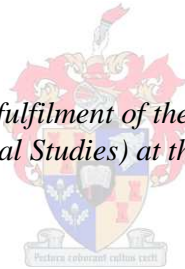# Intractability of Conflict
Causes, Drivers and Dynamics of the War in Somalia

by
Heidi Elisabeth Pettersson

Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts (International Studies) at the University of Stellenbosch

Supervisor: Mr. Gerrie Swart

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Department of Political Science

March 2011

Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author hereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Date: 2 November 2010

Abstract

Somalia has experienced constant instability and conflict for nearly two decades. With a collapsed state, widespread violence and criminal activity, as well as continued disagreement between warring factions, the prospect of peace seems bleak. The purpose and rationale of this research has been to critically examine root causes and perpetuating factors of the protracted war in Somalia in order to arrive at a comprehensive analysis of the reasons for the intractability of this conflict. This study aims to fill a gap in the literature by pointing to some elements which have previously been overlooked in existing research on the topic, especially the impact of the war economy on the fuelling of the conflict.

While the thesis first and foremost set out to identify factors which contribute to the intractability of conflict in Somalia, a thorough conceptualisation of relevant theory and a historical overview of the case study were provided as a point of departure. An analysis then followed which tied theory to empirical data. According to my analysis, the most significant internal factors contributing to intractability of conflict in Somalia were the long absence of a central governing authority, the low level of economic development, the role of Islam, as well as particular choices made by the parties to the conflict. Relational factors which are crucial are the similar military strength of the opposing sides, their lack of cooperation, and their different views regarding the country's law and governance. Finally, external factors were deemed to have had a particularly strong effect on the long war. Ethiopia's constant meddling; Eritrea's support of al-Shabaab; the UN's and the AU's various missions; as well as the presence of a plethora of humanitarian aid agencies have shaped the conflict throughout its course.

The conclusion was drawn that the war economy had the greatest impact on conflict in the first rounds of the civil war, but with the transformation, re-escalation and re-intensification of the conflict that has occurred over the last couple of years, the opportunities for benefiting from war and instability may again have increased. Piracy stands out as a new, prominent pillar of the contemporary war economy. The war economy of today continues to have an influence on the Somali conflict; it adds to its intractability, makes it increasingly difficult to establish a legitimate and stable non-corrupt government, and generally sustains violence in the country.

I suggest that further research be undertaken on the topic of state collapse in Somalia, as it is clear that the long absence of a central government is a factor which has had a significant impact on the prolongation of conflict. In addition, as accurate data on the current war economy is rare, I recommend that field research should be conducted in Somalia to gain a more precise understanding of shadowy economic activities and their linkages to conflict.

Opsomming

Somalië beleef vir byna twee dekades konstante onstabiliteit en konflik. Met wydverspreide geweld, kriminele aktiwiteite, voortgesette verskille tussen strydende faksies en die verbrokeling van die Somaliese staat, lyk die vooruitsig vir vrede in die land onwaarskeinlik. Die doel en rasionaal van hierdie navorsing is om krities te ondersoek wat die grondoorsake en verewigings faktore is, van die uitgerekte oorlog in Somalië. Die navoring meen dus, om 'n omvattende ontleding te gee van die redes vir die hardnekkigheid van konflik in die land. Die studie poog ook om 'n gaping in die literatuur te vul deur te wysig op kritiese elemente wat nalatige was in bestaande navorsing en meer fokus te gee aan die impak van die oorlogsekonomie wat konflik in Somalië aanspoor.

Alhoewel die proefskrif hoofsaaklik poog om die faktore wat bydra tot die hardnekkigheid van konflik in Somalië te bestudeer, word 'n deeglike begrip van die toepaslike teorie en 'n historiese oorsig van die studie voorsien as die vertrekpunt van die navorsing. Dit word dan opgevolg deur 'n analise, wat die teorie bind aan empiriese data. Volgens my analise is die belangrikste interne faktore wat bydra tot die hardnekkigheid van konflik in Somalië; die lang afwesigheid van 'n sentrale beherende gesag, die lae vlak van ekonomiese ontwikkeling, die infloed van Islam, sowel as unieke keuse van partye tot die konflik. Relevante faktore wat noodsaaklik is, is die soortgelyke militêre krag van die opponerende kante, die gebrek aan samewerking, en hul teenstrydige standpunte oor die land se wet en bestuur. Laastens is daar gevind dat eksterne faktore 'n besonder sterk invloed gehad het op die langdurigheid van die oorlog. Ethiopië se konstante inmenging, Eritrea se ondersteuning van al-Shabaab, die VN en AU se verskeie missies, asook die teenwoordigheid van 'n oorvloed van humanitêre hulpagentskappe het deel gehad in die vormulering van konflik oor tyd.

Die gevolgtrekking was dat die oorlogsekonomie die grootste impak gehad het op die konflik in die eerste rondtes van die burgeroorlog, maar met die transformasie-, her-eskalasie en re-intensivering van die konflik oor die afgelope paar jaar, is daar weereens 'n styging in die geleenthede vir individue om te baat uit die onstabiliteit en oorlog. Seerowery staan uit as 'n nuwe, prominente pilaar van die huidige oorlogsekonomie. Die huidige oorlogsekonomie het nog steeds 'n invloed op die Somaliese konflik, dit dra by tot sy hardnekkigheid, maak dit toenemend

moeilik om 'n wettige en stabiele onkorrupte regering te stig en dit fasiliteer die voortduur van geweld in die land.

Ek stel voor dat verdere navorsing onderneem word oor die onderwerp van die ineenstorting van die staat in Somalië. Dit is duidelik dat die lang afwesigheid van 'n sentrale regering 'n beduidende faktor is, wat 'n impak op die verlenging van konflik het. Verder, omdat akkurate data oor die huidige oorlogsekonomie so skaars is, beveel ek aan dat verdere navorsing gedoen moet word om 'n meer akkurate begrip van donker ekonomiese aktiwiteite in Somalië te kry en hul impak op konflik.

Acknowledgments

First of all I would like to thank my supervisor, Mr. Gerrie Swart, for his support and guidance. His insightful and valuable comments and ideas were of immense help during the writing process, and the positive feedback he provided served to keep me focused and motivated.

