhD dissertation, the University of California at Los Angeles, 1972); on Italian Somaliland, see Robert L. Hess, *Italian Colonialism in Somalia* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966); and on the Somali region in Kenya, see *Hannah Whittaker, Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Kenya: A Social History of the Shifta Conflict, c. 1963-1968 (Leiden: Brill, 2014).*

[103] Count Gleichen, *With the Mission to Menelik 1897* (London: Edward Arnold, 1898), 3.

[104] Raymond Jones, *The Battle of Adwa: African Victory in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 233.

[105] Julie MacArthur, *Cartography and the Political Imagination: Mapping Community in Colonial Kenya* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2016), 49.

[106] Jürgen Osterhammel, 'Nationalism and Globalization', in John Breuilly (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford: University Press, 2013), 694-712, 705.

[107] Elie Kedourie, 'Introduction', in Elie Kedourie (ed.), *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (London: Weidenfeld, 1970), 1-152, 1, 8 & 22.

imperialism rather than European imperialism.[108] Anti-imperial Somali nationalism initially shrugged with the imposition of British imperialism but resisted the emergence of Ethiopian imperialism, even when the former imposed colonial rule over the Somalis. This was not unusual as many colonised elites in the British Empire (both in Africa and the Caribbean) came to work alongside British imperialism as a relatively preferable system in which they thought they could advance the interests of their communities.[109] The Somali *uluma* (religious scholar-jurists) began to use Islam as a tool of political mobilisation against external aggression. The *uluma* adopted Sufi ideas as a way to resist imperialism, as other Muslim religious scholars did in other parts of the Muslim world.[110]

This Part I is concerned with how the Somali *uluma* of the late nineteenth-century interacted with Ethiopian and British imperialists. It discovers the unexplored expansion of the Ethiopian Empire into the Somali Peninsula, particularly how Ethiopia extended its imperial rule to the Somali borderlands and how the Ethiopian imperial expansionist activities forced the *uluma* to forge a sense of Somali national identity. By establishing the largely undocumented history of Somali-Ethiopian encounter, the Part I challenges academic and popular discourses of European imperialism and colonialism as the only instigator of nationalism in Africa. It argues that modern Somali nationalism first arose not out of an attempt by the *uluma* to develop an anti-European colonial agenda but as a strong reaction against the imposition of Ethiopian imperial rule. The *uluma* were part and parcel of the three principal leading groups in Somali society, with the other two being clan chiefs and poets. As public intellectuals, the *uluma* had a special position to illuminate the Somali public about the emergence of the infidel, alien regimes.[111] Like elsewhere in colonial Muslim Africa, the *uluma* responded to the arrival of five colonial powers selectively by clarifying to the Somali people that European powers were less threatening than their immediate Ethiopian neighbours. By offering a new conceptualisation of imperialism, the Part I examines the extent to which imperialism, colonialism and nationalism intersected within Somali society, showing how the *uluma*

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[108] Heather J. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
[109] David Killingray, '"A Good West Indian, A Good African, and, in short, A Good Britisher": Black and British in a Colour-Conscious Empire, 1760-1950', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 36, 3 (2008), 363-381; and Kennetta Hammond Perry, *London is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship, and the Politics of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[110] On the Arabian Peninsula, for instance, see Julia Ann Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint: Muslim Notables, Populist Protest, Colonial Encounters* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
[111] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016; and Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, July-August 2016.

recommended using this interaction to render national mobilisation against the Ethiopian Empire. This conceptualisation places the early emergence of Somali nationalism within the context of the history of the long conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia. In doing so, the Part I further expands to connect local politics to regional politics and vice versa.

Searching for Sources

The historical documentation of the late nineteenth-century Horn is rather disconnected and mainly composed of sketches and surveys. As discussed in the Introduction of this thesis, the Somali National Archives was destroyed in January 1991 when the civil war reached the capital Mogadishu. Attempts to access the nineteenth-century Ethiopian archives have also been hopeless, not just because these sources were limited to the centre of power in northern Ethiopia, but the Ethiopian archives were closed to the public.[112] To compensate for this absence of Ethiopian sources, this Part I traces the encounter of the Somalis with the Ethiopian Empire mainly from Somali sources and European archival documents. The Somali sources comprise literary and oral, including proverbs and *qasiidooyin* (religious poems), while the European sources consist of British intelligence reports, travellers' diaries and explorers' accounts. The archival sources enable to trace the origins of unique bottom-up, not top-down, anti-imperial nationalistic activities led by the *uluma*. They also enable an examination of the relationship between Ethiopia and Britain/France/Italy at the time and also how this would have influenced the viewpoints of the European explorers and travellers in question. In her penetrating analysis on the colonial archive not as a historical source but as a historical subject, Ann Laura Stoler argued that the archive was 'the supreme technology of the late nineteenth-century imperial state'.[113] However, as Stoler stressed later, the archive should be cautiously explored along or against the grain.[114] Adopting the method of reading archives against the grain allows greater insights into the histories of colonised peoples. The archival sources not only add new insights into how the Somali *uluma* resisted the Ethiopian Empire, but they also reveal the first signs of modern Somali nationalism.

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[112] Fieldwork notes, the National Archives and Library of Ethiopia (NALE), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, March-April 2016 and November 2019. For the inaccessibility of the archives in Ethiopia, see Sophia Thubauville and Sayuri Yoshida, 'Introduction to the Special Issue "Archives and Collections for/in Ethiopian Studies"', *African Research and Documentation*, 135 (2020), 3-39, 3.

[113] Ann Laura Stoler, 'Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance', *Archival Science*, 2 (2002), 87-109, 87.

[114] Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton University Press, 2010).

To utilise 'other voices' (the voices of those largely excluded from archival sources), the Part I utilises Somali oral sources gathered from the field to connect the views of (the unestablished) colonised sources to (the established) colonial sources.[115] The oral material comes from oral interviews with key nineteen Somali elders between the ages of 70 and 80, who were interviewed in mosques, hotel lobbies and restaurants in 2016. Most of them were the offspring of the *uluma* under examination in this Part I and their socio-historical connection meant they were not detached from their histories. In terms of gender balance, the *uluma* were all men, so the elders interviewed during my fieldwork also were all men. Because the pre-colonial political culture of Somali society gave power to men, women were not allowed to be part of the *uluma* due to the patriarchal Somali social system.[116] The predominance of men in the history of anti-colonialism and nationalism in Africa and elsewhere has been documented.[117] Yet, there is also ample evidence on important roles of ordinary women in African history and politics during and the after the (pre-)colonial era. In their edited volume, Jean Allman, Sugan Geiger and Nakanyike Musisi uncovered how African women were active agents, not passive spectators, in anti-colonial politics. African women confronted the forces of colonialism in their everyday interactions in a colonial domain that defied the fundamental beliefs of freedom and family value.[118] Undoubtedly, Somali women were involved in the politics of anti-colonialism. At times, they were active in anti-colonial discussions of mostly male-only settings, even when they had backdoor positions of power. While historical documents on the nineteenth-century Somali society rarely showed women playing leading roles in politics and religion, they revealed that women, as well as children, had a significant informal role to play in the history of anti-imperialism. However, during the fieldwork, as the interaction between men and women was rarely allowed in conservative Muslim Somali settings, it was difficult to draw on an equal number of male and female interviewees. Male elders held all authority to decide and judge the past, present and future as homespun historians.[119] They were considered

[115] For the concept of 'other voices', see Joel S. Kahn, *Other Malays: Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in the Modern Malay World* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2006), xv.
[116] Mohamed Haji Ingiriis, '"Sisters; was this what we struggled for?": The Gendered Rivalry in Power and Politics', *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 16, 2 (2015), 376-394.
[117] Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher (eds.), *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003); and Nancy Rose Hunt, Tessie P. Liu and Jean Quataert (eds.), *Gendered Colonialisms in African History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).
[118] Jean Allman, Sugan Geiger and Nakanyike Musisi (eds.), *Women in African Colonial Histories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002). See also Iris Berger, *Women in Twentieth-Century Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
[119] For the homespun historians, see Derek R. Peterson and Giacomo Macola, 'Homespun Historiography and the Academic Profession', in Derek R. Peterson and Giacomo Macola (eds.), *Recasting the Past: History Writing and Political Work in Modern Africa* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2009), 1-28.

as circulators of community history, even when they alone were not necessarily the holders. On one occasion in Hargeysa in 2016, at a focus group historical discussion, women were standing behind and beside their male elders, listening attentively to the histories these elders were recounting and nodding along with them.[120] Apart from religion and the patriarchal system, the position and presence of (an unknown) male rather than a (known) female researcher seemed to influence their stance to remain silent about the distant past. Nevertheless, it is imperative to include women's voices to 'restore women to history' and thus avoid a masculinist bias. Three elderly Somali women (two were direct descendants of the *uluma*, while the third gathered oral tradition from her forefathers) were invited to explain the role of the *uluma* from the perspective of Somali women.[121] The fact that women were fellow partners with their men in the anti-colonial struggle indicates that the emergence of Somali nationalism cannot be understood as beingly solely 'men's issue'. Inasmuch as the *uluma* were fathers, sons, brothers and husbands of the women, women were mothers, sisters, daughters and wives of the *uluma*.

The other important historical sources for this Part I came from contemporaneous European accounts. The British explorers and travellers who visited the Somali Peninsula hastened to gather any information that could justify the future colonial formation, but their accounts are important historical material to understand the genesis of the borderland conflicts in the Horn. For instance, the Somali-Ethiopian border confrontations were recorded in detail by Harald George Carlos Swayne, a young British agent (later a colonel). In January 1885, Swayne was sent from India through Aden to conduct a 'survey' (a euphemism for intelligence gathering) about Somali borderlands.[122] Using his reputation as a big game hunter as a cover, the British colonial authorities gave Swayne specific instructions to gather intelligence information from the Somalis and Ethiopians. Swayne became the first 'white man' to ever penetrate deeper into the western Somali borderlands and also the first traveller to visit the borderland areas around Harar since Richard Burton in 1854.[123] Swayne's intelligence data showed that the situation of Somali borderland clans was more complex than the British had previously realised. His

[120] Fieldwork notes, Hargeysa, Somaliland, July-August 2016; and fieldwork notes, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016.
[121] Joan Kelly-Gadol, 'The Social Relation of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women's History', *Signs*, 1, 4 (1976), 809-823.
[122] Records of the Africa Bureau, 'Extract from Captain H. G. C. Swayne's Private Journal, Somaliland, Abyssinia, 1893; map of routes in northern Somaliland, with MS. Additions, 1892', Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Mss. Afr.s.553.
[123] For Burton's path-breaking trip to Harar in 1854, see Sir Richard F. Burton, *First Footsteps in East Africa or An Exploration of Harrar*, vol. 2 (London: Darf Publishers, 1986 [1894]).

documentation remains the most detailed historical sources available about the early Ethiopian invasion of the Somali Peninsula.[124] Swayne recorded that during his seventeen visits to the Somali hinterlands between 1885 and 1893, he witnessed how the Ethiopian forces were violently encroaching into the western side of the Somali frontier. Thus, his body of work provides a unique window on Somali resistance and the imagination of nationhood in Somali society in the age of imperialism. His conclusions drew from a journal of daily account of what was happening in the region, but this does not mean that his views were impartial as rigid colonial perspectives affected some of his (questionable) observations. Moreover, the violence he had encountered, which he emphasised in his work, was common in contemporaneous reports by European travellers at this time; some stressed the brutality of the Arab slave trade in East Africa as a way of justifying European colonial intervention.[125] The philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah and the anthropologist Johannes Fabian, in two separate twenty-first-century studies, critiqued European explorers, ethnographers and travellers for their hyperbolic diaries that strengthened the discursive imposition of European colonial rule.[126]

Alongside Swayne, however, other contemporary British travellers' accounts were also important for triangulation. The important avenue of any historical inquiry in the Horn lies in presenting the perspectives of peripheral peoples. Swayne recorded the views and voices of Somalis more than any other contemporary British traveller, allocating ample space in both his handwritten and typewritten material for Somali statements, including direct quotations from Somali elders, even women and children. This was because he found most of his intelligence data from the Somalis themselves, though he could not speak Somali language. This does not mean that Swayne can be considered neutral in his assessment of the state of Somali-Ethiopian relations. All other British travellers took sides. Swayne sympathised with the Somalis and stressed their anti-Ethiopian position, whereas British travellers James Willes Jennings and

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[124] The Indian Office Records, 'Report on the reconnaissance of northern Somali-land, February to November 1891. By Cpt H G C Swayne, Royal Engineers, and Lt E J E Swayne, 16th Bengal Infantry Bombay: [Govt of Bombay Political Dept], 1892', British Library, IOR/L/PS/20/68: 1892; and The Indian Office Records, 'Vol VII No 8 File 23 Somali Country: proposal of the Political Resident to send a survey party; appointment of Lt Swayne, R.E. (commanding the company of Madras Sappers and Miners) on the survey as Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General', British Library, IOR/R/20/E/158, Item 1: Dec 1885-Dec 1886.

[125] Kathryn Barrett-Gaines, 'Travel Writing, Experiences, and Silences: What is Left Out of European Travelers' Accounts – The Case of Richard D. Mohun', *History in Africa*, 24 (1997), 53-70; and Felix Driver, 'Henry Morton Stanley and His Critics: Geography, Exploration and Empire', *Past & Present*, 133 (1991), 134-166.

[126] Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: Norton, 2006)*; and Johannes Fabian, Out of Our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).*

Christopher Addison implied an anti-Somali position.[127] If Swayne took Somali statements at face value, Jennings and Addison reproved the Somali attitude towards the Ethiopians, even depicting Ethiopia's actions as normal. The reason why Swayne seemed so sympathetic to the Somali position and Jennings and Addison were pro-Ethiopians was that Swayne visited the Somali borderland region when the British colonial authorities were seeking Somali assistance to expand their rule from the coast to the countryside, while Jennings and Addison went there while the British were seeking Ethiopian assistance to conduct an anti-insurgency operation in the Somali Peninsula and Sudan. Swayne drafted his reports not only to inform but also to advise the British colonial authorities about where to stand in the Somali-Ethiopian rivalry. His advice was that the British should take advantage of the Somali-Ethiopian confrontation through the classic colonial strategy of divide and rule, similar to Matabeleland in colonial Zimbabwe where Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni has shown that the British colonial state took advantage of the violence between the Ndebele kingdom and Shona community.[128] In private, Swayne's position was quite different. His private writings were discursively opposite to those he had provided to the colonial authorities. He spent much ink recording the Ethiopian oppressive acts against Somali borderland clans. Since his private position differed so significantly from his public responsibilities, he made a caveat in his memoir to only publish it with 'permission of the authorities'.[129] While his mission was effective in gathering important oral sources, he failed to look for written sources.

From Periphery to the Political Pinpoint

The academic literature on colonial Africa overstates European imperialism and underestimates African imperialism. Primarily conceived as a clash between powerless colonised Africans versus powerful coloniser Europeans, this literature hardly discusses the little known local/regional armed conflict between colonised Africans and African

[127] James Willes Jennings and Christopher Addison, *With the Abyssinians in Somaliland*, with a preface by Colonel A. N. Rochfort (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1905), 235-236. For a post-colonial situation elsewhere in Africa, see Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[128] Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *The Ndebele Nation: Reflections on Hegemony, Memory and Historiography* (Pretoria: UNISA Press, 2009), 142. On the famous colonial strategy of divide and rule, see Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 68-71.

[129] Major H. G. C. Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia, with Supplementary Preface on the 'Mad Mullah' Risings*, third edition (London: Rowland Ward, 1903), preface to the third edition, i.

colonisers.[130] In African studies, African imperialism is largely left out of the critiques on European imperialism due to the latter's enduring legacies of the political crisis of the post-colony.[131] This is also the case in Somali studies.[132] Although acknowledging that Somali nationalism was the result of 'external influences rather than internal developments', Israeli political scientist Saadia Touval contended that 'the principal impetus to the emergence of nationalism as the most important political force in the region was external' by which he meant European imperialism.[133] Following similar lines, Somali political scientist Hassan Omar Mahadallah argues that Somali nationalism drew from 'Somali culture and European ideas mediated in the colonial situation'.[134] The heavy emphasis in scholarly writings about European imperialism in the Horn has diverted attention from Ethiopian imperialism. The historical scholarship never attempted to compare the traits of the Ethiopian Empire with those of the European empires, when – behind the infamous partition of Africa by European imperial powers – there was a parallel partition simultaneously carried out by the local African empire of Ethiopia.[135] Ethiopia found itself in the middle of European powers, creating competition for controlling the peripheral peoples as well as drawing new boundaries on the borderlands. This Ethiopian imperial project can best be understood outside the African/European binary, a differentiation from which allows moving beyond the European characterisation of colonialism as the sole disruptor of African societies. The imperial process through which one African people sought to colonise the other warrants in-depth historical examination.

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[130] Michael Crowder, *West African Resistance* (London: Hutchinson, 1971); A. B. Davidson, 'African Resistance and Rebellion against the Imposition of Colonial Rule', T. O. Ranger (ed.), *Emerging Themes of African History* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968), 177-188; and Allen F. Isaacman in collaboration with Barbara Isaacman, *The Tradition of Resistance in Mozambique: Anti-Colonial Activity in the Zambesi Valley, 1850-1921* (London: Heinemann, 1976). On an important corrective intervention on Asia, see John Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Global History of Empire since 1405* (London: Allen Lane, 2007).

[131] For sharp critiques on the European imperialism, see Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox and Susanne Zantop (eds.), *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Legacy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998); and Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*. On another local African imperialism in East Africa, see Richard Reid, 'The Ganda on Lake Victoria: A Nineteenth-Century East African Imperialism', *The Journal of African History*, 39, 3 (1998), 349-363.

[132] Cabdulqaadir Aroma, *Hadimadii Gumeysiga: Geesi Gumeysidiid* (Muqdisho, Soomaaliya: Aroma Publication, 2005), and Faarax Maxamed Jaamac, *Garbaduubkii Gumeysiga* (Muqdisho: Wasaaradda Hiddaha iyo Tacliinta Sare, Akadeemiyada Dhaqanka, 1978).

[133] Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism: International Politics and Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 124 & 76.

[134] Hassan Omar Mahadallah, 'The Origin and Essence of Somali Nationalism' (unpublished PhD dissertation, Tulane University, 1997), 12.

[135] For a scathing critique on the Ethiopian Empire, see Lubie Birru, 'Abyssinian Colonialism as the Genesis of the Crisis in the Horn: Oromo Resistance (1855-1913)', *Northeast African Studies*, 2/3, 3/1 (1980-81/1981), 93-98.

The history of the Ethiopian encroachment into the Somali borderlands remains largely unexamined in the historiographies of anti-colonial nationalism. While other peripheral borderland communities under the Ethiopian Empire have received much attention from anthropologists and historians, the Somalis have been marginal in both global and regional historiographies.[136] Somali scholars have not attempted to contribute to the critical scholarship on the emergence of modern Ethiopian imperialism to deconstruct and demystify the notion of 'Greater Ethiopia'.[137] The post-colonial political crisis in Somalia and the state collapse that followed diverted the attention of Somali scholars. Thus, historical studies of the processes of imperialism in the Horn have largely been written by either Ethiopians or Europeans who tended to view their subjects through imperial eyes, overlooking the impact of imperial regimes on the Somali subjects.[138] The Somali region in Ethiopia, in particular, has largely been overlooked in the historical surveys of Ethiopian imperialism. Without specifically examining the imperial question, Abdirahman A. Muhumed and Mohamed A. Siraj attempted to examine the 'historical developments' of the region between 1884-1994.[139] The Ethiopian historian Bahru Zewde, though he provided the most comprehensive history of the imperial expansion of Ethiopia, had never examined how the Ethiopian Empire conquered the Somali borderlands.[140] The few recent historiographies on Somali-Ethiopian relations drew largely from an Ethiopian perspective or position, while the Somali perspective of Ethiopian imperialism has remained peripheral rather than central. Cedric Barnes's doctoral study, the first historical work dedicated entirely to the study of encounters between Somali society and Ethiopian imperialism, offers a centre/periphery framework to explore how the Ethiopian rule was imposed upon the Somalis.[141] While Barnes pointed out that the successful Ethiopian conquering of the Somali borderlands allowed the Ethiopian emperors to consolidate their power at the centre, his emphasis on the Ethiopian centre blurs the early anti-colonial activities of the Somali periphery. Peter Garretson's work also pursued this line of centre/periphery

[136] Donald L. Donham & Wendy James (eds.), *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia: Essays in History & Social Anthropology*, 2nd edition (Oxford: James Currey, 2002).
[137] Bonnie K. Holcomb and Sisai Ibssa, *The Invention of Ethiopia: The Making of a Dependent Colonial State in Northeast Africa* (Trenton, New Jersey: Red Sea Press, 1990); and John Sorenson, *Imagining Ethiopia: Struggles for History and Identity in the Horn of Africa* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993).
[138] Tibete Eshete, 'Towards a history of the incorporation of the Ogaden: 1887–1935', *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 27, 2 (1994), 69-87.
[139] Abdirahman A. Muhumed & Mohamed A. Siraj, 'Somali Region in Ethiopia: Historical Developments during the Period 1884-1995', *Somali Studies: A Peer-Reviewed Academic Journal for Somali Studies*, 2 (2017), 60-75.
[140] Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1991* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1991 [2002]).
[141] Cedric Barnes, 'The Ethiopian State and its Somali Periphery, circa 1888-1948' (unpublished PhD dissertation, the University of Cambridge, 2000).

framework from the top-down to trace the historical Somali-Ethiopian relations.[142] Namhla Thando Matshanda's doctoral study reveals complex relationships between the peripheral lowland Somalis and the central highland Ethiopians in two 'peripheral' towns during the mid-twentieth century, but his study still suffers from a heavy preference to the top-down centre.[143] The time has now come for historians to shift the politics of Somali borderlands from the margins to the centre of the history of the nineteenth-century. Paul Nugent has noted the urgency to centre the margins in his study on the boundaries, communities and state-building in West Africa.[144] As Julie MacArthur has argued of Kenya, it is essential 'to break down the national center-ethnic periphery model'.[145] Catherine Boone has also pointed out the importance to explain the present variation between core-periphery relations across Africa, but arguably the historical element has more relevance to contribute to the contemporary discussions on the African conflicts.[146] This aims to explore from the inside-out rather than from the outside-in when examining the history between the centre and the periphery.[147]

Ethiopia, better known as Abyssinia in almost all historical sources in the nineteenth-century, became a powerful African empire after the Battle of Adwa. Its emperors had long pursued an ambitious but aggressive state formation project of violently expanding the empire into the peripheries. From the death in 1543 of *Amir* Ahmed Gurey, the leader of the *jihad* (a Muslim holy war) against the ancient Ethiopian (Christian) Empire, until 1887, when Ethiopian forces conquered the autonomous Muslim city-state emirate of Harar, the Somalis and the Ethiopians never had a direct military confrontation, even though the socio-political relations between them were shaped by recurring tensions of religious and territorial conflicts.[148] By the summer of 1884, the unexpected departure of the Turko-Egyptian rule, first from Harar and second from the coastal zones of the northern Somali Peninsula, created anxiety among Somali borderland

[142] Peter Garretson, 'Ethiopian Expansion into the Ogaadeen and its Relations with the Somali (1887 to 1906)' (unpublished Mimeo, Florida State University, 2001).
[143] Namhla Thando Matshanda, 'Centres in the Periphery: Negotiating Territoriality and Identification in Harar and Jijiga from 1942' (unpublished PhD dissertation, the University of Cambridge, 2014).
[144] Paul Nugent, *Boundaries, Communities, and State-Making in West Africa: The Centrality of the Margins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1.
[145] MacArthur, *Cartography and the Political Imagination*, 29.
[146] Catherine Boone, *Political Topographies of the African State: Territorial Authority and Institutional Choice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1.
[147] Kahn, *Other Malays*, xiii.
[148] For the best indigenous source of Gurey's *jihad*, see Shihaabud-Diin Axmad Cabdulqaadir Saalim Cismaan Al-Jiisaami (Fiqi Carab), *Futuux Al-Xabasha: Mahadho-Reebka Sooyaalka, Qarnigii 16-aad*, tarjamaddii Aadan Xasan Aadan (Beleloo) iyo Maxamed Cabdillaahi Riiraash (Djibouti: Institutes de Languages, 2008).

