THE SUICIDAL STATE IN SOMALIA

The Rise and Fall of the Siad Barre Regime, 1969–1991

MOHAMED HAJI INGIRIIS

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I dedicate this book to all Somali people who suffered
(wittingly or unwittingly)
one way or another under the military regime of Siad Barre

'Hadal nin badiyeyna ma wada oran, nin yareeyeyna kama wada tegin'

A Somali saying

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List of Abbreviations

AFIS–*Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana della Somalia*
CIA–The Central Intelligence Agency
CID–The Central Investigations Department
DFLS–The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Somalia
ELF–The Eritrean Liberation Front
EPRDF–Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FRUD–The Front pour La Restauration de la Dé mocratie (FRUD)
GSK–*Golaha Sare ee Kacaanka*
KGB–*Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti*
MP–Member of the Parliament
NATO–The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NFD–The Northern Frontier District
ONLF–The Ogaden National Liberation Front
RPF–The Rwandan Patriotic Front
SDA–Somali Democratic Association
SDM–The Somali Democratic Movement
SNA–The Somali National Alliance
SPM–The Somali Patriotic Movement
SNM–The Somali National Movement
SODAF–The Somali Democratic Front
SPM–The Somali Patriotic Front
SSA–The Somali Salvation Alliance
SSF–The Somali Salvation Front
SSDF–The Somali Salvation Democratic Front
SWP–The Somali Workers Party
SYL–The Somali Youth League
MB–*Maxkamadda Badbaadada* (The National Security Court)

UK–The United Kingdom
UN–The United Nations
UNHCR–The United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF–The United Nations Children's Fund
US–The United States
US Aid–The United States Development Aid
USC–The United Somali Congress
USSR–The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics
WSLF–The Western Somali Liberation Front

Acknowledgments

For many years, I intended to write a book about the causes of the State collapse in Somalia. One night in April of 2002, while I was a guest visitor of the humanitarian worker Nur Farah and his Swiss wife Magda in their house at the seaside southern town of Merka, Somalia, I began writing a book in Somali language, entitled *Sannadihii Silica iyo Saxariirta Sokeeye* (The Years of Suffering and Civil Strife). What inspired me to write that book was the fact that many people who had been family members and friends (and as such, very close to me) died or were killed in both the State and societal violence(s) in Somalia. After moving out from Somalia, I continued writing that book in Nairobi, Kenya. Unfortunately, I accidentally deleted the unfinished manuscript in my Yahoo! Mail in March 2003. Dismayed as I was, I became disappointed to write again until December 2013, when I began writing it with the same theme, but one with much broader perspectives and wider contexts. The manuscript of this book was finally and formally completed a week before I have embarked on my PhD (DPhil) at the University of Oxford in October 2014. While this book is about the causes of the State collapse, another book is on the way about the consequences of the collapse (on the other hand, my doctoral dissertation will scrutinise the history of the State formation in Somalia).

Over the past five years since July 2010, I have been actively researching the root causes of what one Arab analyst once described on the Al Jazeera Television Network as the 'Somali disease'. My study faces on two fronts in Somali Studies: development of the State and the devastation of the State. My emphasis in this book lies in the era from 1969 until 1991, with the some correlation to (pre)colonial period. I lived in Mogadishu since my birth until I left in October 2002 for Kenya and then for Belgium in December 2003, ending up in England in 2008. In my postgraduate studies, I have first been

trained as a community development practitioner and then as an anthropologist and a historian. Throughout this book, one encounters the interdisciplinarity of my research trainings, coupled with firsthand observations and reflections as a survivor of the 'civil' war.

Many people have helped throughout my research on things Somali about which I started writing when I was at a very young age. I remember the euphoria that surrounded my first article published in a Mogadishu newspaper in November 1994. My particular gratitude goes to my beloved parents: my father Dr Abdullahi Mohamed Barre (who suddenly passed away in May 2015) and my mother Nadifo Mohamoud Gurey. I feel nevertheless regret that my father and my grandmother, Madiina Guuleed Farah Jiileey, known as Aseey (the nickname means 'the light-skinned'), were not alive today to witness this achievement they embarked. I am really grieved that both my father and my grandmother died before they saw my scholarly works. After all, prior to their death they used to read my articles on Mogadishu newspapers in the late 1990s as a young man growing up in a post-dictatorship Mogadishu, writing pieces for *Qaran* (Nation) and *Ayaamaha* (Daily) newspapers. My grandmother did not live long to see me became an academic. Yet, when I last spoke to her over the phone in early 2001, she was confident and convinced that I would succeed someday in my life. My father was always my finest critic of my writings.

Over the years, I have been inspired and influenced by many scholars whom I owe an intellectual debt, to be precise and specific in mentioning: Ali Jimale Ahmed, Heather Marie Akou, Cedric Barnes, Catherine Besteman, Lee Cassanelli, Daniel Compagnon, Mohamed Eno, Charles Geshekter, Abdi Mohamed Kusow, Roland Marchal, Mohamed Haji Mukhtar, Scott Reese, Ahmed Samatar, Hussein Adam 'Tanzania' and many others. I drew insights from the exchanges I have had with many of these scholars. Professor Ali Jimale has always been a true inspirational scholar to me. In African Studies, I have been influenced by numerous scholars. In Somali Studies, it is not less vast. Without reading Ali Jimale's volume, *The Invention of Somalia*, I would not have opted and aspired to academia as a career. An eye-opener, the book was first sent to me as a gift in October 2000 while in Mogadishu by Professor Afyare Abdi Elmi. I must admit I then possessed no tertiary knowledge to understand the gist of the volume. When I read it a decade later in September 2010, it completely left me transformed and turned into a new vigour of academic passion. Dr Afyare Abdi Elmi and Dr Martin Hill have followed my progress throughout the years. I benefitted greatly as an amateur writer from working with Afyare at *Himilo Newspaper* from December 1999 until the late 2000. I sobbed and was saddened by the sudden death of Martin in January 2015.