I would also like to thank the whole staff at the Department of Political Science who made my two years of postgraduate studies so interesting and enjoyable. The knowledge I have gained from my professors and lecturers will most certainly be of great value in the future.

Thanks to my boyfriend and best friend, Michael-John Blignaut, who is always there for me, believes in my abilities, and encourages me to live up to my full potential.

Finally, I want to thank my parents Annika and Christer, and my sisters Helena and Catharina, for their unwavering love and support.

Table of contents

List of figures

List of abbreviations and acronyms

AIAI	Al-Ittihad al-Islamiya/Islamic Unity
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
ARPCT	Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EU	European Union
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
IGO	International Governmental Organisation
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PRIO	Peace Research Institute in Oslo
PSC	Protracted Social Conflict
SNM	Somali National Movement
SPM	Somali Patriotic Movement
SRSP	Somalia Revolutionary Socialist Party
SSDF	Somali Salvation Democratic Front
TFG	Transitional Federal Government (of Somalia)
TNG	Transitional National Government (of Somalia)
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UIC	Union of Islamic Courts
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNITAF	Unified Task Force (for Somalia)
UNOSOM	United Nations Mission to Somalia
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USC	United Somali Congress
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics/Soviet Union

WFP   World Food Program

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose and rationale of this research is to critically examine root causes and perpetuating factors of the protracted war in Somalia in order to arrive at a comprehensive analysis of the reasons for the intractability of this conflict. This study aims to fill a gap in the literature by pointing to some elements which have previously been overlooked in existing research on the topic, such as the impact of the war economy on the fuelling of the conflict.

1.2 Background/context of the study

Post-independence Africa has seen a proliferation of civil wars and other forms of intrastate conflict and unrest. In some countries, armed conflicts have turned into protracted wars, often highly destructive and bloody, in which the adversaries' goals simply seem incompatible and irreconcilable. Commonly, leaders view such situations as a zero-sum game, and there are often players involved who benefit more from war or a stalemate, than from a settlement (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2005: 5). Somalia, situated in the Horn of Africa, is a country caught in such an intractable conflict.

Somalia became independent in 1960. Until 1969 the country was ruled by a civilian government, in a system of rather corrupt and dysfunctional multiparty democracy (World Bank, 2005). General Mohammed Siyad Barre seized power in a military coup in 1969, and ruled the country by authoritarian means until 1991. Somalia's history of independence has been far from peaceful. Three armed conflicts took place during Barre's rule, namely the Ogaden war (1977-78), the war between the Somali National Movement (SNM) and the Somali military (1988), and the conflict between the government and a number of clan-based liberation movements (1989-1990). The legacy of the corrupt, exploitative and oppressive Barre regime is understood to have had a significant impact on subsequent events in Somalia. Dissatisfaction over the government led to a coup in 1991, in which Barre was ousted. The state collapse and civil war which ensued has yet to

come to an end (World Bank, 2005; Lewis, 2008: 72). The Somali conflict has significantly transformed over time, both in terms of its actors and their motives. Thus, what sparked the civil war in 1991 are not necessarily the same factors which are fuelling the conflict today.

In the first years of the conflict, intense warfare took place between various clan-based militias who were fighting for control of government and access to resources. A war economy developed in which powerful warlords and merchants profited from war by engaging in war-related unlawful activities such as weapon sales, drug production and exportation of scrap metal. Large- and small scale predatory looting, as well as diversion of food aid also became part of the war economy (World Bank, 2005: 11; Møller, 2009: 12). Many characteristics of this war economy still exist in Somalia today, and there appears to be actors who have an economic stake in perpetuating a state of lawlessness and war.

During the last half of the 1990s and first half of the 2000s the nature and intensity of the conflict changed. In an increasingly fragmented country without a functioning central government, warlords took control over regions and resources, fighting took the form of sporadic clashes between sub-clan militias, and a state of general lawlessness prevailed. Since the mid-2000s, the armed conflict has however re-intensified. A temporary improvement in security and economic activity in south-central Somalia was achieved after 2005 when Islamic *Sharia* courts began to substitute the "defunct formal judicial system" (Møller, 2009: 13). Virtually all Somalis are Muslim, but fundamentalist Islam has traditionally not had a strong foothold in Somalia, and Islamism was not an issue in the first rounds of the civil war (Møller, 2009: 12). However, the Union of Islamic Courts became a key actor in the conflict, and Islamism began to play an increasingly prominent role in the struggle for power in the country (Lewis, 2008: 85; ICG, 2008: 2). Today (October 2010), militant Islamist groups such as al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam control vast areas in Somalia, where they have imposed strict *Sharia* law on the population (Floudiotis, 2010; Dersso, 2009: 6).

As mentioned, Somalia has lacked an effective government since 1991. A Transitional Federal Government (TFG), supported by neighbouring Ethiopia and the West, has existed since 2004, but has since then been involved in a power struggle with various insurgent groups, such as the Islamist militias mentioned above (Lewis, 2008: 88-91, ICG, 2008: i). The TFG remains fragile,

lacks political legitimacy and has not been able to consolidate power or provide services to the Somali people (U.S. Department of State, 2010; ICG, 2008: i). The first months of 2010 have seen continued instability, fighting, terrorism and piracy, with little progress made to manage the conflict and achieve peace. As this very brief overview demonstrates; Somalia appears to be caught in a perpetual cycle of violence, which has transformed over time but stays seemingly intractable.

1.3   Problem statement

There has been a growing trend among armed conflicts in the developing world to resist swift resolution; and some countries have for years become trapped in a deep-rooted, self-sustaining state of war (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2005: 4). Conflicts do not remain static, but evolve over time. Various underlying and proximate factors cause a conflict to flare up, and while often remaining in the background throughout the course of the war, new drivers and dynamics appear during the conflict, constantly fuelling it in a perpetual cycle of violence. The conflict in Somalia has persisted for nearly two decades. With a collapsed state, widespread violence and criminal activity, as well as continued disagreement between warring factions, the prospect of peace seems bleak. My main research question is: *what factors can be identified as contributing to the intractable and protracted nature of the conflict in Somalia?*