clans. They rightly predicted that Ethiopia would sooner or later fill the vacuum.[149] Historically, Harar stood as a traditional buffer polity between the Somalis and Ethiopians. As a consequence of the Ethiopian conquest, one contemporary report acknowledged that 'Harar [was] no longer a buffer state between Abyssinia and the Somali tribes'.[150] By the time they reached Harar, the Ethiopian forces had subjugated most of their Oromo neighbours, who were also the neighbours of the Somalis. Like the Oromos, the Somalis responded to the Ethiopian conquest with stiff resistance and continued to block a further invasion outside of the ancient gates of Harar.[151] Describing the European societies in the Middle Ages, John Armstrong argued that not all invaded peoples developed nationalism.[152] This was the case for the Afars, Oromos and other heterogenous non-Somali societies in the Horn, but the Somalis were rather different as they possessed one culture, language and religion that allowed to resort to nationalism to resist the Ethiopian invasion. Despite this relative homogeneity, the Somalis were also similar to other peripheral peoples in terms of political power. They were part of what Gufu Oba described as 'nomads in the shadow of empires' in the Horn.[153]

The Ethiopian imperial state-builders aimed to absorb the Somalis into the grand state structure of Greater Ethiopia. Upon the capture of Harar, the Ethiopian forces wasted no time and moved to Jigjiga, the first Somali-alone settlement on the east side of the emirate, where they had established a military garrison soon after their conquest of Harar. The invading Ethiopian forces forced Somali borderland clans to temporarily vacate the settlement, moving their herds back to the outskirts of Jigjiga, while the Ethiopian forces concentrated in the large hills (Somali clans regarded as mountain ranges) around the town on the northwestern side of Harar.[154] According to Somali oral tradition, Jigjiga – a small settlement then hosting specific Somali clans – was primarily essential as a resting place of ample water wells for the people and beasts.[155] A vital strategic gateway, it was the midway of two caravan trade roads connecting the countryside to the coast: Berbera and Harar; and Zeila and Harar. Rather than

[149] The India Office Records, 'Correspondence respecting Egyptian evacuation of the Somali coast (Part I), A W Moore, 28 Jul 1884', British Library, IOR/L/PS/18/B27/1: 28 Jul 1884; The India Office Records, 'Confidential: Egyptian Claims to Sovereignty over the Somali Coast', British Library, IOR/L/PS/18/B3: 1876-1879. On the importance of Harar for Somalis, see Capt. Sir Burton, *First Footsteps in East Africa*, 1-41.
[150] Records of the Africa Bureau, 'Extract from Captain H. G. C. Swayne's Private Journal'.
[151] Cali Jaamac Qalinle, *Taariikhda Ummadda Soomaaliyeed* (Bristol: Bristol PP, 2009), 40-41.
[152] John A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 179.
[153] Gufu Oba, *Nomads in the Shadow of Empires: Contests, Conflicts and Legacies on the Southern Ethiopia-Northern Kenyan Frontier* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 32.
[154] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016.
[155] *Ibid*.

facilitating the potential economic power of Jigjiga, the Ethiopian forces weakened the flow of caravan trade for their rigid authoritarian rule by imposing a heavy taxation system. The higher tax tariffs caused the caravan trade to decrease as traders (mainly from the Reer Ahmed/Nuh Ismail/Sa'ad Muuse/Habar Awal/Isaaq clan) began to navigate new rough routes.[156] In 1884, two British explorers, James Brothers (F. L. James and W. D. James), travelled from Berbera to to *Webi* Shabelle (Leopard River) to survey two other inland routes (one being a caravan route, the other not). On the caravan route, they met returning traders from Reer Ahmed, who were regarded as 'the brokers and usurers of the coast'.[157] The Ethiopian threat was not a one-way street; Somali borderland clans also traditionally posed a danger to the Ethiopian Empire. They were the antithesis of the Ethiopian plans for strategic state formation that aimed to incorporate different peoples into one single empire.[158]

Between the British Empire and the Ethiopian Empire

Even though expressing hostile positions towards Ethiopian imperialism, the northern and southern Somali clans perceived British imperialism differently. As they gradually became more realistic in their views of Ethiopian, British and Italian imperialisms, they accepted the European imperialisms to counter the threat from the Ethiopian Empire. For Somali clans, the destruction Ethiopian imperialism brought on Somali independence and economic subsistence was much more challenging than that of British and Italian imperialisms.[159] Predicting further Ethiopian imperial advances into Somali borderlands and seeking out ways of defending themselves from the impending threat, Somali borderland clans came to be friendly with Europeans in general and the British in particular. Swayne was repetitive about the Somali preference of the British: 'Although a good deal of intermittent fighting is prevalent all over the interior, the Somalis have no quarrel with the English. They [s]how respect for the English as being their natural protectors and arbitrators'.[160] Almost all Somali clans had the expectation 'that now the English, their masters, had come, the Abyssinians would leave off raiding their

[156] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, July-August 2016.
[157] F. L. James, *The Unknown Horn of Africa: An Exploration From Berbera to the Leopard River*, with additions by J. Godfrey Thrupp (London: George Philip & Son, 1888), 115 & 195-196.
[158] For the Ethiopian imperial state formation project, see Donald N. Levine, *Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).
[159] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016; and Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, July-August 2016.
[160] Records of the Africa Bureau, 'Extract from Captain H. G. C. Swayne's Private Journal'; and Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 113.

camels and carrying off their women.'[161] Although these statements were made under desperate circumstances, Somali clan elders told Swayne that 'the English were good people'.[162] The English travellers were better or so seemed as long as they were compared with the encroaching Ethiopian forces. As Swayne reported: 'The elders flocked around to lay complaints before me of the treatment they had received from the Abyssinian invaders'.[163] Many of these clan elders 'came to our tents begging for written testimonials, saying that they were sure a scrap of paper written on by an Englishman was enough alone to keep back an Abyssinian army'.[164] Swayne was not alone in this observation. The British officer, Captain Francis Pearce, similarly reported that 'application [was] made for a scrap of paper with English writing on it'.[165] While the elders wanted to use British papers as assurance from harassment, it was up to the Ethiopian forces to decide what to do about these papers.

In most clan areas they passed through, British travellers received a warm Somali clan welcome in their honour. Swayne reported to his superiors how the Reer Hareed, a sub-clan of the Jibriil Obokor/Sa'ad Muuse/Habar Awal, received him 'with marked civility'.[166] The Iise/Dir clan also celebrated Swayne's visit to them at Jildessa, the caravan route between Harar and to the coast of Zeila. Even the Garhajis/Dir clan members (who had been hostile to the British from the beginning) had become hospitable towards the British around 1890.[167] But the purpose of welcoming the British was again clear. Caught between 'English travellers and Abyssinian invaders', Somali clans were generally 'delighted to meet [the] Englishmen'.[168] The 'delight' with the 'English' in contrast with the displeasure with the Ethiopians on the part of the Somalis was contingent on the differing practices and performances of the two colonial powers. To counter the Ethiopian encroachments, the Somalis consistently sought British support. As Somali clan leaders told to Pearce: 'The whole Abyssinian nation would not venture here, if they know that two Englishmen are here. Help us'.[169] The Bartire/Daarood clan elders flocked

[161] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 125.
[162] *Ibid.*, 134.
[163] *Ibid.*, 163.
[164] *Ibid.*, 125.
[165] Capt. Francis B. Pearce, *Rambles in Lion Land* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1898), 163.
[166] Records of the Africa Bureau, 'Extract from Captain H. G. C. Swayne's Private Journal'. General Nuuh Taani, the long-term chief of the Somaliland armed forces belonged to the Reer Hareed. Fieldwork notes, Gebiley and Hargeysa, April-May 2018 and November-December 2019.
[167] Cf. James, *The Unknown Horn of Africa*, 222-223; C. V. A. Peel, *Somaliland*: *Being an Account of Two Expeditions into the Far Interior* (London: Darf, (1986 [1900]), 174 & 255; and Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, preface to the third edition, ii & 52.
[168] Records of the Africa Bureau, 'Extract from Captain H. G. C. Swayne's Private Journal'.
[169] Pearce, *Rambles in Lion Land*, 165.

to Swayne's camp, complaining to him about the Ethiopian rule. Garaad Mohamed Ahmed, the clan chief of the Bartire, repeatedly told Swayne that his clan wished the 'arrival of anybody in European shade to administer their country and save them from their great grievance, the Abyssinians'.[170] The Garaad made this statement when 'the Abyssinians took away all his power, and he [was] now of little consequence'.[171] Somali clan chiefs like Garaad Mohamed felt humiliated and their dignity had suffered under the hands of the Ethiopian authorities. Garaad Mohamed was obliged to 'trot about like a dog' between his clan households 'to fetch cows for' the Ethiopian 'soldiers to eat'.[172] This was one of the many moments when Swayne – in his details of the person of Garaad Mohamed – individualised the overall Somali suffering under the Ethiopian rule.

The friendly treatment to the British travellers took a more systematic phase, when Somali clans as far as the deep southern Somali Peninsula in the British Colony in Kenya began to receive warmly the British colonial authorities visiting their territories: 'Early in 1899, Mr Jenner visited Lugh and reported that throughout the journey he found the tribes friendly, and apparently pleased with the prospect of the establishment of a Government station in their neighbourhood'.[173] The pro-British sentiment had begun in the southern Somali Peninsula as early as 1892 when British Captain Dundas visited Juba River and found 'friendly relations' that 'may result in substantial benefit to the Company [the Imperial British East Africa Company]'.[174] Unsurprisingly, although Swayne considered the British 'the favoured race in the interior', in reality the imposition of taxes and duties on previously unencumbered imports and exports did not gain them any favours in the port towns of Berbera.[175] The British hesitated to impose taxation in the hinterland, as the Ethiopians used raiding expeditions as a form of taxation right from the beginning. In the early 1890s, Lord Frederick Glyn Wolverton observed that in some parts of the interior the 'English [were] looked upon with fearsome and sometimes [with] friendly eyes'.[176] In the late 1890s, the British traveller Pearce observed in the

[170] Records of the Africa Bureau, 'Extract from Captain H. G. C. Swayne's Private Journal'.
[171] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 162.
[172] *Ibid.*, 162.
[173] Kenya National Archives and Documentation Services (KNADS), 'General Description', Provincial Commissioner, Northern Province, PC/NFD/4/6/1, [1898?].
[174] Archives & Special Collection, 'Capt. Dundas to Proposed tramway from Kismayu to Gobwen or Juba, Dec 1892', SOAS, University of London, File 91, PP MS 1, Box 72.
[175] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, preface to the third edition, ii. For the heavy colonial customs on the port of Berbera between 1884-1891, see Langton Prendergast Walsh, *Under the Flag and Somali Coast Stories* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1910), 306-39.
[176] Lord Wolverton, with illustrations from photographs by Colonel Paget, *Five Months' Sport in Somali Land* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1894), 2.

borderlands that the 'Englishman [was] much feared and respected', claiming that the 'Somali only respects one nation, and that [was] the British'.[177] However, in the late 1890s again, another British traveller Alfred E. Pease reported that the Reer Ali of the Reer Isaaq sub-clan of the Ogaadeen/Ogaadeen residing in the interior zones of Awaare and Dharoor 'were not showing themselves well disposed towards us'.[178] Between Baarreey and Mogadishu in 1884, the James brothers met a Somali (sub-)clan called Koomfah 'who would not allow no European to pass through their territory' because the people of the clan were 'religious and fanatical'.[179] Clearly, before the expansion of Ethiopian imperialism, British colonial authority was not as secure in the countryside as it was on the coast. Even though this meant that not all Somali clans were not initially approving of the possibility for British imperialism, the Somalis on the borderlands had welcomed the British travellers.

The British traveller Charles Victor Alexander Peel won wide applause from a Somali audience, including women and children, when – while responding to a warm reception – he concluded a welcoming speech this: 'May the Abyssinians refrain from taxing and looting you'.[180] The support of Somali women and children for possible British counter-Ethiopian action cannot be disregarded. Women usually told the James brothers that their husbands conducted the leadership tasks both in prayer and politics for them.[181] Yet to Swayne it was observable that women and children preferred the British. In one incident based on him killing a lion, a Somali audience told Swayne that '[t]he Abyssinians can't do that; their guns are small, and are only good for killing women and children and old men with: you English are our friends, and all the Ogaden tribes look to you, our masters, for protection against Abyssinia'.[182] Although his material was not specifically gendered, the gender differences from Somali views of two imperial powers were clear: 'The women were sure we were Abyssinians, for we carried guns; but finding we were English, a revulsion of feeling set in, and the boys went off to tell the tribe the joyful news, and the women to get milk for our men'.[183] The men, women and children of the Sheekhaal clan of the Hawiye gathered around Swayne 'in a dense mass' to ensure him that the English 'are not like Amhara; we are not afraid of you; you don't

[177] Pearce, *Rambles in Lion Land*, 59 & 163.
[178] Alfred E. Pease, 'Some account of Somaliland: With notes on journeys through the Gadabürsi and western Ogaden countries, 1896-1897', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 14, 2 (1898), 57-73, 70.
[179] James, *The Unknown Horn of Africa*, 188.
[180] Peel, *Somaliland*, 51.
[181] James, *The Unknown Horn of Africa*, 110.
[182] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 185.
[183] *Ibid*., 121.

mean any harm'.[184] Crowds of Somali men, women and children from various clans followed Swayne as he went to return to the coast from his field surveys. They were 'clutching hold of our camel bridles and calling out, "The English are good; lead us against the Abyssinians"'.[185] Swayne and other British companions were only individuals and their views did not mean that the British would change its position of not interfering the Somali borderland issues. As this was a contrast between the individual and the institution, the adulation from Somali women and children got to the heads of the British. When one of Swayne's British followers 'stupidly told a crowd of people at the wells that we had come to attack Banaguse, the commander of the Jig-Jiga outpost, and it was not till we heard shouts of delight from the men, women, and children, that we discovered this foolishness, and put a stop to it'.[186] The women and children still, as Swayne reported, 'hung round my camel and my brother's pony in crowds, crying out, "Now it's all right; the English have come"'.[187] The idea behind most of these traveller observations like Swayne's was to present the British colonial state as a friendly force that came to make peace with local peoples in contrast with predatory regional states.[188]

The Preference of 'White Infidel' over 'Black Infidel'

In their opposition to the Ethiopian Empire, the Somalis lacked leader(s) who lead them to pull them out of the Ethiopian invasion. There was an urgent need for any leader capable of countering the imperial quagmire. The *uluma* came to fill this leadership gap and after evaluating the question of imperialism acted as the main spokesmen for Somali society against the Ethiopian invasion. The *uluma* were expected to explain about how it became possible for infidels to occupy the Somali country. Historically, the *uluma*, as oral and written Somali sources highlighted, had a myriad of hats to wear in times of peace and war.[189] The role of the *uluma* was to provide religious counsel for Somalis in matters relating to legal, moral and social affairs. They had also other critical roles to play: upholding Islam, providing spiritual guidance and arbitrating the people through a combination of customary and Islamic laws.[190] While they would travel between the countryside and the coast of the Somali Peninsula, the *uluma* of the

[184] *Ibid*., 189.
[185] *Ibid*., preface to the third edition, vi.
[186] *Ibid*., 130.
[187] *Ibid*., preface to the third edition, 125.
[188] For a similar case elsewhere in Africa, see Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *The Ndebele Nation*, 142.
[189] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Mogadishu, Somalia, April-June 2016; and Ahmed Yusuf, *Soomaaliya: Qaran iyo Qabiil* (Stockholm: African Triangle, 1998), 62.
[190] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Mogadishu, Somalia, April-June 2016.

borderlands were far more involved in the socio-economic obligations of rural communities than the *uluma* on the hinterland. In the countryside, the *uluma* would contribute to the pastoral economy of rural Somalis, for it was not uncommon for the *uluma* to establish and transform their religious settlements into farming plantations, while possessing herds collected from *sadaqa* (charity).[191] The most important element of their economic production and leadership position stemmed from their role as the representatives of religion. Utilising their economic, social and religious standing, they played a pivotal role in the shift from clan towards common coordination. Living mostly among the pastoral nomadic people of the countryside, the Somali *uluma* were pastoral intellectuals, not unlike the Shambaa 'peasant intellectuals' that Steven Feierman observed of Tanzania, who offered 'alternative sources of political language'.[192] In terms of leadership dominance, the *uluma* were second to clan chiefs similar to the intellectuals defined by Gramsci as 'the dominant group's "deputies"'.[193] However, where clan chiefs were unable to exploit all-encompassing ideological discourse, the *uluma* tended to lead ordinary people in the authority of Islam as established 'organic' and 'popular intellectuals'.[194]

The *uluma* were characterised by their religious preaching and didactic teachings. Mama Aanood Hassan Siad Faalshow, who witnessed the life of a religious Somali settlement in her early life, remembered that the sermons of the *uluma* survived generation after generation. She heard from her forefathers that 'their *uluma* would warn against any contact with the infidels'.[195] Although who from whom in the infidel category was unclear, the pressures of the two colonial threats forced them to quickly reassess their available options and choose one colonial rule over the other. In their *qasiidooyin*, the condemnation of Ethiopian imperialism far exceeded British (and also Italian) imperialism, differentiating the former from latter.[196] This meant not only a preference for but a choice between the British and the Ethiopians; the

[191] *Ibid*.
[192] Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press 1991), 123.
[193] Cited in *ibid*.
[194] On popular intellectuals, see Scott S. Reese, *Renewers of the Age: Holy Men and Social Discourse in Colonial Benaadir* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 13. On organic intellectuals, see Ali Jimale Ahmed, *Daybreak is Near: Literature, Clans, and the Nation-State in Somalia* (Lawrenceville, N.J.: The Red Sea Press, 1996), 103.
[195] Mama Aanood Hassan Siad Faalshow, WhatsApp interview, 5 February 2020.
[196] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016; Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Mogadishu, Somalia, April-June 2016; and Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, July-August 2016. For some of their hagiographic work, see Abu. B. Sh. Al-Qadiri, *Jala' Al-Ayman fi Manaqib Al-Shaykhan, Al-Shaykh Al-Wali Hajj Uways Al-Qadiri wal Shaykh Al-Kamil Abd Al-Rahman Al-Zayla'i* (Cairo: Mashhad al-Husayni press, ca., 1954); and Shaykh Qasim Al-Barawi Qasim bin Muhyi Al-Din, *Majmu'at Qasa'id fi Madh Sayyid Al-Anbiya wa Al-Tawassul bi-Taj Al-Awliya Sayyidi Abd Al-Qadir Al-Jilani* (Cairo: Sharikat Maktabat wa Matba'at Mustafa Al-Babi wa Awladuhu, 1955).

uluma chose between the two imperial powers, not because it was a preference *per se*, but because the geopolitical imperial crisis created a dilemma for them to choose one imperialism from the other. The fact that choices were made in the difficult circumstances of a colonial crisis in the Somali Peninsula has not been studied in the historiography of colonialism in the Horn. This binary choice opened a new chapter in Somali colonial history, where some clans and groups were selectively labelled as 'collaborators' of colonialism, while other clans were painted as 'resisters' of colonialism.[197] There was no collaboration other than acceptance of British imperialism, only to counter Ethiopian imperialism. In picking and choosing one imperial power from another, nonetheless, the *uluma* insisted on following a general Islamic philosophy: when faced with two disasters, one should choose the lesser one. In doing so, the *uluma* were not strictly religious when they accepted a form of reception with the British, given that Islam did not allow allying one infidel against another.[198] This does not mean that the *uluma* were monolithic, as there existed variations amongst them over how and when to confront the colonial question. However, according to Mama Aanood's family recollection, 'the influential *uluma* made their words as the ultimate ruling'.[199] This was partly a gendered critique as some male elders positioned the ruling of the *uluma* as final.[200]

The choice between Ethiopian imperialism and British imperialism responded directly to the local historical engagement between the Somalis and Ethiopians. The preference for British imperialism over Ethiopian was part of a philosophical repertoire popularised in the form of religious discourses. The Somali *uluma* philosophised in Arabic the extent of such a choice by instructing the Somalis: '*Idaa Shufta Amxaar, Faranji Xaaji*' (when you see the Amhara, the European is a *Haji* [a Muslim who performed the obligatory *Hajj* pilgrimage]).[201] As a form of criticism of both imperial powers, the oral *uluma* discourse dictated choosing the supposedly temporary disaster over the permanent one. Key to the British preference was that the Somalis did not view them as permanent occupiers.[202] The main goal of the Ethiopians, on the other

[197] Aroma, *Tiirka Colaadda: Maxay ka Curteen Colaadaha Sokeeye?*, 2nd edition (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Percetakan Zafar, 2005), 19.
[198] The Somali militant movement Al-Shabaab's friendly relations with the largely Christian state of Eritrea in 2007 resonates with the Somali *uluma*'s friendship with the British and Italians after 1887. On the history Al-Shabaab, Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The history and ideology of a militant Islamist group, 2005-2012* (Hurst, London, 2013).
[199] Mama Aanood Hassan Siad Faalshow, WattsApp interview, 18 January 2020.
[200] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Mogadishu, April-June 2016.
[201] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016; Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, July-August 2016; and Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Mogadishu, April-June 2016.
[202] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016.

hand, was to reach and remain on the Somali coast forever. Whereas the British may have considered the Somali port of Berbera a British town (despite centuries of a long-established trading entrepot along the Gulf of Aden before their arrival), they had little interest initially in occupying the upcountry and hinterlands, for the Somali clans from the coast and the countryside were free to come and go as they pleased. Swayne confirmed this British plan in his journal when he told a Somali clan chief that 'so far as my having seen his country was concerned, he was perfectly free to come and see mine, and I promised him a new *khaili* from Berbera and some snow-white bafta tobes for his men'.[203] The *uluma* realised the objectives of the Ethiopian and European imperial projects were radically different: the Europeans were after natural resources through establishing colonies, while the Ethiopians were after sea routes to enlarge the size of their empire. The *uluma* observed European travellers talking about further economic trade with the Somalis and how the Ethiopian forces, in contrast, were preventing from that possibility. The British colonial authorities presented their desire for economic adventure in the Somali Peninsula as early as 1886 to compete with other imperial powers.[204] Having recognised that European imperialism was based on politico-economics (administrative activities and trading with local coastal clans), while Ethiopian imperialism was based on politico-religious (robbing Somali borderland clans and making orthodox Christianity upper hand), the *uluma* believed politico-economic imperialism was far less a threat than the politico-religious imperialism, so they felt compelled to make careful distinctions between the two imperial powers.[205]

The British philosopher John Stuart Mill, with his Eurocentric global worldview, suggested that the 'despotism of foreigners' is better than the despotism of 'natives'.[206] Although both the Ethiopians and the British were foreigners on the Somali Peninsula, the Somali *uluma* confirmed Mill's viewpoint by advising against Ethiopian rule in favour of the British. The Somali clans went along with this position as Mama Aanood confirmed.[207] In differentiating

[203] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 68.
[204] Archives & Special Collection, 'Precis of the Conversation which took place at an interview held on 17 Jul[y] 1886 at Taila by M. Sermaire (French Minister) and Major J. M. Hunter HM's counsel and political agent for the Somali coast', SOAS, University of London, File 91, PP MS 37, Lord Reay Papers, Box 6.
[205] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016. For the difference between economic imperialism and political imperialism in another global context, see Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 6.
[206] Cited in Erica Benner, 'Nationalism: Intellectual Origins', in John Breuilly (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (Online Publication, 2013), 1-14, 9.
[207] Mama Aanood Hassan Siad Faalshow, WattsApp interview, 18 January 2020.

the Ethiopians from the British, the *uluma* were prepared to accept the distant despotism rather than what Thomas Metcalf – writing about India – called 'Oriental despotism'.[208] The Somalis applied the term '*Habash'* or '*Habashi*', a word loaned from Arabic meaning 'mixed' to describe the Ethiopians.[209] In contrast, the Somalis knew the British as English. The British travellers Jennings and Addison noted that, during their trip to the Somali borderlands, most of their 'time was occupied in settling disputes between the Somalis and the Habashis'.[210] Throughout the nineteenth-century, the peripheral peoples in the Horn saw all Ethiopians through the predatory behaviours of the Amhara, the ruling ethnic community of most of the Ethiopian emperors.[211] Like the other peripheral peoples in the Horn, the Somali clans connected any matter related to Ethiopia to the Amhara who 'came to be known as the Abyssinians'.[212] Although the term did not isolate the Amhara from the rest of the Ethiopians, it nonetheless stressed the predatory nature of their empire. The very term 'Amhara' came to increasingly evoke blood and bloodshed as reflected in Somali proverbs from the time advising the Somalis to act against the Amhara. Some Somali elders heard from their forefathers' sayings like '*Amxaaro madax gumac galey leedahaye, madax hadal galo ma laha*' (the Amhara have a head that only bullet should hit, but do not have a head amenable to negotiation).[213] Other proverbs stated that '*Amhaaro aragtaa, yaab aragtaa*' (once you see the Amhara, it comes with a shock).[214] For the Somali *uluma*, the Amhara were *gaalka madow* (the black infidel), while the Europeans *gaalka cad* (the white infidel). Somali elders who still recalled the role their forefathers played in the early resistance contended that '*gaalka cad*' was better administrator when it comes to the administration of justice.[215]

The British preference is a testament of how the history of colonialism during the partition of the Somali Peninsula was more complex than a simple confrontation between the black colonised and the white coloniser, revealing how Africans could be colonising as well as colonised.[216] The African/European and black/white conceptualisation of the *uluma* uncovered

[208] Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 66.
[209] Jennings and Addison, *With the Abyssinians in Somaliland*, 202n1.
[210] *Ibid*., 32 & 164.
[211] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016.
[212] Bereket Habte Selassie, *Conflict and Intervention in the Horn of Africa* (New York: Monthly Review, 1980), 49.
[213] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016.
[214] *Ibid*.
[215] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Wadaamagooyo, Somaliland, 11 December 2019.
[216] For a related argument in colonial India, see Thomas R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 204-224.

that it was not only the 'outsider' white imperialist who secured a forceful colonial state formation projects in Africa, but also the 'insider' black imperialist who separately and simultaneously sought out a similar project. The insider/outsider terms point out the extent to which one colonialist was regional or global to the colonial project. After Swayne read a book about the Franco-Prussian War, Ogaadeen men asked him: 'It is all very wonderful; why are we not like the English, who have so big a name? Why has Allah given us nothing and you everything?'[217] After showing them coloured drawings of English women, Ogaadeen women asked Swayne: 'Why did Allah make us black and these [other women] white?'[218] This was Swayne's rare contact with Somali women, but his remark reveals more about his preconceived notions about race than it does about Somali women he pretended so authoritatively to represent them. But while Swayne was certainly paternalistic in his view of the physical outlook of the Somalis and Ethiopians, as he was committed to the notion of white supremacy rooted squarely in the late Victorian world, both the Somalis and the Ethiopians had an antipathy to 'blackness' and refrained from considering or calling each other 'black'. Instead, the Somalis and the Ethiopians considered themselves as part of non-African society. In their eyes, the non-African identity (Solomonic for the Ethiopians and Arabian for the Somalis) was seen as superior to the Bantu identity prevalent elsewhere in Africa. Being black, for them, was an epithet to the Bantus.[219]

The preference for the white colonial over the black colonial – whether it was based on belief or perception – was not unique to Somalis. It was common with peripheral communities on the edge of empires in other parts of Africa. Examples were plentiful. In Eritrea, the coastal local people initially preferred the Italians to the Ethiopians.[220] In Nigeria and Zimbabwe, local people initially preferred the British to their local conquerors.[221] In Rwanda, the Hutu people once preferred the rule by the Belgians to the Tutsi.[222] Wherever there was an expansive regional African empire, big or small, local people often preferred the European imperial rule.

