Theorizing Stability of Somali State: In the Light of the Comprehensive Perspective of Somali Studies

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Abstract

This essay addresses the Somali state-building process' challenges and emphasizes the need to explore the relationship between modern state structures and traditional Somali society. Critiquing existing perspectives such as the Anthropological, Marxist, and Revisionist approaches, the author proposes an alternative viewpoint called the "Comprehensive Perspective" (CP). The CP rejects sectionalization, colonization, secularization, and patriarchization within Somali studies, advocating for an inclusive approach encompassing all elements of Somali society. The essay presents six scenarios representing the Somali mindset, highlighting the varying loyalties to Islam, nationalism, and clan, which pose significant challenges to state-building. The classification and dynamics of traditional and modern Somali elites are also examined. The CP offers an alternative perspective for Somali studies and a solution through the Inclusive Reconciliation Framework (IRF). The essay concludes that reconciliation between state and society requires reconciling political elites, restructuring traditional institutions, addressing past grievances, and establishing a foundation for a shared future. This process should be reflected in constitutional provisions and legal frameworks while involving non-state actors like civil society organizations and business communities to contribute to the Somali state-building effort. Integrating non-state actors leads to developing a "stability model for Somali state-building."

Key word: *theorizing, state, comprehensives, perspective, sectionalization, anthropology*

Introduction

The Comprehensive Perspective is the fourth Somali studies perspective developed to criticize the other three perspectives. Somali studies are a multi-disciplinary academic term for studying the Somali people in the Horn of Africa, their diasporic communities, and their interactions with other people's worldwide. The main fields in Somali studies are social science, humanities, and fine arts. Somali studies analyze the historical, social, economic, and political aspects and their interaction with local culture. It is rooted in the ancient history of the Horn of Africa. It draws from the chronicles and literature written by Greek,

Jewish, Chinese, and Arab/Muslim geographers and explorers in the Middle Ages.[1] It is also embedded in the works of scholars of Islam who focused mainly on Islamic studies, memorized rich poetic literature, and travelogues of the European explorers of the nineteenth century.[2] Moreover, Somali studies hinge on colonial literature and archives and scholarly work produced by researchers and found in published books.[3] Furthermore, since the Somali people bridge Africa and the Middle East, Somali studies are influenced by African and Middle Eastern studies.[4] The term Somali studies was coined in 1978 with the establishment of the Somali Studies International Association, emulating other country studies that were booming during that period.[5]

Somali studies have continued to grow since adopting Latin orthography as the official national alphabet of the Somali language in 1972 and establishing various state institutions to promote arts, theatre, and culture.[6] Somali studies were booming with the growing trend of publishing books in Somali, English, Arabic, and other languages. Annual book fairs started throughout Somalia's big cities, and publishing houses and translation services are

[1] The Chinese explorers were Tuan Chéng-Sbib, Chou Ju-Hua, Zheng. The Arab explorers and geographers were Ibnu Said al-Magribi, Mohammad al-Idrisi, and Ibn Battuta. In addition, there was also a Jewish traveler, Benjamin of Tudela.

[2] The European explorers of Somalia were mainly Italians, including Luigi Robecchi - Bricchetti, Vittorio Bottego, and Prince Luigi Amedeo, Duke of the Abruzzi. They focused their trips on southern Somalia. On the other hand, the British explorer who visited northern Somalia was Richard Burton.

[3] Most notable books on Somali Studies developed from the Ph.D. thesis were authored by Lee Cassanelli, Saadia Touval, Ahmed Samatar, Abdi Samatar, Said Samatar, Abdi Sheikh Abdi, Afyare Abdi Elmi, Robert Hees, Virginia Lulling, Mohamed Nuh, Abdirahman Ahmed Noor, Scott Rees, Mary Hope Schwoebel, Abdurahman Baadiyow, Abdislam Salwe, and others.

[4]Abdurahman Abdullahi, "Revisiting Somali historiography: critique and idea of comprehensive perspective," Journal of Somali Studies: Research on Somalia and the Greater Horn of African Countries 5, no. 1–2, 2018, 31–59, 32.

[5] Lee Cassanelli, "The Somali Studies International Association: A Brief History," Bildhaan 1, 2001, 1–10.

[6] These institutions include the establishment of the Somali Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1973, the national theatre in 1967, and the National Museum in 1933.

booming. Moreover, several specialized journals on Somali studies are being published.[7] Additionally, the annual conferences of Somali Studies are conducted at many universities and institutes, such as Mogadishu, JigJiga, SIMAD, Banadir universities, and East African Association for Research and Development (DAD) and Heritage Institute.[8]

However, with all this progress in Somali studies, the fundamental question of why the Somali state collapsed within 30 years (1960-1991) and how to re-institute it remains disputed. Even worse, the military regimes' elite political culture and policies are recuperated in the new state-building processes.[9] Studies explaining the Somali state collapse and its causes could be summarized into three main categories. To simplify, let us compare the Somali state collapse to a crumbled building. What are the possible factors that can collapse this building? The first factor may be external, like tsunamis, artillery shells, or missiles hitting the building. The second factor may be the quality of the material that was incapable of bearing the burden of the structure. Hence, the building collapses due to engineering miscalculations or the poor quality of the building materials. The third factor may be the defective engineering of the building that, over time, collapses by itself.

Comparing the collapsed Somali state to the collapsed building, we can assert that the causes of the breakdown of the Somali state were multiple external factors (colonial legacy, war with Ethiopia, Cold War, etc.), defective engineering of state-building, and the low capacity of the political leadership. The flawed engineering mimics the state's inimical relation with its societal roots: Islam and the clan system. The poor quality of the construction materials is comparable to the political elites' low capacity and the society's poor cohesion. Fig 1 demonstrates the concept of state-society relations in which the

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[7] See "Somaliland Standard," Retrieved 26 April 2023. Also, see Mogadishu Book Fair. https://qz.com/africa/740313/somalias-new-love-affair-with-books-ramps-up-as-safety-returns-to-the-country (accessed on 27 April 2023).

[8] The most famous specialized journals on Somali studies are Bildhaan, Journal of Somali Studies, and Somali Studies: A Peer-reviewed Academic Journal.

[9] Abdurahman Abdullahi, "The Somali Elite Political Culture: Conceptions, Structures, and Historical Evolution." Available from https://mu.edu.so/somali-elite-political-culture/ (accessed on 26 April 2013).

Islamic belief and the clan system are the basis while the modern state is the superstructure. The state-society conflict is like a foolish person representing the state's political elite who cuts the tree's root where he sits (figure 2). Is there any doubt that this person should fall?

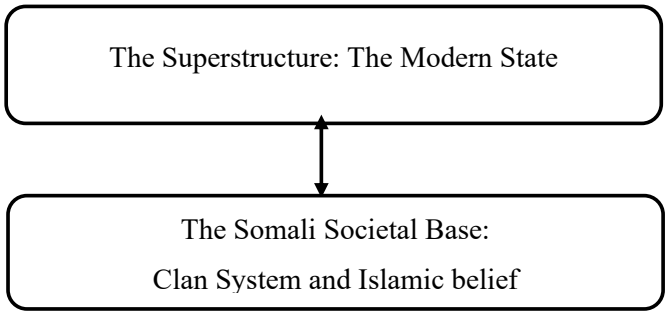

Figure 1. The Somali Societal Base and Superstructure

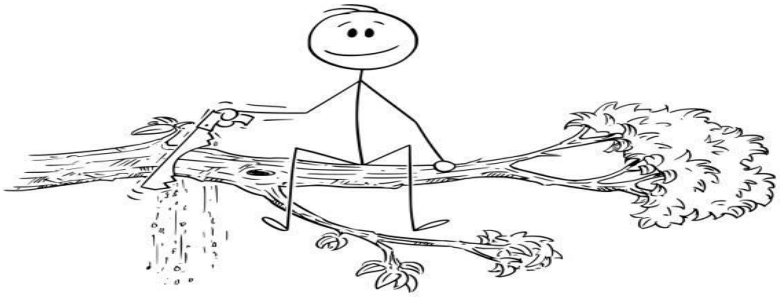

Figure 2. An example of the Somali political elites cutting the roots of Somali society:

Islam and the clan system

Even though this paper focuses on Somalia, its main thesis applies to other countries sharing similar postcolonial conflict history with Somalia. Such countries include Yemen, Libya, Sudan, Chad, Mauritania, and Afghanistan. These countries experienced a similar historical trajectory to Somalia, from weak postcolonial regimes to military dictatorships and civil wars that created instability and continuous state-society conflict. This paper briefly produces the theoretical backdrop of the three theories employed in this research. Moreover, the paper offers the critical challenges of Somali state-building that expound on the root cause of the current crisis and proceeds into the overview of the various perspectives of Somali Studies as a background for developing the comprehensive

perspective (CP). Finally, after exploring and categorizing the main Somali conflicts, this essay suggests the Inclusive Reconciliation Framework (IRF), which could be developed into the Stability Model (SM) for Somali state-building.