A growing literature on the political economy of war in Africa suggests that certain actors may profit from protracted armed conflict and state collapse, and may therefore have a stake in perpetuating the crisis (Menkhaus, 2003:406; Kaldor, 2006; Reno, 2000; Allen, 1999). Somalia has been divided into areas controlled by warlords, who control much of the economy to the detriment of the Somali people. A sub-problem of my study is therefore: *to what extent does the war economy sustain and perpetuate conflict in Somalia?* As mentioned, extreme protractedness and intractability has been a feature of several contemporary conflicts. Thus, another sub-question which will be addressed in the concluding chapter of the study is *whether the case of Somalia is unique in terms of the factors which perpetuate the conflict or whether the findings of this study allow for generalisations to be made regarding other intractable conflicts?*

More specifically, this study aims at contextualising and conceptualising conflict in Africa, by providing a theoretical overview of theories of conflict. In particular, it aims at outlining a theoretical framework for analysing intractable conflicts. Furthermore, it will conduct a historical overview of the case study, Somalia, which will include background to the ongoing conflict; a descriptive analysis of the course of the civil war; and an overview of Somalia's war economy. Subsequently, it will analyse the case study against the backdrop of the theoretical discussion, identifying factors which are especially strong drivers of the Somali conflict, and which thus contribute to its intractability. Finally, the impact of the war economy as a major factor which undermines peace in Somalia will be assessed, before considering whether findings from the Somali case study may be applicable to other cases of similar intractable conflict.

1.4   Significance of the study

The study aims to fill a gap in the literature in providing a systematic analysis of the Somali conflict and the drivers behind it, based on theory and a detailed case study. The limited existing literature on intractability of conflict also makes this study distinctive. When it comes to Somalia, surprisingly few comprehensive studies have been conducted on the topic of conflict in the country in general. A database search of South African theses with the keyword "Somalia" yields merely three results, none of them similar to this study. A great deal of the academic literature available on Somalia focuses on the country and people from an anthropological or historical point of view; on the first stage of the civil war after the fall of Siyad Barre; on the collapse of the state; and on the United Nations (UN) missions to Somalia in the early 1990s (for example Lewis, 1994, 2002, 2008; Clarke and Herbst, 1996; Hirsch, Oakley and Crocker, 1995). Studies that deal with the Somali conflict tend to focus on the visible manifestations of conflict, while leaving less visible, underlying factors unaddressed. Furthermore, research concerned with the drivers of the Somali conflict quickly become outdated as the conflict evolves. Since the early 1990s there have been significant shifts in the dynamics of the crisis as well as in the vested interests of key actors (Menkhaus, 2003: 406).

What is more, many people, academics as well as other observers, seem to perceive the situation in Somalia as too intricate, complex and difficult to understand. In the media, as well as in academia, Somalia is repeatedly called the ultimate 'failed state', which contributes to a sense of

'hopelessness' among observers. Consequently, too little time is spent attempting to understand the underlying causes, as well as the driving forces, behind the Somali conflict. As Menkhaus (2003: 407) notes, "'failed state' and 'collapsed state' have become throwaway labels to describe a wide range of political crises". This study takes the position that the 'failed states' thesis, which is often used to describe and explain the crisis in Somalia, is counterproductive to the management of the conflict as it fails to take into consideration the various structural, relational and external factors which makes the conflict intractable.

Peace-efforts initiated by external actors have to date been unsuccessful. In future peace processes, it is imperative for everyone involved, Somalis and foreigners alike, to fully understand the reasons behind the conflict, and the elements behind its self-perpetuating nature. Without such a profound comprehension putting an end to the cycle of violence will be very difficult. The study thus aims to make a contribution to the literature on Somalia's conflict, by providing an analysis of the reasons behind its seeming intractability, which are crucial to understand from the point of view of future peace-building.

1.5   Delimitations

As has become apparent, I will limit my study to analysing the intractability of conflict in one country: Somalia. The choice of case study is motivated by the limited amount of research previously conducted on the Somali war. I view it as one of the most complex cases of protracted armed conflict in the world today, and believe that exploring the factors behind its seeming intractability will yield some valuable lessons for students of violent conflict and complex emergencies.

As far as geographical delimitations are concerned, the greatest emphasis will be put on southern and central Somalia, as the situation in the northern part of the territory understood as Somalia is rather different. In 1993, Somaliland in northern Somalia declared independence from the south. It has since then experienced relative stability, and has demonstrated some aspects of a functioning government, but has yet to be internationally recognised (World Bank, 2005: 11). Puntland, a coastal region in north eastern Somalia, has since 1998 been a semiautonomous region which from time to time has appeared more politically stable and economically successful than

the south (Hagmann and Hoehne, 2009: 50). Though less attention will be given these regions, they do play a role in the dynamics of the Somali conflict and will thus not be ignored.

Furthermore, the situation in Somalia can be divided into three crises: collapse of government, lawlessness and protracted armed conflict (Menkhaus, 2003: 405). Though recognising that these are closely interlinked, the greatest emphasis will in this study be put on the armed conflict-dimension. Time-wise, I will focus on the period post-Siyad Barre, 1991 until present, although a historical background will be given. Events occurring after August 2010 will not be taken into account.

1.6   Literature review

1.6.1   *Understanding contemporary wars*

Warfare and the nature of armed conflict have undergone some fundamental changes since the end of the Cold War. Wars between states are less common today, and intrastate fighting has instead become the predominant form of armed struggle. Military historian Martin Van Creveld was one of the first to recognise this changing nature of war in his important work *Transformation of War* (1991) which points to how, regardless of the decline of the nation-state, organised violence persists and war is fought for different reasons and by using different methods than before. Scholars such as Kaldor (2006) and Münkler (2005) have subsequently termed these wars *new wars* and identified some common characteristics which set them apart from what we understand as traditional interstate wars. In short, contemporary conflicts, a majority of which have taken place in Central America, the Middle East, South East Asia and Africa, have typically shared a number of characteristics. First, conflict is seldom confined to a specific front or battle ground, but is instead manifesting itself as widespread, omnipotent political violence. Second, the new wars tend to result in a large number of civilian casualties as violence is often deliberately directed at civilians. Third, the distinction between war and crime has often become blurred in contemporary war-torn societies (Kaldor, 2006: ix). Guerrilla warfare and the use of terrorist-methods have also become increasingly common (Münkler, 2005: 3).