I am particularly indebted to Professor Charles Geshekter, who has incessantly provided intellectual and academic support. As always, Geshekter has

extremely generous in sending me colossal boxes of rare books and documents on Somalia, sent through postal mail from California to London by post with a heavy price and cost on his part throughout 2013 and even to this day. Apart from letting me read copies of his unpublished papers, Geshekter also read and commented (with mentorship and guidance) a number of my previous studies while I was at Goldsmiths, University of London and I cannot find words to thank him. I am always grateful to him. A congenial conversation with Markus Virgil Hoehne on one raining late October evening in 2013 after a conference at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) had stimulated intellectual investigation on reconceptualising the Somali clan system, a study on which I am currently working. Roland Marchal and Marja Tiilikainen sent me two useful studies by postal mail from France and Finland respectively. I also thank Professor Lee Cassanelli, who encouraged the publication of my first scholarly article on *Northeast African Studies*. Dr Mohamed Abdulkadir Eno has shored up my entry into academia and encouraged my post-graduate studies.

My sister Hani and her husband Abdulkadir hosted me a week in their apartment in Tilburg, the Netherlands, in the last week of June 2012. My brother Mahad in the U.S. and my brother Abdisamad in South Africa have provided me support. Abdullahi Ahmed Ali 'Fat' and his wonderful wife Haliima Sheikh Hassan Asmara 'Haliima Kaaha' and Mire Sheikh Omar Yarow and his wife Sagal have been so close and family friends to me. Special thanks to my brother Liban Hassan Diiriye Afrah, whose continual moral support and unwavering encouragement I will always be held untouched. I cannot forget Mohamed Ali-Nur Aden Yare in Copenhagen (Denmark) for his assistance and encouragement. Mohamed Ali Siad 'John' has kept encouraging me at all times. I also like to thank my childhood friend Mohamed Ahmed Mohamoud 'Mohamed Yariisow' in South Africa, with whom I went to school, as well as Dr Abdullahi Warsame Abtidoon 'Abdullahi Yare' in Mogadishu who believed in me very early by pointing out my potentiality. I also acknowledge Abdi Farah Jama Diini 'Abdi Dheere', Khadar Abdi Mohamed, and Ahmed Haashi who have conferred me constant moral support. So was the late Ahmed Jama who passed away in London in late 2013.

My thanks goes to Mohamed Salaad in Gothenburg (Sweden) and his courteous and considerate wife who hosted me a week in the summer (mid-June) of 2012. My friends in Belgium deserve special mention: Abdullahi Abdi, Ali Baashi, Asad Nuur Aliyow 'Duurow', Engineer Khaliif Sheikh Osman and Adar Osman. I cannot forget the helping-hand I had received during my undergraduate studies from 2004 until 2008 from the late Omar Vervie who died in a car accident in Belgium in 2009. Thanks also to the late Nuurta Haji Hassan Alasow Jineey, who provided information and insight, but passed away shortly afterwards in Toronto, Canada. I also feel grateful to

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I am immensely grateful to the late Professor Hassan Ookiyo for sharing with me many insights and information pertaining to the Siad Barre regime under whom he worked as a law lecturer at the Somali National University. It was a saddening night for me when he suddenly died at his home on the outskirts of Gothenburg (Sweden) in May 2014 at the midst of researching and writing this book. I note the fruitful numerous email discussions I had with Daniel Compagnon from January up to June 2014, during the early stage of writing this book. Thanks also due to David Brooks, the Editor of the Journal of the Anglo-Somali Society, who sent me documents with short notice. I thank Hodan Ismail Ali Obokor, Abdirahman Luunge, Kamaal Abdi Omar, Hussein Warsame Ali and many others who provided me useful connections and contacts. I thank Abdullahi Sheikh Mohamoud Guuleed Ga'madheere, Harbi Elmi Farah, Abdulkadir Ahmed Nuur (and all Ahmednur Ali Guuleed family), Ahmed Abdi Dheere, Liban Mohamed Sheikh Hussein 'Khasaaro' and Khadar Abdi Mohamed for one way or another of their encouragement and support. I am also indebted to Sarah Craze for drawing the maps. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the friendly team of the University Press of America, especially Holly Buchanan and Beverly Shellem, for making this book project a reality. Lastly, but not least, I like to thank my family who endured my unending work.

Note on Somali Orthography and Transliteration

In this book, transcribing Somali terms and phrases have followed Somali orthography. Therefore, ‘c’ stands for the Arabic consonant ‘ayn for the aspirated ‘h’. Put it differently, c is meant ‘a; dh = d and x = h. The ‘ refers to the Arabic word of ‘*ayn* and thus applies to Arabic loan words of Somali usage – e.g., *‘ulema*. Somali orthography is used when directly quoting from poems and proverbs.

Anglicised form of the Somali names are used throughout this book. All Somali names used will be anglicised except in the case of authors using their names in line with the standard Somali(s) orthography. In other words, the names of the Somali authors will be adapted as they used in their books. For instance, Faarax will be retained as it is, not Farah. However, all the Somali terms and proverbs will be used in their original Somali followed by English translation. All other individual Somali names will be rendered in their anglicised versions.

Lastly, but not least, the names in quotation marks specify nicknames as they are mostly better known than a person’s formal name.

Introduction

'O Somalis', prophesied the Somali bard Farah Mohamed Ali 'Farah Gololeey' on the eve of independence for The Somali Republic in July 1960, 'you will sooner or later be ruled by bandits'.[1] Gololeey, a well-known outspoken bard, who served the Somali National Assembly for four years (1964–1969), was particularly well-placed in predicting the future and fate of the post-colonial State façade. What Gololeey had cautioned was not so quite dissimilar from what Jean-François Bayart, Stephen Ellis and Béatrice Hibou would call 'the Criminalisation of the State' to paint the post-colonial authoritarian African States.[2] Upon independence, Somalia briefly witnessed a democratic system of governance and a dictatorial regime within a short period of a decade. As the Somalia in the 1960s was a period of politics based on democratic structure, civil politics became uncivil in 1969 after which the shift leaped from authoritarianism to autocracy. With the adoption of democratic institutions–a separation of power, free judiciary and free press–from July 1960 up to October 1969, Somalia was regarded one of the few examples of real democracies in Africa. With its defects and deficiencies, it enjoyed representative Italian-type of parliamentary democracy for nine years prior to paving the way to a breakdown. It was upon assessing the political patterns and processes of power in post-colonial Somalia that led Gololeey to perfectly predicting the rise of the military regime of Major General Mohamed Siad Barre, c. 1969–1991.