Theoretical Base of the Comprehensive Perspective

In theorizing the comprehensive perspective, this paper utilizes three theoretical frameworks: the theory of state-society relations, the elite theory, and the ibn-Khaldun's theory of solidarity. These three frameworks focus on the relationship between the state and society, which cuts across aspects of the theoretical borderlines, exploring how governance and society interact and influence one another. We will briefly produce an overview of these theories. Firstly, scholars in state-society relations agree that society provides crucial support for a state's effectiveness and that a state is critical to collective action in society.[10] The UK Department for International Development (DFID) defined state-society relations as 'interactions between state institutions and societal groups to negotiate how public authority is exercised and how people can influence it. They are focused on issues such as defining the mutual rights and obligations of the state and society, negotiating how public resources should be allocated, and establishing different modes of representation and accountability.''[11]

Earlier scholars of state-society relations considered strong traditional societies structured into tribal communities and religious groups in postcolonial countries an obstacle to modern development. However, in the later period, strong states and strong societies in collaboration were conjectured to offer a better prospect for development.[12] The

[10] Atul Kohli, "State, Society, and Development." In *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner (eds.). New York: Norton, 2002, 84-117; Joel Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute Each Other* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Stephen Haggard, *Pathways from the Periphery* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

[11] *Building Peaceful States and Societies: A DFID Practice Paper* (London: Department for International Development, 2010), 15.

[12] Spalding, Nancy Jackson. "State-Society Relations in Africa: An Exploration of the Tanzanian Experience." *Polity*, vol. 29, no. 1, 1996, pp. 65–96. Also, for the definition of the development see Dr. Reem

challenging nature of Somali state relations with its society stems from the strangeness between the postcolonial form and character of the state and the underlying social, economic, and political configurations of Somali society. The resulting tensions in state-society relations are directly attributable to the enduring influence of colonial legacy.[13] Thus, the independent Somali state (1960-1991) embarked on a policy of suppressing its strong society, and the reaction of society in encountering it caused the state to collapse in 1991. Additionally, the resilience of Somali society and its ability to survive and even develop more than 30 years of hardship is associated with its strong social networks, deep-rooted clan culture, strong Islamist groups, and relative networks.[14] Indeed, the state and society are not separate and wholly independent entities from one another since the state's top institutions are occupied by individuals representing the interests of various segments of society. Thus, state and society are interdependent, and while the state adopted modernization programs against traditional ethos, Somali clans hardly accepted the state's laws and programs and preserved their traditional customary laws and networks.

Secondly, the elite theory seeks to describe power relationships in contemporary society and posits that a small minority holds the most power. The central premise of the elite theory is as follows: 'No societies are governed by the people, by a majority; all societies, including societies called democratic, are ruled by a minority.'[15] Even when entire groups are supposedly excluded from the state's traditional power networks, elite theory recognizes that "counter-elites" frequently develop within such excluded groups. The

Abuiyada, Traditional Development Theories have failed to Address the Needs of the majority of People at Grassroots Levels with Reference to GAD. Social Sciences Department Dhofar University Salalah, Sultanate of Oman. International Journal of Business and Social Science Vol. 9, No. 9. September 2018.

[13] Shaheen Mozaffar, Dimensions of state-society Relations in Africa. African Studies Center, 1985, 1.

[14] Islamist organizations played an important role in mitigating conflicts, spreading Islamic values, creating formal and informal education programs, establishing business pan-clan networks, establishing charities, etc.

[15] James Burnham, The Machiavellians: Defenders of Freedom (The John Day Company, 1943), 165.

elitist method permits the integration of the two levels of analysis: micro-systems studies by anthropology and macro-systems that fall in the domain of political science.[16]

In the Qur'an, the elite is synonymous with the Arabic term *al-Mala,* which means the great one, the chieftains, the leaders, the notables, the eminent, the dignitaries, the elders, and the ruling circle.[17] Being the ruling elites and the privileged class, the Qur'an characterized these elites as ardent refusers of the prophets' messages. This is so because the prophets' message carried fundamental ideological change and a vision for the socio-economic reform of societies. As class theory postulates, political elites not only drive political power by owning economic resources, they acquire from other resources that promote access to and retention of political power. These resources include social backgrounds, such as gender and educational qualifications, and communal attributes, like ethnicity, religious affiliation, and political party affiliations.[18] Critical elite analysts insist that the political elite, despite their nominally different nature, stem from common backgrounds, which explains their similar political socialization, the formation of attitudes, and interest cohesion.[19] The concept of the elite is someone with a community reputation and enjoys the best social, economic, political, and cultural levels.[20]

Thirdly, Ibn-Khaldun's theory of Asabiyah explains how conflicts develop in the tribal nomadic societies, what happens after their conquest of the urban centers, and how to mitigate their destructive culture. The *Muqaddimah* (prolegomena) to the Universal History, authored by Ibn-Khaldun, delves into the studies of the relations between civilizations and nomadic people. The societies of Ibn-Khaldun's subject of study were

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[16] Asaf Hussein, Political Perspectives on the Muslim World (New York: Praeger, 1981), 81.

[17] See the meaning of *al-Mala* in the Qur'anic translations of Pickthall, Yusuf Ali, Shakir, Arberry, and others.

[18] Weber M. *The theory of social and economic organization* (New York: Oxford University Press 1943).

[19] Prewitt K, Stone A. "The ruling elite." In Olsen ME, Marger MN, Eds. *Power in modern societies. Boulder* (Westview Press 1993).

[20] A. R. Khajeh-Sarvi, *Political Competition and Political Stability in Iran* (Tehran: Revolution Documents Center Publications, 2003), 339.

clans and tribes, and their religion was Islam. It explains the difficulties of resuscitating the collapsed state because nomads do not agree to one leadership, which prolongs the conflict. Moreover, Ibn-Khaldun connotes Asabiyah as "basically a social force which offers the ability for confrontation, whether that confrontation [political] demands or defends [from threats]."[21] How the nomads behave when they conquer urban cities, Ibn Khaldun writes that "palaces that succumb to the Arabs [nomads] are quickly ruined."[22]

Furthermore, Ibn-Khaldun deals with mitigating the nomads' destructive behaviour. This theory suggests that Asabiyah cannot be weakened without the intervention of a religious, moral standard that lessens its ferocity and savageness with the teaching of universal values. Addressing this question, Ibn-Khaldun wrote: "Arabs [nomads] can obtain royal authority only by using some religious coloring such as prophecy, sainthood, or some great religious event in general."[23] "But when there is a religion [among them] through prophecy or sainthood, they have some restraining influence. The quality of haughtiness and jealousy leaves them. Then, it is easy for them to subordinate themselves and unite."[24]

In the post-colonial Somali state, the theory of state-society relations studies indicated confrontations between the state and society because of the secular view of the state that disdained the culture and norms of the clan-based Muslim society. Secondly, the elite theory deals with the modern elites who were the product of the colonial education system and retained the political ideology and culture inherited from the colonial rulers. These elites acquired predatory elite political culture mixing colonial governance culture (top-down) with the local clan culture (clannism) that continued and even worsened after the collapse of the state in 1991. Finally, Ibn-Khaldun's theory of solidarity offers a remedy to the chaotic nature of clan-based societies by introducing Islamic ethics and charismatic

[21] Ibid., 257.

[22] Ibn-Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* (Princeton University Press, 1980), 302.

[23] Ibid., 305.

[24] Ibid.

leaders into the equation, calling for Islamic principles of brotherhood, peace, justice, and good governance.

Background One: The Key Challenges of Somali State-building

The main challenges of Somali state-building are its strategic geographic location, the division of the Somali territory among multiple colonial powers and the Somali aspiration for uniting them (Greater Somalia), and the Westernized state model in conflict with its society. The geography of Somalia connects Asia, Europe, and Africa, which attracted competition among the various colonial powers to dominate Somalia. Also, adjacent to the Suez Canal and the oil-rich Gulf region, Somalia became part of the Cold War zones by the 1950s. Moreover, Somalia was drawn to the river Nile politics between Egypt and Ethiopia.[25] Furthermore, Somalia became a place where the double identity of Arabness and Africanness compete and conflict.[26] Presently, global terrorism designated Somalia as a suitable location to wage what they called global Jihad to restore the Islamic Caliphate. Finally, the renewed superpower rivalries between USA and China and rising regional powers like Turkey, the Gulf states, and neighboring countries pose new challenges for Somali state-building.

The second challenge was dividing the Somali cultural nation into five parts among multiple colonial powers, which inspired Somali nationalists to struggle to unify all Somali territories. This venture positioned Somalia on a collision course with international conventions on the inviolability of the colonially inherited borders.[27] Moreover, it also embroiled Somalia in continuous conflict with its neighbors. Gradually, Somali nationalism began to decline with the defeat of Somalia in the war with Ethiopia in 1977/78

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[25] Osman Abdullahi, "The Role of Egypt, Ethiopia the Blue Nile in the Failure of the Somali Conflict Resolutions: A Zero-Sum Game" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Hilton Hawaiian Village, Honolulu, Hawaii, March 2005).

[26] See Ibrahim Farah, "Foreign Policy and Conflict in Somalia, 1960-1990" (Ph.D. diss., University of Nairobi, 2009), 187.