There is a vast literature on causes of conflict, and a growing one on specifically reasons behind contemporary African conflicts. In regards to conflict theory in general, the 'greed vs. grievance' debate has received much attention during the past decade. The greed thesis, originally put forward by Collier (cited in Porto, 2002: 8), suggests that economic agendas are central in understanding why civil wars erupt. The grievance hypothesis, which long dominated literature on conflict, posits that issues related to identity, such as ethnic or religious cleavages, and inequality are at the root of conflicts (Porto, 2002: 9). Cilliers (cited in Porto, 2002: 14) has argued that while the greed theory is useful in explaining the perpetuation of war, it cannot be used as a single factor explanation for the causes of war. Scholars writing on armed conflict in Africa have also focused on greed and grievance related issues, but have in addition identified factors which have proved significant to understanding conflict taking place specifically on the African continent. The colonial legacy, ethnic and religious divisions, bad leadership and economic decline are among common explanations for Africa's seeming proneness to conflict (Misra, 2008; Ohanwe, 2009; Copson, 1994; Osman, 2007b).

1.6.2 *Intractability and protracted conflict*

To borrow from Crocker, Hampson and Aall (2005: 5), an intractable conflict will in this study be broadly defined as a conflict which has:

> persisted over time and refused to yield to efforts – through either direct negotiations by
> the parties or mediation with third-party assistance – to arrive at a political settlement.

It is important to note that intractability does in this study not imply that a conflict is unresolvable, but simply that it has resisted resolution. Thus, the concept of intractability is not understood to contain an element of inevitability. In other words, conflicts are more or less intractable, not completely intractable (Kriesberg, 2005: 66). To further conceptualise what is understood by intractable conflicts, Licklider (2005: 33) views intractable conflicts as conflicts that divide large groups of people and involve large-scale violence. Similarly, in this study intractable conflicts will be understood as intractable wars; that is, armed conflicts which have resulted, or are likely to result, in a large number of casualties.

Licklider (2005: 37) makes the important point that intractable conflicts are in fact the exception, not the rule, and it is thus important that they be explained and not "assumed away" under throwaway labels such as "ancient hatreds". He further addresses the important question of how rebels and other actors in today's intractable conflicts can afford to maintain resistance during civil wars. External support and resource looting may therefore play key roles in a protracted war in the developing world (Licklider, 2005: 38). Zartman (2005: 48) points to five internal characteristics which intractable conflicts tend to have in common. They are "protracted time, identity denigration, conflict profitability, absence of ripeness, and solution polarization". These elements do not relate to the sources of the conflict, but are rather a result of its development over time. They are not static, but will also change as the conflict evolves. According to Zartman (2005: 48), any effort to overcome intractability and eventually manage and solve a conflict must face these five elements. However, the involvement of outside actors in the conflict and the external context also affects the intractability of a conflict.

Kriesberg (2005: 67), who has published extensively on the topic of intractability, also highlights the dynamic nature of intractable conflicts, and outlines six phases in the life-time of such a conflict. The first phase is the outbreak of conflict, followed by an escalation phase characterised by destruction. Third, there will typically be failed efforts to make peace; after which the destructive conflict becomes institutionalised, signifying the fourth phase. The fifth stage is a de-escalation of conflict which leads to its transformation. Lastly, the intractable conflict will eventually be terminated and the society recovered. These phases are however merely loosely sequential, and it is common to regress to an earlier phase. According to Kriesberg (2005: 69), intractable conflicts transform and shift from one phase to another when changes occur in their core components. He identifies four key components of social conflict as being *identities*, *grievances*, *goals*, and *means to achieve goals*. The role of identity is generally viewed as crucial in the study and analysis of intractable conflicts (Northrup, 1989; Azar, 1990; Fisher cited in Porto, 2002: 20).

Kriesberg (2005: 76) has outlined a theoretical framework for understanding the factors which shape the "emergence, persistence and transformation" of intractable conflicts. This will be used as a foundation and analytical framework for the analysis of intractability of conflict in Somalia.

The factors are divided into internal, structural and external factors (2005: 77). Internal factors refer to the structural parameters within which actors of the conflict function. Such factors include fighting capacities, economic development, culture and decision-making institutions. These factors in turn influence the abovementioned key components of social conflict. A war economy in which some are profiting from war is seen as an important internal factor. Relational factors are concerned with relations between opposing groups. Differences in economic resources and population size will for example have a great impact in this regard. Finally, external factors and actors may have a significant impact on intractability. The influence of a superpower may for instance be crucial to the course of a conflict. Foreign military intervention or humanitarian assistance are other factors which fall under this category (Kriesberg, 2005: 83).

1.6.3 *War-economies*

Traditionally, the concept of 'war economy' has been understood as a centralised, autarchic system in which a large part of the population participates in the war effort in various ways. Kaldor (2006: 95) explains how the 'new wars' have seen an emergence of a new type of war economy, the "globalized" war economy, which is in essence the complete opposite. This type of war economy exists in fragmented societies where the state apparatus is weak and decentralised. Participation in the war effort is low due to lack of legitimacy of the warring parties, and due to lack of resources to pay salaries. In such contexts, there is "very little domestic production, so the war effort is heavily dependent on local predation and external support" (Kaldor, 2006: 95). Besides generating a general predatory social condition, a war economy typically also entails the privatisation of military forces, diversion of aid and remittances, and the proliferation of illegal circuits of trade (Kaldor, 2006: 96-115).

Similarly, Münkler (2005) also emphasises how war-economies have become typical features of contemporary conflict-ridden societies. He states that the economic dimension of the new wars has often been attributed with less explanatory appeal than ideological, ethnic and religious factors, and argues that economic drivers of conflict are highly significant and should not be overlooked. The warlord is identified as a central figure in most new wars, and is defined as person who combines military, political and entrepreneurial logic. Münkler (2005: 92) further explains:

> The new warlords [...] derive their income directly from the fighting of wars, and thereby profit from the collapse of many states that can no longer maintain, or in any way enforce their monopoly on violence. [...] For the warlords, war has become an economically attractive proposition because they can control the distribution of its costs, the privatization of its profits and the socialization of the losses that it entails.

Reno (2000, 2006) and Allen (1999) are also among scholars who have highlighted the economic aspect of warfare and the predatory behaviour of warlords and politicians in present-day African conflicts. Reno's concept of the 'shadow state' has become a useful analytical tool to understand how warlords and rulers in neo-patrimonial states benefit from parallel economies.