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[217] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 213-214.
[218] *Ibid*., 213. Frances Swayne, Swayne's cousin, wrote about her later travels in British Somaliland from a gender perspective. See Frances Swayne, *A Woman's Pleasure Trip in Somaliland* (Bristol: John Wright & Co., 1907).
[219] Francesca Declich, 'Il Processo di Formazione dell Identita Culturale delle Populazione Bantu della Somalia Meridionale' (unpublished PhD dissertation, Instituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli, 1992).
[220] Tekeste Negash, *No Medicine for the Bite of a White Snake: Notes on Nationalism in Eritrea*, 1890-1940 (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrika Institutet, 1986), 47.
[221] Julie Bonello, 'The Development of Early Settler Identity in Southern Rhodesia: 1890–1914', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 43, 2 (2010), 341-367; and Moses Ochonu, 'Colonialism within Colonialism: The Hausa-Caliphate Imaginary and the British Colonial Administration of the Nigerian Middle Belt', *African Security Review*, 10, 2-3 (2008), 95-127.
[222] Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 41-75.

There was an exception to the rule in the Horn. The northern Muslim Sudanese hostility to the British meant they preferred the Ethiopians to the British, despite the religious differences of Muslim/Christian identities between the northern Muslim Sudanese versus the Ethiopian Christian Amhara. For the Sudanese Mahdists, the *Khalifa* (a Muslim state leader) was their guardian and the '*faranji*' (European) was the 'enemy of God'. In a letter to the Sudanese *Khalifa*, the Ethiopian Emperor Yohannes, who echoed the similar anti-*Ferenji* sentiment before his death in 1889, had also recognised that the '*faranjis* are our enemies as well as yours'.[223] In the nineteenth-century, the Somalis, Sudanese, Ethiopians and other communities in the Horn used *Ferenji* (also spelt *Frenji* or *Ferenj*) to describe the Europeans, with the term carrying a Christian connotation on the Somali and Sudanese cases.[224] The *Ferenji* (in Somali it was *Faranji*, but in Amharic *Ferenjoch*) was probably originated from French (could also be Franks) or from the third-century Roman word '*Franci*', which meant proud or bold.[225] Among the clans of the southern Somali Peninsula, *Sabti Faranji* (the Saturday year of the European) marked the day the European first invaded the coast of the Banaadir, but there was no day marking the Ethiopian invasion of Somali borderlands.[226] This was because there was no definitive arrival day of Ethiopian imperialism, given how the earlier conquest of Harar connected to the Ethiopian expansion into the Somali Peninsula.

The *Uluma* as First Nationalists at the Forefront

The relations between the Somali *uluma* and European colonial officials were generally characterised 'more by silence than voice', while the *uluma* mostly maintained 'an amicable relationship with one another'.[227] Sheikh Madar Ahmed Shirwa (1825-1918), a Qadiriyya leader, who chose the British side over the Ethiopians became a trusted friend of the British. Educated at an Islamic school in Harar, but based in Hargeysa, known in the nineteenth-century as the 'Little Harar', Sheikh Madar was an erudite intellectual widely credited for his positive way of seeking friendship with British explorers. According to Somali oral tradition, Sheikh Madar made himself an influential man as the first point of contact of British travellers from

[223] Haggai Erlich, *Islam and Christianity in the Horn of Africa: Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan* (London: Boulder, 2010), 34, 33 & 26.
[224] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016; and Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, July-August 2016; Abir, *Ethiopia*, xxi and 105; and Negash, *No Medicine for the Bite of a White Snake*, 11 & 63.
[225] Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism*, 32; and Kedourie, 'Introduction', 38.
[226] Enrico Cerulli, *Somalia Scritti Vari Editi ed Inediti*, Vol. 1 (Roma: A Cura dell'Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana della Somalia, 1957), 148.
[227] Reese, *Renewers of the Age*, 23.

the coast to the countryside.[228] Swayne described Sheikh Madar as a 'steady supporter of the British interests'.[229] Recurrent appreciation of Sheikh Madar in British travellers' diaries from 1891 up to 1899 offers glimpses into his influential position. His story also enables to glimpse important elements of emerging *uluma* influence. In 1897, the British traveller R. McD. Hawker described Sheikh Madar (who he mischaracterised his name as 'Sheikh Mattar Hersi') as 'the most influential mullah in Somaliland'.[230] In Peace's account in 1898, Sheikh Madar was 'one of the more important mullahs [sheikhs] in Somaliland'.[231] In Pearce's account in 1898, Sheikh Madar was 'a worthy old man'.[232] Sheikh Madar governed Hargeysa, 'a permanent village, where a certain amount of sorghum [was] cultivated'.[233] In 1895, another British traveller, Henry Cecil Lowther, observed that in Sheikh Madar's absence, his blind son-in-law ruled Hargeysa, an indication that the *uluma*'s authority was either rotatory or shared.[234] Sheikh Madar was the elder of what would become a long line of political and religious leaders in the Somali Peninsula, including men and women.[235] By clan, he was a Sa'ad Muuse/Habar Awal/Isaaq and by *tariqa*, he belonged to the Qadiriyya, the predominant *tariqa* in the Somali Peninsula at this juncture, of which he was one of its northern leaders. In the eyes of the British colonial state, he represented his Qadiriyya *tariqa* and in the eyes of the Ethiopian imperial rule, he represented only his Isaaq clan. But his written communication and other activities showed that he believed that he represented all Somalis. In a letter he wrote to the British colonial authorities in Aden during the advent of the Ethiopian incursions, he asked for British assistance against the Ethiopians.[236] However, unlike clan chiefs, the *uluma* such as Sheikh Madar never requested a British protectorate to confront the Ethiopians. The colonial accounts on the Somali *uluma* as described by colonial travellers reveal that, although the British recognised their local influence, they never conducted negotiations as they did with clan chiefs. This gave clan chiefs an empowered agency in the earlier Anglo-Somali relations.

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[228] Fawzia Yusuf Haji Aden, WhatsApp interview, 24-25 February 2020; Jawahir Yusuf Haji Aden, WhatsApp interview, 22-25 February 2020; and Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, 243fn3.
[229] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 7.
[230] R. McD. Hawker, 'VI. – On the Results of a Collecting-Tour of Three Months in Somaliland', *Ibis*, 41, 1 (1899), 52-81, 54.
[231] Pease, 'Some account of Somaliland', 60.
[232] Pearce, *Rambles in Lion Land*, 75.
[233] Hawker, 'VI. – On the Results of a Collecting-Tour', 54.
[234] H. C. Lowther, 'Lion Hunting beyond the Haud', *The Nineteenth century: A Monthly Review*, 38, 223 (1895), 474-493, 493.
[235] His great-grandchildren still play a prominent role in Somali politics. Fawzia Yusuf Haji Aden, WhatsApp interview, 24-25 February 2020; and Jawahir Yusuf Haji Aden, WhatsApp interview, 22-25 February 2020.
[236] Cited in John Drysdale, *Stoics without Pillows: A Way Forward for the Somalilands* (London: Haan, 2000), 49.

Both British colonial sources and oral family tradition mostly provide a favourable treatment of Sheikh Madar. While the colonial sources describe him as the founder of Hargeysa, his family tradition holds him as 'a religious leader' and 'a smart politician'.[237] The Somali guards travelling with Swayne took the religious advice of Sheikh Madar wholeheartedly to conduct Islamic obligations.[238] Peel cast Sheikh Madar in an unfavourable light as an ungrateful man, even painting him as a beggar, because he asked for material resources.[239] Sheikh Madar wanted something in return for his facilitation of the British expeditions, but he also asked the British explorers to counter the expanding Ethiopian imperial rule over the Somali borderlands. On more than one occasion, he implored the British travellers to halt the Ethiopian encroachment.[240] As Swayne stressed: 'Sheikh Mattar told us that he thought if the Abyssinians came down they would choose the time of the harvest, six weeks later'.[241] Acting as a kind of state authorities in the Somali Peninsula, the *uluma* had forged a trust between them and clan chiefs that drew them closer together. Sheikh Madar had close contacts with many clan chiefs and fellow sheikhs that successfully facilitated Swayne's trip.[242] Haji Mohamud Nur, one of the influential *uluma*, whom the James brothers described as the 'chief priest', was also 'friendly' to the British travellers.[243] He was 'a fine specimen of his race, tall, intelligent, and courteous', with 'a natural tendency to smile'.[244] He knew the British were 'good people', as he first encountered them during a visit to Mecca and Aden, ostensibly the former for pilgrimage, the latter for business. On their second return to the coast from the countryside, the James brothers mentioned that Haji Mohamud 'implored [them] to remain with him forever.'[245]

The *uluma* sought to establish themselves as uniting figures for Somali clans through their written communication. Sheikh Madar wrote 'to all mullahs, widads, and chiefs' of the Ogaadeen clans, especially Reer Maalinguur and Reer Amaadin, as well as the Gariire of the Dir clan beyond Iimeey.[246] Sheikh Madar wrote another letter to another sheikh recommending

[237] Fawzia Yusuf Haji Aden, WhatsApp interview, 24-25 February 2020; Jawahir Yusuf Haji Aden, WhatsApp interview, 22-25 February 2020; and Records of the Africa Bureau, 'Hargeisa', Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Mss. Afr. s. 551.
[238] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 16-17.
[239] Peel, *Somaliland*, 40. Peel mentioned meeting another Madar who was a sultan of one section of the Habar Yoonis clan (174).
[240] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 116.
[241] *Ibid*., 96.
[242] *Ibid*., 148 & 349.
[243] James, *The Unknown Horn of Africa*, 145.
[244] *Ibid*., 148.
[245] *Ibid*., 201.
[246] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 148.

British explorers pass peacefully on the road to the Shabelle River. Sheikh Madar also gave Swayne 'letters of introduction' to clan chiefs of Reer Ali/Reer Isaaq of the Ogaadeen clan and the Abasguul of the Absame clan.[247] In all his correspondence, he used the lingua franca of the Somalis: Arabic. The James brothers also mentioned another sheikh in Bur'o, belonging to the Isaaq clan, who gave them a letter to his fellow *uluma* in the Ogaadeen clan territory.[248] When Sheikh Madar issued a *laissez-passer* for British explorers to pass through some areas in the western Somali Peninsula, he was acting as the counterpart of Ras Makonnen, because both Sheikh Madar and Makonnen provided separate passports to British explorers.[249] Using Sheikh Madar's *laissez-passer*, Swayne commissioned one *wadaad* (an itinerant sheikh) named Sheikh Yoonis as a guide and saw in the clan territory of the Reer Amaadin/Reer Abdulle sub-clan of the Ogaadeen clan a settlement 'full of mullahs [sheikhs] from every tribe'.[250] Another Somali sheikh whose name was not disclosed had hosted Swayne for a while on Sheikh Madar's recommendation. Lowther reported that 'Sheikh Muhammid, son of Sheikh Elmi', the head of Milmil (Gaagaab) village and Haji Ahmed Warsame, a prominent sheikh in the village, were also 'excellent guide[s]' who assisted British travellers.[251]

The *uluma* formed friendly relations not just with the British but also with the Italians. They gave a warm reception to Italian travellers on the coast of southern Somali Peninsula. In a letter dated 12 March 1891, the Italian traveller and colonial official Ugo Ferrandi reported how a young Somali sheikh hosted him and welcomed him in Brava in the southern Somali Peninsula.[252] The *uluma* were generally receptive to the Europeans as the 'traveller's best friends'.[253] This was not because they were paving the way for the European colonial state formation project, but because they were striving to block the Ethiopian colonial state formation project. Their method of engagement with British and Italian imperialisms was based on political calculation: as long as the British and the Italians were friendly with the Somalis, they were not bothering with their imperialisms. In 1892, several Italian travellers visiting the zone of the Shabelle River received news of a large contingent of Ethiopian forces raiding on the banks of the river.[254] Somali borderland clans asked Italian travellers for assistance against

[247] *Ibid.*, 16.
[248] James, *The Unknown Horn of Africa*, 74.
[249] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 7 & 240.
[250] *Ibid.*, 192 & 204.
[251] Lowther, 'Lion Hunting beyond the Haud', 475, 485 & 493.
[252] Ugo Ferrandi, 'No Title', *L'Esplorazione Commerciale*, 6 (1891), 171-172.
[253] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, preface to the third edition, vi.
[254] Giuseppe Candeo, 'Un Viaggio nella Penisola dei Somali', *Atti Congresso Geographica Italiana*, 1 (1892), 349-367; Ferrandi, 'No Title'; Luigi Pennazi, 'Esplorazioni Baudi e Candeo nell'Ogaden', *L'Esplorazione*

the Ethiopians. The Somalis relished the useful expertise of the visiting British and Italian travellers. As they passed through, the travellers provided social health services for the Somalis and their beasts. Some of them acted as physicians; they attended patients and examined blind and lame people and offered medicine for the sick. They also tended to kill lions and hyenas who frequently took Somali herds.[255] This contributed to the positive impression the Somalis held for the Europeans in contrast with the Ethiopians.

The *uluma* were not all content with European expeditions in the Somali country before the Ethiopian invasion. Unlike Swayne's and Jennings' travellers in the 1890s, the James brothers in the 1880s considered the *uluma* (whom they called 'priests') as 'the most dangerous people in the country' in the 1880s. They were 'ignorant and fanatical', living in one of the most 'fanatical Mahommedan countries'.[256] Two Somali men – 'troubled characters' in the eyes of the James brothers – preached to the Somalis in Bur'o 'not to assist the Christians, who had come to take their country, demanding why they permitted the Christians to drink at their wells, where no white man had ever drunk before'.[257] One furious Sheikh, 'a hostile priest' as they called him, lifted his spear and denounced the white men 'with all his might and main', urging one local clan 'to no longer withhold their hands from slaying the strange infidels who had come to take their country'.[258] In 1884, the James brothers had with them a letter written on a British Government paper which was addressed to '[a]ll Sultans and Sheikhs' to help and not hinder their trip.[259] The suspicious *uluma* in the Isaaq clan territory sent letters to the *uluma* in the Ogaadeen clan territory, telling them that 'word had come from Mecca urging people to stop us, as the English had lately killed a great many Moslems (this referred to the British expedition in the Sudan), and that we intended to take their country, and were only the advance-guard of an army that was coming to devastate the whole land'.[260] This emphasis on the ownership of the country was the beginning of a new nationalism used by the *uluma* as part of their anti-imperial resistance. As the James brothers pointed out, a religious element was infused with nationalist arguments against their expedition. The Somali guides who

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Commerciale, 6 (1891), 274-277; and Enrico Baudi Di Vesme, 'No Title', *Bollettino della Società Geologica Italiana*, 10 (1891), 154-157.

[255] James, *The Unknown Horn of Africa*, 97, 128 & 150; Lowther, 'Lion Hunting beyond the Haud', 485-486; Peel, *Somaliland*, 203-207; Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 46 & 96; and Wolverton, *Five Months' Sport in Somali Land*, 99.

[256] James, *The Unknown Horn of Africa*, 73-74.

[257] *Ibid.*, 79.

[258] *Ibid.*, 113.

[259] *Ibid.*, 83.

[260] *Ibid.*, 129.

accompanied the James brothers were scolded for 'having accompanied Kafirs [infidels] through their land, and ended up declaring that they were no better than Kafirs themselves'.[261] One of the *uluma* asked Duale Idiris, the famous Somali guide from Aden and James brothers' principal interpreter, who had previously guided the celebrated expedition of Henry Morton Stanley to Congo in central Africa, as to why as a Muslim he 'had gone into the country with Christians'.[262] After the Ethiopian encroachment, the question over his Islamic faith and national belonging was not a concern as everyone felt a duty to defend the land. In the late 1880s, a few years after the James brothers' trip and before the Jennings and Addison's travel, the anti-imperial Somali politics shifted from anti-British to anti-Ethiopian nature as a result of the increasing Ethiopian pressures on the Somali borderlands.

The *uluma* sought to sharpen clan commonality to counter the hegemonic Ethiopian imperial ambitions of the ruling Amhara. The overriding problem that the Somali *uluma* faced urgently was what to do about the Ethiopian encroachment.[263] The *uluma* finally began to preach but not practise *jihad* against the Ethiopian Empire. At the height of the Ethiopian invasion in 1891, when the Ethiopian forces accelerated their raiding expeditions, the influential *uluma* began to navigate a new role as forerunners of defensive territorial nationalism. They would plead for all Somali clans to join in one cross-clan resistance by publicly preaching – with the expectation that the British would help them – a fight against the Ethiopian forces. On 25 July 1892, Swayne recorded in his journal how a Somali sheikh named Sheikh Aw Mohamed Sufi called for a *jihad* against Ethiopia.[264] With this preaching of *jihad* at a public gathering, unheard of since the days of Ahmed Gurey in the sixteenth-century, Sheikh Sufi argued that it was the right time for Somali clans to confront Ethiopian forces militarily. Coming from the eastern Ogaadeen area from 'the direction of Mudug' region in the central Somali Peninsula, Sheikh Sufi met with the Reer Ali of the Reer Isaaq sub-clan of the Ogaadeen clan. Reer Ali's horsemen gave him 'a great equestrian display' in his honour. Sheikh Sufi then made an urgent appeal, preaching 'for hours to the crowd squatting in the sandy riverbed'.[265] As Swayne reported: 'With my brother I stood at the Sheikh's side for a time. He was polite to us, and asked us to listen to his words, as they were on important matters. Our interpreter helped us to

[261] *Ibid*., 142.
[262] Cited in *ibid*., 127.
[263] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016; Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, July-August 2016; and Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Mogadishu, Somalia, April-June 2016.
[264] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, preface to the third edition, v-vi.
[265] *Ibid*., vi.

get their drift'.[266] While Sheikh Sufi stood – as remembered by Somali elders – as representative of all *uluma*, Swayne described him dismissively as 'not necessarily a very important man', but he quickly noted that his preaching made him a man of great presence among his Somali audience.[267] Sheikh Sufi was the father of Sheikh Ali Sufi and grandfather of Sheikh Abdirashid Sheikh Ali Sufi, a prominent religious family in the late colonial and post-colonial Somalia that originated from the Ogaadeen clan territory. Duale Idiris described the *uluma* in the Ogaadeen territory as 'sort of bishops' and he meant that most of the Somali *uluma* of the borderland were based in the Ogaadeen territory, although they were not all of them belonged to the Ogaadeen clan.[268]

The *uluma*'s preaching of nationalising Somali clans was a new movement of anti-colonial politics. Swayne reported that Sheikh Sufi was 'part of an organised plot for rousing the Somali tribes to combine against the Abyssinians'.[269] The most difficult issue at hand was how to convince divisive Somali clans to think as a nation. Sheikh Sufi left no stone unturned to exhort the clans to come together and 'began a long speech, which was heard in dead silence by the crowd, saying that now the white men had come it was time to attack the Abyssinians, and that if we would lead them with our thirty rifles, they could soon collect a large force and march on the Abyssinian chief, Basha-Basha'.[270] To say his final words, Sheikh Sufi 'lifted his spear and addressed the assembled people, beginning by himself singing what appeared to be a [poetic] composition of his own'.[271] His audience included men, women and children who conscientiously listened to what he was saying. Swayne also reported meeting another Somali sheikh called 'Seyyid Mahomed' with all the potential for offering national leadership for Somali clans. On 31 July 1893, Seyyid Mahomed received a letter from Sheikh Madar, asking him to provide a pass for the British traveller. Unlike Sheikh Madar and Sheikh Sufi, Seyyid Mahomed was the only Somali sheikh Swayne described extensively just because for his rigorous involvement in clan mobilisation for the *jihad*. Seyyid Mahomed lived with the Maalinguur sub-clan of the Ogaadeen and the inhabitants of his settlement consisted of 'mainly widads and mullahs from different Somali tribes'.[272] *Widad* or *Wadaad* is a Somali term for a

[266] *Ibid*., v-vi.
[267] *Ibid*., preface to the third edition, v & 124; and Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016.
[268] Cited in James, *The Unknown Horn of Africa*, 16.
[269] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 123.
[270] *Ibid*., 124.
[271] *Ibid*., 123.
[272] *Ibid*., 240.