For a brief period, the post-colonial Somali *gouvernementalité* (governmentality)–to use Michel Foucault's pithy phrase–ruled through the framework of European democracy handed down from European colonialism, but it soon paved the way first for clanised and (then) for criminalised State under the cloak of a military rule.[3] Although this State system of bureaucratic propensity, with its parliamentary functionality and independent judiciary,

operated through vigorous and vital manner, it was alien in the minds of the public.[4] Aside from the democratic institutions at work, the very basis of democratic rule–the free and fair election–was so corrupted that the very democracy itself was turned out to be a debacle.[5] Even though democracy was an infant in the 1960s, it was years heavily discredited by virtue of acute embezzlement and vote fraud. Thus, the years between 1960 up to 1969 were condemned as *the* 'neo-colonial period' led by *the* 'neo-colonial power'.[6] However, no one envisaged that post-colonial Somalia would end up a dictatorship that led to fall down a complete collapse. Put this way, no one lived through the 1950s anticipated that the State left behind by colonial authorities would fall into collapse within nine years. Few Somalis–such as Farah Gololeey–had nevertheless recognised that the rush to independence would culminate in catastrophe. Barely a decade passed, when the Somali State was replaced forcefully and violently by the autocratic clano-military regime of Siad Barre. Somalia after the 1969 coup went through a complete metamorphosis. From African experience, coups tend to lead to collapse. The coup phenomenon was a conundrum that spread Africa like a wildfire at the time.[7] Throughout his 21-year dictatorial rule (1969–1991), even though he maintained to having been enthused by an altruistic desire to salvage the society from corrupt post-colonial plunderers, Siad Barre remained what Samuel Finer described 'the man on horseback'.[8] Everywhere in Africa, except few exceptional cases, the probability for a coup maker to hand over power to civilian rule has remained nil.

This book documents and delves into the reign and rule of the Siad Barre regime that ruled from 1969 up to 1991. It is indeed important to bring the State 'back in' in the analysis of what went wrong in Somalia at the post-independence period.[9] The place to begin understanding any political problem on the Africa continent is always with the State in power.[10] A Russian proverb has it that the problem of the system starts from the top. Indeed, the political problem that shattered the grand Somali aims of independence had started from the top–that is, the State system. No doubt that 'to understand politics' in Africa is 'to understand relations of power in their historical settings'.[11] On 21 October 1969, Somalia saw a coup that brought Siad Barre, the Commandant of the Army, to power upon the successful stage of a (bloodless?) coup d'état that overthrew the democratically-elected civilian government. The month the coup occurred was known as '*Oktoobartii Madoobeyd*'–which is to say, the Black October.[12] Not because the coup served as subterranean as well as subterfuge, but Siad Barre's seizure of power–followed by an 'absolutist authoritarian rule'–led the unified Somali State–as we knew it–to a state of statelessness.[13] Since the violent takeover of the State power dragged Somalia to the path of bloody clan conflicts, Somalia became a prominent case in the point of the politics of *busaarad* (bankruptcy). Into the political crisis following the coup came the Somali

syndrome. With the absence of a State acting as neutral to Somali clans and communities, the regime was a clan State out of a communal State. By communal is referred to a State where every clan and community had their voice, even when some persisted greater voice and attempted to appropriate the whole national State for themselves.

This book is a critical repositioning of the study of the military regimes in Africa by tracing what went wrong with the post-colonial Somali State once colonial rule passed to the Somali hands. It critically engages with the wider theoretical and conceptual frameworks in African Studies which attributes the post-colonial African State raptures to colonialism. Focusing on the Siad Barre regime, the book argues that the military leaders trained and taught by colonial authorities were harsher than their tutors and teachers, as plunder, pillage and patronage were institutionalised. The main argument is that colonialism left Africa on its own. The book puts emphasis on African agencies (shaped by external patrons) over what went wrong with Africa after the post-colonial period. The book traces how such a totalitarian rule became a becoming by looking at both internal and external interactions. However, how President Siad Barre came to power and ended is a matter of dispute, even among those who assisted him in undertaking such a perilous task. In an interview with four fellow collaborators of the coup, there was a lack of unanimity for who had the idea and who made it a reality.[14] Seeking to secularise socio-economic life of Somali society, an attempt hardly made by colonialists, even though they left Somali politics secularised, Siad Barre sought what other African dictators had hardly dared. Unlike his contemporaries in the wider region, i.e. Idi Amin, Jean- Bédel Bokassa, Muammar Ghaddafi, Mengistu Haile Mariam, Daniel arap Moi, Robert Mugabe, Ja'far Muhammad Numeiry, Sese Seko and others, Siad Barre infiltrated in every facet of Somali society–from cultural continuum to the concept of clanship. The 1975 proclamation of the Family Law as well as the 1971 mock banning of the clan system constituted direct interventions of societal traditions and customs. While it was aimed in the eyes of the communist community at promoting the image of the regime as progressive a regime as contrasted to others, proscribing clan was deemed as an attempt to prevent major clans from demeaning Siad Barre's clan. From early on, many Somalis began to resist the imposition of the totalitarian structure of the State.