[27] Somalia did not endorse the declaration of the Organization of African Unity on the sanctity of the borders in Cairo, 1964; Saadia Touval, "The Organization of African Unity and Borders," *International Organization* 21, no. 1 (1967): 102–27.

and the proclamation of the independent Republic of Djibouti in 1977. What is more, the repressive policy of the military regime and the armed opposition movements organized on a clan basis further weakened Somali nationalism.[28] Therefore, the centrifugal forces of Somali clannish particularism overwhelmed the centripetal forces of nationalism that were substantially weakened during long years of dictatorship (1969–1991), and the Somali state collapsed in 1991. Since then, Somalia has remained the emblem of the longest-collapsed state in modern history. Indeed, Somali nationalism never dies because it is organic and alive among all Somalis; however, it requires a new vision and interpretations that draw lessons from past experiences.

The third challenge is the postcolonial state built on the Westernized model, which failed to accommodate the Somali traditions (i.e., Islam and the clan system). Consequently, the pervasive state penetration in the society ineptly collided with a strong society based on the clan system and Islam, thus kindling a defense mechanism that provoked rebellious confrontations. Therefore, strained state-society relations instigated the emergence of three competing ideologies: clannism, Islamism, and nationalism, even though these ideologies are dynamic, crosscurrent, and often overlap.[29] However, without a reconciliatory arrangement, the notion of their mutual exclusion prevailed. Indeed, the polarization of the society started manifesting with the enforced secular reforms of the military regime, which provoked the emergence of insurgencies under the banners of Islam and clan. Therefore, it is arguable that Somali society has been systematically radicalized since 1969.

[28] The Armed opposition movements established with the support of Ethiopia were Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), Somali National Movement (SNM), United Somali Congress (USC), and Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM).

[29] Abdurahman Abdullahi, *Tribalism, Nationalism, and Islam*.



Figure 3. The three Key Successive Challenges of Somali State-building

The two challenges related to the strategic location that attracts foreign powers' competition and the division of Somalia into five parts are political realities that compel pragmatic handling. Dealing with foreign competition requires a prudent foreign policy safeguarding Somali national interests and mitigating foreign influence. Regarding Greater Somalia, reinterpreting its vision and adopting a new strategy based on regional integration resolves this case. The third challenge regarding the state-society conflict is that Somali scholars are required to critically analyze the past and develop a stable system of governance for Somalia. The Somali state's failure resulted from bankrupt ideas invented by foreign and Somali intellectuals and implemented by Somali politicians. The following section examines these ideas that, after being internalized by the Somali politicians, caused the state's breakdown within three decades and still place obstacles in its re-instituting.

Background Two: Overview of the Perspectives of Somali Studies

Somali studies have been dominated by narratives rooted in sociocultural anthropology that focus on kinships and social organizations, religion, myths, symbols, values, and the relationship between traditional and modern structures. Some scholars argue that anthropology originated and developed as the study of "other cultures," both in terms of time (ancient times) and space (non-Western societies).[30] These scholars' viewpoints

[30] Prem Poddar and David Johnson (eds.), *A Historical Companion to Postcolonial Thought in English* (Colombia University Press, 2007); Also, David Johnson (ed.), *A Historical Companion to Postcolonial Literatures – Continental Europe and its Empires* (Edinburgh University Press, 2008).

consider anthropology as a colonial intellectual tool developed for understanding colonized populations, which enables them to conquer, dominate and administer.[31] In addition, colonial scholars imbued with racial superiority produced debasing images and distorted descriptions of the colonized nations. These images permeated the various educational means and research methodologies in postcolonial knowledge production. For example, there is a persistent repetition of the clannish image of the Somali people in much of the academic literature, which tends to represent Somalis as exceptional and clannistic while dooming them to be forever fractious and incapable of building a viable state.[32] Scholars of anthropology make their assumptions on "the modernization metanarrative, which focuses on the transition from tradition to modernity.

This theory is founded on the belief that traditional societies can be developed with the assistance of the developed countries along the same path taken by the more developed Western countries."[33] This theory draws from the ideas of Max Weber (1864–1920) on the role of rationality and irrationality in the transition from traditional to modern society, popularized later by Talcott Parsons (1902–1979). Many modernization theorists often saw traditions as obstacles to economic growth and related democracy with modernization, taking national states as the unit of analysis.[34]

The above concept was ingrained in the minds of the Somali political elites. As a result, they espoused the idea of peripheralizing the traditional identities of Islam and the clan system. In doing so, they aspired to be modern and developed. The conception of modernity against tradition was the core ideology of Somali nationalism and the state that gained

[31] Maxwell Owusu, *Colonial and Postcolonial Anthropology of Africa: Scholarship or Sentiment?* (De Gruyter Mouton, 1979).

[32] Ahmed Samatar. "The Curse of Allah: Civic Disembowelment and the Collapse of the State in Somalia." In Ahmed Samatar (ed.), *The Somali Challenge: From Catastrophe to Renewal?* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1994), 110.

[33] Abdullahi, *Revisiting Somali Historiography*, 36.

[34] Dean Tipps, "Modernization Theory and Comparative Study of the Societies: A Critical Perspective." *Comparative Study of Society and History* 15, no. 2 (1973), 199–226.

independence in 1960. The damaging impact of this perspective was that it created a rift between the national state and its societal base. In the first nine years of civilian rule (1960–69), the state-society conflict was mild and manageable; however, during the military regime (1969–1991), the ideological gap between the state and society had widened due to the adoption of socialism and ruthless modernization programs of the totalitarian military regime.

The military regime followed, to a certain degree, the footsteps of Kemal Ataturk in adopting his principles, such as secularism, nationalism, statism, populism, and reform.[35] However, these principles were camouflaged with the rhetoric of socialism and expressed in the secularization of the family law, abolishing the Diya system, the execution of scholars of Islam, forming the one-party system, and the persecution of the political opposition.[36] Somali studies reacted to the military regimes' policies and adoption of socialism with the emergence of the Marxist perspective.

This perspective is founded on class analysis and historical materialism.[37] The Marxist analysis of the Somali studies criticized anthropological and modernization theories. Nonetheless, the military regime had been hybridizing the concepts of sociocultural anthropology and the ideology of socialism. Both perspectives shared a secular worldview and enmity toward the traditions of the societies. The oppressive nature of the military regime and its harsh policies against traditional values were confronted with the radicalization of clans and the emergence of armed oppositions by the end of the 1970s. Moreover, the phenomenon of Islamism that appeared in the 1960s as part of the global rise of Islamist movements became more structured, and various organizations were

[35] Seyfettin Aslan, *Historical background and Principles of Kemalism* (NWSA–Social Sciences, 2013).
[36] Ozlem Demirtas Bagdons, *A Poststructuralist Approach to Ideology and Foreign Policy: Kemalism in the Turkish Foreign Policy Discourse* (Ph.D. thesis, Central European University, Hungary, 2008), 26–29. Available from file:///C:/Users/Dr.%20Baadiyow/Downloads/iphdeo01.pdf (accessed on 25 April 2023).

[37] Erik Wright, *Approaches to Class Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

instituted.[38] Indeed, during this period, the seeds of extremism in the name of Islam surfaced in reaction to the execution of the Ulama in 1975, who opposed secular family law.[39]

The negative impact of the marginalized Somali traditions paved the way for extreme state-society conflict, which gradually triggered a total breakdown of the state in 1991. With the end of the Cold War, the demise of the Soviet Union, and the collapse of the Somali state, the Marxist perspective reached a dead end, even though the theory of class analysis was sustained. Thus, proponents of the Marxist perspective reverted to accepting the need to reconcile modernity and traditions. This transformation was more evident in the thesis of Ahmed Samatar, who proposed the synthesis of modernity and tradition (clan [tol], customary law [Xeer], and Islamic law [Qanoon]).[40] However, the practical integration of modernity and tradition remains the most significant unsolved challenge in Somalia and all Muslim states.

The collapsed state of Somalia in 1991 posed an unprecedented challenge to state-building. Professor Hassan Kaynan said, "Somalia has not been the only country to experience state failure, but the scale, magnitude, duration, and consequences of state disintegration have earned it the infamy of being the first and most enduring failed state."[41] During this long and traumatic period, a perspective of revisionism emerged strongly, expressing the historical marginalization of the southern semi-pastoral regions versus the northern and

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[38] Abdurahman Abdullahi, *The Islamic Movement in Somalia: A Case Study of Islah Movement (1950-2000)* (London: Adonis & Abbey, 2015), 141-170.

[39] Abdurahman Abdullahi, "Women, Islamists, and Military Regime in Somalia: The New Family Law and Its Implications." In M.V. Hoehne, and V. Luling (eds.), *Milk and Peace, Drought, and War: Somali Culture and Politics* (London: Hurst, 2010), 137–60. The first radical reaction was Takfir group that emerged at the end of the 1970s, and the current al-Shabaab and Daish are rooted in the same ideology but reformed to adopt a violent approach.

[40] Ahmed Samatar, "The Curse of Allah: Civic Disembowelment and the Collapse of the State in Somalia," 95–133, 138.

[41] Notes of Professor Hassan Kaynan on the Concept Note of the Workshop on the Somali Equation Framework to be held in June 2023.

central nomadic areas of Somalia in "a more epistemologically holistic and pluralistic way of articulating Somali society."[42] Proponents of the revisionist perspective criticized the two other perspectives cited above for accepting the constructed myths and utilizing the official narratives that contributed to the conceptualization of Somalia.