(Muslim) sheikh, while *Mullah* is a similar term derived from Asia for a (Muslim) sheikh. In comparing him with other sheikhs and clan elders, Swayne noted:

> I went with the elders, through a dense crowd, to the Seyyid's hut. He was too old and feeble to walk over to camp, and had sent his son to ask if I would mind coming to him, to make his acquaintance and give him medicine. The Seyyid is known far and wide as a holy man, even my Dolbahanta headman, Adan Yusuf, having heard of him. Adan was glad to meet such a holy man, who was said to be invulnerable. He added that the Abyssinians lately tied the Seyyid up and fired at him point blank with Remingtons, but the bullets melted; they then bound him to a *guda* thorn-tree, and collecting all the dry branches about, lit a roaring fire at his feet, but obstinately refused to burn; so then they gave up interfering with him! [...] The Seyyid was cordial, and I gave him medicine at the door of his hut in the presence of his wives and children, who squatted on their heels in a semicircle round, whilst the townspeople collected in a mass to gaze at us through the palisades of the courtyard which separated the hut from the main street of the village. He had only seen one English party, that of Colonel Paget and Lord Wolverton, two months before, and they had left a good impression'.[273]

Unfortunately for the historical record, Colonel Paget and Lord Wolverton did not mention Seyyid Mahomed in their single traveller account.[274] Seyyid Mahomed was not *Sayid* Mohamed Abdulle Hassan, the famous Somali *jihadi* leader and the anti-colonial freedom fighter that emerged in 1899 and was dubbed by the British as the 'Mad Mullah' for his fierce fight against colonialism (see Part II). *Sayid* Mohamed was in Mecca at the time Swayne had met Seyyid Mahomed in 1893 and, when he returned to the northern Somali Peninsula in 1895, armed with his Salihiyya *tariqa*, he started a heated argument over the *turuq* orientation with Sheikh Madar and other Qadiriyya *tariqa* leadership. By contrast, Seyyid Mahomed was friendly with the British travellers and hosted them in his 'permanent village of three or four hundred huts, about the size of Hargeisa'.[275] He lived a quiet life, cultivating a farm on the banks of the Faafan dry riverbed, reading the Holy Koran to the people and educating the youth. Like Sheikh Madar, Seyyid Mahomed had relations beyond the Somali Peninsula. Swayne recorded how 'Seyyid Mahomed had written a letter on my behalf' to 'Dubbi Harre and Gudan Abatteri, two Arusi Galla chiefs of great influence' in the Oromo country.[276] Even though the *uluma* had contacts with each other and thus mainly acting as individuals, they formed their relations through *turuq* basis. *Sayid* Mohamed was from the rather militant Salihiyya *tariqa*, while Seyyid Mahomed and Sheikh Aw Mohamed Sufi, like Sheikh Madar, belonged to the Qadiriyya *tariqa*. Despite the Qadiriyya's passivist attitude, Seyyid Mahomed lacked the

[273] *Ibid*., 241.
[274] Wolverton, *Five Months' Sport in Somali Land*.
[275] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 241.
[276] *Ibid*., 244.

warrior qualities and war characteristics of *Sayid* Mohamed and *Amir* Ahmed Gurey: their charisma, youthful energy, military skills and economic inducements to attract Somali clans behind him. But, like other previous *uluma*, Seyyid Mahomed wanted to defend his community and country from the encroaching Ethiopians. However, not every Somali sheikh saw Ethiopian imperialism through the same eyes. For example, in the late 1890s, when the Ethiopian forces further expanded their rule into the Somali Peninsula, Sheikh Abdallah Al-Sadiiq, who was appointed as *Ra'iis Al-Muslimuun* (the Head of the Muslims) in Harar by Ras Makonnen, accepted the status quo and worked with the Ethiopian authorities. He, however, preferred the rule of the Ottoman Sultanate and had maintained close relations with its rulers in Istanbul, Turkey, while temporarily still serving under the Ethiopian rule in Harar.[277]

The growing Ethiopian encroachment did not initially lead to the emergence of an anti-imperial leader, even though an external adversary was generally essential for the unity of common resistance and the creation of national identity. As Swayne observed of Seyyid Mahomed: 'If he were a fighting man the Seyyid would probably have developed into a first-class Mahdi, and long ere this he could have made a combined movement against Abyssinia; but his influence, like that of other Somali sheikhs and mullahs, is almost entirely social and religious'.[278] Swayne miscalculated the role of the *uluma*, because their anti-imperial efforts constituted crucial evidence of an active attempt at playing a leadership role. Seyyid Mahomed – as Swayne himself recorded – proposed an all-Somali clan crusade against the occupying Ethiopians, travelling from one clan territory after another to the border areas. He urged Somali clans to unite as one community against one common enemy and actively sought to mobilise local forces to face the Ethiopian forces.[279] What Sheikh Madar, Sheikh Sufi and Seyyid Mahomed did – attempting to unify all Somalis against one common enemy in unison – was a work of national mobilisation aimed for two reasons. First, to reject Ethiopian imperialism and foster religious and territorial unification. Second, to organise Somali clans around a common national interest to cast out the Ethiopians, while also calling for Somalis to embrace an idea of national unification in the face of the expanding Ethiopian imperial rule. As the *uluma* kept no daily accounts of their activities, their descendants still living on the borderland areas recounted about their forefathers' concerns.[280] They recalled that the *uluma* feared the loss of

[277] Erlich, *Islam and Christianity in the Horn of Africa*, 46.
[278] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 240.
[279] *Ibid*., 241.
[280] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016; and Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, July-August 2016.

their property, religious identity, territory and independence. For the descendants of the *uluma*, these national values they defended so hard were intertwined and warranted sacrifice.[281] Territory and belonging were invariably more interconnected in the borderlands as Somalis sought to negotiate daily encounters with colonial authorities.[282] As the loss of their land to the Ethiopian occupiers placed a burden on the Somali lives, the *uluma* were now more concerned about the fall of their country than any other. Unlike Muslim intellectuals in the Russian Empire, religion was not the pressing political issue facing the Somali *uluma* under the Ethiopian Empire, but it was utilised for the defence of the national territory anyway.[283]

Defending the Nation: The 'Poor Oppressed Country'

There is a tendency in imperial history to argue that the nation-building projects in the colonised world began with the imposition of 'modern forms' of colonial rule. Critics of exogenous theories have proposed new ways of investigating the endogenous roots of anti-imperial national activities to inform the wider historical studies.[284] In this regard, the Somali *uluma* had much more in common with other *uluma* in East Africa and South Asia, who elucidated the colonial crisis through religion.[285] The *uluma* exhorted the borderland clans to utilise their national identity '*u kaca Soomaalinnimadiina*' (stand up for your Somaliness).[286] Echoing Benedict Anderson's classic theory of 'imagined communities', the *uluma* remarkably imagined inventing an Andersonian Somali political community – one based in a sense on Islam.[287] But while Anderson was thinking of the print capitalism that fostered the imagined national communities in much of Europe and the colonial world, the Somali community was different in the nineteenth-century as it was largely based on an oral culture. As the custodians

[281] Oral history from Sheikh Nuur Mohamed Osman 'Nuur Geelle', video clip (between min. 4:35 and 4:57), found while research fieldwork in Mogadishu, Somalia, between May 2015 and September 2015.
[282] Anna Bruzzone, 'Territory and Belonging in the Kenya-Somalia Borderlands: Negotiating Political Authority in Wajir, c. 1912-1963', in Didier Guignard and Iris Seri-Hersch (eds.), *Beyond Dispossession: Spatial Appropriations in Modern Empires, 1820-1960* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019), 101-127.
[283] Elena I. Campbell, *The Muslim Question and Russian Imperial Governance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015); and Mustafa Tuna, *Imperial Russia's Muslims: Islam, Empire, and European Modernity, 1788–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
[284] Kahn, *Other Malays*, xiii.
[285] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Mogadishu, Somalia, April-June 2016; Randall L. Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Change and Traditional Islam on the East African Coast, 800-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002 [1987]), and A. M. Zaidi (ed.), *Evolution of Muslim Political Thought in India*, Vol. I: *From Syed to the Emergence of Jinnah* (New Delhi: Michikof Panjathan, 1975).
[286] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016; and Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, July-August 2016.
[287] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

of religious knowledge, the *uluma* were the traditional literati (intelligentsia): 'the mullahs themselves [were] always worrying the traveller for Korans and paper, they at least can read and write'.[288] Although the *uluma* did not use print capitalism as such, they adopted an alternative intellectual form of cultural nationalism that stressed how the Somalis shared one culture, language and religion. As shown by their intellectual production, they used vernacular Somali language with an Arabic script and also proper Arabic to communicate with fellow *uluma* in the Somali Peninsula, but not to communicate with ordinary people.[289]

Old men whose grandfathers were *uluma* described how the *uluma*'s earlier anti-colonial appeals for national unity and defence were received with mixed feelings. Ahmed Ali Hassan, one of the elders, argued that 'although people became emotional to the appeals of the *uluma* during the night, they were doing their business during the day'.[290] According to their critics, the *uluma* were also defending their position. Mama Aanood Hassan Siad Faalshow mentioned how the *uluma* rejected to accept the rule of external invaders which was intent on undermining their local authority.[291] The *uluma*'s calls for united *jihad* were also a political tool to broaden their religious position. Mama Aanood heard from her forefathers that 'they [the *uluma*] were saying to the people that the Amhara were coming to Christianise you'.[292] Through their *jihad*, religious preaching and political thinking, the *uluma* aided the advance of national identity, which in this case was a sentiment to defend what one Somali described to Swayne as their 'poor oppressed country'.[293] The call for *jihad* placed responsibility on the Somalis to act upon the exhortation of the *Ardul Soomaali li'l Soomaaliyiin* (the Somali Country for the Somalis).[294] Their *jihad* amounted to 'everyday forms of resistance' that James Scott described in his influential studies, *Weapons of the Weak* and *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*.[295] The *jihad* had proved a popular tool for anti-colonial mobilisation in many places, such as the

[288] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 290.
[289] 'Ab. al-R. Zaki, *al-Islam wa al-Hadarah al-'Arabiyah fi Sharq Ifriqiya* (Cairo: al-Majallah al-Misriyah li al-Dirasat al-Tarikhiyah, 1972); and 'Abdurahman al-Najjar, Al-Islam fi Al-Somal (al-Qahira: Madba_at al-Ahram al-Tijariyah, 1973).
[290] Ahmed Ali Hassan, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, 1 April 2016.
[291] Mama Aanood Hassan Siad Faalshow, WhatsApp interview, 18 January 2020.
[292] Mama Aanood Hassan Siad Faalshow, WhatsApp interview, 5 February 2020.
[293] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 124. For a similar case, see Pearce, *Rambles in Lion Land*, 98.
[294] For how this was also the case in colonial Sudan, see Gabriel Warburg, 'From Mahdism to Neo-Mahdism in the Sudan: The Role of the Sudanese Graduates in Paving the Way to Independence, 1881-1956', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 41 (6), 975-995, 995n10.
[295] James S. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1986); and James S. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1992).

Mahdist movement in Sudan in 1881-1898 and the 1857 rebellion in India.[296] The idea of *jihad*, based on self-defence and self-determination from imperialism, stood out as the first primary resistance bearing a national characteristic that was intrinsically a Somali struggle with a national liberation movement as its ultimate goal.[297]

However, the *jihad* was without a definitive leader. Pearce observed that the Somalis lacked 'a central controlling power' to be able to counter 'a common enemy armed with modern rifles'.[298] As such, if they could get arms, the *uluma* believed they could collect 'a large force and march on the Abyssinian[s]'.[299] By promoting cross-clan anti-colonial struggle, the *uluma* theorised a collectivist form of *wax-wada-qabsi* (cooperation) that created a precondition for *midnimo* (unity) to enable borderlands clans to go to war as one against the Ethiopian Empire.[300] Early European travellers were struck by the development of disparate clans living side by side among themselves in a system of cross-clan cooperation. Where the Habar Awal/Isaaq, Gadabiirsi/Dir and the Ogaadeen/Daarood had cooperated for only economic opportunities, they now began to cooperate against the Ethiopian Empire.[301] When describing the relations among themselves, the James brothers considered the Somalis not as clans, but as 'country folk'.[302] They told Ogaadeen clan elders that they came 'to trade their own country'.[303] Mindful of Adam Smith's theories, one of the James brothers once touched 'on the benefits that accrue to nations through peaceful commerce and settled government'.[304] The James brothers described some Somali attitudes as 'a national pastime', while mentioning that the Somali *tobe* was a 'national costume' in the Somali Peninsula.[305] Jennings and Addison made a nationality figure showing the number of their local party members. The section titled 'Nationality' differentiated the 'Somali' from the 'Abyssinian'. The Somalis were 78, the

[296] Jill C. Bender, *The 1857 Indian Uprising and the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); and P. M. Holt, *The Mahdist State in the Sudan, 1881-1898*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970). For a more critical analysis on the Mahdism in Sudan, but one more amenable to the Ethiopian position, see G. N. Sanderson, 'Conflict and Co-Operation between Ethiopia and the Mahdist State, 1884-1898', *Sudan Notes and Records*, 50 (1969), 15-40.
[297] T. O. Ranger, 'Connexions between "Primary Resistance" Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Central Africa, Part I', *The Journal of African History*, 9, 3 (1968), 437-453; and T. O. Ranger, 'Connexions between "Primary Resistance" Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Central Africa, Part II', *The Journal of African History*, 9, 4 (1968), 631-641.
[298] Pearce, *Rambles in Lion Land*, 176.
[299] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 124.
[300] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016; and Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, July-August 2016.
[301] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 110.
[302] James, *The Unknown Horn of Africa*, 199.
[303] *Ibid*., 218.
[304] *Ibid*., 215.
[305] *Ibid*., 202 & 325.

Ethiopians 26, altogether 104.[306] The larger number of Somalis had strengthened the Ethiopian anger towards the Somalis. The two peoples saw each other as separate, but equal nations. Predicting that there would be a sign that 'the nation [Ethiopia] will go to war with somebody [Somalia]', Jennings and Addison mentioned a match between 'countrymen' [Ethiopians] versus 'countrymen' [Somalis].[307]

Anthropologists have long highlighted the clan conflicts within the Somalis and overlooked the common clan discursive ideas about confronting imperialism.[308] Cross-clan activities of the *uluma* in the form of national unification could provide a power to resist, if not a form of freedom of movement within the Somali zones (see Part II).[309] Since the Ethiopian invasion only chronically affected the clans inhabiting the borderlands in the western and northwestern Somali Peninsula, it was difficult to persuade other inland clans who were only marginally affected by Ethiopian imperialism to join the *jihad*, even with the persistent appeal from the non-clan-based *uluma*. It would be misleading, however, to assume that the late nineteenth-century *uluma*-led anti-imperial activities were simply based on clan before the emergence of non-religious nationalists (see also Part II). Although the *uluma*'s initial efforts at creating a Somali national mobilisation in an all-clan unification never attained the level of one organised insurgency movement, they positioned themselves alongside their clan helmets. This mission was not altogether unsuccessful, as it inspired a whole generation of *turuq* leadership. The development of community spirit – what the Muslim thinker Ibn Kahldoun called *assabiyah* (group solidarity) – tended to lead to the emergence of a new form of anti-colonial mobilisation.[310] Thus was the formation of an institutional form of anti-colonial resistance (see Part II).

Conclusion

The dearth of contemporaneous written records makes the drawing of authoritative conclusions here difficult other than tentative conclusions that can only be based on limited historical

[306] Jennings and Addison, *With the Abyssinians in Somaliland*, 84.
[307] *Ibid*., 194.
[308] I. M. Lewis, *The Somali Lineage System and the Total Genealogy: A General Introduction to Basic Principles of Somali Political Institutions* (Hargeisa, Somaliland Government, 1957); Ioan M. Lewis, *Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society* (Trenton, N.J.: The Red Sea Press, 1994); and I. M. Lewis, *Saints & Somalis: Popular Islam in a Clan-based Society* (London: Haan Associates, 1998).
[309] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016.
[310] Ibn Khaldûn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, abridged edition edited by N. J. Dawood, translated by Franz Rosenthal, introduction by Bruce B. Lawrence (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

observations about matters of anti-imperial activities in the nineteenth-century Horn. However, the nineteenth-century brought with it a time of social and political upheavals in the Somali Peninsula and elsewhere in the Horn and East Africa. From an observable asymmetrical position, modern Somali nationalism emerged from a tension between two sources of imperialism: regional and global. As it manifested from the two imperial invasions, it was partly a regional response to global dynamics. The underlying original factors of the rise of nationalism in the Somali Peninsula originated from the threats of these two imperialisms that eventually intertwined: European and Ethiopian. Hassan Mahadalla argued that Somali nationalism was inherently an 'anti-colonial phenomenon', but the crucial unanswered question remained which type of anti-colonialism.[311] Initially born as an anti-imperial struggle against Ethiopian imperialism, Somali nationalism lent itself more broadly to the imperial project for acquiring further territorial expansion. As a result, the origins of anti-colonial Somali nationalism arose not as a reaction to European colonialism but to Ethiopian imperialism of the Somali borderlands. Miles Larmer and Baz Lecocq highlighted that 'nationalism as a political ideology found its origins both in opposition to old empires and the assertion of new ones'.[312] Although Somali nationalism began as a basis for the rejection of – and resistance to – both Ethiopian and European imperialisms, the intention of first Somali nationalists was not just defending the Somalis from two external occupations, but also to select one out of five colonial powers.

This Part I has connected Somali studies with Ethiopian studies. In the eyes of Somali elders, looking back more than a century later, the most difficult of all colonial state formation projects was the Ethiopian one.[313] For them, the anti-imperial Ethiopian resistance was a much stronger impulse than the anti-imperial European resistance.[314] To paraphrase Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism*, the Somalis 'can be expected to be one in which nationalism persists, but in a muted, less virulent form'.[315] The colonial partition of the Somali people into five zones stretching across the Horn led to anti-imperial resistance attempts that combined religious and secular elements. The Part I has brought to the fore more a history of early anti-imperial

[311] Hassan Mahadalla, 'Pithless Nationalism: The Somali Case', in Abdi Mohamed Kusow (ed.), *Putting the Cart Before the Horse: Contested Nationalism and the Crisis of the Nation-State in Somalia* (Trenton, N.J.: The Red Sea Press, 2004), 59-74, 69.
[312] Miles Larmer and Baz Lecocq, 'Historicising Nationalism in Africa', *Nations and Nationalism*, 24, 4 (2018), 1-25, 6.
[313] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, March-April 2016.
[314] *Ibid*.
[315] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), 122.

activities in the Horn than a history of the imperial state-building in the Somali Peninsula. The colonial history of the Horn has too often been conceived as a clash between the local colonised and external coloniser rather than within the local populations. The moment of the colonial partition, as Mahmood Mamdani reminds, 'was a meeting point of several inter-related developments'.[316] One of such meeting points occurred in the form of confrontation between Islam and imperialism, as Martin Klein showed in his seminal work of colonial Senegal.[317] This kind of historical examination was not done in the Somali Peninsula. Of all other five Somali zones curved up by imperial regimes, the Somali borderland in Ethiopia has not received an in-depth serious historical assessment and thus remains the most misunderstood. Haggai Erlich painted a misrepresentative picture of non-confrontation between the Somalis and Ethiopians, contending that the Ethiopians 'did not actually colonize the Ogaden, but rather continued raiding and taxing there'.[318] However, the Somalis were not only – as Erlich puts it – 'victims of their disunity'.[319] Nor were they only victims of their own destiny. Instead, they were casualties as well as choosers between British imperialism and Ethiopian imperialism. Only an institutional formation of one hybrid national resistance movement would undermine all the colonial empire-building projects in the Horn. This is the history of Part Two.

[316] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 37.
[317] Martin Klein, *Islam and Imperialism in Senegal: Sine-Saloum 1847-1914* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968).
[318] Erlich, *Islam and Christianity in the Horn of Africa*, 49.
[319] *Ibid*.

PART II

RADICAL NATIONALISM

Sayid Mohamed Abdulle Hassan and the Dervishes, 1899-1920

Introduction

> 'Oh, intending colonist[s], be warned in time, and leave this country well alone: a country full of bad people, no water, and little green grass. The Wilderness of Canada is bad enough, but quite a paradise after Somaliland'.[320]

This piece of interesting Eurocentric advice was given to the potential Ethiopian and European colonialists by a British Victorian traveller who observed parts of the Somali Peninsula. When Charles Victor Alexander Peel, the first British and second European explorer (after the Italian traveller Luigi Robecchi-Brichetti) who visited central Somali Peninsula, drafted that advice in the early 1890s, the Somali Peninsula was not subject to a colonial state.[321] But the Somali people were already under pressure from four 'intending colonists': the Ethiopians, the British, the French and the Italians. Peel forewarned the imminent emergence of an anti-colonial struggle. As the imperial powers expanded their territorial gains, they forced the Somalis to organise to insurgency movement and use *jihad* (holy war) to challenge the colonial rule. The Somalis founded a political institution named the Dervish (Dervishes in plural; *Daraawiish* in Somali) in the late nineteenth-century. This politico-religious insurgency organisation with a mass cross-clan appeal soon spread in the Somali Peninsula at the turn of the twentieth-century. It was initiated by an intrepid Somali intellectual *Sayid* Mohamed Abdulle Hassan who returned from some years of studying in Arabia. *Sayidka* (the *Sayid*), as he was better known, sought to mobilise the Somali clans against any form of Christian rule (whether regional or international, black or white, imperial or colonial). Started as a religious reformist and revivalist pressure group, the *Sayid*'s Dervish struggle soon developed into an anti-colonial

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[320] C. V. A. Peel, *Somaliland*: *Being an Account of Two Expeditions into the Far Interior* (London: Darf, (1986 [1900]), 259.

[321] Luigi Robecchi-Bricchetti, *Somalia e Benadir: Viaggio di Esplorazione nell'Africa Orientale* (Milano: Carlo Aliprandi, 1899); and Luigi Robecchi-Bricchetti, *Dal Benadir: Lettere Illustrate alla Società Antischiavista d'Italia* (Milano: Carlo Aliprandi, 1904).

political project. The British first recounted and recorded the formation of the Dervishes on 6 September 1899.[322]

The *Sayid*'s strategy was to consider who to confront first: the Ethiopians or the Europeans. For him, the only way to respond to colonising Christian regimes was radical resistance and this meant using an insurgent approach to resist colonialism.[323] Since the imposition of colonialism was cruel, the Somali response would be even crueller. As Mahmood Mamdani stresses in colonial Africa: 'The form of rule shaped the form of revolt against it […] Every movement of resistance was shaped by the very structure of power against which it rebelled. How it came to understand this historical fact, and the capacity it marshalled to transcend it, set the tone and course of the movement'.[324] The *Sayid* developed a violent politics for the hitherto non-violent line of the previous *uluma* (religious scholar-jurists), stressing the practice of *jihad* in the resistance to the Ethiopian occupation. He was not alone in mobilising against Ethiopia for a wider pan-Somali anti-colonial *jihad*. However, he did lead the Somalis to an organised anti-colonial *jihad*, even when his Dervishes failed to position themselves alongside the *uluma*'s previous calls of *jihad* against Ethiopian imperialism (see Part I). While the previous *uluma* were not successful in unifying Somali society under the calls for their *jihad*, they foregrounded a political legitimacy the *Sayid* needed to start his struggle. Even though the previous *uluma* encouraged *jihad* against an invading Ethiopian army, they had not allowed themselves to take the lead (see Part I). One of the tasks of the *uluma*, everywhere in the Muslim world, was to counter colonial regimes and unify the people, educate them, represent them to the colonial state and create a national resistance movement if the need arose.[325] At the time of the imposition of colonial rules, the Somali *uluma* were expected to make *jihad* more than just words. The *jihad* prevailing in the Muslim world as a consequence of colonialism led the *Sayid* to play plural roles both individually and organisationally before going to the war on

[322] Kenya National Archives and Documentation Services (KNADS), 'General Description', Provincial Commissioner, Northern Province, PC/NFD/4/6/1, [undated]. See also Neville Williams, *Chronology of the Modern World, 1763 to the Present Time* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1966), 386.
[323] Radicalism, as Anthony Giddens argued, was 'not just bringing about change but controlling such change so as to drive history onwards'. Cited in Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 2; and Chris Matthew Sciabarra, *Total Freedom: Toward a Dialectical Libertarianism* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 94fn17.
[324] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 24.
[325] Paul R. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison* (New Delhi: Sage Publications India, 1991), 88.

colonialism.[326] Painting themselves as defenders of oppressed powerless Muslims from oppressive powerful Christians, the *Sayid* and his contemporaries in the Muslim world all used the Islamic *jihadi* ideology for their anti-colonial resistance missions.

Most of the existing literature on the *Sayid* is hagiographic as much as hideous. While much has been written on the *Sayid* and the Dervish movement is the most extensively studied anti-colonial struggle in Somali history, Dervish studies has almost entirely focused on either the person or politics of the *Sayid*, putting undue emphasis on his personal charisma and leadership.[327] The Dervish organisation has not been studied as a separate unit of historical analysis and less attention was given to the *Sayid*'s intellectual ideas, his theories and practice. Even the type of nationalism that he proposed for anti-colonialism has not been separately examined.[328] Historical studies on the *Sayid* have been limited to colonial and post-colonial accounts that tend to over-simplify his position as being hero or non-hero without exploring the reasons for why this might be the case.[329] The existing scholarship has tended to limit the Dervish activities to the northern Somali Peninsula. This Part II extends beyond the north to reach to other southern parts in the Somali Peninsula, including the hitherto neglected Jubaland and the Somali region in Kenya, known as the Northern Frontier District (NFD). Because previous scholarship had either celebrated or condemned the Dervish leader and his Dervishes, the Part II presents a balanced historical re-assessment of the *Sayid* and his struggle. Commonly considered by scholars of Somali society as proto-nationalism, this Part II redefines the Dervish as an organisation originating from the previous build-up Islamic efforts of modern Somali nationalism initiated by the *uluma* (see Part I).

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[326] For a broader religious nationalism in the Muslim world, see *ibid*., 91-92.

[327] For the detailed documentation of the Sayid's voluminous poems, see Sh. Jaamac Cumar Ciise, Diiwaanka Gabayadii Sayid Maxamad Cabdulle Xasan (Xamar: Wakaaladda Madbacadda Qaranka, 1974); Yaasiin Cismaan Keenidiid, Ina Cabdille Xasan e la sua Attivita Letteraria (Naples: Instituto Universitario Orientale, 1984); Nicole Lécuyer-Samantar, *Mohamed Abdulle Hassan: Poète et Guerrier de la Corne de l'Afrique* (Paris: Afrique Biblio Club, 1979); Said S. Samatar, 'Poetry in Somali Politics: The Case of Sayyid Mahammad Abdille Hasan' (unpublished PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, 1979); and Said Samatar, Oral Poetry and Somali Nationalism: The Case of Sayid Mahammad 'Abdille Hassan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Abdi Sheikh-Abdi, Divine Madness (London: Zed Books, 1993).