1.6.4 *Intractability of conflict in Somalia*

The causes of conflict must be understood as different from the factors which drive a conflict and make it intractable. This study however posits that it is important to understand the reasons behind a conflict in order to be able to proceed to analysing and understanding its intractability. In the case of Somalia, there are various theories on the cause of the conflict, and admittedly the line between causes and perpetuating factors often becomes rather blurred. Ohanwe (2009: 137- 146) identifies two main strands of theory which attempt to explain the causes of conflict in Somalia, namely the traditionalist theory and the transformationist theory. The traditionalists, who include renowned Somalia-scholars such as I.M. Lewis and S. Samatar, maintain that the conflict "cannot be divorced from the traditional Somali political genealogy". They argue that due to the decentralised political structure of Somalia, civil organisations follow genealogical clan-lines, and thus clan-loyalty is a defining feature of the current political situation in Somalia (Ohanwe, 2009: 138).

The transformationists, on the other hand, disagree with the traditionalist notion of the continued existence of pre-colonial clan structures, and argue that these have been substituted by "new social strata such as pastoral producers, merchants, the petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia" (Ohanwe 2009: 139). Furthermore, they claim that the "clan" of contemporary Somalia is not comparable to the old traditional notion of a "clan", and that interests of social groups have changed significantly over time. A key thesis of the transformationist strand of theory is that it is the forces that brought about the eventual collapse of the Somali state must be viewed within a "social rather than genealogical order of Somalia" (Ohanwe, 2009: 139).

In the literature on Somalia, clan identities are often mentioned as a significant feature of society and the current conflict (World Bank, 2005: 15; Adam, 1999). Somalia is viewed as an ethnically homogenous country, but its people can be roughly divided into six major clans, which in turn are subdivided into a large number of sub-clans, and sub-sub-clans (Lewis, 2008; Adam, 1999: 170). Though most agree that clan divisions in Somalia are by no means inherently a catalyst for conflict, there appears to be general consensus in the literature that identities have been manipulated and clan cleavages constructed and strengthened in order to mobilise clan members in conflict (World Bank, 2005; Adam, 1999: 170; Ajulu, 2004; Dersso, 2009: 3). Despite his rhetoric against clan ties, Siyad Barre is believed to have left a legacy of increased clan cleavages, due to his unofficial policy of continuously awarding key governmental posts and various other benefits to members of his own clan (Lewis, 2008: 45; Rotberg, 2003: 12).

The manipulation and politicisation of clan identities is thus seen as both a cause and driver of the conflict, which may be contributing to its intractability (World Bank, 2009: 18; Adam, 1999: 189; Ajulu, 2004). Menkhaus (2003: 410) notes that a significant trend in the evolution of the conflict has been the "devolution of warfare to descending levels of clan lineage". Since 1995, armed clashes have increasingly occurred between sub-clans, or among extended families, as opposed to previously when fighting tended to erupt between the major clans. As has been noted in an International Crisis Group report, however, the common reductionist tendency to view the Somali crisis as resulting from clan hostility and clan dynamics is inadequate as it fails to explain many aspects of societal trends and power struggles (ICG, 2008: 4).

Elmi and Barise (2006) have identified a number of factors which they view as significant root causes and perpetuating factors of the Somali conflict. They argue that Somalis have fought over land, water and livestock since long before independence, and although the type of resources needed have changed to a certain extent in modern times, competition for resources and/or power can be singled out as the most important root cause of conflict in the country, and is also believed to be sustaining the war. Other root causes which are identified are the legacy of colonial rule and the partitioning of the Somali nation; and of a repressive military state under Siyad Barre (Elmi and Barise, 2006: 33-34). Contributing factors, factors which fuel the conflict, that is, are according to Elmi and Barise (2006: 36-39) politicised clan identities, the availability of weapons,

the large number of unemployed youth in the country, as well as the existence of certain features of Somali culture which sanction the use of violence.

Furthermore, it is argued that contributing factors to the intractability of conflict are Ethiopia's involvement, a lack of major-power interest in Somalia, and a lack of resources within the country. Warlords benefiting from a *status quo* of war and instability are also noted as a significant obstacle to peacebuilding (Elmi and Barise, 2006: 51). Similarly, Menkhaus (2003) argues that interest, not identity, is a key driver of conflict in Somalia, and that the 'war economy' theory is of important use when attempting to understand the Somali crisis. He posits that the intractability of the Somali crisis can generally be attributed to three broad factors: "complete and protracted state collapse", "protracted armed conflict" and "lawlessness and criminality". Several of the various factors listed above have also been identified by authors such as Dersso (2009) and Osman (2007).

The 'failed state' thesis has often been used as something of a 'catch-all' explanation for the crisis in Somalia. Kaplan (2006), for example, calls Somalia "the very definition of a failed state". The 'failed state' discourse attributes states with a number of negative characteristics such as 'weak', 'collapsed', 'dysfunctional' or 'imploding'; inexplicitly comparing them the strong states of the West (Hill, 2005: 139; Jones, 2008: 181). A large number of journalists, politicians, and academics have uncritically used the 'failed state' terminology when describing crisis in the developing world. Though perhaps useful to the extent that it can describe status quo, it has been argued that the analytical and explanatory basis of the concept is greatly flawed (Jones, 2008; Hill, 2005; Hagmann and Hoehne, 2009). Jones (2008: 197) argues that using the 'failed state' thesis as an explanation for the state of affairs in states such as Somalia is highly inadequate as it continually mischaracterises social conditions and fails to identify causes of the crisis; thus the superficial characterisation of Somalia as a failed state lacks any real explanatory power. Instead, he argues that the Somali conflict and crisis must be understood as being "rooted in the colonial and postcolonial contradictions of the local and regional political economy, which were heavily militarised by international intervention governed by geo-strategic logics" (Jones, 2008: 197).

1.7   Research design

1.7.1   *Research design and methodology*

In order to answer my research questions I will conduct an analytical, qualitative study in the form of a single-case study. During past decades, political scientists have increasingly started using the case study approach, as its usefulness for certain types of research questions has become widely recognised. George and Bennett (2005: 5) define a case study as a "detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalisable to other events". Conducting a case study of Somalia thus enables me to look at a large number of variables and identify causal mechanisms. Case studies allow the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the case and its contextual variables, which statistical studies fail to capture (George & Bennett, 2005: 21). In this study, the geographical entity known as Somalia is thus the unit of analysis. To analyse the case study, a theoretical framework developed by Kriesberg (2005) will be used as an analytical tool.