Scholars who adopted this new perspective demystified the conventional image of Somaliness as one constructed by idealistic Somali nationalists, colonial historiographers, and post-colonial political hegemonic clannists. Moreover, these scholars criticized made history as chauvinistic, focusing on northern pastoralists and excluding the southern agrarian population. The revisionists have re-examined conventional national symbols and myths such as racial homogeneity, linguistic unity, and shared historical experience. They advocated for comprehensive Somali Studies that do not exclude sociological minorities and marginalized communities. However, the revisionist perspective does not disagree with the anthropological and Marxist perspectives on the secular view. Indeed, their difference is confined to criticizing the marriage of power and knowledge that nomadic-rooted and camel culture national leaders promoted.[43] The objectives of the revisionist scholars have been partially achieved in the development of the constitutional provisions, which recognized linguistic diversity and minority rights, and the adoption of a federal system demanded by the Hizbia Dastur Mustaqil al-Somalia (HDMS) party, which represented the south/western clans of Digil and Mirifle, before the Somali independence in 1960.[44]

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[42] Abdullahi, *Revisiting Somali Historiography*, 42. Interview with Professor Abdi Kusow, one of the prominent scholars from the revisionist perspective, in 2018.

[43] It is noteworthy that all presidents and Prime Ministers of Somalia since the independence in 1960 were rooted in the pastoral nomadic regions. As a result, the nomadic culture became dominant in Somali studies, educational curricula, and mass media.

[44] Digil & Mirifle clan family is one of Somalia's prominent four clan families, which were given equal quota with Hawiye, Darood, and Dir in the 4.5 clan power-sharing. This clan family is concentrated in the South/Western state of Somalia. See Somali Provisional Constitution, Article (31:3) states, "The state shall promote the cultural practices and local dialects of minorities." Also, see Elmi, Afyare. *Decentralization options for Somalia: Paper for the Heritage Institute for Policy Studies* (2014). http://www.heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Decentralization_Options_for_Somalia-ENGLISH.pdf (accessed on May 10, 2023)

The three above-stated perspectives are just two sides of the same coin regarding their belonging to secular philosophy and overlapping understanding of Somali society and its relationship with the modern state. Indeed, the ideology of the postcolonial Somali state in its two phases, civilian and military, was founded on the hybridization of anthropological, liberalism, and Marxist perspectives, which suffered failure as an intellectual framework for Somali state-building. The three above-stated perspectives are just two sides of the same coin and belong to secular philosophy. Nevertheless, they have an overlapping understanding of Somali society and its relationship with the modern state. Indeed, the ideology of the postcolonial Somali state in its two phases, civilian and military, was founded on the hybridization of anthropological, liberalism, and Marxist perspectives, which suffered abysmal failure as an intellectual framework for Somali state-building. On the other hand, the revisionist perspective contributed to addressing internal grievances among Somalis and criticizing the propensity of Somali studies to specific regions. Therefore, their central thesis was confined to demanding an inclusive approach to Somali studies. As a result, these three perspectives were criticized by this author, who proposed the 'Comprehensive Perspective' (CP) of Somali studies.

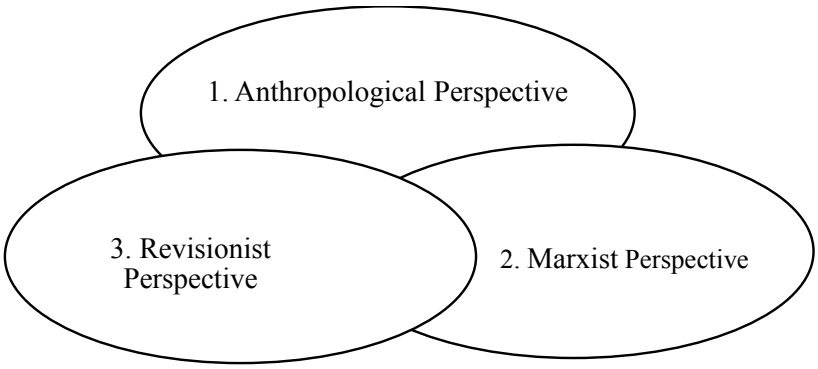

Figure 4. The three perspectives with overlapping secular views

The Comprehensive Perspective of Somali Studies

The comprehensive perspective (CP) was founded to explore Somali studies since ancient times, periods of strength and weakness, the impact of Islam in framing societal culture and building states, the colonial intrusion and Somali reaction, the introduction of the modern state system, the rise and the fall of the Somali state, the civil war and reconciliations, the recovery of the Somali state in 2000, and all further occurrences from that period on. This perspective refutes four prevalent features of Somali studies: exceptionalization, clannization, secularization, and patriarchization. Historically, the initial idea behind the CP was developed by this author as a critical approach in 1989 while a graduate student at the Islamic Institute at McGill University. Developing this Comprehensive perspective has gradually expanded since then.[45] The CP offers an alternative perspective and scholarly foundation for revisiting and reconstructing Somali studies. The CP offers an alternative perspective of Somali studies and provides the road map for resolving the Somali conflict and establishing a stable Somali state at peace with its society. CP does not only offer an alternative perspective of Somali studies but provides the road map for resolving the Somali conflict and establishing a stable Somali state in peace with its society.

The first premise of the CP is criticizing the other three perspectives in their adoption of the secular view in their analysis. In the Somali context, a secular view means that despite accepting Islam as the state religion, the colonially inherited legal system and elite political culture tend to separate religion from state affairs. As a result, the Somali state acquired a mixed legal system in which familial and financial disputes were adjugated in Sharia legal frameworks. At the same time, in other matters, secular laws took precedence. For example, during military rule, even the family laws were secularized, which provoked

[45] The initial idea was expressed in the MA thesis submitted to the Islamic Institute, McGill University, titled "Tribalism, Nationalism, and Islam: The Crisis of Political Loyalties in Somalia." Since then, this author published four books and several papers and articles in the spirit of this perspective. See https://mogadishuuniversity.academia.edu/AbdurahmanAbdullahibaadiyow (accessed on 16 May 20123)

societal uproar and the execution of opposing Ulama.[46] Indeed, these three perspectives share these attributes in following methodologies that divorce Islam in their research or rarely mention the Sufi orders as part of society's presupposed declining traditional culture.[47] Conversely, CP calls for the inclusion of the role of Islam, Islamism, and Sufi orders in Somali studies as part of the Somali equation.

The second premise of the CP is to include women in historical research and not to confine the analysis to the patriarchal segment of society. This means that besides reaffirming the early marginalization of women in the decision-making of the pastoral/nomadic communities, contemporary Somali studies should not peripheralize women's crucial societal role and give attention to their rich cultural contributions.[48] Moreover, women's social, political, and economic roles should be revised and restored. To do so, women should be liberated from the traditional clan bonds and extreme interpretation of Islam by ultra-conservative groups. Instead, women must be given the role articulated by the moderate scholars of Islam and enshrined in the Provisional National Constitution.[49]

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[46] On 23 January 1975, ten leading scholars of Islam were executed because they opposed secularized family law. See Abdurahman Abdullahi, *Women, Islamists and Military Regime in Somalia*.

[47] The academic literature on Islam in English mainly focuses on Sufi Orders. They include Mohamed Mukhtar, "Islam in the Somali History: Fact and Fiction," in Ali Jumale (ed.), *The Invention of Somalia* (Red Sed Sea Press, 1995), 1–29. Mohamed M. Kassim, "Aspects of Banadir Cultural History: The Case of Baravan Ulama," in Ali Jumale (ed.), *The Invention of Somalia* (Red Sea Press, 1995), 29-43. Christine Choi Ahmed, "God, Anti-Colonialism and Drums: Sheikh Uways and the Uwaysiyya"; B.G. Martin, "Shaykh Uways Bin Mouhammad Al-Barawi: A Traditional Somali Sufi." Scott Rees., *Urban Woes and Pious Remedies: Sufism in Nineteenth Century Banaadir (Somalia)* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999); Said Samatar, "Sheikh Uways Muhammad of Baraawe, 1847–1909: Mystic and Reformer in East Africa," in Said S. Samatar (ed.), *The Shadows of Conquest: Islam in Colonial Northeast Africa* (Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 1992), 48–74. After 9/11, western academia began to study modern Islamic movements as part of security studies. Currently, there is an overflow of literature on al-Shabaab.

[48] The literature on Somali women and their role in politics, economics, and civil society has grown, with several noteworthy publications authored by Dr. Hamdi Sheikh Mohamed, a book chapter by Christine Choi Ahmed, Judith Gardner, and Judy El Bushra, and many others.