BETWEEN SILENCE AND SIAD BARRE

A Critical Synthesis/Anthology

Conducting a fieldwork research in Somalia during and after the Siad Barre regime was difficult, especially for a scholar with a critical eye. Somalists were under constant control by the regime in power through censorship and

intervention of their research themes as well as restriction of their activities to freely reach informants and interviewees. The field was, after all, under the sway of the regime. Customariness was obeyed that outside observers travelling to Somalia for research-related trip had to rely on what Paul Ricoeur calls 'the master narrative'–that is, when those who held power dominate the knowledge being produced.[15] The British social anthropologist and recently deceased doyen of the English-speaking Somalists, Ioan Myrddin Lewis was perhaps the most candid among Somalists in admitting that his writings on Somalia were directed by some post-independence politicians. To call on his reflections: 'I have certainly been more subject to pressures, often elusively subtle ones, in post- than in pre-independence Somalia. Reflecting on this, I now think that I have sometimes tended to be less critical and objective [...] about the policies and actions of successive independent Somali governments'.[16] Even though those politicians who pressurised Lewis are covered and concealed, one could infer their shadows from the acknowledgements of his monographs. Like it or not, as Charles Geshekter, almost all previous outside observers of Somali State and society became Lewisite.[17]

There is a lack of critically and comprehensively detailed discussion of the Siad Barre regime. Existing scholarship on Somali politics and history passed over and pursued a theme not exclusively–but in parallel–with the Siad Barre regime. These studies consist of two similarly yet different types of scholarship: those written during the last legs of the regime and those written after its fall. During the Siad Barre regime, authors who attempted to trace the regime had skipped over the political aspect of the militarised reign. Few authors who studied post-colonial politics in order to investigate what went wrong with Somalia had included a chapter or two on the period of the regime in their studies, albeit with passing statements.[18] Some books published during this time (and several of them commissioned by the regime itself) regarded the stiff resistance to topple the Siadist State as a war between a modernising State and primordial clan guerrilla insurrections. Seemingly due to political affiliation with the regime, those writing these years failed to portend the real root causes of the State failure. In *Socialist Somalia*, Ahmed Samatar aims to assess whether the Siad Barre regime fell short of socialist ideals and ideology. Gauged through political economy and scientific socialism, Samatar pays no attention to the extent of brutality unleashed by the regime.[19] Produced barely two years before Siad Barre's fall, Samatar's study granted the authoritarian regime with quite a propitious judgement.

The only thorough survey analysing the Siad Barre regime in some detail was the unpublished French-written study titled 'Ressources Politiques, Régulation Autoritaire et Domination Personnelle en Somalie: Le Régime Siyyad Barre (1969–1991)'.[20] With Introduction, preliminary chapter, three parts (all together seven chapters) and Conclusion, this crucial work comprises

two extensive volumes, a fruit of doctoral dissertation, which the French political scientist Daniel Campagnon defended on 17 February 1995 at Université Pau and Pays de l'Adour (joint) in France. The dissertation deals with how the Somali State was used as a resource to accumulate wealth by creating a system of clan clientelism. The first volume forms the body of the research study and the second volume (much smaller) constitutes the extensive bibliography and appendices. In the first, Compagnon offers an analysis of Somali social structure, downplaying the salience of clanism in the Siad Barre regime and seems to suggest that there was a regulation in the authoritarian rule. Compagnon treats quite less critical to the regime than to armed opposition movements, minimising the State terror unleashed upon civilians and pointing out instead panegyric personalities from other clans to stress that Siad Barre's rule was not as clannish as it seemed. As he interned for the French Embassy in Mogadishu from 1983–1985, Compagnon was apparently in a better position to record a leaked confidential information within the circle of the regime. Some minor flaws and inaccurate assertions notwithstanding, his dissertation merits publication.

Another crucial work about the Siad Barre regime was produced by the young Italian scholar Anna Bruzzone.[21] However, the main concern appears to be the economic and sociological aspects of the regime. Since Siad Barre was to be unseated, scholars have maintained to explain what has become of the Somali State, even if no inclusive study has yet been able to account in scrutinising in-depth into the rise and fall of his regime. Works emerged during Siad Barre's departure put greater emphases on the anarchy and chaos that followed his flight and more often than not lament a new imagination of the State restoration. Because the time was so close, debates, disputes and discussions have revolved around the shock of the State disappearance. In his essay, 'The Curse of Allah: Civil Disembowelment and the Collapse of the State in Somalia', Ahmed Samatar went as far as to suggest that Islamic values and secular political principles could go hand-in-hand in reinstating the State structures.[22] Only after Siad Barre went to exile in Nigeria did scholars begin to re-examine his rule quite critically. As such, there exists a small number of fine scholarship that took a different approach by assessing the regime through the themes of hegemony, State failure and international intervention which vigorously challenged the previous studies about the Somali State and society.[23] Another significant work is the fine and valuable slim work titled, *The Fallen State: Dissonance, Dictatorship and Death in Somalia*, by Alice Bettice Hashim. Reviewing the rule of Siad Barre in the wider context of post-colonial State, Hashim sheds light on the predatory power of the regime in two chapters, within the analytical framework of a State 'bereft of institutional structures'.[24] To make her point, she expands on Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg's typologies from prophet and prince to autocrat and tyrant, lastly concluding that the Siad Barre regime was a fascis-

tic rule.[25] The prophet was referred to a ruler who ruled by manipulation; the prince by charisma; the autocrat by absolutism; and the tyrant by fear. However, Siad Barre neither typify for the typology of the prince nor of the prophet. Even though he was initially perceived as a Messiah, in part because of corrupt previous civilian rulers, he soon proved as an autocrat transformed into a tyrant.