My research questions are of an empirical and exploratory nature; and the research design will be flexible in order to allow for the emergence of unanticipated issues. Viewing the research design as a continuing process is common within the social sciences, as an element of the unknown will always be present in social research (Lewis, 2003: 47). In order to answer the research questions, existing data will be analysed, rendering the study a "secondary data study", which makes use of textual data sources (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 76). Babbie and Mouton (2001: 79) identify three common purposes of research: exploration, description and explanation. This study will contain elements of all three, which is common in social research. The relatively limited research previously conducted on conflict and Somalia, and the virtual lack of research on the specific research topic which this study deals with, renders the exploratory element rather dominant. Description will also play a role, namely in describing the history and current context of the Somali crisis. Explanation is also partly a purpose of this research, as causal relationships between variables are investigated. Babbie and Mouton (2001: 81) define such indications of causality as major aims of explanatory studies.

1.7.2 *Sources of information*

For this study I will be using published material mainly in the form of books and academic articles. For my theoretical frameworks most of the information will come from these two types of sources. Chapter 3, which presents the case study, will be based on data from books, articles and, when it comes to recent developments, reports and articles accessed online, from for instance the International Crisis Group, the World Bank and other organisations deemed reliable sources of information. For some sections, such as the ones on the Somali war economy, online news articles and other online publications will also be used.

1.7.3 *Limitations*

Ideally, I would travel to Somalia to conduct field research on my topic. Conducting interviews with experts on Somalia such as I.M. Lewis and Said Samatar would also be ideal. However, due to limited resources and time this is not possible, and therefore I see it as the greatest limitation of my study that I have to rely on secondary sources instead of being able to gather my own data. The implications of this may be that I may have difficulties finding all the relevant information needed, as the availability of certain types of information, such as economic statistics on Somalia, is limited. This lack of sufficient data may for instance hamper the development of a strong hypothesis about the impact of the war economy on the course of the Somali conflict.

1.8 Outline of the study
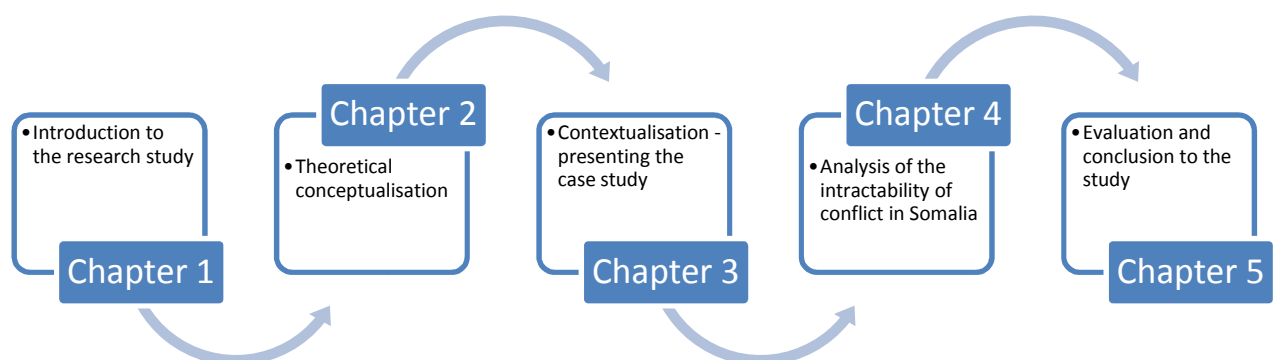
Figure 1. Outline of the study.

This study will consist of five chapters. Figure 1 gives a visual overview of the layout of the study. Chapter 1 has introduced the topic, by conceptualising core ideas and providing a contextual background. The research aims and questions have been stated, and the research design has been explained. Chapter 2 will consist of a comprehensive literature review on the topic of conflict and intractability, and will thus expand on the theory introduced in Chapter 1. A theoretical framework for analysing the intractability of conflict in Somalia will be presented in this chapter. Chapter 3 will present the case study, and will provide a historical background, as well as a descriptive overview of the current Somali conflict. Chapter 4 will proceed to analyse the intractability of conflict in Somalia, by positioning the findings of Chapter 3 within the theory outlined in Chapter 2. In this chapter, key factors impacting the perpetual state of the crisis will be highlighted and explained, and the specific impact of the war economy will be assessed. Finally, in Chapter 5 conclusions on the findings of the study will be drawn, and avenues for future study will be identified.

2 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

War, defined as a struggle between groups of people over control of resources, territories or power, has been a feature of human societies throughout history. The nature of war has changed significantly over time; from pre-historic ambush warfare between hunter-gatherer groups, to large-scale battles between immense armies in Roman times, to the total wars of the 20th century. Finally, the post-World War, and especially the post-Cold War[1], era has seen the emergence of a new kind of armed conflict; one which often takes place within the borders of a country, and tends to be characterised by widespread civilian casualties and a blurring of lines between criminality and warfare. Several of these new wars, often referred to as intra-state or civil wars, have proven extremely resistant to conflict resolution initiatives, due to the specific features and conflict dynamics which are typical of them. Political instability, poverty, and inadequate leadership are commonly viewed as some of the reasons why the developing world has been particularly prone to armed conflict. Africa is certainly no exception, with Somalia being but one of a plethora of destructive civil wars which have been fought in the continent. Other severe wars have during the last decades taken place in countries such as Angola, Mozambique, Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Sudan, to name but a few.

This chapter will provide a theoretical overview of a number of concepts and theories which are useful in the analysis of armed conflict and wars in general, and intractable civil wars in particular. First, central concepts such as conflict, war, and civil war will be defined, followed by a section on contemporary wars. The following section presents theoretical arguments on the causes of conflict put forth by various prominent scholars. Then, a section on causes of specifically African conflicts will follow. The latter part of the chapter will focus on intractable conflicts, outlining theoretical frameworks for the analysis of such conflicts, discussing the role of

---

[1] The Cold War refers to the period between the end of the Second World War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. It stemmed from an ideological conflict between capitalism and socialist communism, which in many cases manifested itself through wars by proxy in which the United States of America (USA) and the Soviet Union (USSR) backed opposing sides in conflicts, in what was viewed as strategic countries in the developing world (Collier, 2006: 15; Adebajo, 2005: 27; Ohanwe, 2009: 30).

identity in intractable conflicts, and finally presenting the war economy theory in terms of its role in sustaining conflicts.