[328] See, for instance, Samatar, Oral Poetry and Somali Nationalism.

[329] A. S. Bemath, 'The Sayyid and the Saalihiya Tariqa: Reformist, Anti-Colonial Hero in Somalia', in Said S. Samatar (ed.), *In the Shadow of Conquest: Islam in Colonial Northeast Africa* (Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 1992), 33-47; and Robert L. Hess, 'The Poor Man of God: Muhammad Abdullah Hassan', in Norman R. Bennett (ed.), *Leadership in Eastern Africa: Six Political Biographies* (Boston: Holmes & Meier, 1968), 65-108. Others emphasised his war against European colonialism. Ray Beach, *Warrior Mullah: The Horn Aflame 1892-1920* (London: Diane Pub. Co. 1990); Francesco Saverio Caroselli, *Ferro e Fuoco in Somalia* (Sindicato Italiano Arti Grafiche, Roma, 1931); and Gerardo Nicolosi, *Imperialismo e Resistenza in Corno d'Africa: Mohammed Abdullah Hassan e il Derviscismo Somalo, 1899-1920* (Catanzaro: Rubbettino, 2002).

The Part II establishes that the first intention of the *Sayid* was not aimed explicitly at the European imperial expansion, but rather at counteracting the Ethiopian encroachment. By putting the *Sayid* and his Dervish organisation into a plural framework, this Part II argues that understanding the *Sayid*'s struggle requires a holistic approach to placing his *jihad* within local, regional and global dynamics. The purpose of the Part II was not to paint the *Sayid* in brighter colours than he was hitherto portrayed, but to put the *Sayid* the individual and the Dervish the organisation into one frame. The emergence of the *Sayid* receives a fresh examination in this Part II, based primarily on his poems and other primary sources about him. The *Sayid* can best be assessed, not through colonial or anti-colonial dichotomies, but through the discursive criteria of a global leader he set himself in his preferred form of communication: oral poetry and prose. His poetry and prose were a testimony to the intellectual acumen and scholarly erudition of the *Sayid*. The poetic sources overall provided different perspectives of the *Sayid* and his Dervish struggle. The origins of his anti-colonial intellectual ideas can be found in the *Sayid*'s poetic corpus today remembered by male and female Somali elders living in Somalia, Somaliland, Ethiopia and Kenya as well as in the diaspora. These elders, who inherited oral Dervish tradition from their forefathers, included several of his descendants and the descendants of his wives. There were also key informants, including young and old women, most notably a woman poetess in Hargeysa, Somaliland, who memorialised most of the *Sayid*'s poems during her tender age.[330] It is important to highlight that one can infer that oral testimonies were what Somalis thought about the *Sayid* differently since his time. It would not be striking that these different positions survived over a century. The informants constructed their different historical viewpoints on the stories they heard or had been taught about the *Sayid* at a turbulent time in the region's history. This came with a pile of prejudices to either lionise or demonise him. Even though oral sources tended to balance archival sources, some elders sought to eulogise the *Sayid*. One of them, Bashiir Ali Mohamed, seemed to have a greater admiration for the *Sayid*, not because he adhered to his religious ideology or belonged to his clan, but because of then political tension in the Somali region in Ethiopia.[331] Both archival and oral sources help to reconstruct the various aspects of the *Sayid* and his struggle, but they had their limitations. As archival sources, for example, largely provided a prejudiced colonial

[330] Somali male and female elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 4 August 2016.
[331] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016. During my research into the *Sayid*, I came across some of the *Sayid*'s family members. In 2017, I had a brief historical discussion about the *Sayid* with General Muuse Hassan Sheikh, the grandnephew of the *Sayid* and the *Sayid*'s great-grandniece, both living in the diaspora, at Hotel Jazeera in Mogadishu, Somalia. In December 2019, I had another brief historical discussion in Djibouti with another great-grandniece of the *Sayid*.

position of the *Sayid* and oral sources countered them by making him a 'hero', both sources eventually warranted intervention from other sources, such as poetry.

'Do you not see that they have destroyed our religion'

The *Sayid* returned at the time Peel was warning the would-be colonialists. After years of pursuing higher education and conducting religious obligation in Mecca in *Hijaz* (present-day Saudi Arabia) in the 1880s, the *Sayid* was indoctrinated into a radical anti-colonial *jihadi* idea. In Mecca, he ingratiated himself with two notable Sudanese *uluma*: his main mentor and tutor *Sayid* Muhammad Salih Al-Rashiidi and the anti-colonial leader 'Mahdi' Muhammad Ahmad bin Abdallah. From the former, he borrowed the title '*Sayid*', the latter the name of the Dervish struggle in Sudan.[332] As someone who was exposed to active anti-colonial resistance activities in Arabia, the *Sayid* tasted the power and boundaries of colonialism. Born around 1856, the *Sayid* felt the pain and pressure of the alien infidel imperial/colonial regimes both at home and abroad, so he hastily returned home to establish a *jihadi* organisation like the Mahdist in Sudan in his own country. His sudden return to the northern Somali Peninsula in 1895 meant that he came face to face with colonialism. His first confrontation with the colonial state occurred over imperial port taxation systems. As he returned by dhow from Aden to Berbera, he immediately questioned the authority and operation of the British colonial authorities. When a British colonial official who was screening the arrivals at the Berbera port demanded the *Sayid* to pay a landing fee, the *Sayid* was reported to have retorted 'are you the owner of the country, why are you asking me to pay a landing fee?'.[333] Hence the colonial authorities nicknamed him *Wadaadkii Waalnaa* 'the Mad Mullah' because the previous Somali *uluma* had rarely confronted them directly with those radical questions about the ownership and national belonging of the Somali Peninsula. The derogatory name of Mad Mullah forever remained an official title during the British colonial rule.[334]

The *Sayid*'s challenge to the British state was a surprise to both the colonial authorities and the Somalis. Rival prominent *uluma* in Berbera like Sheikh Aw Gaas Ahmed quickly suggested to

[332] For the Dervishes in Sudan, see Philip Warner, *Dervish: The Rise and Fall of an African Empire* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Books, 2010 [1973]).
[333] Aw Jaamac Cumar Ciise, Taariikhdii Daraawiishta iyo Sayid Maxamad Cabdulle Xasan (1895-1921) (Muqdisho: Wasaaradda Hiddaha iyo Tacliinta Sare, Akadeemiyadaha Dhaqanka, 1976), 9. Translation mine.
[334] James Willes Jennings and Christopher Addison, *With the Abyssinians in Somaliland*, with a preface by Colonel A. N. Rochfort (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1905), 30.

the British to detain him or else, he prophetically insisted, he 'would be searched in a faraway place'.[335] Emerging at a time when the Qadiriyya had flourished and was the predominant *tariqa* in the northern Somali Peninsula, the *Sayid*'s second confrontation occurred in the form of élite competition with the local *uluma*. During his brief presence in Berbera, he quickly created a name for himself by implicating himself in a tense dispute over religious Islamic duties and obligations.[336] He hid himself in his anti-colonial project at this period to compete with other *uluma* through discursive religious battles based on what was right and wrong in daily religious practices. In his initially controversial but powerful sermons, he preached against the Qadiriyya's doctrine of *tawassul* (intermediation) – a spiritual intermediary for an ordinary Muslim to seek divine help. Many years later, Somali elders (both devotees and critics) recalled that the *Sayid* also preached against the consumption of coffee and chewing *khat* (a leafy green plant containing small stimulant drug), a preaching considered extreme by the local *uluma*.[337] His rival *uluma* provided no alternative leadership nor a religious-nationalist project to counter either the *Sayid* or the colonial state. Even if they had one, this would have stirred up more conflicts than it resolved, so they chose to remain reticent about the call against anti-colonialism as suggested by the *Sayid*. The *uluma* were not alone taking this position. Whether or not to fight colonialism on the battlefront was a broader question in other parts of Muslim (west) Africa.[338]

As the bustling urban town of Berbera proved to be rather hostile to him, the *Sayid* left the urbanised colonial centre for rural areas around Oodweyne where he established a close relationship with Sultan Nur Ahmed Amaan Diiriye Sugulle of the Habar Yoonis clan of the Isaaq.[339] Unlike his rivals who mostly lived at urban centres, the *Sayid* was now moving from one rural area to another, attracting the attention of rural inhabitants on the road. Despite the

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[335] Quoted in Ciise, Taariikhdii Daraawiishta, 11-12.
[336] Heather Marie Akou, *The Politics of Dress in Somali Culture* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2011), 43.
[337] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016; and Somali male and female elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 4 August 2016. Cf. Ciise, Taariikhdii Daraawiishta, 10; and Scott Reese, *Renewers of the Age: Holy Men and Social Discourse in Colonial Benaadir* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 11.
[338] Cheikh Anta Babou, *Fighting the Greater Jihad: Amadu Bamba and the Founding of the Muridiyya of Senegal, 1853-1913* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007); and John Glover, *Sufism and Jihad in Modern Senegal: The Murid Order* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2007).
[339] Ciise, Taariikhdii Daraawiishta, 13; and Major H. G. C. Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia, with Supplementary Preface on the 'Mad Mullah' Risings*, third edition (London: Rowland Ward, 1903), ix. Sultan Nur was with the *Sayid* until the end of the Dervish struggle. See F. L. James, *The Unknown Horn of Africa: An Exploration From Berbera to the Leopard River*, with additions by J. Godfrey Thrupp (London: George Philip & Son, 1888), 55; and Douglas Jardine, *The Mad Mullah of Somaliland* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1923), 274.

intellectual difference between the rural and urban *uluma*, living in both rural and urban areas, he operated mainly in rural areas. According to Dervish tradition, on his way from an urban to a rural area, the *Sayid* met orphaned boys converted into Christianity by French-speaking Belgian missionaries. When he asked them to which clan they belonged, the orphans replied that they were 'the clan of the Fathers (in Somali, *Reer Faddar*)'.[340] This response made him furious, because he believed recognising one's Muslim religion and patrilineal line of descent through *abtirsiinyo* (clan genealogy) was necessary to one's existence and identity as a Somali. The *Sayid* wrote in the first letter he sent to a Somali clan (the Idagalle, Garhajis) in 1899 thus: 'Do you not see that they have destroyed our religion, and made our children their children'.[341] At first, the *Sayid* started his activities as a rural preacher and established a *mal'aamad* (religious student hamlet), receiving a warm welcome from rural Somalis who recognised him as he projected himself: a revivalist Muslim sheikh purifying the faith.[342] He provided religious teaching and other tutorial lessons in addition to spiritual guidance for almost four years. After the declaration of the Dervish organisation in the Isaaq (Habar Je'lo and Habar Yoonis) settlement in Bur'o, where at a mass clan gathering at their wells, he proclaimed that 'infidel invaders' divided themselves into colonial zones, the *Sayid* moved to Qoob Fardood around Buuhoodle, a rural area populated by his maternal sub-clan of the Ali-Geri of the Dhulbahante clan. Qoob Fardood, as far as can be established from oral and colonial sources, was a place known as a religious village before the emergence of the *Sayid*.[343] From this rural clan area where both his father Sheikh Abdulle and grandfather Sheikh Hassan Nur were revered religious men, the *Sayid* found staunch loyal supporters. Aside from the clan connection, colonial sources show that he gained early adherents after succeeding in resolving the long inter-clan wars within the rowing Dhulbahante subclans.[344]

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[340] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016. On a somewhat similar version of the *Sayid*'s reaction, see Ciise, Taariikhdii Daraawiishta, 11; and Alice Bettis Hashim, *The Fallen State: Dissonance, Dictatorship and Death in Somalia* (Lanham, M.D.: University Press of America, 1997), 59. For a penetrating analysis, see Charles Lee Geshekter, 'British Imperialism in the Horn of Africa and the Somali Response, 1884-1899' (unpublished PhD dissertation, the University of California at Los Angeles, 1972), 213-214.

[341] Cited in United Kingdom National Archives (UKNA), Colonial Office (CO), 535, 'Colonial Office and Predecessors: Confidential General and Confidential Original Correspondence, Somaliland (Sir R. Wingate's Mission), Despatch, 1909'.

[342] For the *Sayid*'s early efforts for recruitment, see Bemath, 'The Sayyid and the Saalihiya Tariqa', 33-47.

[343] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 9 December 2019; Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Laas Aanood, (disputed between Somaliland and Puntland), 11 December 2019; and Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Wadaamagooyo, Somaliland, 12 December 2019. See also Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, 89.

[344] Records of the Africa Bureau, 'Appendix I The Mad Mullah' in 'History of the Somaliland Camel Corps – J.G. S.Drysdale', Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Mss. Afr.s.552; and Records of the Africa Bureau, 'Life of the Mullah' in 'History of the Somaliland Camel Corps – J.G. S.Drysdale', Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Mss. Afr.s.552.

Communication with Somali Clans

The *Sayid* benefited from external and internal bonds. From his rural settlement, he first began using prose by writing Arabic-written letters to Somali clans to convince them to join the *jihad* for one anti-colonial front. From the beginning, he first wrote to the Idagalle, Habar Yoonis and Habar Je'lo clans of the Isaaq in the northern Somali Peninsula. Historians have not examined his contacts with clans in southern Somali Peninsula.[345] In one of his later correspondences with the Mareehaan and Ogaadeen clans of the Daarood in British-held Jubaland in southern Somali Peninsula, he offered unique insights into how and why he had started his anti-colonial struggle.[346] His letter was of interest to the British colonial authorities as it provided glimpses of the *Sayid*'s thinking. The letter discovered his intellectual pedagogy as well as his paternalistic politics. Given the dearth of his available written work and the fact that this specific letter was never used before, it would be important to fully discuss the content of what he termed a 'proclamation' letter. He first recounted that, when he 'came to the Somali country', he found the Somali situation in misery. The Somalis who lived in the coastal areas were 'subjects to the English and those in the interior [were] under the control of the Abyssinians'. He felt unease when he found out that people were 'contented to such Governments, and none of them [were] able to stop the ruling of these Governments'. Instead, the local people helped them and sent 'their children to their churches', because they were told that their children were taken 'to teach them [how] to read, write and make accounts that they may be profited in days to come by the heathens'. This was true in the coast, but not in the interior, but the *Sayid* continued to contend: 'I found the state of things was very bad in my sight, I felt very sorry, and by this wrath I had, my thoughts were hateful and night to me was day, and day as night, and day a week, and week a month, and month a year, and a year a fearful eternity'.[347]

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[345] Several historians have mentioned the *Sayid*'s contacts with Somali clans in the Banaadir coast. See Lee V. Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society: Reconstructing the History of a Pastoral People, 1600-1900* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982); postscript; and B. G. Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods in Nineteenth-Century Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 180.
[346] KNADS, 'Letter from Mohamed Abdullah Hassan to Jubaland Somalis at Serenleh', Provincial Commissioner, Northern Province, PC/NFD4/7/1, undated [presumably 1916]. This section draws from this document translated from Arabic into English by the colonial authorities in the British Colony of Kenya.
[347] *Ibid*.

Shortly thereafter, the *Sayid* obtained 'a perfect command from God' to implement the Islamic law, which he wrote must cancel all the existing laws. Then, while he did not disclose where he received money, he wrote that he paid to hold a convention and collected clan chiefs '(sultans) and learned men'. Altogether, fifteen clan chiefs and two hundred and seventy learned men gathered. No doubt that what he meant by learned men were the *uluma* as there were no then other formally educated men in the Somali Peninsula. Next, the *Sayid* wrote that he advised all of them to stand firm by 'the law of our Religion' not by him, if 'they were contented to abide by open war'. Referring to God's command: 'Any one [*sic*] who befriends you, then you return such friendship and anyone who treats you evil then you return evil'. This meant to choose between the friend and the foe in the colonial powers. To the clan chiefs and the learned men, he offered 'to choose one man to be [the] head and leader of these affairs'. He bragged, 'so they appointed me, saying that no one is fit for such affairs but yourself'. Since they selected him as a leader, he warned that 'as you yourselves have chosen me, it then shall be whoever does not obey my orders I shall take away from him all his property and cut off of his hand and this shall be right according to the law of our religion'. He continued to make further warning of the consequences of any disobedience to him. 'As you have chosen me', he warned them, 'you have no choice of your own now and if you refuse to obey me I shall make war against you before I enter into war with heathens; and that time I shall break down all of your houses. So they agreed to this'. The *Sayid* noted that after three days, all the clan chiefs 'changed their mind and broke my orders but one 'Akil' named Nur'. The exceptional clan chief was Sultan Nur whose anti-colonial principle against the British preceded that of the *Sayid*'s. Recognising his support, the *Sayid* appreciated the fact that Sultan Nur was the only clan chief who initially sided and stayed with him. The *uluma* similarly deserted the *Sayid*: 'Likewise the sheikh[s] did the same except one named Abdalla Gorioo'.[348] The exceptional sheikh was Sheikh Abdullahi Qoriyow who would become the chief judge of the Dervishes. It was with the helping hand he received from Sultan Nur and Sheikh Abdullahi Qoriyow that the *Sayid* was able to start his anti-colonial *jihadi* organisation.

In his correspondence, nonetheless, the *Sayid* seems a starter as well as an organiser who represented on many things. Similar to the early years of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, the *Sayid* gained his early popular support from the lower section of society. He was a bit calculative of how they would qualitatively assist his struggle. According to him, 'this God

[348] *Ibid.*

gave me men of very low state to follow and love me who [were] Midgans, iron workers and others. These men were like a pillar of strength for they succeeded in killing all the 'Akils' save five, and the Sheikhs save twenty'.[349] His testimony shows that he preferred the so-called 'low caste' clans, while he sought the loyalty of the Somali *uluma* and influential clan chiefs by force.[350] It also showed that violence was at the outset his form of paving the way for himself. After eliminating potential local competitors, the *Sayid* appropriated their properties. The *Sayid* asked the clans he contacted to spread his message and not 'to listen to the words of the people who change[d] their religion, or to the hypocrites, or to the heathens, for they from the beginning to the end have assaulted Mohamed who is as far beyond mortals [*sic*]'. On the latter 'heathens', the *Sayid* stressed that 'God has commanded us to fight them', quoting from an 'explanation' of the Holy Koran made by other *uluma*: 'Fight the heathens with the sword and the hypocrite with the tongue'. In his words, 'at present as our country has been entered by the heathens by means of money […] so at present we have changed the Sheikhs explanation [*sic*] in this way 'Fight both the heathen and hypocrite with the sword for a hypocrite is far worse than a heathen [*sic*] for this reason who fight them all [*sic*]'.[351] Given his fanatical religious instructions, the *Sayid* was more of neo-Salafi than neo-Sufi. The neo-Salafis preached violence to confront both their local and external adversaries, but the neo-Sufis only authorised fighting against external invaders.[352]

Despite the relatively patronising tone he spoke to the clans in his letter, the *Sayid* wished to open up a new anti-colonial front in Jubaland at a time when other *uluma* like his Ogaadeen clansman Sheikh Abdirahman Mursal Omar were challenging the British colonial state without his cooperation.[353] The lack of cooperation was not part of the power struggle between the *uluma,* but part of power-grabbing between the two sheikhs. In his letter, the *Sayid* indicated how he was well-informed about the news of Jubaland and its surrounding areas. He wrote that he heard that the Europeans planned to build a house 'in your country and put their flag', but

[349] *Ibid.*
[350] Many of the loyal followers of the previous Somali *uluma* in the late nineteenth-century were also the so-called outcast clan of Midgaan. See James, *The Unknown Horn of Africa*, 137.
[351] KNADS, 'Letter from Mohamed Abdullah Hassan to Jubaland Somalis at Serenleh'.
[352] Mohamed Haji Ingiriis, 'The Invention of Al-Shabaab in Somalia: Emulating the Anti-Colonial Dervishes Movement', *African Affairs*, 117, 467 (2018), 217-237, 222.
[353] KNADS, 'Confidential – Somali unrest in the Northern Territories, February 29th, 1916', Somali Unrest 1916 18, 1926, Provincial Commissioner, Northern Province, PC/NFD4/7/1, sheet 81; KNADS, 'Intelligence, 23rd May, 1916 – Somali Unrest 1916 18, 1926', Provincial Commissioner, Northern Province, PC/NFD4/7/1, sheet 81; and Records of the Africa Bureau, 'Intelligence: Jubaland', undated, Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Mss. Afr.s.424.

he considered this act 'an evil business'. However, as long as 'your faith is strong', he advised, 'follow them [the Europeans] but make the day to be a night and teach your children the Koran and the law. Do not teach them the writing of Europeans or their language, for these two things are the beginning of all trouble'. If their children wanted money from the heathens, the *Sayid* promised, 'bring them to me, I shall give them money and the Ogaden [clan] daughters who are as the daughters of Israel. I also give them she[-]camels and horses which will be much better for them in so much that when they shall go away from me, they may be able to talk about it to those who are with the European and come to us'.[354] His equation of the Ogaadeen women with the Israeli women through an offer of gifts to clans reveals that the *Sayid* harboured admiration of the Jews, not anti-Semitism. Generous gifts like women could cement close reciprocal social relations between the Dervishes and local clans. The *Sayid* perceived that some clans were on the side of the colonial state just for material reasons and to some extent he was right. With promises and payments to the clans, much of which he received from other clans as donations, he cautioned the clans they should not abandon the Dervishes once they joined them. His intended audience was the ordinary people, the *uluma*.

Finally, and most importantly, the *Sayid* lectured the clans at length on how to engage with the Ethiopians and Europeans. This made two interesting differentiations in line with the preceding preferences of the other *uluma* (see Part I). However, he was also a pragmatic strategist who suggested realistic ways in the face of the two Christian colonial regimes. He went so far as to paint his call for *jihad* as a form of protection for Somali clans from both the Ethiopians and the British. For when the Europeans would come 'to your country', he emphasised, 'do not receive wages from them, and do not stay with them always unless you are afraid of trouble'.[355] He asked them instead to provide him with the vital intelligence data he so desperately needed to counter colonialism. 'Try to find out', he guided, 'if the Europeans are tired of fighting against us or if they are still full of energy. Inform us of all that you may hear'. He then made further promises for reward. 'Any one [*sic*] who can inform me with certainty', he promised, 'I will give him one hundred she camels, five horses, one rifle and one revolver'. In the event the clans were forced to stay with the Europeans, his advice was that they must not hesitate to fulfil their religious obligations of strictly following prayer times. Therefore, he instructed 'do not stop with them but go and pray, do not obey to their command, and do not fear them, even

[354] KNADS, 'Letter from Mohamed Abdullah Hassan to Jubaland Somalis at Serenleh'.
[355] *Ibid.*

if they will kill you, that time send me a word at once'. The *Sayid* understood that the European authorities were obliged by their laws to honour the religion of local people, so 'do not think that they [could] interfere in our religious matters because they are prohibited by their Government to trouble us in religious matters'. Conversely, the *Sayid* observed, the Ethiopians were different because they were 'troublesome as their Government [was] nothing, and they have no regulations or religion or law'. Eventually, he asked the clans: 'Pray much for us'.[356] Although ending with a prayer, the letter was not passive. It was a point of entry into the heart of Ethiopian rule and a point of departure from the British rule.

However, in aiming to extend *jihad* into the south and deep south, almost everywhere in the Somali Peninsula, the *Sayid* maintained his correspondence, continually and consistently writing letters to those Somali clans inhabiting at the periphery of the Somali Peninsula. Almost all Somali clans had direct and indirect communication with the *Sayid* who influenced anti-colonial activities in all other Somali lands, except French Somaliland; the people there did not have visible communication with the Dervishes. Both the British and the Italian colonial authorities reported that the Somali clans in British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland and the Somalis in the Ethiopian-occupied area had constant contact with the *Sayid*.[357] Confidential documents uncovered at the Kenyan National Archives reveal that the *Sayid* had also continuously communicated with the Somali clans in British East African Colony in Kenya.[358] The British colonial authorities had at the outset harboured the suspicion that the *Sayid* 'might cross the Juba river' in which case several Somali clans (namely the Mohamed Subeyr of the Ogaadeen and the Mareehaan) were highlighted to be likely joining him. But because some clans (including his own Ogaadeen clan) were still establishing a foothold in the Somali region in Kenya, they did not want to antagonise the British.[359] As the British colonial officer Charles Eliot in Jubaland wrote later: 'Whatever overtures were made to them by the Mad Mullah during the recent war met with no practical result, and they were by no means anxious that he should come southwards'.[360] If the Somalis in Kenya seemed unenthusiastic to receive the

[356] *Ibid.*
[357] For some of the letters sent by the *Sayid*, see Francesco Saverio Caroselli, *Ferro e Fuoco in Somalia* (Roma: Sindicato Italiano Arti Grafiche, 1931); and Jardine, *The Mad Mullah of Somaliland*.
[358] KNADS, 'Letter from Mohamed Abdullah Hassan to Jubaland Somalis at Serenleh'.
[359] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Nairobi, Kenya, March-June 2020; and KNADS, 'General Description, Jubaland Records, 1915', Provincial Commissioner, Northern Province, PC/NFD4/6/1, sheet 80.
[360] Sir Charles Eliot, *The East Africa Protectorate* (London: Edward Arnold, 1905), 119. Cf. E. R. Turton, 'The Impact of Mohammad Abdille Hassan in the East Africa Protectorate', *The Journal of African History*, 10, 4 (1969), 641-657.