After the Siad Barre regime was toppled, those authors who assessed it only made some hints and overlooked to provide detailed examination on how the regime came and ended. In her survey of the State evaporation, *Networks of Dissolution: Somalia Undone*, Anna Simons puts forth a painstaking anthropological analysis that concentrated on the last two years of the Siad Barre regime and how urbanised people in Mogadishu negotiated and mediated themselves with a regime that had gone mad.[26] Simons found that one reason (among many) of the State 'dissolution' was an unaccounted foreign aid to the brutal dictatorship. This proposition seems in line with the view expressed in somewhat less scholarly, but historically significant, by Cabdulqaadir Aroma's *Sababihii Burburka Soomaaliya* (The Reasons for Somali Destruction). Written in Somali, much crucial part of this study deals with the Siad Barre regime.[27] In his volume of collected essays, *From Tyranny to Anarchy: The Somali Experience*, Hussein Mohamed Adam 'Tanzania' also incorporates specific periods of the Siad Barre's rule, but mentions much about anarchy (the consequence) than about tyranny (the causality).[28] Adam, Aroma, Compagnon, Hashim and Simons, nonetheless, came to the same conclusion that a State authority–begun as a clan corporation–was later ended in personal/family rule. In light of the above literature review, studies on the Siad Barre regime are very few and far between. Most of these studies were researched and written well before Siad Barre was ultimately driven out from Somalia. So they write small contemporary details, but not the whole story. In other words, no one did tell the entire story of the Siad Barre regime. So far, no other scholar had attempted to look at this regime. And no one has too yet sought to systematically study the post-colonial and post-post-colonial State for that matter.

THE RATIONALE OF THE BOOK

The Methodologies

The coming and ending of the Siad Barre regime has been misunderstood, partly because there is no published comprehensive study on it. The lack of holistic examination and explanation of the Siad Barre regime remains more relevant. Even though Maria Brons analyses the society as the main protagonist of the State, no systematic sociological and cultural investigation of the State and society was conducted.[29] A multidisciplinary empirical study of the

collapse is necessary to understand how Somalia slid into suicidal State. The impact and the authority of the nation-State on Somali society have yet critically and comprehensively been traced through genealogical construction. This book attempts to fill in this gap by tracing the politics and processes of reign and ruling from 1969 up to 1991. Seeking to make a comprehensive and comparative partnering with other Africanist scholarship, the book follows a new way of reconceptualising and reconsidering the past. A new framework and useful analytical tools have to be used if one were to separate State terror from societal violence. As the first published book-length study to explore the Siad Barre regime, this is the first study in Somali Studies that confers most of its referring spaces with Somali sources. Since no extensive study on the dictatorial military regime had been published, the task of this book is to extensively undertake a reappraisal of the Somali State and it does so by explaining and analysing not only the rise but also the fall of the Siad Barre regime.

The book sets out the decades of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s Somalia to explore and examine how the Siad Barre regime came into being and ruled. It brings to light for the first time never-used documentary evidence on how power was seized in October 1969 and how Siad Barre implicated himself in the assassination of President Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, five days before the coup. Framing new ways of analysing military regimes in Africa begins with (re)assessment of how the Siad Barre regime was approached before. By putting different perspectives into historical context in a holistic approach, this book circumnavigates through comparative and comprehensive on the regime to reveal how colonialism did not produce less than what criminalisation of the State resulted in Somalia. This empirical argument was crucial to understanding the conundrum that faced the new Somali Republic in the late 1960s. By employing nuanced analytic concepts and categories, the aim is to refine the past to recapture the present and envision the future. The historicity of exploring Somali State trajectory entails employing a Braudelian *longue durée* approach. The main thesis of the book is that the contemporary conflicts are not only attributable to but also because of the past plunders of the Somali military leaders, with Siad Barre being the main culprit. Three interrelated sets of contexts/questions inform the study: how Siad Barre came into power, how he ruled and maintained his authoritarian reign over the Somalis and who had assisted him from inside and outside. To what extent his legacies contributed to the clanised wars in the aftermath of his demise?

The micro-physical dynamics of the despotic regimes spiced with clan cover can best be explored if used the main theoretical and conceptual framework of Jean-François Bayart's *la politique du ventre* (the politics of the belly) in his *L'État en Afrique* (The State in Africa).[30] Bayart argues that 'Africa's contemporary political struggles and wars are not the consequences of a radical rupture–colonization–but are symptomatic of a historical line of

continuity, namely a practice of extraversion'.[31] He also shows that, '[s]ome post-colonial regimes have even turned the colonial legacy in matters of coercion into official policy, such as in Mozambique, where a law of 31 March 1983 reintroduced public floggings which had earlier been banned in 1975'.[32] Bayart's model could be of use as a point of departure in this book to provide with heuristic and holistic approach in tracing Somali political realities. The politics of the belly and the predatory performance brought power to the centre of the analysis by offering both empirical and theoretical discussion. The examination shows how, when and why the role of the State–from protector to predator–in post-colonial Africa came to rot. As Bayart pointed out, Somalia would have merited deeper examination, even though it is–in his own eyes - 'a woebegone African country'.[33] By deeper meant empirical work, one that identifies the root causes and takes a critical look at the State and society.

The way the State is conceived in the Global North has been categorically and contrastingly different from the way it is seen in the Global South. Foucault formulated two types of analytical concepts to interrogate power both its dialectics and discourse: (1) The archaeology and archives, and (2) the genealogy, which is to say the imposition of power on the public and their bodies through subjection and subservience.[34] Despite its recognition of power as paramount and principal actor of human agencies, not to mention the emphasis on discipline and regulation, Foucault's proposition is important to capture the regime of Siad Barre. The power and pathos of politics as well as the politics of particularity forms significant part in this book. To explore the nature of this regime, its dialectics and dynamics of power and State terror are necessary spaces to locate within the wider scope of Somali politics, culture and history. It is to the dynamics of dictatorship, the culture of violence and predatory political power in Siad Barre's regime that serious thought and attention are given. The process of clanisation, criminalisation and, finally, cannibalisation of the State through the evocation of 'it's our turn to eat' or put it otherwise, 'it's our time for our tribe to solely eat the spoils of the State' is convenient analytical concepts to gauge the dictatorial rule.[35] The Foucauldian g*ouvernementalité* –as an 'art of government'–also adds a new flavour in understanding and analysing power from below. With their own *gouvernementalité*, the Siad Barre authorities created their own knowledge. However, once replaced or ousted, the knowledge produced throughout the ruling period lost credibility and confidence to sustain it.