2.2   Defining conflict and war

As this study is concerned with the intractability of conflict, namely in the case of the civil war in Somalia, it is at this point necessary to define some concepts which are central in the study, such as conflict, armed conflict and war, in order to arrive at a comprehensive conceptualisation of the topic. Firstly, *conflict* is an ambiguous concept which has several meanings in everyday life. It may refer to some sort of behaviour or action, but can also be understood as an abstract notion. Overall, conflict tends to involve an incompatibility: that is, two or more parties to a conflict understand their views to be incompatible, which may be due to some form of scarcity. From this starting point, Wallensteen (2007: 15) arrives at a definition of conflict as "a social situation in which a minimum of two actors (parties) strive to acquire at the same moment in time an available set of scarce resources". Crucial to note is that "strive" is in this context a broad term which may include armed violence, or even war. Conflict may arise in a wide variety of contexts and occurs on multiple levels, including the inter- and intrapersonal levels, the intergroup, the organisational, as well as the international levels. A conflict will evolve in a life-cycle, during which phases of escalation and de-escalation may occur. Escalation of the conflict, or de-escalation achieved by third party intervention, tends to result from various forms of bargaining, threats and pressures which are used to influence the other party's behaviour and decisions (Byrne & Senehi, 2009: 3). As subsequent chapters will show; combined, these definitions are highly applicable to the case of Somalia, and are thus an appropriate starting point for the analysis of its protracted conflict.

The Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO) and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) have defined *armed conflict,* as "a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory [which results in] the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state" by (UCDP/PRIO, 2009: 3). For the purposes of this study, however, armed conflict is understood as any fighting between two or more groups which involves the use of weapons. This is significant in regards to Somalia, where a large part of the fighting took place between rival non-state actors, during the prolonged absence of a central government. *War* is the ultimate armed conflict, and is among the most destructive of human activities. Wars involve

deaths of soldiers and civilians, destruction of property, resources and the environment, taking of territory and eviction of inhabitants. Furthermore, it tends to severely disrupt the psychological, physical, economic and cultural development of individuals (Wallensteen, 2007: 16). Exact definitions and conceptions of what constitutes "war" differ, but armed conflicts which have resulted in more than 1,000 battle related deaths are typically viewed as wars - as opposed to smaller-scale rebellions or conflicts of a temporary nature[2] (Wallensteen, 2007: 19). The much-quoted military theorist Carl von Clausewitz (cited in Kaldor, 2006: 17) defined war as "an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will". The Clausewitzean definition assumes that states are the actors in war, and thus that national interest is at the heart of warfare. As the next section will show, however, such conventional explanations of warfare seem to increasingly have lost their relevance as the states' monopoly of violence has dwindled during the past decades, giving rise to new kinds of wars. Moreover, Clausewitzean thinking may be of questionable relevance in regards to Africa, where the Western concept of the 'state' may be less applicable.

A general trend which has become evident is that a majority of contemporary conflicts are more or less confined within the borders of a state, and may thus be classified as what is commonly known as *civil wars*. A civil war is the occurrence of "large-scale violence among geographically contiguous people concerned about possibly having to live with one another in the same political unit after the fight" (Licklider cited in Adam, 1999: 171). A civil war may be considered to have ended when the level of violence has dropped to under 1,000 war-related deaths per year, over a period of five years. The appropriateness of the terms 'civil' or 'internal' war as a description of today's wars has however been contested, as the numerous transnational connections which such conflicts involve have caused the line between internal and external, and between local and global, to become increasingly blurred (Kaldor, 2006: 2). The terms conflict, armed conflict, war and civil war will be used more or less interchangeably throughout the study, as all terms are applicable to the type of conflicts investigated here.

---

[2] The UCDP and PRIO also define war as conflict resulting in over 1,000 battle-related deaths, and *armed conflict* as any fighting resulting in at least 25 battle-related deaths (UCDP/PRIO, 2009: 3). Wallensteen and Axell (in Francis, 2006:71) have termed a conflict of between 25 and 1,000 battle-related deaths over the course of one year an "intermediate armed conflict".

2.3   Contemporary conflicts

As touched upon in Chapter 1, a number of distinctive characteristics can be identified as typical of contemporary wars, which sets them apart from previous wars. Scholars have used a variety of terms to describe such conflicts, including 'privatised war', 'post-modern war', 'wars of the third kind', and 'fourth generation warfare (4GW)'[3]. This section will elaborate on these new wars, relying predominantly on Mary Kaldor's (2006; 2009) work, and accordingly adopting her terminology. It must however be noted that the new wars thesis is used here less as an explanatory framework; but rather in a descriptive manner in order to arrive at a comprehension of how war is waged today, in countries such as Somalia.

The old wars against which Kaldor (2006: 15-32) contrasts the new wars are wars which, in accordance with Clausewitz' theorising, were waged between states, by state armies. The goals of these wars were often geopolitical, and the methods used to achieve them were chiefly the capturing of territory through battle. Such wars were in essence financed through taxation and by mobilising a large part of the population to sustain a self-sufficient, centralised war economy. Four main aspects can thus be identified in which the new wars are different: the character of the warring parties; the political goals; the methods of warfare; and the financing of the war.

As previously mentioned, Clausewitz saw states as the main, or indeed the only, war-waging actors, and famously stated that war is a continuation of politics by other means (Keen, 2000: 27). During the past decades, states have however given up their monopoly on violence, as war has become an activity principally of para-state or even private actors, which may include mercenaries, warlords, guerrilla-groups and terrorist-organisations (Münkler, 2005: 1). Kaldor (2006: 97) distinguishes between five primary types of fighting units in the new wars: "regular armed forces or remnants thereof; paramilitary groups; self-defence units; foreign mercenaries; and, finally, regular foreign troops". While most of these concepts are self-explanatory, it may be useful to specify that paramilitary groups are independent groups of men who usually have formed around an individual leader. Such groups tend to consist of redundant soldiers, and are

---

[3] 'Wars of the third kind' refers to wars in which hit-and-run, guerrilla-style tactics are used; wars of the first and third kind being conventional warfare and nuclear warfare respectively (Rice, 1998: 1). Fourth Generation War, then, refers to wars in which it becomes apparent that the state has lost its monopoly on war. "All over the world, state militaries find themselves fighting non-state opponents such as al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the FARC" (Lind, 2004).

often related to extremist factions and political parties. Self-defence units are formations of volunteers who attempt to defend their localities. Such units were active for instance in the conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda (Kaldor, 2006: 98).