Sayid, there were others who claimed Dervish membership there. A list of sheikhs following Sheikh Sharif Ali, a Somali religious preacher, in Jubaland and Somali region in colonial Kenya, shows a man by the name of Abdi Darawish, a Swahili Kenyan whose second name suggests that he was a member of the Dervish.[361] When the *Sayid* wrote his letter to Baardheere clans, he wanted them all to be Dervishes. Although denied by some Somalis, the fact that unrelated clans were in contact with him attested to his ambition to be a Somali leader.[362] The responses from various clans revealed that he embodied a national commander that the Somalis from deep in the southern Somali Peninsula could establish contact with him for support. By communicating with different clans to unite for the Dervish cause, regardless of whether they accepted or refused his *jihad*, the *Sayid* wanted to appear a leader who took himself for the task of a national unification project. By communicating with the British colonial authorities, the *Sayid* presented and positioned himself as the spokesman of all Somali people in his day. However, when communicating with the British colonial authorities, the *Sayid* claimed a religious identity, but the colonial authorities refused to recognise him other than his clan identity, a reflection of how the colonial state preferred secular identity through the divide and rule policy.[363] The *Sayid* wrote about himself as a Hashimi (Prophet Muhammad's clan), but the British colonial authorities wrote him back as Reer Hamar/Bah-Geri clan member. According to the British travellers, the *Sayid*'s sub-sub-clan Reer Hamar 'were originally considered to belong to the Ogadayn, but had in some mysterious way cut themselves adrift and established an independence of their own'.[364]

Before moving to the *Sayid*'s poetry and politics, it is important to discuss the role of women in the Dervish movement. If the Dervish male fighters seemed to reinforce the masculinist notion that combat was exclusively a male activity, Somali women played a visible role in the Dervish struggle. The *Sayid* was progressive in contrast with other anti-colonial *jihad*s in the Muslim world when it comes to women empowerment. He allowed women to play a decisive role in his *jihad*. Indeed, the visible actors of warfront were invariably men, but the position of women in the Dervishes has not been examined before. This is despite the fact that his mother

[361] KNADS, 'A List of Sherif Ali's Followers', Provincial Commissioner, Northern Province, PC/NFD/4/1/7, Garba Tulla, 17.7.28; and KNADS, 'Office of the Senior Commissioner, Northern Frontier Province, Meru', Provincial Commissioner, Northern Province, PC/NFD/4/1/7, 18th April, 1928.
[362] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 9 December 2019.
[363] For how the British applied the policy of divide and rule in India, see Amar Farooqui, '"Divide and Rule"? Race, Military Recruitment and Society in Late Nineteenth Century Colonial India', *Social Scientist*, 43, 3/4 (2015), 49-59.
[364] James, *The Unknown Horn of Africa*, 155.

Timiro Seed Magan 'Arro Seed', wives like Naado Buraale Abdi Omar 'Naado Indha-Saransar', sisters like Barni and Jamaad, daughters like Qaali, left a crucial imprint of their importance in the *Sayid*'s struggle. Mama Aanood Hassan Siad Faalshow, who inherited oral tradition from her forefathers, remembered that 'women were not allowed to go to warfront; they just remained house wives'.[365] Even if the *Sayid* would not sanction his women to go and fight physically, he allowed the Dervish women to act as military commanders in their houses. His mother Arro Seed commanded a Dervish brigade.[366] His principal wife Naado (of all his wives, she was the *Sayid*'s most favourite because of her unparalleled beauty) commanded another brigade.[367] His principal sister Barni was the only poetess among the Dervish fighters who was known for composing praise poems for their war bravery. His principal daughter Qaali was a kind of social adviser for her father. Overall, while the Dervishes practised a patriarchal system where men had the upper hand, the *Sayid* sanctioned women to have their voices heard as decision-makers and policy advisers. The Dervish women were not passive followers even intellectually. Both his sister and daughter challenged the *Sayid* in poetry, when they felt that he personally wronged them or their beloved husbands.[368] The *Sayid* retorted to them in poems with persuasive admonition. The poem by Qaali to her father the *Sayid* in which she complained about material neglect and demanded a better treatment provides particularly crucial evidence of how women had even voice of rebellion among the Dervishes.[369]

The Theory and Practice of the Dervishes

Contrary to previous historians who contended that the *Sayid*'s *jihad* was first aimed at the Somalis of the Qadiriyya *tariqa*, the Dervish *jihad* was – right from the beginning – primarily aimed at the Ethiopians.[370] The *Sayid* continued the strategy of the previous *uluma* by targeting the Ethiopian Empire rather than the British Empire. Like the Somali *uluma* before him (see

[365] Mama Aanood Hassan Siad Faalshow, WhatsApp interview, 5 February 2020.
[366] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016; and Somali male and female elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 4 August 2016.
[367] *Ibid*. Women had critical roles in pre-colonial and colonial wars in the Horn of Africa. See Richard Reid, *War in Pre-Colonial Eastern Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007), 155.
[368] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016.
[369] *Ibid*.; and Somali male and female elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 4 August 2016. See also Ciise, Diiwaanka Gabayadii, 246.
[370] Robert L. Hess, 'The "Mad Mullah" and Northern Somalia', *The Journal of African History*, 5, 3 (1964), 415-433, 420; and John P. Slight, 'British and Somali Views of Muhammad Abdullah Hassan's 'Jihad', 1899-1920', *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies*, 10 (2010), 16-35, 30.

Part I), the *Sayid* considered the Ethiopians as 'the worst enemies of Islam'.[371] He also thought them 'as his ultimate enemies'.[372] If his 'main instrument in his effort to unite his people was his call for war on the occupiers', the *uluma* accomplished this before him.[373] Since the era of Ahmed Gurey, the *Sayid*'s struggle was the first time the Somalis presented a cross-clan front to Ethiopia.[374] The primary objective of his mission was to drive the Ethiopians out of the Somali Peninsula by using the same military methods adopted by the Ethiopians against the Somalis. Only in response to the Ethiopian raiding expeditions of the Somali settlements did the *Sayid* begin incursions against them. While his *jihad* began as a war against the Ethiopian Empire similar to that of Ahmed Gurey's, the British colonial authorities in the imperial port town of Berbera mistook his rural mobilisation as an imminent threat to them. The British authorities, anxious of their shaky hold over the coast, assumed that the *Sayid*'s accumulation of arms constituted a potential danger to their immediate security and occupation of the strategic Somali coast. The *Sayid* himself compounded the situation by arming his followers with rifles, both bought and stolen, from several sources. The British authorities provoked him further by writing to him to return a gun taken by a defected Somali colonial auxiliary. This occurred at a critical time when the *Sayid* was collecting arms in preparation for *jihad* against the Ethiopians and had the enduring effect of redirecting his fury from Ethiopia to Britain.[375] The British authorities admitted that:

> The movement of the Mullah Mohammed Abdulla Ibn Hassan, once called the Mad Mullah, was primarily directed against the Abyssinians; but, as he gathered strength, he became able to enforce the principle that 'whosoever was not with him was against him', with the result that, amongst others, some of the tribes which were nominally under British protection fell victims to his displeasure. His disturbance and plunderings [sic] of these tribes naturally brought him into conflict with the British authorities, and hence arose the necessity for the various expeditions which have been got together for his suppression.[376]

The British suspicion was misplaced. The *Sayid* launched his attack on the opposing clans under the British rule later and he was initially on good terms with the British colonial bureaucrats in Berbera. Even when he first provided justice to his followers in the rural areas, he would send local Somali disputants for colonial court justice in Berbera.[377] Considering his

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[371] Haggai Erlich, *Islam and Christianity in the Horn of Africa: Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan* (London: Boulder, 2010), 55.
[372] *Ibid*., 4.
[373] *Ibid*., 56.
[374] *Ibid*., 50.
[375] Ciise, Diiwaanka Gabayadii, 14-15.
[376] Jennings and Christopher Addison, *With the Abyssinians in Somaliland*, 5.
[377] Enrico Cerulli, *Somalia Scritti Vari Editi ed Inediti*, Vol. 1 (Roma: A Cura dell'Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana della Somalia, 1957), 153; and Jardine, *The Mad Mullah of Somaliland*, 40.

cooperation with the British in terms of justice administration during his initial preparations against Ethiopia, not to mention his main concern for the impact of the Ethiopian encroachment, it is doubtful whether the *Sayid* ever intended to engage militarily with the British. The *Sayid* and the British became bitter enemies later, similar to Emperor Menelik and the Italians who had a good working relationship in the beginning as they had one common enemy to unite them, but 'ended up as the worst of enemies'.[378] In the testimony of colonial officials, the British and Italians knew that the *Sayid*'s struggle was first and foremost 'directed against Abyssinia'.[379] The lack of proper communication between British authorities in India and Aden (the latter was subordinate to the former) made an accurate assessment of him difficult. By invoking the days of Ahmed Gurey, the *Sayid* sought to unite them with Islam. He returned to British Somaliland at a time when Somali clans desperately needed leadership and unity against Ethiopian imperialism. He also emerged at an opportune time when the Ethiopians were consolidating their power over the northwest Somali Peninsula. Most of those affected by the Ethiopian invasion had given up hope, until the emergence of the *Sayid* as an organiser. The Ethiopian threat to the *Sayid*'s Ogaadeen meant his clansmen remained friendly with the British, because they were in turn friendly with the Ethiopians.[380] In the testimony of one British officer:

> It is well known that Great Britain was on friendly terms with Abyssinia, and it was unreasonable for the Somalis to expect such leadership from us. The mullahs began to supply that leadership, and later on the 'Mad Mullah', by interfering with our protected tribes, drove us to side against him with Abyssinia, thus rendering the struggle doubly holy by arraying a Mahommedan Power against two Christian ones. During part of the time, in the last three years, Abyssinian armies have been co-operating with an expedition, and one or two British officers have accompanied these forces.[381]

This first-ever armed attack of the Dervishes against an expanding imperial power was the best evidence that the *Sayid* armed his followers to end the Ethiopian occupation of the Somali borderlands, not the British rule in Berbera. As the Ethiopians advanced their expeditions

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[378] Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1991* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2002), 74.
[379] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, third edition, vi. The Italian colonial official Francesco Saverio Caroselli mentioned about the existence of an 'Abyssinian colony' in the Somali Peninsula. Caroselli, *Ferro e Fuoco in Somalia*, 42 & 45.
[380] On the testimonies of the Ogaadeen and other clans, see Records of the Africa Bureau, 'Extract from Captain H. G. C. Swayne's Private Journal, Somaliland, Abyssinia, 1893; map of routes in northern Somaliland, with MS. Additions, 1892', Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Mss. Afr.s.553. As early as 1884, a British traveller reported that the Reer Hamar showed 'a friendly welcome' as well as 'a disposition to be friendly and hospitable, and were indeed, the first Somali tribe against whom we could have no complaint'. James, *The Unknown Horn of Africa*, 156 & 158.
[381] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, preface to the third edition, vii.

against the Somalis to extend their authority and to enforce a coercive taxation system, destroying the pastoral economy of the Somalis on the frontier zones on the way, the *Sayid* decided to (re)act swiftly by force. In March 1900, he sent a contingent of Dervish forces to ambush the Ethiopian garrison in Jigjiga, in response to the Ogaadeen clan's urgent call for military assistance.[382] The Dervish forces successfully recovered herds owned by the Ogaadeen clan previously taken forcefully by the Ethiopians. The casualties on both sides were unprecedented.[383] The Ethiopians claimed they killed 600 Dervishes and the British concurred with the Ethiopians apparently to demoralise the Dervishes. The Dervishes never disclosed the number they lost in the battle, but they propagated that the number of the Ethiopians killed were much more than the dead Somalis. However, as the attackers, the Dervishes bore the brunt of the attack, but they succeeded in frightening the Ethiopians who felt compelled to retreat. The Ethiopian authorities in Harar hurriedly armed their children out of fear the Dervishes would conquer the once-revered Muslim city.[384] The *Sayid* and his Dervishes thereafter became power with which to be reckoned. Neither the British nor the Ethiopians could ignore the ability of the Dervish forces to undertake other attacks with the assistance of other Muslim populations in the Horn of Africa. Colonial traveller accounts highlighted that the Muslim people of Harar were among those who assisted the Dervishes to attack Jigjiga.[385]

The *Sayid* sought to establish military defences to defend the Somali clans inhabiting the border with Ethiopia. His initial objective was not, as David Laitin and Said Samatar assumed, to help his Ogaadeen clan resist the Ethiopian raids into their areas.[386] Although the Ogaadeen (or the wider Absame clan in general) bore the brunt of the first Ethiopian expeditions, they were not the only Somali clans hard hit by the Ethiopian invasion (see Part I). The colonial partition of the Somali Peninsula affected the daily lives of the *Sayid*'s paternal clan Ogaadeen and maternal clan Dhulbahante, dividing the *Sayid*'s immediate family between the British and the Ethiopian rules. In the Ethiopian language, the *Sayid*'s sub-clan Bah-Geri were 'Ethiopian dependents', meaning they were subjects of and subservient to the Ethiopian Empire. His

[382] Records of the Africa Bureau, 'List, in Chronological Order, of the Principal Ethiopian Expeditions in Somali Territories for the Forcible Collection of Tributes after the Stipulation of the Italo-Ethiopian Convention of the 16th March 1908', Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Mss. Afr.s.770. For a brief discussion on this first Dervish attack on the Ethiopian garrison at Jigjiga, see Cabdulqaadir Aroma, *Tiirka Colaadda: Maxay ka Curteen Colaadaha Sokeeye?*, 2nd edition (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Percetakan Zafar, 2005), 108.
[383] David D. Laitin and Said S. Samatar, *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State* (London: Gower, 1987), 56-57; and I. M. Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, fourth edition (Oxford: James Currey, 2002), 71.
[384] Hess, 'The "Mad Mullah" and Northern Somalia', 420.
[385] Jennings and Addison, *With the Abyssinians in Somaliland*, 41.
[386] Laitin and Samatar, *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State*, 57.

mother's sub-clan Ali-Geri was under the British colonial sphere. The Somalis who were opposed to the *Sayid* and allied with the British felt 'the inseparable hardship of a foreign military occupation much more than would otherwise be the case', but the British contended that the 'existing frontier [was] a merely provisional one'.[387] The final rectification of the Anglo-Italian frontier began in February 1906 at the height of the war between the *Sayid* and the British. Knowing nothing of these secret agreements, the *Sayid* was still feeling that the Ethiopians and British were equal infidel enemies. Despite his accurate intuition, he still preferred to act militarily against Ethiopia. Even when the British provoked him, the *Sayid* initially avoided attacking the British (and other European powers).

The British became hostile to the *Sayid* in 1899, before the Ethiopians became aggressive to the Dervishes in 1900. This prompted him to compose more biting poems about the British. Through his poetry, the *Sayid* stated a political position to prioritise retaliation against Ethiopia. The British gave no consideration of the subtle lines of his poetry, when the *Sayid* expressed in a poem that his arch-enemy was Ethiopia, not others. As he described himself: '*Nin Amxaar ah mooyee, intii edeg adduun joogta, Islaameedku wuxuu ii yaqaan ehulu-kheyrkiiye*' (other than an Amhara man, Muslim societies, as well as all other people in the world, recognise me as a pious man).[388] Although seemingly not separating the Christian Amhara (then the ruling group of Ethiopia) from the rest of Muslim Amhara, his conceptualisation of the war with the infidels (Ethiopians and Europeans) was dichotomous, not as a war between nations (Somalis and others), but one between *Islaanka* (Muslims) and *gaalada* (Christians).[389] Subsequently, the *Sayid* was confronted by a multifaceted infidel enemy: the British in the north, the Italians in the south, the Ethiopians in the west and Somali clan-sultanates within the two fragile Somali mini-states in the northeast and central Somali Peninsula, both Italian protectorates since 1889.[390] So the *Sayid* formed the anti-infidel politico-religious-based warfront in the northern

[387] Records of the Africa Bureau, 'Correspondence, Memoranda, papers as Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief of the Somali Coast protectorate of British Honduras, 1902-14', Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Mss. Afr.s.553.
[388] Somali male and female elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 4 August 2016; and Ciise, Diiwaanka Gabayadii, 22. Excerpts from *Sayid*'s poem '*Ogaadeen hadaan ahay*' (for I am an Ogaadeen [clan]). Translations mine.
[389] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Nairobi, Kenya, March-June 2020.
[390] Records of the Africa Bureau, 'Classified Document, 'Atti Internazionali e Convenzioni interne riguardanti la Somalia dal 1889 alla fine del Mandato Fiduciario (Classifica)', Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Mss. Afr.s.770; The India Office Records, 'Vol IX No 10 File 135 Somali Coast: alleged intention of the Italian Government to annex some part on the African coast, Bond passed by Sultan of Abula to M Suel', British Library, IOR/R/20/E/122: Jan 1880-Feb 1880; and The India Office Records, 'Vol XVII No 18 File 491 Proposed Italian protectorate over the territories from the eastern limits of the British Protectorate on the Somali Coast as far as the border of Zanzibar territories', British Library, IOR/R/20/E/173, Item 2: Jan 1889-Apr 1889.

and western Somali Peninsula and carried out *jihad* against all infidels and their Somali adherents, regional and international. The Ethiopians and British later attacked him on several fronts and at one time surrounded him.[391] In one of his poems, the *Sayid* provided an insight into what motivated him and how he came to clash with the British:

Dagaalkii nasaarada, anaa daalib ku ahaaye
Dalka ma lihid, anigaa ku iri dooraweynaha'e
Daliilkii Rasuulkii, anaa doonayoo helaye.

In the fight of the infidels [the British] / it was I who was adept
The land is not yours / it was I who said to the plump
On the Prophet's path / it was I who coveted and found it.

Anaa diiday maantuu lahaa, deeqan iga hooye
Diinkayga anigaan ku gadan, dabaqi naareede
Anaan labada daarood tan hore, derejo moodayne.

I repudiated when he [the infidel] / offered me a payment
For my religion / I do not buy off the upper deck of the hell
In this world and the heaven, the former / I see no prestige.[392]

The poem reveals that the *Sayid*'s anti-colonial struggle was stirred by a combination of religious principles and nationalistic ideals, more to the former than the latter. The first and third sentences of the poem presented religious reasons, while the second offered a nationalist argument. However, Islamism was squeezed in with nationalism. The British did not engage Somalis to translate his poems for them (rarely did a British colonial official understand the Somali language), an indication that they did not recognise the significance of poetry as a form of diplomatic communication for the *Sayid* and among Somali society in general. Due to the increasing British hostility towards him and thus deliberately dismissive of his intellectual production, the British colonial authorities had never been fairer to the political principles and religious values of the *Sayid*.[393] At no time were those who directly dealt with him prepared to recognise him as a religious authority with a political position. Instead, the British colonial authorities branded him the 'Mad Mullah', though he was neither mad nor was he a Mullah.

[391] Ciise, Taariikhdii Daraawiishta, 98.
[392] Collected from the memories of Somali elders, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016; and Somali male and female elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 4 August 2016. Excerpts from *Sayid*'s poem '*Dardaaran*' (the Last Will or Leaving Words of Advice). Translations mine.
[393] For the perspectives of the British and Italians, see Jardine, *The Mad Mullah of Somaliland*; and Nicolosi, *Imperialismo e Resistenza in Corno d'Africa*.

The hostility of the British towards the *Sayid* concealed his anti-colonial ideas as much as it revealed. The British had initially been sceptical of whether the *Sayid* was an Arab or a Somali, but wrote him down 'presumably a pure Somali'.[394] The colonial authorities sought every way of making him an illegitimate leader. For instance, they attacked the veracity of his anti-colonial religious conviction and found unique ways of discrediting him. Consider the case of an undated letter in which the colonial authorities said his Sudanese mentor *Sayid* Muhammad Salih had excommunicated his student, the Somali *Sayid*.[395] Yet no-one knows for sure if his mentor really wrote the letter. The *Sayid* had various enemies: erstwhile Dervishes, disgruntled local *uluma* and embittered colonial authorities, so the letter itself had an important trans-national history. The changing mode of colonial engagement with local *uluma* was telling of the tactical ways in which the colonial authorities exploited Islamic *fatwas* (legal pronouncements in Islam) to delegitimise anti-colonial Muslim leaders like the *Sayid*.

The *Sayid*'s ability to sustain twenty-one years of anti-colonial struggle speaks volumes for his resilience and runs counter to the colonial labels such as an 'outlaw', a 'madman', a 'profligate' and a 'libertine'.[396] The British colonial authorities – as Christine Choi Ahmed noted – eventually recognised the activity of Dervishes as a 'Somali national struggle'.[397] This after it took more than two decades to suppress, in the words of one senior colonial official in British Somaliland, 'the most fanatical' Islamic movement.[398] Fighting in the name of Islam, the Dervishes identified themselves as anti-colonial *jihadists* and the British recognised them as such. For some former British colonial officers, the Dervishes 'fought for the glory of Allah – not for the glory of Somali nationalism'.[399] As perceived decades later, the *Sayid* pursued 'a more politically incisive nationalist form, articulated through the Islamic Salihiy[y]a appeal'.[400] The British reports mentioned that Somali soldiers under their employ who displayed a dislike for fighting the Dervishes were motivated by 'their religion', combined with 'such national

[394] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland*, vii.
[395] The India Office Records, 'Somaliland: movements of 'Abdullah Shaheri, [the] late righthand man of the Somali Mullah; proceedings of the Somali Mullah', British Library, IOR/R/20/E/255, Item 6: Aug 1904-Nov 1904, Vol II No 6A File 1154.
[396] 'Mad Mullah Advancing: Profiting by Delay in British Somaliland Expedition in Securing Arms and Supplies', *The New York Times*, 8 November 1902; and Hess, 'The "Mad Mullah" and Northern Somalia', 415. For the resilience of the Sayid's jihad, see Jardine, *The Mad Mullah of Somaliland*; and Nicolosi, *Imperialismo e Resistenza in Corno d'Africa*.
[397] Christine Choi Ahmed, 'God, Anti-Colonialism and Drums: Sheikh Uways and the Uwaysiyaa', *Ufahamu*, XVII, 2 (1989), 96-117, 115.
[398] Geoffrey Archer, *Personal and Historical Memoirs of an East African Administrator* (London: Oliver & Boyd Ltd., 1963), 57.
[399] John Drysdale, *Stoics without Pillows: A Way Forward for the Somalilands* (London: Haan, 2000), 7.
[400] Ahmed I. Samatar, *Socialist Somalia: Rhetoric & Reality* (London: Zed Books, 1988), 29.

feeling as they possess[ed]'.[401] In 1903, *Globe*, a British newspaper, concluded that there was 'no matter for surprise, and still less for regret, that the risky experiment of employing Somalis to fight against their co-religionists seems likely to be abandoned'.[402] His religious zeal, combined with unparalleled poetic oratory skill (some Somali scholars regard him as the best poet in Somali history), gave the *Sayid* such religious standing and political leadership that drew adherents in the northern, western and central Somali Peninsula.[403] Followers of the *Sayid* joined the Dervishes as members of Somali clans, although each Dervish was obliged to adhere to the doctrine of the Salihiyya *tariqa*. The various unrelated clans of these areas were attracted by his calls to fight for 'the glory of God'.[404] The Somali clans were hardly amenable to the power of another clan, so the *Sayid*'s prestige was based more on his Islamic ideology than on clan connotation. Islam and the clan were accepted instruments locally to further his struggles and achieve his political aims. To destroy him, both the British and the Italian colonial authorities looked to Islamism rather than clannism.