The Source Base

Material for the historical reconstruction on the Siad Barre regime emanated from a variety of sources. Based on a range of never-before-used sources, such as in-depth and extensive oral interviews with and information from

many of the Siad Barre regime authorities and principal participants of the ruling strata, as well as relying on never-used-before official State documents and reports; (1) primary data not accessible to non-Somali speaking students and scholars, (2) hard to find documents (especially those from armed opposition movements that fought against the regime, (3) oral literature (Somali oral poetry recorded in cassettes and videos), (3) films, (4) photographs and (5) previously underused sources: nationalistic and war songs, speeches, intelligence reports, confidential regime documents, media bulletins, newspapers and declassified American, British and Russian documents. Also using are neglected sources, such as videotapes retrieved from YouTube, local oral tradition and research bulletins. Combining all these sources is aimed to avoid sticking to one single source and adopt triangulation in referring to sources. To further alternate sources, archival research was done in the UK National Archives, British Library and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). Regrettably, almost all (or majority) of the regime's secret files in the Ministry of Defence and Villa Somalia–the presidential compound–were destroyed both before and after Siad Barre's flight and fall. The destruction of evidential sources that might have provided insights into how Somalia dragged into the current chasm is substituted by an open-ended oral interviews.

Interviewees and informants included elites and ordinary, luminaries to laymen, participants and bystanders, both men and women, such as former ministers, ambassadors, consuls, generals, colonels, other army and police officers, politicians (both loyalists and rivals), civil servants, religious scholars, students, medical doctors, academics, engineers and as well as the senior regime official's drivers, bodyguards, agents and informers. Most of the interviewees were people who had been players of the events they were interviewed. Scattered around the world; in Africa, Canada, USA, Europe, with many of them living from Mogadishu to Minneapolis, they consisted of cross clan individuals selected for their knowledge of the event under examination. All interviews were conducted in Somali language in order to allow the interviewees to better express themselves. Some other oral confidential information was also gathered in Somali and translations from Somali into English are mine. If some provided more information and insight than others, it was merely because they were more well-informed than the rest. Some provided dense, very detailed unpublished information which was forced to keep secret by the Siad Barre regime. However, this information itself was corroborated and counterchecked with other knowledgeable informants and interviewees. One caveat, however. Similar to David Keen's case in Sierra Leone, though not every interviewee or informant 'was telling the truth or even remembering events accurately, but my intention has been to listen carefully to them, to try to understand events from their point of view, to

contextualise what people have said, and to give as accurate a picture as I can through the accumulation of stories and detail'.[36]

If full names are used repeatedly, it was because Somali names may seem unrecognisable to the non-Somalis. The names of some interviewees are withheld for security (and other) reasons. Some interviewees and informants who provided sensitive and crucial information have chosen to remain anonymous. Where the interviewee had requested for anonymity and where necessary for sensitivity, names will be shortened. Personal contact with the interviewees and informants are maintained during the course of the research and of writing the book in order to connect for a need of further details. A new method of conducting ethnography through the phone lines in what I would call telephonic ethnography in contrast with visual was tried. The aim was to amass empirical data and gain observations over the phone by listening long hours to unseen informants and interviewees. Since respondents are scattered around the world, the method used to find information was to conduct cross-ethnographic examination. This is most useful when one could not carry out fieldwork research but had the (cap)ability to obtain crucial contacts for research. The ethnographic approach contributes to cultural nuances of power, politics and personalities in the post- and post-colony through appraising State and micro- and macro-politics without overlooking geopolitics.

However, some potential interviewees and informants who worked for the regime feared to talk about their experiences. Why some are still fearful for exposing their real experience long after the regime was ousted is still incomprehensible to me. Many potential interviewees were particularly apprehensive that the information with which they shared would lead them to persecution, so they opted not to talk, others remained unanimous, specifically in cases they provided their witness accounts on sensitive matters in which they were at stake. Some interviewees talked to me through each other. One old former senior officer (brigadier general) has provided me with some worthwhile documents, while relating to me at the same time some interesting stories. He would often admonish me 'please don't mention my name on it'. Asked why, he stated that he would be apprehensive to be accused of dividing Somali society, but the reality was that he was anxious about the ousted regime, as though Siad Barre was still ruling in Somalia. He felt tempted when I said to him that I am willing to expose myself to be accused of 'dividing the Somalis', an accusation which seems to be an easy caption to silence any meaningful debate and to distort studies on the Somali syndrome. It astounds me to deal with such a people who seemed to have suffered from what can be called a mental massacre. But the importance of oral history for purposes of culling information from participants can hardly be underestimated. One has to bear in mind that oral history is a new *technique* rather than a new branch of history. John and Jean Comaroff suggested that any

historical ethnography 'must begin by constructing its own archive. It cannot content itself with established canons of documentary evidence, because there are themselves part of the culture of global modernism–as much the subject as the means of inquiry'.[37] The method used here was 'insider-insider' interview approach instead of 'outside-outside' technique. This is not so indifferent from what Jacques Le Goff calls 'lived history' (*histoire vécue*)–that is, a history remaining one's stored memory as an event that has happened a minute ago. This is also to employ what can be characterised as a mobile history (Le Goff uses the term 'an almost immobile history' to denote the long duration historical method known as *longue durée*).[38]

Another important source is memoirs provided by participants of the regime, but critical use of the information contained in the memoirs should be employed. Many former senior officers of the Siad Barre produced memoirs describing their observations during the turbulent years of totalitarianism. Crucially, authors of some memoirs provided witness accounts and insider information. Cabdulqaadir Aroma and Cabdulqaadir Shire Faarax, who worked for the regime and witnessed the brutalities firsthand, offer a distinct insights and perspectives.[39] Aroma, a regime employee until the last minute, has a lot of documents at his disposal, but rarely disclosed them. Faarax published his memoir nine months before the downfall of the regime. A former editor of the regime-controlled newspaper, Faarax fell out with Siad Barre, when the newspaper he was editing was dismantled upon publishing a critical commentary reviewing the pitfalls of the regime. According to him, the newspaper headquarters was attacked, equipment confiscated. His real grievance apparently stemmed from the fact that Siad Barre began to groom his son, General Maslah Mohamed Siad, as his heir apparent. Faarax then lobbied for a regime change, but somehow seemed more critical in his memoir to the armed opposition movements than the regime. However, in some other ways, Faarax was prophetic in predicting that what would follow Siad Barre should be clan revenges. This he noted at a time when notable Somalist scholars were reiterating and reassuring that Siad Barre would leave the State intact.[40] Both analytical and somewhat theoretical, Faarax's account provides suggestions and recommendations. Since other authors were critical to the regime in specific timeframe on one hand, some were supportive on the other, with some falling out as late as January 1991. Therefore, some memoirs offer frank assessment than others, especially those who worked for the regime in mid-level capacity, with dramatic revelations and reflections.[41] Western diplomats who worked in Somalia also published their own memoirs.[42]