[49] See Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *The Status of Women in Islam*. Available from https://www.centuryassociation.org/download/marriage_2016/books/The_Status_of_Women_in_Islam__by_Yusuf_al_Qaradawi.pdf (accessed on 17 May 2023); Hiam Salah EI-din Ali el-Gousi, "Women's Rights in Islam and Contemporary Ulama: Limitations and Constraints. (Egypt as Case Study)" (Ph.D. thesis, The

The third premise of this critique is to avoid the exceptionalization of Somalia and to explore its shared features with African and Middle Eastern studies. Professor Cassanelli rightly said, "Somali Studies, as a collective enterprise, has been too insular, too unwilling to view Somalia as a variant of other societies."[50] He further observed that the sense of "Somali exceptionalism" prevents seeing Somalia as resembling other African and Muslim societies.[51] Moreover, it must be seen through its similarities with African and Middle Eastern Studies. Thus, Somalis share geography, culture, colonial legacy, religion, and postcolonial challenges with African people. African Studies began as part of the colonial project to understand the colonial subjects. On the other hand, Middle Eastern Studies extensively includes Islamic Studies due to the preponderance of the Muslims in the region. Somalia, being a member of the League of Arab States, shares many things with countries in the Middle East, including cultural traits, political culture, and the Islamic faith. Thus, Middle Eastern Studies have influenced Somali Studies, and many of their conclusions may apply to the Somali context.

The fourth premise is the clannization of Somali studies which leads to the clannization of Somali politics and conflict, the prevailing narrative of academic circles, and public perception. For instance, Ahmed Samatar quotes from David Laitin and Said Samatar, "For years, the eminent European anthropologist Enrico Cerulli and I.M. Lewis have been telling us that to understand Somali politics, it is necessary to understand Somali clanship and kinship ties."[52] Clannization of the conflict was intended to divert individual

University of Leeds, 2010). Available from https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/15221/1/535101.pdf (accessed on 15 May 2023), 91–103.

[50] Cassanelli, "The Somali Studies International Association: A Brief History," 8.

[51] Ibid., 8.

[52] Samatar, A. I. "Somali Studies: Towards an Alternative Epistemology." *Northeast African Studies* 11, no. 1 (1989): 3–17. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43660258. David Laitin and Said Samatar, *Somalia: In search of a state*. (Boulder, Westview Press), 1987, 198. Also, Ahmed Samatar, Samatar on Lewis: "A Modern History of Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa" H-Africa, 2003. Available from https://networks.h-

responsibilities to the collective responsibility of the clans for crimes committed during the civil war and to offer impunity to the perpetrators of heinous crimes. This premise affirms the political elite's responsibility for the Somali conundrum, state failure, and collapse due to their inability to deal with state-building challenges. This failure resulted from the elite conflict between Islamists and non-Islamists on the nature of the state on the one hand and the conflict among non-Islamist elites on power and prestige on the other.[53] The clannization of the conflict led to failed reconciliations and conflict resolution processes and methods during the first ten years of the state collapse. Moreover, in 2000, even the power-sharing among the political elites, based on clan affiliation, failed to produce a functioning Somali state. Although the clan factor could not be utterly disregarded, its precarious practices must be managed and tamed through policies that confine it in its indispensable societal role.

Thus, understanding the dynamics of the four factors: exceptionalization, clannization, secularization, and patriarchization of Somali studies is crucial to deciphering Somali chronic state failure. Moreover, it enables us to develop new perspectives that offer a microscopic view of the root conflicts and fault lines underlying state-society relations, elite political conflict, the politicization of clan structures, the radicalization of national politics, and the misuse of Islam as a vehicle of violent extremism. Finally, the CP is not just a theoretical framework, but it also suggests an inclusive reconciliation framework.

To simplify, the explanation of the basic premises of the CP will refer to the theory of mind in psychology, which refers to understanding thoughts in people's minds (mental states).[54] I will analyze the state of mind of Somali individuals by illustrating the six possible

net.org/node/28765/reviews/32825/samatar-lewis-modern-history-somali-nation-and-state-horn-africa (Accessed on 22 May 2023)

[53] Due to elite conflict for power, specific clans were mobilized to support the regime, while others supported their opposition political elites. In the process, Somali society was polarized in line with clan belonging.

[54] Ian A. Apperly and Butterfill, Stephen A. "Do humans have two systems to track beliefs and belief-like states?". *Psychological Review*. 116 (4), 2009, 953–970.

scenarios of the state of mind represented in the following six circles that show hierarchies of loyalties to clan, Islam, and nationalism. The objective of analyzing the minds of Somali individuals is to realize the appropriate hierarchy of loyalties at the individual level. This is the first step towards Inclusive Reconciliation. Let us imagine dissecting the mind of the various Somali individuals horizontally to watch their belief system and the hierarchies of their loyalties to the Somali equation: clan system, Islam, and modern state. Eventually, we will see the reconfiguration of the individual's state of mind in one of the following six figures (see Figure 5).

Fig.1 shows the map of the mind of extreme clannists, in which Islam comes the lowest in the hierarchy of loyalties while nationalism comes second after clannism. Fig. 2 shows the map of a traditionalist where clan comes first, the traditional conception of Islam (Sufism) comes second, and nationalism acquires the smallest loyalty. This type of mind is prevalent in most Somali populations who practice general Islamic obligations but are mainly apolitical. Fig. 3 demonstrates the mind of an extreme secular nationalist who first gives his loyalty to nationalism, followed by his clan, with Islam being the smallest in his hierarchy of loyalties. This form of mind tolerates clannism but opposes and oppresses activists aspiring to apply sharia. It is the mind of the secular absolutists experienced in Somalia during the military rule. Fig. 4 demonstrates the mind of moderate nationalists, where the hierarchy of loyalty to nationalism comes first, with Islam to follow and clannism of the lowest priority. Fig. 5 shows the properly organized mind of a Muslim individual in whom loyalty to Islam comes first, nationalism second, and clannism the lowest rank.

However, the realization of this model based on the inclusivity and prioritization of three elements of the Somali equation is yet to be developed. This form of mind belongs to the moderate Islamists who aspire to transform their society through peaceful and democratic means while advocating Islamic principles and values in the state and society.[55] Fig. 6

[55] Organized moderate Islamists generally belong to the Muslim Brotherhood persuasions organizationally or ideologically. In Somalia, Muslim Brotherhood persuasion includes the Islah Movement, Aala-Sheikh, and other smaller entities.

shows the mind of an extreme Islamist who does not recognize the modern state system and nationalism. Instead, he aspires to realize international order based on the historical Muslim state (Caliphate) through violence.[56] This mind hardly swings to another ideology like the other five mindsets. This extremism in the name of Islam is apparent in Al-Shabab, Daish, and similar organizations.

These six types of minds among Somali individuals are extreme clannists, moderate clannists, extreme secular nationalists, moderate nationalists, moderate Islamists, and extreme Islamists. The three extreme loyalties do not tolerate each other and believe in the total exclusion of the others: a zero-sum game. On the other hand, moderates are tolerant of each other and open to mutual interactions, dialogue, and peaceful conflict resolutions. Indeed, the biggest challenge of Somali cosmology is fluctuating the hierarchy of loyalties to the Somali equation and the delusions of each element. Accordingly, it is common to see an individual offering his loyalty to Islam in one circumstance, his clan on another occasion, and his nation in another period. It is all circumstantial, and even concurrent loyalties may occur occasionally. Fluctuating loyalties pose the biggest obstacle to developing a strategy to deal with the crisis of loyalties and creating an environment of reconciliation. Fluctuating loyalties is like a civil war taking place in the minds of every individual, where various loyalties contest each other for dominance. Unquestionably, this continuous contestation of loyalties generates traumatic syndrome, identity crises, and disordered thinking and delusions. An adequately organized hierarchy of loyalties of the individuals in putting Islam first and nationalism second while clannism takes third space is the goal of the inclusive reconciliation framework of Somalia. In this approach, the position of Islam supersedes nationalism, contrary to the current secular Muslim regimes. Indeed, secular nationalism has failed in most Muslim countries and cannot sustain in the foreseeable future.

[56] Dan Josef and Harun Maruf, Inside Al-Shabaab: The Secret History of al-Qaida's Most Powerful Ally. Indiana University Press, 2021. Also, Abdi said M.A. The Al-Shabaab Al-Mujahidiin: A Profile of the First Somali Terrorist Organisation. Available from https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/55851/AlShabaab.pdf (accessed on 25 April 2023), 3.