The British colonial emphasis on the Islamic aspect was so extensive that it blurred other crucial aspects of the Dervishes. The India Office mentality, as British authorities there had a traumatic experience of anti-colonial Islamic ideology, dictated how to approach politico-religious movements. Therefore, a religious emphasis was used to draw a lesson from the Indian 'Mutiny' that culminated in what Christopher Herbert has described a 'war of no pity'.[405] The *Sayid*'s struggle, as one British traveller, noted right from the beginning, was 'a Mahommedan [Muslim] Power against two Christian ones', the Ethiopians and the British.[406] The Dervishes, one British colonial official observed in the middle of World War I, were none other than a 'religious movement, and this is always a matter of concern in a Mohammedan country'.[407] The *Sayid* was said to have been implicated in 'fanaticism in national uprising'.[408] He remained, in British colonial eyes, 'a purely religious leader',[409] who was involved in a

[401] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, third edition, iii.
[402] 'SOMALIS AS SOLDIERS', *Globe*, Friday 29 May 1903.
[403] See Samatar, Oral Poetry and Somali Nationalism.
[404] Jardine, *The Mad Mullah of Somaliland*, 310.
[405] Christopher Herbert, *War of No Pity: The Indian Mutiny and Victorian Trauma* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008). For an Islamic perspective of the 'mutiny', see R. A. Geaves, 'India 1857: A Mutiny or a War of Independence? The Muslim Perspective', *Islamic Studies*, 35, 1 (1996), 25-44.
[406] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, third edition, vii.
[407] *Roy Irons, Churchill and the Mad Mullah of Somaliland: Betrayal and Redemption 1899-1921 (Barnsley: UK, Pen & Sword, 2013), 29.*
[408] J. S. Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia* (London: Frank Cass, 1965), 244.
[409] *Brock Millman, British Somaliland: An Administrative History, 1920-1960 (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge: 2014), 194.*

'religious fanaticism'.[410] The *Sayid*, another British colonial official eventually admitted, had already 'established a great reputation as a religious leader'.[411] In an unsuccessful attempt to persuade him to surrender, the Islamic element was used in the offer to live apolitically. Again, following his fall, the second most important condition for him to surrender was 'concerning yourself only with religion'.[412] This meant that he was expected to abandon his political leadership. The *Sayid*'s fight against the 'infidel invaders' – from an Islamic revivalist position – also attracted non-Somalis, who supported him in different ways, notably for construction and mechanical matters.[413] Ethiopian Muslim auxiliaries joined him after the palace plot that resulted in the overthrow of the Muslim friendly crown prince of Ethiopia *Lij* Iyassu in 1916.[414] In the colonial ethnography as well as contemporary scholarship, the Dervishes were considered pure Somalis, even when accommodating other Muslims from time to time.[415]

Clannism, Islamism and Nationalism

Incensed with the British attitude towards him, their lack of consideration for his individual integrity and political standing and the apparent disrespect they had shown to his religious position as a revered sheikh, the *Sayid* was committed to exercising various anti-colonial ideologies. While utilising Islamism, he also adopted religious nationalism and spoke about the nation, Islam and clan. For him, secular nationalism was an unknown notion, but clannism was connected to Islamism. By using Islamism and clannism to draw both *jihad* and national unity into one single framework, he spoke simultaneously as a Muslim *jihadist*, a Somali nationalist and an Ogaadeen clan poet. A closer examination of his poems reveals that he explained his struggle through the common dialectics of clannism, Islamism and religious nationalism. Although coupling Islamic appeal with a nationalistic zeal, he neither used Somali nor Salihiyya in his Dervish organisation. Rather, he named his followers the Dervishes to stress their Islamic identity and to signify something above national or clan. Even though employing a very different term from the Somali, the *Sayid* and his Dervishes still maintained their Somali identity. The reason why he sidestepped the Somali name – even 'Somalia' – and adopted the

[410] *Irons, Churchill and the Mad Mullah of Somaliland, 7 & 133.*
[411] Records of the Africa Bureau, 'G. H. Summers, Memorandum on Political Affairs in Somaliland', Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Mss Afr.s.905, 1925.
[412] Cited in *Irons, Churchill and the Mad Mullah of Somaliland, 207.*
[413] Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, 218; and Ingiriis, 'The Invention of Al-Shabaab in Somalia', 228.
[414] Records of the Africa Bureau, 'Precis of Abyssinian Intelligence Collected by District Commissioner Hargeisa August 30th – September 15th 1916', Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Mss. Afr.s.551.
[415] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, postscript.

term ‘Dervish’ is unclear. The *Sayid* seemingly did not feel it was appropriate to fight under the names ‘Somali’ or ‘Somalis’, but he provided no explanation in his poetry as to why he used the name ‘Dervishes’ rather than Somali or even the Salihiyya’s name. The Dervish religious identity was not, however, equivalent to the secular Somali national identity, the very Somaliness that gave him political recognition among Somali society.

By essentialising the Dervishes, the *Sayid* made a clear distinction between his countrymen (the Somalis) and his adherents (the Dervishes). Unlike the other Somalis, the Dervishes had a unique dressing style. In her *The Politics of Dress in Somali Culture*, the anthropologist Heather Marie Akou argued that the white turban they wore distinguished the Dervishes from the other Somalis.[416] As there were other Somalis who wore different turbans in both rural and urban centres, the selection of the white turban for the Dervishes did not create a physical variation between the Somali masses and Dervishes. As noted by Sheikh Aw Jama Omar Iise, the Somali compiler of the *Sayid*’s poems and his biographer, by ‘the Somalis’, the *Sayid* meant all other Somalis, except his Dervishes.[417] But in the corpus of his poems and prose, the *Sayid* separated his Dervishes from other Somalis, using the term ‘Somalis’ only to refer to all those British-allied Somali clans who were opposed to the Dervishes. In three letters he initially sent to the British colonial authorities in Berbera, he complained of ‘the Somalis’ whom he described as ‘thieves’.[418] In his usage of the term ‘Somali’, he seemed to comply with the colonial usage of all clans as Somalis. The *Sayid* once reminded his rival clans: ‘*Waa taad inuu dowlad yahay, dood ku bixiseene*’ (you remember, you claimed that he [colonialism] is a government’.[419] With a somewhat vaunted language, he also bragged that he had scrutinised Somali society since his adolescent years, so he alone was capable of representing their cause, their needs and their aims. Indeed, as long as he fought and defended the Somalis from further Ethiopian incursions, he proved himself as a national leader. The *Sayid* insisted again that he alone knew how to speak for and to the Somalis.

Soomaali anigaa tamminay, tiilka ay tahaye
Anigaa tafniday meesha iyo, toban jirkeygiiye

[416] Akou, *The Politics of Dress in Somali Culture*, 44.
[417] Ciise, Diiwaanka Gabayadii, 51n1.
[418] The India Office Records, ‘Collection 324A/106 Correspondence from commissioner at Be[r]bera and officer commanding Proserpine regarding [the] situation in Somaliland’, British Library, IOR/L/MIL/7/14608: 1911.
[419] Collected from the memories of Somali elders, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016; Somali male and female elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 4 August 2016; and Kaydka Radio Muqdisho (Radio Mogadishu Archive), uncatalogued. Translation mine.

Anuu iga ta'wiishaa ninkaan, tooda garanayne.

I scrutinised the Somalis, in the way they seemed
I counted them and the place, since from my juvenile years
I am the one being sought by anyone who does not understand them.[420]

Throughout his struggle, the *Sayid* maintained using religious didactics and nationalist exhortations to draw more Somalis into the Dervishes. In his poems, he clearly expressed both sentiments. He challenged all Somali clans with two poems that used the same alliterative 'd': '*dalkuu idinku oran duunyo dhaafsada'e… idinkaa dalkaba lehe, dowlad maw ahaataan?*' (he [colonialism] would ultimately say to you take this material stuff in exchange for the country […] since you own the whole country, why do you not become a government?).[421] Next, he lamented: '*Dadkaad iibiseen baa dacarta igu kiciyey*' (the country you sold out made me start vomiting bile).[422] Even when he justified his *jihad* more along religious and nationalistic lines than along clan lines, this did not mean that he altogether discarded the clan notion. The *Sayid* sometimes would switch from a religious and nationalistic position to clanistic position, with many Somalis going even further to decry him as a clan leader rather than a national or a religious one.[423] He was not immune to the contradictions of Somali clannism: sometimes he behaved as a pan-Muslim leader, other times a nationalist who would plunge into clannism at the last minute. In one of his poems, he encouraged his daughter not to marry beyond her clan.[424] In another, he told Allah: '*Eeboow nin gob ah, baan ahoo guni rifeysaaye*' (O' Allah, I am a nobleman from a noble clan who is flicked by inferior clans).[425] He would at times translate this clan theory into practice, acting as a clan commander in the eyes of other clans. Whenever his Bah-Geri sub-clansmen called for his support in a clan conflict with other

[420] Collected from the memories of Somali elders, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016; Somali male and female elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 4 August 2016; and Ciise, Diiwaanka Gabayadii, 51. Excerpts from *Sayid*'s poem '*Xuseenow Tabtaan Ahay*' (O Hussein, how I found myself). Translation mine. For a fuller account of the poem, see ibid., 48-53.

[421] Collected from the memories of Somali elders, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016; Somali male and female elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 4 August 2016. See also Ciise, Diiwaanka Gabayadii, 101 & 127; and Ahmed Yusuf, *Soomaaliya: Qaran iyo Qabiil* (Stockholm: African Triangle, 1998), 57 & 65. Excerpts from *Sayid*'s poems '*Dardaaran*' (the Last Will or Leaving Words of Advice); and '*Doodna waxaan u leeyahay*' (a debate for my position). Translation mine.

[422] Ciise, Diiwaanka Gabayadii, 101. Translation mine.

[423] Only recently did Somali authors begin to critique the *Sayid* as a leader. Cabdiraxmaan C. Faarax 'Guri Barwaaqo', *Sooyaal: Ina Cabdalla Xasan ma sheekh buu ahaa, mise…?* (Hargeysa: N.P., 2012); and Aroma, *Tiirka Colaadda*.

[424] Ciise, Diiwaanka Gabayadii, 246. Translation mine.

[425] Collected from the memories of Somali elders, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016; Somali male and female elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 4 August 2016; and Ciise, Diiwaanka Gabayadii, 230. Excerpts from *Sayid*'s poem '*Gudban Gaala-Leged*' (Traversed Infidel Overthrow). Translation mine.

Ogaadeen sub-clans, he would intervene in their favour. The best evidence that his Somali rivals labelled him as a clan sheikh rather than a common national figure is the title given to him by them: *Wadaadkii Ogaadeen* (the Ogaadeen Mullah or the Ogaadeen Sheikh). In a poem, the poet Daadeey Mohamud Ismail, one of the *Sayid'*s contemporary adversaries, stated that '*Wadaadkii Ogaadeen, mindhaa uma wadiiqeeyo, mar haddaan ka wabaxsaday, mindhaa weeye ma iraahdo*' (under the Ogaadeen Mullah, I will never serve, as I gained wealth from him, I will never say "yes"'.[426]

Although the *Sayid* maintained utilising Islamism to reach his political objectives, he 'continued to use clan politics […] as a tool for securing and extending his power base'.[427] Combined with clannism, his religious nationalism was similar to what B. G. Martin referred to 'a political initiative with a religious colouring'.[428] Even when the anti-colonial struggle had Islamic and national flavours and feelings, clannism was deeply entrenched in *Sayid*'s psychology. According to the Somali psychologist Hussein Bulhan, the *Sayid* 'was profoundly clannish even when he claimed to fight for a lofty religious cause. He also interpreted opponents to his cause as [an] expression to his clan identity'.[429] With some visible strategic flattery, the *Sayid* linked his ancestral clan roots to the ancestral religious genealogy of Prophet Muhammad and then boasted of belonging to the 'best of the Somali clans': the Ogaadeen.[430] The *Sayid* came from a clerical family of Reer Sheikh Hassan Nuur, but he was not of Qurayshitic descent. The *Sayid*'s emphasis on Prophetic ancestry was common in other *turuq* leaders in other parts of Muslim Africa, like Senegambia, examined by David Robinson, where the *uluma* used to make similar emphasis on proving their higher ancestry.[431] The *Sayid* as other *uluma* elsewhere sought to tap into a social and symbolic capital to create awe and inspiration among their followers. This was part of what Robinson calls 'convertible capital'. By social capital, it is meant 'networks of relationships and skills that could be mobilized for particular needs and constituencies', while symbolic capital is the 'accumulation of prestige

[426] Daadeey Mohamud Ismail, the poem titled '*Wadaadkii Ogaadeen*', quoted by Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 9 December 2019.
[427] Maria H. Brons, *Society, Security, Sovereignty and the State: Somalia, From Statelessness to Statelessness?* (Utrecht: International Books, 2001), 140.
[428] B. G. Martin, 'Muslim Politics and Resistance to Colonial Rule: Shaykh Uways B. Muhammad Al-Barawi and the Qadiriya Brotherhood in East Africa', *The Journal of African History*, 10, 3 (1969), 471-486, 481.
[429] Hussein A. Bulhan, *Politics of Cain: One Hundred Years of Crises in Somali Politics and Society* (Bethesda, Maryland: Tayosan International Publishing, 2008), 39.
[430] Ciise, Diiwaanka Gabayadii, 22 and 95.
[431] David Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation: Muslim Societies and French Colonial Authorities in Senegal and Mauritania, 1880-1920* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), 5-6 & 162.

and power within a group marked by language, custom, kinship, or religion'.[432] The clan was also equally important to his identity. While virtually every Somali clan considered themselves as the 'best of the clans', the *Sayid*'s clannish attitude led to suspicion among Somali clans that he was involved in a competition for clan superiority.[433] Some of his clannish poems and deeds reinforced this suspicion. His final lamentation was revealing, when he chanted '*anaa dilay ee xaggeen u doonaa Daarood?*' (I killed but where can I seek out the Daaroods?).[434] Daarood was his wider clan-group and he eventually admitted after his downfall that he subjected them to destruction rather than defence from the Ethiopians. While the notion of nationalism was strong in his struggle, his politics was principally based on an amalgamation of Islam and clan.

The clan politics of the Dervishes was a double-edged sword. On one hand, it suggested the excessive usage of clan identity in the imagination of Somali society, but on the other hand it revealed how *qabiil* (clan) was not the sole or even the primary basis of mobilisation in the Somali world. Although recruiting from them, the *Sayid* sometimes saw all Somali clans as hostile, including his own Ogaadeen. He sometimes viewed the Somalis and Ethiopians in the same light; to him, all were his external enemies.[435] This position hardly amounted to a nationalist stance and indicated some of the many ambiguities in the *Sayid*'s leadership and legacy. The destruction and devastation that ravaged the northern and western Somali clans as a consequence of his authoritarian tendencies had long remained a controversy among Somali clans. There emerged two sides of the *Sayid* in tandem: The *Sayid* the anti-colonial leader and the *Sayid* the anti-peace leader. The two lesser-known *Sayid*'s also appeared: The *Sayid* the patriot and the *Sayid* the butcher. Because of his beautiful poetry, the *Sayid* was venerated as '*halyeey qaran*' (a national hero), but for his politics, he was labelled as '*maangaab dhiigyacab ah*' (a dumb butcher).[436] In the later years of his struggle, the *Sayid* embroiled himself in more armed clan conflicts. This made him very unpopular among some Somali clans. The *Sayid* had only himself to blame for the hostile relations with those clans. His rival poet Ali Dhuuh Adan,

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[432] *Ibid.*
[433] For Somali clanocentrism, the tendency to hold one's clan superior to another, see Mohamed A. Eno and Omar A. Eno, 'Intellectualism and Ethnocentrism: Mukhtar and the 4.5 Factor', *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies*, 9 (2019), 137-145. For Somali clan suspicions, see Mohamed Haji Ingiriis, 'Redefining Somaliness through the Bantu-Jareer Community: The Absent Somalis in the Somali Socio-Political Landscape', in Marisa Fois and Alessandro Pes (eds.), *Politics and Minorities in Africa* (Milano: Centro di Studi Africani in Sardegna, 2012), 71-99.
[434] Collected from the memories of Somali elders, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016; and Somali male and female elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 4 August 2016.
[435] Jardine, *The Mad Mullah of Somaliland*, 164.
[436] Aroma, *Tiirka Colaadda*, 110.

a former defector of the Dervishes, charged the *Sayid* with hypocrisy and attacked him in this manner in a poem: '*Allaahu Akbar, aadaanku waa kaa afkiyo beene*' (Allah is great, the call of prayer is for you just a word of mouth and a lie).[437]

The *Sayid* was often rightly accused of being revengeful and vindictive, not only by the British colonial authorities, but also by various Somali clans, including his own Ogaadeen. Even the Dhulbahante were divided over the issue of the Dervish struggle, although most of them initially welcomed the *Sayid*. Then in a power struggle with the main Dhulbahante clan chief Garaad Ali Farah, the *Sayid* ordered the Dervishes to assassinate him.[438] Formerly supportive of the *Sayid*, the Garaad lost his life once he withdrew his support. After the assassination, most of the Dhulbahante sided with the British. It was a shock for the Dhulbahante to witness the assassination of their clan chief, the second reported political assassination after Sheikh Aweys under the instruction of the *Sayid*. The only sub-clan of the Dhulbahante that consistently supported the *Sayid* was Ali-Geri, his mother's sub-clan.[439] The fact that the *Sayid*, first of all, went to his maternal Dhulbahante clan rather than his paternal Ogaadeen clan to establish a base for the Dervishes unsettled two common claims in Somali studies: (1) the primordialist perception of an inherent patrilineal kinship based on clan lineage segmentary system whereby the *mag*-paying (or *diya*-paying) close-knit sub-subclan groups were considered as the most stable form of clan solidarity, and (2) the constructivist claims of invented traditions which contended that clanship had no major political value in (pre-)colonial Somali social milieu.[440] The *Sayid* himself complicated the given categories of the clan by which the scholarship of the politics of Somali society usually proceeded as the predominant paradigm. He rarely used clan as a tool to further his anti-colonial struggle and pitted no clan against another. For instance, he did not help the Dhulbahante to attack their nemesis the Isaaq. He only sent his Dervishes to those clans who refused to support him or those who became hostile to his struggle. His

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[437] Yusuf, *Soomaaliya*, 57. Translation mine.
[438] Aroma, *Sooyaalka Soomaaliya*, 137; Aroma, *Tiirka Colaadda*, 109; and I. M. Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, revised, updated & expanded, 4th edition (Oxford, James Currey, 2002 [1965, 1980 & 1988)], 70.
[439] Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, preface to the third edition, ix. Ali-Geri was rumoured to have originated from the Duduble, a clan of the Hawiye clan-group.
[440] On a heated dispute between primordialists and constructivists, see I. M. Lewis, 'Doing Violence to Ethnography: A Response to Catherine Besteman's "Representing Violence and 'Othering' Somalia"', *Cultural Anthropology*, 13, 1 (1998), 100-108; Catherine Besteman, 'Primordialist Blinders: A Reply to I. M. Lewis', *Cultural Anthropology*, 13, 1 (1998), 109-120; Bernhard Helander, 'The Emperor's New Clothes Removed: A Critique of Besteman's "Violent Politics and the Politics of Violence"', *American Ethnologist*, 25, 3 (1998), 489-501; Catherine Besteman, 'A Response to Helander's Critique of "Violent Politics and the Politics of Violence"', *American Ethnologist*, 26, 4 (2000), 981-983; and I. M. Lewis, 'Unravelling a "Flawed" History' (review of *Unraveling Somalia: Race, Class, and the Legacy of Slavery* by Catherine Besteman)', *The Journal of African History*, 41, 3 (2000), 522-524.

advisers consisted of supposedly loyal (Daarood) and hostile (Hawiye and Isaaq) clans. Haji Firhad, a Faqashinni/Habar Gidir/Hawiye, was a righthand man and loyal trusted adviser to the *Sayid*. British intelligence reports of 1918 mentioned that Haji Firhad went to Ethiopia to obtain ammunition for the Dervishes.[441] Firhad's diplomatic mission to Addis Ababa was before 1916 when Ethiopia fell under the brief rule of a Muslim friendly prince *Lij* Iyassu. Haji Sudi, known as Shabelle (Leopard), a Habar Je'lo/Isaaq, was another righthand man and loyal trusted adviser. A furious British painter under the British colonial state declared that he would have killed Haji Sudi who he had accidentally met in 1895.[442] This was because Haji Sudi, as a former interpreter for the British colonial state in Aden, Yemen, was well-versed with the British political machinations and manoeuvres. He had also a wide range of extensive global experience as a seaman serving in British warships in Asia and Europe. He brought all these unique experiences to reinforce the Dervish struggle.

The role of various Somali clans in the *Sayid*'s struggle has been unmapped in Somali studies. Somalist scholars have perceived that the *Sayid*'s power was largely clan-based because his locus of authority largely rested in the rural Dhulbahante and Ogaadeen areas. They therefore observed that the *Sayid* 'had an exceptionally loyal following among Darod clans'.[443] Even after the fall of the *Sayid*, the British colonial intelligence reports continued to propagate – in order to lessen his national legitimacy – that his Dervishes were largely from the Daarood clans and ignored that many Daaroods deserted him early on.[444] When the *Sayid* once called on Daarood clans for succour and support against the British and some of their Isaaq allies, several Dhulbahante sub-clans who were antagonistic to the Isaaq responded with fervour. The fact that the *Sayid* had comparatively more Daarood clan followers than any other clan made their rivals the Isaaq quite unwilling to his long-term plans. The deep distrust between the Isaaq and the Daarood led the former to become reluctant to contribute many more forces to the Dervishes.[445] Yet, as noted, the Isaaq clans of the (eastern) Habar Yoonis and Habar Je'lo constituted the bulk of his Dervishes initially, when the *Sayid* succeeded in establishing cross-clan support from other Isaaq clans who opposed him. The British intelligence report

[441] Records of the Africa Bureau, 'Somaliland Protectorate: Intelligence Report No. 22'.
[442] Malcolm McNeill, *In Pursuit of the Mad Mullah: Service and Sport in the Somali Protectorate* (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1902), 112-114. On Haji Sudi Shabelle's influence, see Nicolosi, *Imperialismo e Resistenza in Corno d'Africa*, 281.
[443] Drysdale, *Stoics without Pillows*, 7. See also Reese, *Renewers of the Age*, 11.
[444] Records of the Africa Bureau, 'The Somali Tribes and their General Geographical Position' in Summers, 'Memorandum on Political affairs in Somaliland protectorate: excerpt from papers written in 1924 by Sir Gerald Summers and in 1925 by Sir Arthur Lawrence', Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Mss. Afr.s.520.
[445] *Ibid*.

highlighted how the *Sayid* some sustained most of his support from the Ogaadeen, Dhulbahante, Habar Je'lo and Habar Yoonis.[446] The same British intelligence report noted that the Gadabiirsi, the Iise and the Isaaq clans of the Arap, Idagalle, Habar Awal and the (western) Habar Yoonis 'were never among the Dervishes'.[447] The Isaaq who were mostly Qadiriyya adherents had close economic connections with the British colonial state and sold their herds to the main coastal Berbera market. The Habar Gedir/Hawiye in Hobyo port refused to assist in the third British expedition against the *Sayid*.[448] The Habar Gidir did this not just out of solidarity with the *Sayid*, but also because they refused to assist an infidel expedition attacking a Muslim man. Some sub-clans of the Ogaadeen also refused to sell their herds to the British in solidarity with the *Sayid*.[449] Considering the role of clan in Somali society, loyalty to clan affiliation was expected at times of conflict and crisis, but not at all times.