Aggregation of ethnographical study and oral historical information are invaluable to analyse the Somali dilemma and construct detailed study. All three ways of participant observation–experiencing, inquiring and examining–are employed to present archival, ethnographic, empirical, observatory

study. Reading primary historical sources itself is ethnography if the social scientist or the historian employs the necessary tools to glean information out of complex documents. In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Clifford Geertz drily demonstrated that 'doing ethnography is establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing texts, taking genealogies, mapping fields, keeping a diary, and so on'.[43] Geertz, nevertheless, doubts on how sheer observation could contribute to systematic knowledge. Comaroff and Comaroff also stressed that 'a historical ethnography must always go beyond literary traces, beyond explicit narrative, exegesis, even argument'.[44] Ethnography entails a careful double check of events and dates; many informants and interviewees tend to confuse both, though. This meant the scholar himself or herself had to go beyond the memory of the interviewees and official documentations to check the information. Here, there is some caution on the data from intelligence research bulletins used in this book. Both *Africa Confidential* and *The Indian Ocean Newsletter* carry inaccuracies and errors, names, places, dates that warrant caution. The information they provide is at times misleading and contradictory and one has to cite with caution, look at a critical eye and combine other sources with a double check. Crucially, their documentation is of importance of exploring the Siad Barre regime. *Horn of Africa* periodical is also a good source for examining the regime as it had published a series of articles, news reports and critical commentaries assessing the regime throughout the 1980s.

It is worth highlighting that the official bulletins upon which this book draws heavily and other State publications were carefully censored by the regime. The written documents produced by the regime authorities did not accommodate the voices of those opposing them. Despite these omissions, they provide unique evidence on the regime activities and what the dictator was involved in more than two decades. Using Italian or Somali versions where English version is not available, the Official Bulletin of the Somali Democratic Republic–*Faafinta Rasmiga Ah* or *Faafin Rasmi Ah* in Somali and *Bollettino Ufficiale della Repubblica Democratica Somala* in Italian–began Somali version on 1 April 1973. The bulletin had been published with different forms and shapes from 1950 until 1989. However, in 1990, the Siad Barre regime was unable to publish one due to the collapsing condition of the country. Similarly, from 1980 onwards, most of the bulletin announcements were legislations and land leases. Alongside the regime publications, other primary sources are also drawn in this study. Most of the materials, especially official bulletins and visual clips, have not yet attained attention in the scholarship on Somalia. In line with primary sources, colonial documents and data collected by colonial authorities were used for purposes of comparison. However it may seem scathing and scornful, the Saidian critique of colonialism and colonial writers did not repudiate and rebut the historical contribution of the nineteenth-century ethnography and traveller's account.

Had it not been useful as a historical data, Edward Said himself would not have been so eloquent and articulate in arguing against *Orientalism*, even though he was raised under colonial rule and he thus experienced firsthand the colonial oppression.[45]

The Structure of the Book

The book organised chronologically comprises five parts (eleven chapters, overall), consisting of decentralised sections. The Part I traces the colonial impacts and influences of the new post-colonial breed of African military leaders. By engaging with wider debates on the State and society in post-colonial Africa, chapter 1 sets the stage for scrutinising the rise of the military regimes in Africa and the place of Siad Barre in particular of coming out from colonial edifice. Chapter 2 discusses the internal and external politics of the post-colonial State and how the dissolution of the late 1960s democracy and how the subsequent coup was planned and performed. Part II investigates how power was seized and totalitarianism imposed. Chapter 3 explores how the coup was conducted and power consolidated in a cunning but a careful way. Chapter 4 examines the institutionalisation of the dictatorial system of State. Part III studies how clanisation of the State was transformed into criminalisation. Chapter 5 reveals how State plunder, predatory power and political economy were infused to protect the regime on the one hand and to enrich close clan cronies on the other. Chapter 6 delves into detail on how and why the 1977 war was waged, presenting the many perspectives of those who were involved. Part IV assesses the excessive clanism of the regime and how the State strategies behind that policies had contributed to its downfall. Chapter 7 demonstrates how clan and clanship system were used and exploited. Chapter 8 uncovers the manoeuvres of the Presidential Palace at a time of enormous political crisis. Chapter 9 tracks the dying days of the regime. Part V evaluates the political calculation of who should have taken the State. Chapter 10 locates the capital city uprising that led to the demise of the regime. Chapter 11 reflects on the realities of the post-Siad Barre State grabbing, exploring the politics of the main post-Siad Barre political players and highlighting why and who should rule and why. The conclusion summarises the arguments and observations of the book.