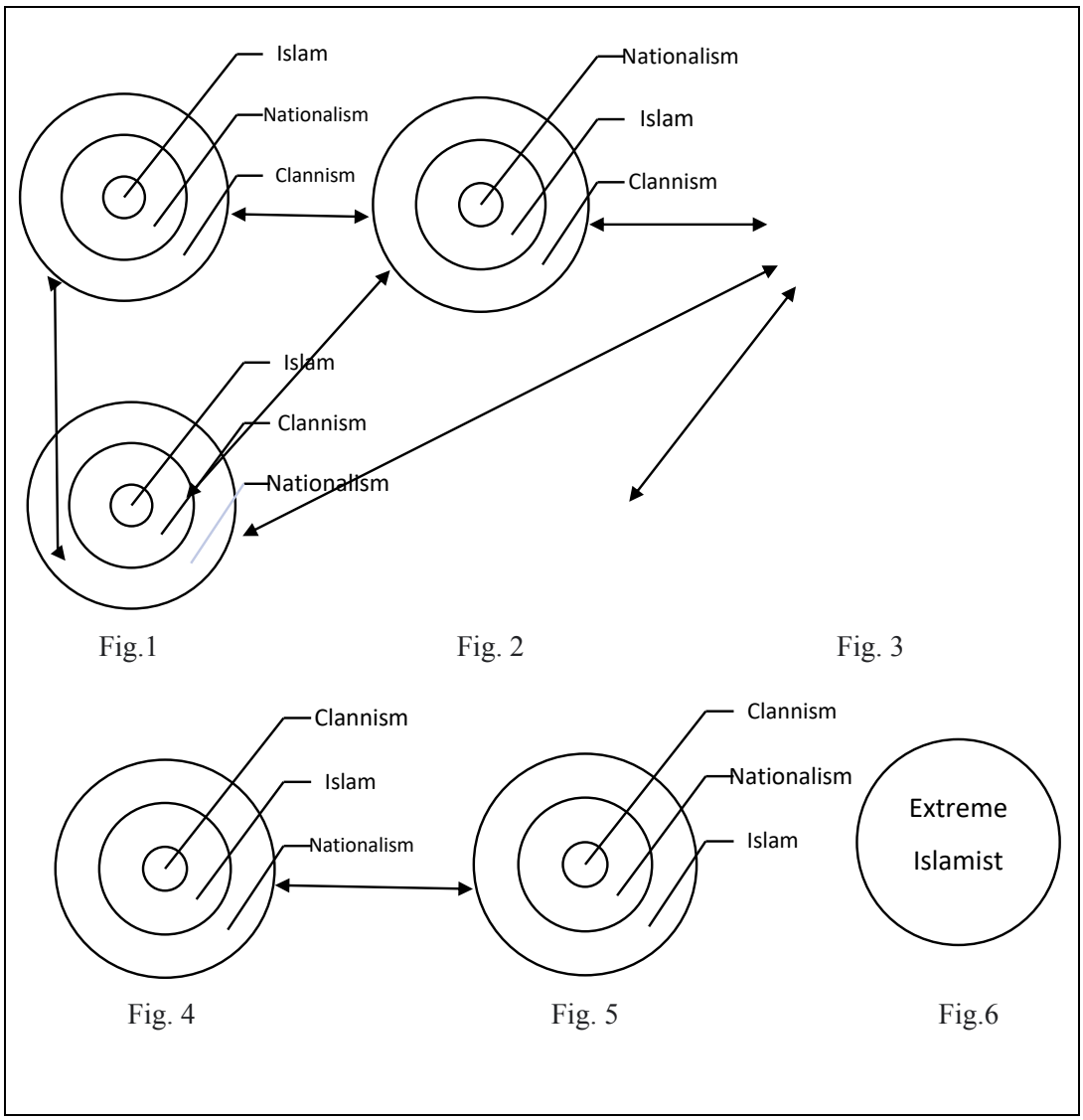

Figure 5. The Six Types of Minds Showing Their Process of Fluctuations.

The second illustration of the basic premise of the CP is to examine the reconfiguration of the structure and relations of the Somali elite. This analysis aims to understand the elite conflict needed to develop an inclusive reconciliation framework. It is an appropriate tool for analyzing state-society relations. The elitist analysis method is applicable in the political analysis of Muslim countries where the impact of kinship in politics is still dominant. Figure 5 shows the four main categories of the Somali elites, divided into

traditional elites (traditional Ulama and traditional clan elders) belonging to the micro-level analysis and modern elites (Islamists and non-Islamists) belonging to the macro-level analysis.[57] We use the term "non-Islamist" to mean a Muslim who practices Islam and does not deny its principles but does not advocate its application as an Islamist does. Most people belong to this category. These four elite categories are illustrated in Figure 6.

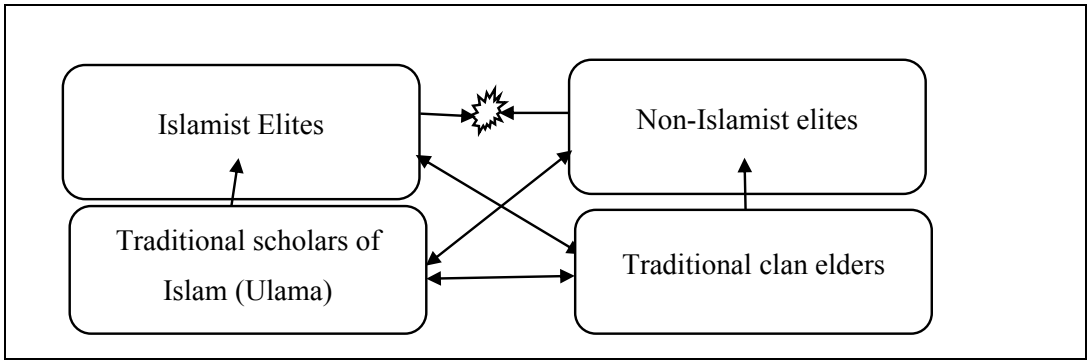

Figure 6. The Somali Elite Structure and Their Relations

Here, we will examine these four elite categories' horizontal and vertical relations. The relationship between clan elders and traditional ulama is complementary because their community authorities are well divided. Clan elders have the power to manage the day-to-day affairs of the clan and make peace and war. At the same time, the role of Ulama is mainly confined to religious activities and reconciliation.[58] Their relations are generally courteous and friendly, creating an environment of stability and solidarity in their community.[59] Often, they became relatives through family marriages, which even solidified their affinities and cooperation. Contrary to the traditional elites, relations between the modern elites are confrontational because of their different political views and

[57] This model was developed in 1991 during my MA program at the Islamic Institute, McGill University. See Abdullahi, Tribalism, Nationalism and Islam, 92.

[58] Abdurahman Abdullahi, *The Islamic Movement in Somalia*.

[59] Ibid.

agenda. They disagree on the nature and ideology of the state. Whereas moderate Islamists aspire to transform the modern state into one that applies Islamic laws and follows principles and values, non-Islamist elites cling to the form of the state inherited from the colonial powers. The postcolonial state was generally secular in its legal, economic, and cultural values.

On the other hand, the relations between the traditional Ulama and the modern Islamists are somehow suspicious because Islamists aspire to a political agenda, whereas most traditional Ulama are apolitical. Moreover, modern Islamists compete with traditional Ulama on the religious authority in society. Indeed, different groups of modern Islamists deal with traditional Ulama differently. For example, Salafia groups' relations with traditional Ulama are more intolerant than the Muslim Brotherhood's persuasions.[60] Moreover, the relationship between traditional clan elders and non-Islamist elites is courteous and primarily rooted in next-of-kin empathy. In addition, traditional clan elders and modern elites are, to a certain degree, linked to each other through relative networks. Indeed, the role of clan elders changed significantly after the adoption of clan-power sharing in 2000 and since their empowerment to select members of the parliament. In this circumstance, all politicians must cultivate closer relations with their clan elders. Finally, the relations between Islamists and traditional clan elders and between non-Islamists and traditional Ulama are generally courteous and based on respect.

The Comprehensive Perspective and the Inclusive Reconciliation Framework (IRF)

The comprehensive critical perspective aims to explore and offer a new interpretation for Somali studies and suggests a framework for resolving the Somali crisis. Having seen the configuration of the Somali mind and elite structure and their relations, we understood the nature and hierarchies of the Somali conflicts at individual and collective levels. As such,

[60] Abdurahman Abdullahi, "The Conception of Islam in Somalia: Consensus and Controversy," *Bildhaan* 21 (2023), 79–98, 87–90. Available from https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1240&context=bildhaan (accessed on 25 April 2023)

this perspective is called the 'inclusive reconciliation framework' (IRF). The IRF aims to set a new direction in resolving the four levels of Somali conflicts: the modern state and traditional Somali society, the elite political conflict for power, the politicized and clannized armed conflict, and internal conflicts among traditional elites and conflicts in the name of Islam. These conflicts exclude traditional clan conflicts for pasture, land, water, and other factors, which are quickly resolved through traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. These four levels of conflict are shown in Figure 6 below.

Having grasped the four levels of conflict, let us begin to address their reconciliation. The first level of IRF is the state-society conflict, the root cause, and the father and mother of all other conflicts. However, before proceeding further, we must grasp the historical approaches to state-building and their relationship with the traditional system. There were initially two models of Somali state-building with divergent state-society relations. The first approach was exercised during the two phases of the state-building approaches: the democratic system (1960–69) and the military dictatorship (1969–91).