The *Sayid* was a proto-nationalist as his appeal cut across clan divisions, even if not universally. Although throughout the *jihad* (from the start until the final hours), he encountered serious difficulties commanding all-Somali clan support, because clans acted both as allies and adversaries of the Dervishes depending on the context, he nonetheless attracted wide support across clan lines by mobilising followers from different clans. The Somali oral tradition holds that, when the *Sayid* first came to Berbera, he was powerless and penniless but succeeded to start his struggle from scratch by way of swaying the Habar Yoonis and Habar Je'lo clans of the Isaaq into supporting him.[450] Almost every Somali clan had some members or relatives in the Dervishes, largely from the Daarood and Isaaq, but also including some Hawiye and the clans known today as 'the Point Five'.[451] This allowed the Dervishes to operate in far-flung places including areas inhabited by the Bantu/Jareer, Hawaadle/Hawiye and Digil-Mirifle.[452] Whenever the situation seemed serious, the *Sayid* sought the support of his hostile clans through his popular poetic verses. There was hardly a major Somali clan which did not send men of war to contribute to his *jihad*. Even the Hawiye clans largely living in central and

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[446] *Ibid.*
[447] *Ibid.*
[448] Harry Fecitt, 'The Third Campaign against the Mad Mullah: 1902 to 1903', *Journal of the Anglo-Somali Society Journal*, 51 (Spring 2012), 4-13.
[449] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016.
[450] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 9 December 2019.
[451] For a critique on the notion of the Point Five (0.5), see Mohamed A. Eno, 'Inclusive but Unequal: The Enigma of the 14th SNRC and the Four-Point-Five (4.5) Factor', in Abdulahi A. Osman & Issaka K. Souaré (eds), *Somalia at Crossroads: Challenges and Perspectives in Reconstituting a Failed State* (London: Adonis, 2007), 58-81; and Eno and Eno, 'Intellectualism and Ethnocentrism: Mukhtar and the 4.5 Factor', 137-145.
[452] Cerulli, *Somalia Scritti Vari Editi ed Inediti*, Vol. 1; Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia*, postscript.

southern Somali Peninsula (considered by the British colonial authorities as 'peaceable' people) supported the *Sayid* at one time or another. The Italian ethnographer Enrico Cerulli who onetime was a senior colonial official in Italian Somaliland mentioned that the Dervishes had a brigade named *Xagato* (scratchers) exclusively composing of Habar Gidir/Hawiye fighters.[453] The Italian historian Federico Battera who drew from Italian colonial archives highlighted that the Hawaadle/Hawiye clan were on the side of the *Sayid* until May 1914, when their clan chief Ugaas Rooble – due to heavy pressures from the Italians in Italian Somaliland – 'made an act of submission' to the Italian colonial regime.[454] This act automatically made Ugaas Rooble an enemy of the Dervishes. The *Sayid*'s biographer gave an oral account that the *Sayid* had cried for three times following a series of battles with the British, one of which was when he heard the death of a Dervish fighter from the Hawaadle clan, evidently one of the *Sayid*'s best men, perhaps the best of men in the Dervishes.[455]

Support from the clans closest to him often fluctuated. Despite the supposedly unwavering support from several Daarood clans, the main clan chiefs of the Daarood – Osman Mohamoud of the Majeerteen, Yusuf Ali Keenidiid of the Majeerteen and Mohamoud Ali Shire of the Warsangeli – were mostly antagonistic to the Dervishes due to power struggle with the *Sayid* and they isolated him, although they were one time or another in league with him.[456] The *Sayid* then concentrated on recruiting the support from the non-Daarood clans. Consider, for instance, how a rival Hawiye clan sheltered him for his safety and survival after his defeat, when he moved and settled in an area of Iimeey settlement inhabited by the Karanle/Hawiye but controlled by the Arussi/Oromo sultans.[457] The fact that the *Sayid* sought the sanctuary of Karanle clansmen as he was not safe in the midst of his Ogaadeen clansmen, as a consequence of grievances and grudges against his Dervishes, and that the *Sayid* felt secure and safe in a Karanle clan area but not with his Ogaadeen clan, even when he at first begged their protection, attests to the fluidity and fallacy of the Somali patrilineal clan system as unfailing social

[453] E. Cerulli, 'Islam in East Africa', in A. J. Arberry (ed.), *Religion in the Middle East: Three Religions in Concord and Conflict*, 2: Islam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 203-219.
[454] Federico Battera, *Dalla Tribù allo Stato nella Somalia Nord-Orientale*: *Il Caso dei Sultanati di Hobiyo e Majeerteen, 1880-1930* (Trieste: Universita di Trieste, 2004), 244n31.
[455] Radio Television of Djibouti (RTD), 'Tixmaal - Taariikhda [D]araawiishta' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aU6-NCjMf2M (accessed on 16 June 2019).
[456] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016; and Jennings and Addison, *With the Abyssinians in Somaliland*, 240.
[457] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Mogadishu, Somalia, April-May 2016 and September-October 2017. One of the first British travellers who penetrated deep into the Iimeey in 1884 found that it was a Karanle territory. James, *The Unknown Horn of Africa*, 327.

insurance for Somalis.[458] Samatar observed that the *Sayid* 'retreated to his old Ogaden territory'.[459] This happened initially, but by the time of his official defeat the *Sayid* ended up in the Karanle territory. Moreover, the *Sayid* was not born and bred in the Ogaadeen territory, so the notion of Samatar's 'old Ogaden territory' is misplaced.[460] The *Sayid* also found protection in the Arussi/Oromo sultanate, then under a marginal Ethiopian influence, but he never asked for an Ethiopian asylum as such, as some authors of Ethiopia assumed.[461] The *Sayid* had no direct or indirect communication with the Ethiopian rulers after the downfall of *Lij* Iyassu, but he had previous diplomatic relations with the Arussi sultans to facilitate weapons passing through their territory.[462] Some Somali elders still recalled how the Arussi sultans, when giving him sanctuary, asked compensation from him by demanding marriage with some of his daughters.[463] The *Sayid* finally became powerless and unexpectedly died of influenza (part of the pandemic at that time) in Iimeey sometime in February 1921.[464] It is still a mystery why the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, who was one of the most anti-Muslim and pro-British Ethiopian emperors, refrained himself from invading the *Sayid*'s sanctuary in the Arussi-controlled Karanle country. The *Sayid*'s admirers – out of religious conviction – would have referred to this as Allah's will.[465]

The *Sayid*'s long shadow on the Somalis remains vivid today. He had a greater impact on the Somali lives after his death than during his life, given how he has been revered since his fall. Somali elders, especially those living in southern Somalia where the international community was now framed as 'imperialists', still mention his struggle in their historical discussions.[466] After all, the *Sayid* left a lasting legacy of anti-infidel(ism), anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism. Despite his atrocities against opposing Somali clans, his memory still lingers on in the minds of the war-torn Somalis. His last widely-publicised poem '*Dardaaran*' (the Last

[458] The Somali clan system was accorded to paramount importance by primordialist pioneers like Lewis. See, for example, I. M. Lewis, *The Somali Lineage System and the Total Genealogy: A General Introduction to Basic Principles of Somali Political Institutions* (Hargeisa, Somaliland Government, 1957); and Ioan M. Lewis, *Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society* (Trenton, N.J.: The Red Sea Press, 1994).
[459] Samatar, *Socialist Somalia*, 33.
[460] *Ibid*.
[461] For various factual errors on the *Sayid*'s sanctuary, see Erlich, *Islam and Christianity in the Horn of Africa*, 4, 44, 64 & 84.
[462] For the rule of the Arussi sultans, see Abbas Haji, 'Arsi Oromo Political and Military Resistance Against the Shoan Colonial Conquest (1881-6)', *The Journal of Oromo Studies*, 2, 1 & 2 (1995), 1-21.
[463] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016.
[464] Records of the Africa Bureau, 'Summers, Memorandum on Political affairs in Somaliland protectorate: excerpt from papers written in 1924 by Sir Gerald Summers and in 1925 by Sir Arthur Lawrence', Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Mss. Afr.s.520.
[465] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016.
[466] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Mogadishu, Somalia, April-June 2016.

Will or Leaving Words of Advice) will forever remain a rallying call for Somalis confronted with a threat from any aggressive infidel actor. In '*Dardaaran*', after suffering from his final defeat in January 1920 by the first British airstrike in Africa, the *Sayid* sent his last poetic sermon first to the Dervishes, then to his Daarood clanspeople and then to the Somalis in general, a revelation of how Islam, clan and nationalism prioritised one after another.[467] For precautionary measures, the *Sayid* finally prefixed the poem the term 'Somali': '*Dacwad kalena Soomaali waa mid aan dareensiiyey*' (another indictment is what I wanted to share with Somalis).[468] His poetic prophecy '*marka dambe*' (another time) predicting additional colonial occupation of the Somali Peninsula after his demise went unheeded then by many Somalis, but later became a reminder of the colonial consequences. In essence, *Dardaaran* was his tribute to Somali posterity. In it, the *Sayid* disclosed for the first time his prediction of the future. He stated that '*dusha ayuu idinka raran dumar sidiisiiye*' (he [colonialism] will force you to take his belongings on your back, as the women).[469] His insightful denunciation of the colonial state and his warnings of the objectives inherent in the colonial rule were hugely influential for Somali anti-colonialists.

Conclusion

The *Sayid* was a powerful figure and symbol of national resistance in Somali history. During the post-colonial period, the *Sayid* was placed among the second top leader, after Ahmed Gurey, to be anointed a national martyr. The *Sayid* has been presented as 'a national hero and symbol of modern Somali nationalism', so much so that he was 'highly charismatic figure,

[467] Collected from the memories of Somali elders, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016; Somali male and female elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 4 August 2016; and Ciise, Diiwaanka Gabayadii, 125-128. Translation mine. As the compilation contains an incomplete version of the poem, the fuller part of the excerpts of *Sayid*'s poem '*Dardaaran*' (the Last Will or Leaving Words of Advice) with the similar chanting voice of the *Sayid* by the poet Aw Daahir Afqarshe can be found the Radio Mogadishu Archive (uncatalogued) and *YouTube*, 'Gabaygii DARDAARAN (Sayid Maxamed Cabdule Xasan', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8HmGLTg1NU (accessed 19 October 2018). The colonial reports noted correctly at the time of his defeat was in January 1920, but at the time of his death was erroneously noted in January 1921. Colonial Report - Annual, No. 1252, Somaliland, REPORT FOR 1921, London: Printed & Published by His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1923, 2.

[468] Collected from the memories of Somali elders, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016; Somali male and female elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 4 August 2016; reciter: Xaaji Maxamuud Maxamed 'Indho-taag', 7 April 1987, Somali Academy of Social and Arts, Mogadishu (cass 3311 side B (26:11), restored in the Somali collections archive, Indiana University Press; and Ciise, Diiwaanka Gabayadii, 126. Excerpts from *Sayid*'s poem '*Dardaaran*' (the Last Will or Leaving Words of Advice). Translation mine.

[469] *Ibid*. Translation mine.

much like the 16th "Gran" [Ahmed Gurey] who fought the Abyssinians'.[470] Like Ahmed Gurey, another 'hero of Somali nationalism',[471] the *Sayid* has been regarded as a 'great national hero and fighter for independence'.[472] The tendency to present religious leaders, like the *Sayid* within a framework of (post)-colonialism as national heroes, has been common in many parts of Africa, Arabia and elsewhere.[473] The presentation of religious leaders against the colonial rules as 'national heroes' has been particularly recurring manifestation in post-colonial nationalistic academic studies and popular accounts.[474] For reasons relating to his lengthy anti-colonial resistance, the *Sayid* has frequently been featured not just as the father of modern Somali nationalism, but also as a founder of modern Somali statehood. The Somali author Cabdisalaam Jaamac Salaad Axmed insisted that what the *Sayid* had fought for was the creation of '*qaran Soomaaliyeed*' (Somali state).[475] One eminent Somali historian went even as far as to crown the *Sayid* as a king compared to Emperor Tewodros, the intransigent factional leader of *Zamana Masafent* (the Era of the Princes) in Ethiopia (*c*.1769-1855), who was admired in Ethiopian circles as 'the father of modern Ethiopia'.[476] Depending on the Somali zone in which one visits, many Somali national figures have often been compared and contrasted with the *Sayid*.[477] Complimentary references of the *Sayid* can also be found in the acclaimed novel of preeminent Somali novelist, Nuruddin Farah, who shared the Ogaadeen/Daarood clan identity

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[470] Hashim, *The Fallen State*, 59. See also Annalisa Urbano, 'The Emergence of Mohamed Abdullah Hassan as a Somali National Hero' (unpublished paper available at the London School of Economics and Political Science [LSE], undated).

[471] Leo Silberman, 'The "Mad" Mullah: Hero of Somali Nationalism', *History Today*, 10, 8 (1960), 523-534; and Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism: International Politics and Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 51.

[472] Touval, *Somali Nationalism*, 60.

[473] Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*, 6. For similar cases but one of military resistance, see Miles Larmer and Baz Lecocq, 'Historicising Nationalism in Africa', *Nations and Nationalism*, 24, 4 (2018), 1-25, 11.

[474] During the post-colonial period, *Sayid*'s poems were popularised in the Somali print media. See Anonymous, 'Literature: Mohamed Abdulla Hassan: The Frivolous and the Profound', *Dalka*, 1, 1 (1st July 1965), 10-11.

[475] Cabdisalaam Jaamac Salaad Axmed, *Dhacdooyinkii Geeska Afrika iyo Taariikhda Soomaaliya* (Glendale, Co: Fanaxey Publisher, 2006), 45.

[476] Said S. Samatar, 'The Search for the Real Mullah: Mohammed Abdille Hasan of Somalia' (paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Baltimore, November 1978), 1-4; Said Samatar, 'Oral Poetry and Political Dissent in Somali Society: The Hurgumo Series', *Ufahamu*, 17, 2 (1989), 31-52; and Said S. Samatar, 'Genius as Madness: King Tewodros of Ethiopia and Sayyid Muhammad of Somalia in Comparative Perspective', *Northeast African Studies*, 10, 3 (2003), 27-32. On Tewodros, see Mordechai Abir, *Ethiopia: The Era of the Princes: The Challenge of Islam and the Re-Unification of the Christian Empire 1769-1855* (London: Longmans, 1968), xxv; and Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia*, 31. On the Era of the Princes, see Abir, *Ethiopia*, xxiii, 30, 46-47; and Shiferaw Bekele, 'The State in the Zamana Masafent (1786-1853): An Essay in Reinterpretation', in Tadesse Beyene, Richard Pankhurst and Shiferaw Bekele (eds.), *Kassa and Kassa: Papers on the Lives, Times and Images of Tewodros II and Yohannes IV (1855-1889)* (Addis Ababa: IES/AAU, 1990), 25-68.

[477] Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Jigjiga, Somali region in Ethiopia, 1 April 2016; Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Hargeysa, Somaliland, 9 December 2019; and Somali male elders, focus group historical discussions, Laas Aanood, (disputed between Somaliland and Puntland), 11 December 2019.

with the *Sayid*.[478] One Somali maverick, a Mareehaan/Daarood, also claimed that '*Jaamacadda Oxford ayaa lagu dhigaa taariikhdiisa*' (his history is taught at the University of Oxford).[479] While the *Sayid* and his Dervishes have been projected as the pioneers of (proto-)Somali nationalism, this projection blurred the point that the *Sayid* and his Dervishes were part of an ongoing process of modern Somali nationalism.[480] Almost all of the eulogies tended to centre around his early years but not his end.

The *Sayid* was an elusive historical figure. Generations of historians have grappled with his struggle. A great deal has been written about him, his early life and struggle. However, in practice, little has been written on his organisational leadership and his anti-colonial intellectual ideas. Despite their long anti-colonialism or anti-imperialism efforts, the *Sayid* and his Dervishes are rarely discussed in the historiography of African nationalism. Although they have come under the able examination of several Somalist scholars, they were not examined on an intellectual and institutional basis. This Part II has explored these important aspects of the most widely mistaken anti-colonial struggle in the Somali Peninsula. Rather than focusing on the *Sayid* specifically, the Part II has combined the anti-colonial struggles of other *uluma*, in the west and east, south and north, into one religious-based struggle. The Part II reframed the *Sayid*'s struggle as an organisational movement rather than as an individual-based struggle. This framing fits perfectly the exploration of plural nationalism, because the Dervishes, as the Part II argued, was the first anti-colonial organisation, as all other previous anti-colonial Somali struggles in the late nineteenth-century had no organisational names and did not even fight in the name of *turuq*. No previous organisation had so emphasised the need to systematically spread the nationalist ideas among various sections of the Somali population like the Dervishes. The *Sayid* and the Dervishes were more multifaceted nationalists than previous Somalist scholars have recognised. Maria Brons contended that the *Sayid* 'failed to turn his political ideas of Somali nationalism and anti-colonialism […] into political practice'. As she argued: 'One of the reasons why Mohammed Abdulle Hassan's movement did not mature into a united Somali anti-colonial struggle (and eventually into an evolving Somali state) was the fact that

[478] Nuruddin Farah, *Close Sesame* (London: Allison & Busby, 1983).
[479] Available at: *YouTube*, 'Dabcasar oo afka furtay Majeerteen u dhaan dhaaminaya', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvt0J2aYmyc (accessed on 16 June 2019).
[480] Abdi Abdulkadir Sheikh-Abdi, 'Mohamed Abdulle Hassan: African Nationalism in Somalia' (unpublished PhD Dissertation, Boston University, 1985); Bemath, 'The Sayyid and the Saalihiya Tariqa', 33-47; Ciise, Taariikhdii Daraawiishta, 312; Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods*, 180; Samatar, *Socialist Somalia*, 24; and Samatar, Oral Poetry and Somali Nationalism, 5.

his policies remained clan attached and thus fragmented'.[481] However, his policies were much complicated than one insular element as long as they drew also from Islamism and nationalism.

If Paul Brass was right to describe nationalism as a 'political movement by definition' that 'requires political organization, skilled political leadership, and resources to gain support to make successful demands in the political system', then the *Sayid* fulfilled all the requirements for a (religious) nationalist.[482] The political movement, in essence, should be a 'political organization that succeeds in identifying itself with the community rather than merely representing the community or pursuing its interests is also likely to be more effective against external political competition and potential internal rivals'.[483] Unlike the earlier attempts of the *uluma*, the *Sayid* created new symbols of Somaliness to lead his Dervishes. The story of *Sayid*'s political leadership was more complex than previously assumed. The *Sayid*'s was a larger than life leader in his own days. Although his early career showed a character of an ordinary sheikh, his poetry put him in the position of a thinker who put his intellectual ideas into practice. His intellectual input and impact were so large that he had gained loyal adherents from almost every Somali clan. The *Sayid* was an ambitious anti-infidel political leader, not just a sheikh in the strict sense of the word. Although often used interchangeably, *wadaad* and sheikh had two definitive and divergent roles in the Somali context; the *wadaad* normally taught the Koran, while the Sheikh was considered as '*alim* (scholar). The *Sayid* described himself as a Sufi adherent, but he acted as a neo-Salafi insofar as his actions were based on a neo-Salafi orientation. True, his neo-Salafi actions were in stark contrast to his neo-Sufi words. In his poems, he always claimed as Sufi Salihiyya adherent. However, he used the Salihiyya *tariqa* spiritually, but not politically. On a political level, he fought along the lines of the Dervishes, but never along the Salihiyya lines. On a cultural level (or what can be called social capital), he used his poetry to play Somali clan politics.[484] The British colonial state hardly considered the fact that even 'friendly clans' (a colonial term describing Somalis supportive to the British Empire) viewed the fight with the *Sayid* unacceptable, according to Islam, especially when a Muslim would side with an infidel against another Muslim.[485]

[481] Brons, *Society, Security, Sovereignty and the State*, 141 & 140.
[482] Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 48.
[483] *Ibid.*, 48.
[484] Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*, 5-6 & 162.
[485] Records of the Africa Bureau, 'The Somali Tribes and their General Geographical Position'.

Except for Ahmed Gurey, no previous religious Somali leader had ever enjoyed political authority so influential to affect the Muslim societies in the Horn as the *Sayid*. There was a time during his peak that the *Sayid* was seen as the successor of Ahmed Gurey.[486] Like Ahmed Gurey, the *Sayid* emerged as a religious-political leader which for him politics was part of the religion. The *Sayid* the religious *alim* became the *Sayid* the war commander. Although the earlier *uluma* set the stage for *jihad*, the *Salihiyya* leader-cum-Dervish leader used Islam not simply as an idea, but as an ideology to lead the Somalis to the *jihad*. Whereas the previous *uluma* challenged the colonial state behind the Somali clans, the *Sayid* came to stand in front of the clans. With his poetic persuasion, the *Sayid*'s name reached far and wide in the wider Somali Peninsula and beyond and he came within so short a time to acquire unprecedented power over Somalis of almost every clan, although by no means universal support.[487] Through calls of anti-colonialism, he positioned himself as a politico-religious leader. By developing an early critique of colonialism, the *Sayid* – much to his own credit – began to challenge the British colonial state immediately after embarking at the Berbera port on a boat from Aden, but he continued to accelerate the earlier *uluma* calls of *jihad* against Ethiopia. The Ethiopians temporarily ceased this harassment soon after the Dervishes launched their war against them. Had the struggle of the Dervishes been consistent with their initial plan of confronting the Ethiopian raiding expeditions, which had more a devastating impact on the Somali clans than by any other colonial power, the *Sayid* might have left a legacy different from the one he bequeathed. If the British had also protected the Somalis from the Ethiopian encroachment, the *Sayid*'s struggle might not have attracted such diverse Somali clan support. Trained in towns in the Somali Peninsula and beyond, the *Sayid* officially started his religious career in an urban Isaaq town of Berbera, but ended up in a rural Dhulbahante territory. Between 1899-1920, the *Sayid* cooperated, clashed and competed with other local *uluma*, both fellow Sufi rivals and traditional clan competitors, in the struggle against colonialism. The *Sayid*'s failures to defeat the Ethiopian, British and Italian regimes (1899-1920) solidified the colonial conquest.

The *Sayid*'s standing as a Somali hero has recently been denounced. Reflecting on the events of the 11 September 2001 where the United States was the target of shocking suicidal attacks

[486] Erlich, *Islam and Christianity in the Horn of Africa*, 51. For a comparison between the two leaders, see I. M. Lewis, 'Continuing Problems in Somali Historiography: Imam Axmad Guray and Sayyid Maxamad Cabdile Xasan', in Hussein M. Adam and Charles L. Geshekter (eds.), *Proceedings of the First International Congress of Somali Studies* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), 185-189.
[487] On the concept of warrior-preachers in Muslim Africa, see Martin Klein, *Islam and Imperialism in Senegal: Sine-Saloum 1847–1914* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968).

by Al-Qaeda, non-Somali social scientists and journalists have branded him as a modern-day warlord or 'religious fanatic' who 'predated Bin Laden' (the leader of Al-Qaeda).[488] Both nationalist and non-nationalistic descriptions and labels of the Sayid do little justice to the man nor his struggle, for they fail to consider the context and circumstance of his jihad. A much more nuanced comparison, though by no means the only one, can be found from the anti-infidel Muslim leader Umar Mukhtar of Libya, the so-called 'lion of the desert'. Umar Mukhtar, who like the Sayid started his career as a Koranic teacher, resisted the European colonialists for nearly twenty years and fiercely fought them through desert warfare.[489] Umar Mukhtar also had a considerably complex personality. In much the same way as other Muslim leaders who came to embody the anti-colonial resistance activities in the Muslim world, the *Sayid* stands tall in the anti-colonial memory of Somali society. The post-colonial erection of a beautiful statue on the top of a famous hill in downtown Mogadishu, a place not far away from the Italian colonial headquarters, was a clear illustration of the *Sayid*'s special place in modern Somali nationalism. But the fact that the statue was demolished and destroyed during the civil war in January 1991, although reinstated in October 2019, was another illustration of the many sides of the *Sayid*.[490] Both cases show the prominence of his positive and negative legacies as well as the significance of his struggle.

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[488] Jon Abbink, 'Dervishes, *Moryaan* and Freedom Fighters: Cycles of Rebellion and the Fragmentation of Somali Society, 1900-2000', in Jon Abbink, Mirjam de Bruijn and Klaas Van Walraven (eds.), *Rethinking Resistance: Revolt and Violence in African History* (Leiden, Brill: 2003), 328-365, 341; George L. Simpson, Jr., 'Mad Mullahs and Pax Britannica: Islam as a Factor in Somali Resistance to British Colonial Rule', in Joseph Morrison Skelly (ed.), *Political Islam from Muhammad to Ahmadinejad: Defenders, Detractors, and Definitions* (New York: Prager, 2009), 91-104; Slight, 'British and Somali Views of Muhammad Abdullah Hassan's 'Jihad'; and Touval, *Somali Nationalism*, 60. For journalistic reports, see Jeffrey Bartholet, 'Muhammad Abdille Hassan: The Somali "Mad Mullah" Who Predated Bin Laden', *Newsweek*, 30 September 2009; Jeffrey Bartholet, 'It's Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World', *Newsweek*, 22 October 2009; and Colin Freeman, 'Ahmed Abdi Godane: The New "Mad Mullah" bent on Jihad', *The Telegraph*, 28 September 2013.

[489] Archivio Centralle dello Stato (ACS), 'Capie Populazioni indigeni ostili e non (Omer el Muktar, Reconquista della Libia: Cirenaica'. On documentary detailing his jihad, see *ILM FILM*, 'Life of Omar Mukhtar عمر المختار The Lion Of The Desert', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_hvSGxWygo (accessed on 5 October 2018).

[490] For an interesting discussion on the demolition of the *Sayid*'s statue, see Ali Jimale Ahmed, '"Daybreak is Near, Won't You Become Sour?": Going Beyond the Current Rhetoric in Somali Studies', Ali Jimale Ahmed (ed.), *The Invention of Somalia* (Lawrenceville, N.J.: The Red Sea Press, 1995), 135-155, 138-139.