I

The Colonial State and Schooling: Tribulation

Philosophers, when confronted with outside and inside, think in terms of being and non-being. Thus profound metaphysics is rooted in an implicit geometry which—whether we will or no—confers spatiality upon thought; if a metaphysician could not draw, what would he think?
—Gaston Bachelard[1]

Chapter One

The Genealogies of African Dictatorship(s)

SOMALIA IN A WIDER AFRICAN ASSESSMENT

From Colonial to Cannibalised State

There is nothing particularly unique about Africa. From Algeria to Angola, Egypt to Ethiopia, Libya to Liberia, Morocco to Mauritius, Somalia to Senegal, Sudan to South Africa, Africa has similarities and dissimilarities with regards to the conjuncture between the State and society. Somalia is part of Africa considered to be 'a continent of clans, of segmentary tribes'.[1] However, Somalia rarely appears comparative thematic scholarship on Africa. Similarly, a scholarship providing a comparison of Somalia to other African experiences is almost non-existent in Somali Studies. Commonalities, contrasts and comparisons of the litany of wars precipitated by African authoritarian regimes in relation to the Somali case after post-colony warrants careful and critical examination. The Africanist scholarship hardly mentions the Somali State in continuities and discontinuities compared with other post-colonial African states.[2] The only occasion one encounters a word on Somalia is when discussions on Africa reaches the penetration of Islam into the Eastern part of the continent upon which Mogadishu, the Somali capital, was centred. This led some scholars to contend that theories about Africa proved inapplicable and incompatible to Somali syndrome. From Foucault to Fanon, Somalia baffled any type of theory relevant to other African contexts. The gist of this argument suggests that there is no set of fixed theoretical frameworks applicable to Somali case. Even though such contention may develop the Malthusian argument of the New Barbarism, it has become hard to refute it.[3] Serious Somalists, such as Catherine Besteman, aptly conclude that:

> . . . Somalia in the 1990s has been a bewildering place which stretches our ethnographic and theoretical abilities of understanding. How do we begin to understand a place where Foucault's disciplinary technologies of control (the army, national security service, schools, prisons, ritualized public displays of state support, state laws governing bodies) gave way to criminal terror, where Raymond Williams's hegemony (with all its inherent contradictions) was completely replaced by contradictory and alternative hegemonies, where Benedict Anderson's imagined nation gave way to antagonistic localized identities, where Marx's classes (still unconsolidated at the time of collapse) disintegrated into patronage through military might, where Weber's territorial sovereignty was replaced by millions of transnationally mobile refugees and expatriates spread throughout the globe?[4]

Compared with other African experiences, the Somalia is not that unique. After colonialism departed, the agency passed to the Somalis in the form of indigenous self-determination. The dialectics and dialogic(s) of the dictatorial clano-military rule in Somalia never in any respects distinct from the other experiences of dictatorial regimes in Africa. The two predominant paradigms in African Studies are colonial and post-colonial theories. Both share two common yet distinct characteristics: the emphasis of colonial legacy and liability of the postcolonial (the so-called neo-colonial) African States. Africanist scholars have tended to devote much time debating over the dichotomy between colonial and post-colonial statecraft(s). It is here where the African political scientist Mahmood Mamdani and the African philosopher Achille Mbembe represent two less known schools of thoughts within the African Studies.[5] Out of coloniality and of post-coloniality, Mamdani puts emphasis on colonial politics and policies, while Membe problematises the rules and rulings of the postcolonial African leaders. Post-colonial order in Africa is for Mbembe a preposterous power repulsively displayed both public and private, disrupting everyday forms of existence. The picture painted in Mamdani's portrayal of Africa is that of passivity on the part of Africans in determining and defining the cacophony and capability to live without delegating innate responsibility to external outsiders. Both Mamdani and Mbembe have a point.

The central argument of Mbembe follows the fact that colonialism was over and, at the wake of the post-colonial creation, Africans assumed the power of colonialists as the masters of their own destiny. In *On the Postcolony*, he calls for a new mode of probing power and subjectivity in Africa. In employing a variety of methods–one of which was the use of captions and cartoons–he demonstrates how postcolonial rule in Cameroon was characterised by 'the violence of fantasy'.[6] With his concept of colonial *commandement*, he further shows that such a colonially-inspired order was in place in many post-colonial African settings and points out to the absence of what he calls the exercise of 'existence' in post-colonial Africa.[7] To exist meant to

live and a much-sought sparkler: life without domination and denial, adding voice and visibility in matters affecting personal and communal African existence. Mbembe is in search of 'complete' men and women in post-colonial Africa, itself a never attained venture.[8] His revelations are revealing: 'While we now feel we know nearly everything that African states, societies, and economies *are not*, we still know absolutely nothing *about what they actually are*'.[9]

Mamdani sees post-colonial African states as nothing more than an extension of colonial control. In a superb study on contemporary Rwanda, he goes as far as to refer the Rwandan genocide to a handiwork of colonialism, especially the Belgian colonial policies of 1927 all the way up to 1936 by fomenting 'racial superiority', when the infamous ethnically-classified identity cards spawned contestation that pitted the Hutu against the Tutsi. From his perspective, the Rwandan genocide can best be understood in placing within the wider 'colonial logic'. Towards the end, Mamdani concludes that Rwandan genocide was a natives' genocide. 'The fact is', the respected scholar concedes, 'that the Belgian power did not arbitrarily cook up the Hutu/Tutsi distinction. What it did do was to take an existing sociopolitical distinction and racialize it'.[10] In more than one way, Mamdani is right to emphasise the corollary of colonialism. However, much of his arguments tend to leave African agency out of the analysis. The Mamdanian-manner of colonial scapegoat has become a reputed conjecture in African Studies.[11] Indeed, Mamdani has created an academic space wherein African peoples are often treated as passive objects in the Africanist scholarship.

Colonialism on Conviction

African authors had searched scapegoats for their societal syndromes well before colonial departure. For them, colonialism was the ethnographer and author of African contemporary political crisis. In 1958, when Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe published his debut novel, *Things Fall Apart*, his aim was to put a familiar African scapegoat of European colonialism into poetic prose.[12] This permeated that Africa was a place of peace prior to European encroachment and whatever became wrong with it was because of colonialism. Such thesis was popularised in academia by countless African academics, with the most famous voice is the one springing from Mamdani. In the Somali case, this never was. Somalis are actors and agents of their own destiny. Colonialism came to the Somali territories in a time at late nineteenth-century, when Somalis resisted the rule led by the Ottoman Islamic State in the North (later British Somaliland) and the other led by Omani Sultanate based in Zanzibar in the South (later *Somalia Italiana*). Soon after they adopted what they termed 'indirect rule', European colonialists encountered Somali clans killing women and children for clan revenge, a sub-