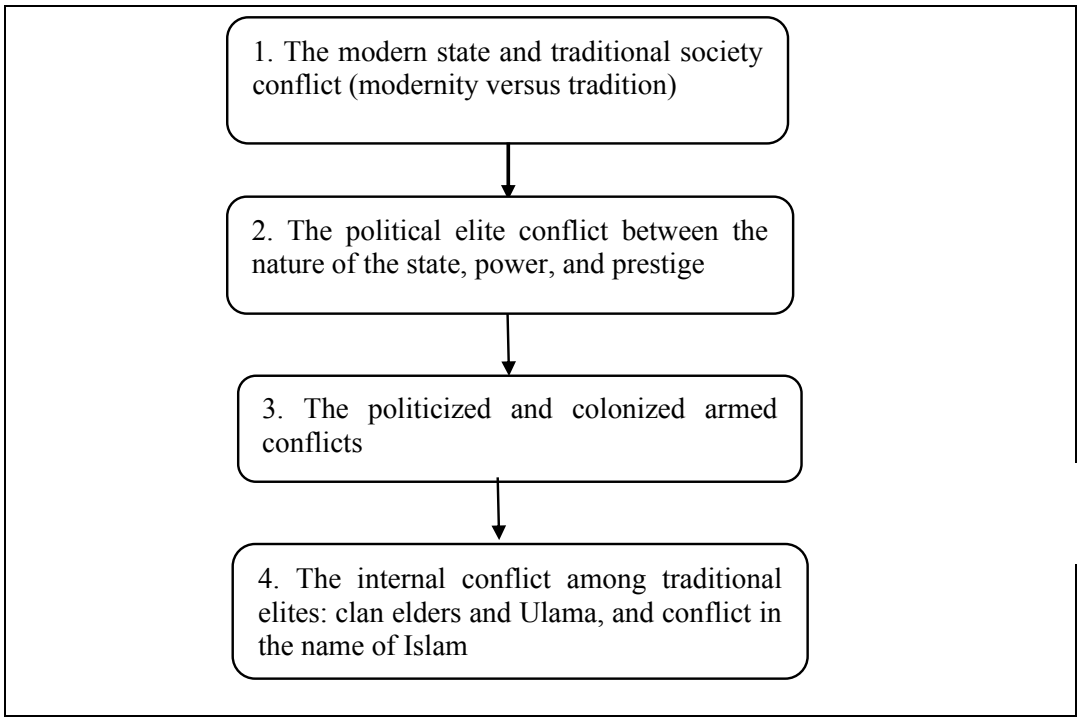

Figure7. The four layers of Somali conflicts

In this approach, the state-building process was based on Westernization, secularization, and despising traditions. Its concept was based on moving society to the Western system of governance by indoctrinating society to accept and adopt this system. However, this system failed to sustain itself because of suppressing traditions on which oppositions organized their armed supporters and toppled the regime and the state in 1991. To exemplify this process, let us consider the state as a house where people compete to enter because their livelihood depends on it. However, the design of the house is not fit to accommodate these people's features and way of life. As a result, the people were overcrowded outside of the house and forcefully rushed at once to enter it. No guides or supervisory bodies showed the people the systematic way in which each had a chance to enter the house, nor the culture of a queueing system or "first come, first served." Through this process, the house falls apart, and the people are either killed or injured, with only some of them able to save themselves by escaping the collapsing house. This phenomenon is precisely what happened in Somalia in 1991.

The second approach was developed during the Somali Peace and Reconciliation Conference in Djibouti in 2000, which was based on indigenization while keeping features of the Western structure of the state.[61] Indigenization was the power-sharing based on clan quotas of 4.5 and giving clan elders the authority to select and nominate members of the parliament from their clans. In addition, Islam was accepted as the ultimate reference of all laws, and since then, this provision has been included in the Provisional Constitution. On the other hand, the established state system kept the features of the Western system of governance, such as the design of governance inherited from the colonial powers in 1960.[62] Moreover, the Somali state adopted a federal system of governance in 2004. Both clan power-sharing and federalism were necessary decisions to recover the state. Nonetheless, these new approaches were abused by the political elites who were infused with a toxic

[61] The system was built on clan power-sharing and selecting members of the parliament by the clan elders. However, the outcome of the process was the structure of the modern state system constituting a legislative assembly, executive branch, judiciary branch, and the presidency.

[62] The system was a parliamentarian who was alike to the Somali governance system of 1960.

elite political culture.[63] Nevertheless, this approach failed to produce a functioning Somali state for over two decades. This approach was founded on moving the state to the society and building the state on the traditional structure. Both approaches were extremes in employing either Westernization or indigenization. Therefore, the IRF suggests moving the state and society towards each other at the middle ground where the state and society's main features are preserved. Of course, this requires re-engineering the system of governance in Somalia and reorganizing the design of traditional authority damaged during the civil war.

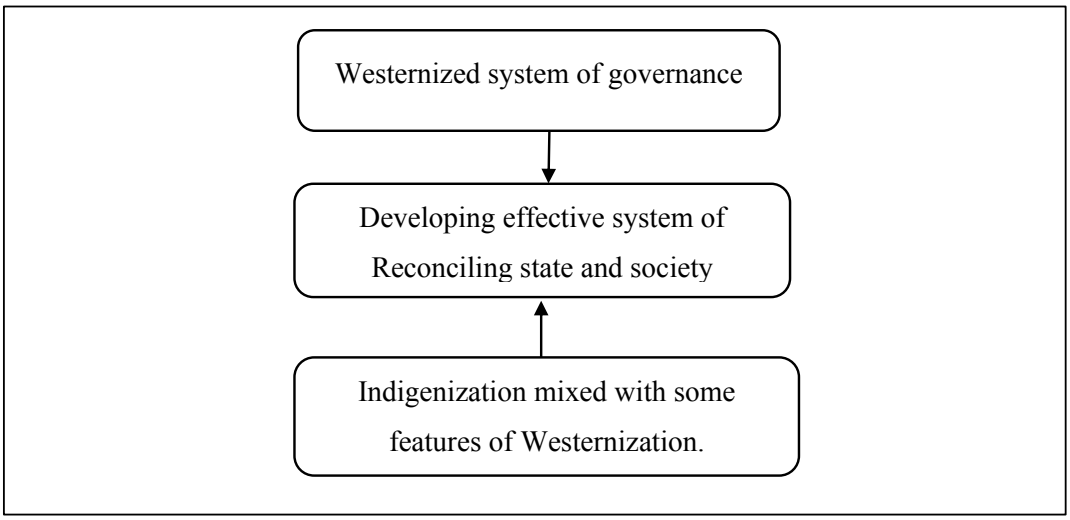

Figure 8. The process of the ideal model of reconciling state and society in Somalia.

The second level of the IRF is elite political reconciliation. There are two approaches to completing this phase. The first is the reconciliation process between Islamists and non-Islamists on the nature of the state.[64] This phase was reached through the Transitional Charter of 2000 and its subsequent constitutional provisions. For instance, the Somali

[63] Abdurahman Abdullahi, The Somali Elite Political Culture: Conceptions, Structures, and Historical Evolution. Somali Studies: A Peer-Reviewed Academic Journal for Somali Studies, Volume 5, 2020, 30-92.

[64] Islamists are individuals and groups who advocate the application of Sharia in society and the state. They are activists and organizers. On the other hand, non-Islamists are most Muslims who, though they believe in the supremacy of Allah's laws, do not advocate for its application.

Provisional Constitution stipulates that Islam is the ultimate reference of all state laws. Article 3.1 states, "The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia is based on the foundations of the Holy Quran and the Sunna of our prophet Mohamed (PBUH) and protects the higher objectives of sharia and social justice." Moreover, Article 2.3 states, "No law can be enacted that is not compliant with the general principles and objectives of Sharia." This phase of the IRF was achieved generally. The second approach to elite reconciliation entails creating an inclusive political system, not only one that is democratic but also sensitive enough to accommodate all segments of society, including women and minorities. The inclusion of women is well articulated in the Somali Provisional Constitution. Article 3:5 states, "Women must be included, effectively, in all national institutions, in particular all elected and appointed positions across the three branches of government and in independent national commissions." In traditional societies, political processes based on winners and losers or a majoritarian system breed sectarianism, exclusions, and conflict. Therefore, developing an appropriate political system, election model, and effective public institutions are all necessary preconditions for a successful elite reconciliation.

The best example of creating consensus and cohesion in a clannish society was the story of the Black Stone when the Quraish sub-clans disputed who would position the Black Stone in its place after reconstructing the Ka'ba. They agreed to accept the judgment of the first person who entered the house of Ka'ba, and the person was young Muhammad (the Prophet). He placed the Black stone on a sheet and requested all the leaders of the tribes to hold the sheet and lift the stone together to the Ka'ba. This story shows that clan prestige is critical; therefore, creating collective leadership and a sense of shared ownership is vital for the stability of the state.[65]

The third level of the IRF deals with the politicized and clannized conflict. This entails addressing past grievances and gross human rights violations by adopting transitional

[65] Muhammad Husayn Haykal, Life of Muhammad, translated by Isma'il Al-Faruqi. Available from https://muqith.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/muhammadbyhaykal.pdf (accessed on 17 May 2023),128.

justice mechanisms that suit Somali culture and religion. Islam and traditional culture have crafted the tools to resolve prolonged human rights violations after the civil war. For example, the practical transitional justice approach and tool in Islam could be derived from the conquering of Mecca by the Muslims after eight years of their forced migration to Medina and 13 years of subjugation in Mecca.[66] On the other hand, some grievances of the politicized clan conflict could be resolved through traditional means. Clannization of the Somali conflict deflects individual responsibility for the committed crimes and depicts it as the collective culpability of a clan. Transitional justice in Somalia is a neglected field that the CRF strongly advocates for.[67]

The fourth level of IRF calls for reorganizing traditional authorities, which have been corrupted and lost their authoritative powers. Traditional institutions of clan elders and the Ulama religious authority have drastically deteriorated. Therefore, it is necessary to revise the structures of the clan elders who have been chaotically divided and ruined their authorities' inter-clan cohesion and hierarchy.[68] The fragmentation of clan elders took a high stake since the collapse of the state in 1991, during the civil war, and the empowerment of clan elders as custodians of authority to select members of the parliament. The politicization of the clan elders ruined clan cohesion and stability of clans. On the other hand, the IRF advocates for establishing a unified system of meaning of Islam agreed upon by the prominent Ulama and officially accepted by the state. This approach creates an environment of minimizing conflicts on the issues of Islam. Currently, the Ulama are highly fragmented, and various groups adhere to their different interpretations. Establishing a commission of Ulama belonging to the multiple persuasions should be the

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[66] Abdurahman Abdullahi, *Recovering the Somali state: The Role of Islam, Islamism, and Transitional Justice* (Adonis and Abbey Publishers, 2017), 123.

[67] Abdurahman Abdullahi, "Conceptions of Transitional Justice in Somalia: Findings of Field Research in Mogadishu," *North African Studies, Michigan State University Press* 14, no. 2 (2014), 7–43.

[68] Abdurahman Abdullahi and Ibrahim Farah, *Reconciling the State, and Society: Reordering the Islamic work and Clan System*. Available from https://www.scribd.com/document/15327358/Reconciling-the-State-and-Society-in-Somalia# (accessed on 26 April 2023)

first step towards the practical unification of understanding Islam in Somali society. The following figure shows the reconciled modern political elite and properly reorganized traditional elders and Ulama.

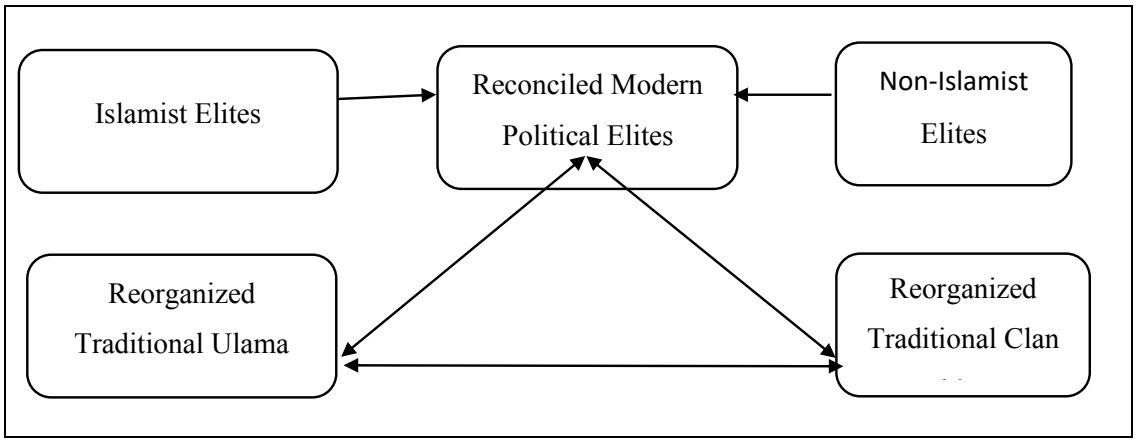

Figure 9. Comprehensive Reconciliation Framework Triangle

Realizing the state-society and elite conflicts (modern and traditional elite), as demonstrated in the two diagrams 8&9, will eventually resolve the other conflicts (clannized political conflict, internal conflicts among clan elders, or conflict in the name of Islam.

The Comprehensive Perspective and Stability Model of the Somali State

Adopting the triangle of the IRF is enough to create an environment of stability in Somalia. Since the collapse of the state, Somali civil society (CS) emerged strongly. The traditional elders, Ulama, and modern civil society organizations filled the vacuum of the state. These organizations were engaged in the public service provision in education, the health sector, charities, peace, and reconciliation and networked with international organizations. These CS organizations are networked nationally and are becoming more organized. In addition, the business community is also robust and plays an essential role in all development sectors. Business personalities are very crucial in making peace and war among clans. The

stability of the state necessarily entails cooperating with non-state actors, including the CS and business communities.

There are six scenarios of civil society/state relations. These are CS, apart from the state (mosque committees, sports clubs); politicized CS in opposition to the state (civil society toppling dictatorial regimes through peaceful means); CS in continuous dialogue with the state (criticizing when the state deviates from the public good and support when they do good); CS in support of the state (the supports civil society and promotes its ideals); CS in a partnership or substitute to the state (in case the state is weak like Somalia, civil society substitutes the state); and CS beyond the state as a global phenomenon (international NGOs advocating for global issues).[69]

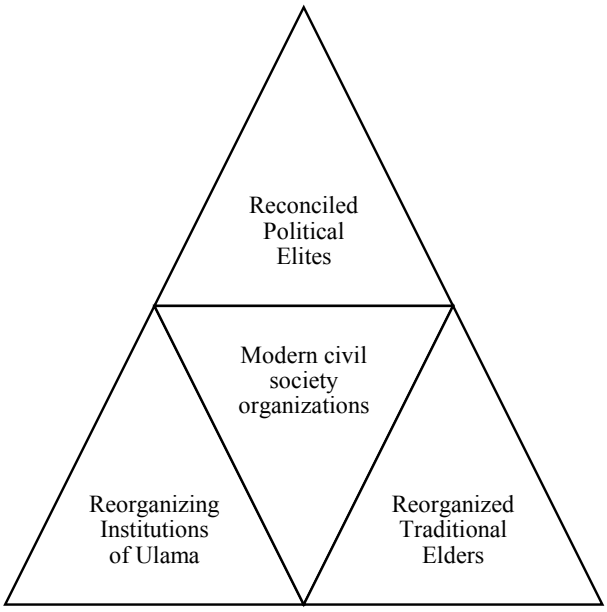

Figure 10. Stability Model of Somali State-building

The role of the Somali CS in rebuilding the state must be to engage in continuous dialogue with the state and avoid its politicization. They must criticize and dialogue with the state when it deviates from the constitution and undertakes policies not in the public's interest.

[69] See Abdurahman Abdullahi, Making Sense of Somali History, vol. 2, Adonis & Abbey, 2018, 67–70.

They also have to support the policies and programs of the state when the state is doing beneficial programs such as promoting public education, improving human rights, fighting Al-Shabab, and so on. This concept agrees with the Islamic notion of rejecting the mischievous (Munkar) and supporting the virtuous (Macruuf).[70] The organized nationwide civil society, including all sectors, is the agent of stability of the state and an element of a new re-engineering of the stability model of Somalia.

Conclusion

This essay has exposed the challenges posed to the Somali state-building process and depicted modern state relations with the traditional Somali society as one of the main challenges that Somali studies still need to address. After criticizing three main perspectives: Anthropological, Marxist, and Revisionist, this author suggested an alternative perspective named the "Comprehensive Perspective." This perspective refutes Somali studies' exceptionalization, clannization, secularization, and patriarchization. It offers an inclusive approach that combines all elements of the Somali equation into Somali studies. To simplify the concept of the CP, the six scenarios of a Somali mind were illustrated in which the rightly organized mind places Islam first, nationalism second, and clan third. However, it was discovered that these loyalties fluctuate with the changing situations that exhibit significant challenges to the Somali state-building process. Moreover, the classification of the Somali elites into traditional and modern and their relations were also exposed and examined. CP is an alternative perspective for Somali studies and a solution for the inclusive reconciliation framework (IRF).

The inclusive reconciliation framework is based on understanding the four levels of Somali conflict: the state-society conflict, elite political conflict, clannized political conflict, internal conflicts within traditional elites, and conflicts in the name of Islam. It also hinges on understanding the two previously used approaches to state-society relations. The first

[70] See "Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoying al-Ma'roof and forbidding al-Munkar." Quranic verse, "(al-Imran, 3: 104). Also, see the verse, "You are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin al-Ma'roof and forbid Al-Munkar, and you believe in Allah (Aal Imran, 3: 110).

approach was Westernization, which was based on moving the people to accept the inherited state model from the colonial powers. The second approach was indigenization, founded on moving the state model to the people through clan power-sharing. Thus, the first IRF reconciles the state and society by moving them to a middle space that recognizes the separate spaces and roles of the state and society. The second IRF concerns reconciling the political elites on the nature of the state and practicing democratic values sensitive to the Somali culture and belief system. The third IRF calls to address the human rights violation of the clannized political conflict during the civil war through transitional justice mechanisms rooted in Somali culture and Islam. Finally, the fourth IRF involves reorganizing the fragmented traditional institutions during the civil war, politicizing the clans, and elimination of extremism in the name of Islam.

Finally, reconciling state and society entails reconciling political elites, reorganizing traditional institutions, addressing previous grievances, and laying the foundation for a shared future is the only way to institute a viable Somali state. Reorganizing and reconciling Somali society should be expressed through constitutional provisions and legal frameworks. Moreover, non-state actors, such as civil society organizations and business communities, must be given cooperative roles in the Somali state-building to bolster this new structure. Assigning a role to the non-state actors offers the final design that produces the "stability model for Somali state-building."

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