As far as political goals are concerned, the new wars tend to be concerned with identity politics, rather than with geopolitical or ideological considerations. Identity politics refer to a claim to state power and access to the state apparatus on the basis of identity, which in this context is narrowly understood as a form of labelling. Hence, labels based on ethnicity, race, or religion, are utilised as a means of political mobilisation and as a basis for political claims. In Kaldor's view, "conflicts based on identity politics can also be termed ethnic conflicts" (2006: 80). The identity politics of the new wars have two primary sources. Firstly, they have arisen as a response to the "growing impotence and declining legitimacy" of the conventional political classes (Kaldor, 2006: 80). Secondly, the process of globalisation, and the insecurity which accompanies it, has given rise to a parallel economy in which the marginalised and excluded parts of society have found new ways, legal and illegal, of making money. In this context, identity politics functions as a means of building alliances and legitimising questionable forms of economic activity (Kaldor, 2006: 87).

The most noteworthy way in which methods of warfare have changed, is that in the new wars battle confrontations between opposing factions are rare, and instead most of the violence is targeted at civilians. In some cases this is deliberate, as during the wars of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, during the genocide in Rwanda, or more recently in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Whitaker, 2010). Other times the large number of civilian casualties may result from the difficulty of distinguishing combatants from non-combatants (Kaldor, 2006). In the case of intentional targeting, groups targeted may include various opposition groupings; specific communities, which sometimes are targeted for their control of valued assets; ethnic groupings; or exposed groups of vulnerable individuals such as women, children, or refugees (Allen, 1999: 369). In the beginning of the previous century soldiers constituted 90 percent of casualties in war, whereas almost exactly the opposite is true for the new wars - merely 20 percent of war-related deaths in the wars of the late 20th century were combatants (Goodhand, 2003: 630; Münkler, 2005: 14).

The final distinctive characteristic of the new wars is the way in which they are financed. Similarly to Kaldor, Münkler (2005: 1) notes that to properly gain an understanding of the distinctive characteristics of the new wars, one must not fail to take into account their economic foundations. The means by which wars are funded have significantly changed, and in today's wars, the financing of the conflict is often an important factor in the actual fighting, which was not the case in previous inter-state wars. The new wars are primarily financed by methods which rely on violence, such as pillaging and looting, kidnapping, hostage-taking, smuggling of valuable commodities and diversion of humanitarian aid. It appears as though violence has in many instances become an end in itself rather than an instrumental device, and that this has encouraged the self-reproducing nature of violence in modern wars (Allen, 1999: 369).

The political economy of war is thus central in the new wars thesis. A main distinguishing feature of the new wars is according to Münkler (2005: 3) the multitude of actors which have vested interests in the war, and for whom disadvantages of peace may outweigh the advantages. The contemporary civil wars can furthermore not be understood in isolation from international capital linkages. The international community may have contributed to creating an environment conducive to war through policies of structural adjustment and trade regulation (Goodhand, 2003: 636). Transnational networks of illegal trade in drugs, arms or other goods are also often essential in funding the new wars. The economic aspects of contemporary warfare will be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections.

The concept of new wars has attracted a number of critiques. The most frequently mentioned criticism is that there is nothing new about the new wars. Proponents of this view argue that many, if not all, of the characteristics of the so-called new wars were also in one form or another present in earlier wars (Zeleza, 2008: 15; Kaldor, 2009: 3). In this line, it has also been argued that the literature on new wars fails to include a historical perspective, in the sense that the dichotomies drawn between the 'old' and the 'new' wars are "untenable on historical and empirical grounds" (Zeleza, 2008: 15). Critics thus believe that the characteristics of old and new wars are largely indistinguishable. Zeleza (2008: 16) rejects the new wars theory, and calls for analyses which take into account the complex interplay between historical and contemporary processes; the nexus between politics, economy and culture; the intersections of local, regional

and global structures; the role of state, capital and civil society; as well as the way in which various social constructs shape and influence conflicts.

2.4 Causes of conflict – Greed or grievance?

Attention will now be turned from the characteristics of contemporary war to the underlying causes of war. The discourse on causes of civil conflict was long dominated by what has been called the 'grievance theory', which posits that conflict and rebellion will arise as a result of grievances, which can have a basis in identity related to religion, ethnicity or social class; or may stem from poverty, inequality, lack of economic opportunities, political exclusion, and the like. During the 1990s numerous scholars, most notably Paul Collier[4], started to put forth counter arguments to the grievance thesis which posit that economic agendas are in fact the main catalysts and drivers of civil wars. Consequently, an academic debate has ensued over whether 'greed' or 'grievance' is the most significant explanation of the reasons behind internal rebellion and wars. This section will begin by presenting some arguments by scholars who view grievances as predominant explanations of civil wars, before examining the 'greed' thesis, as well as some of the critique which it has generated.

Ted Robert Gurr (in Ohanwe, 2009: 39) has developed a theory of conflict which postulates that grievances stemming from relative deprivation are at the root of many civil wars. Relative deprivation refers to the "perceived discrepancy between men's value expectation and their value capabilities"[5], and thus implies that people become dissatisfied when they have less than they believe they are entitled to and capable of having. Relative deprivation refers not only to economic deprivation, but can also be situated at the political level (Ohanwe, 2009: 34; Porto, 2002: 39). According to this explanation, conflict occurs when people are prevented from achieving their value expectations. The political violence stemming from such a situation goes through three stages: first, the discontent develops; second, the discontent is politicised; and third; violence erupts, directed at political actors or objects (Ohanwe, 2009: 34). Nevertheless, other

---

[4] Paul Collier (2000, 2006) worked extensively with Anke Hoeffler in conducting quantitative analysis of the economic causes of civil wars. Other prominent advocates of the importance of economic agendas in wars include David Keen (2000), William Reno (2000, 2002) and Mark Duffield (2000).

[5] Value expectations are "goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are entitled" (Gurr quoted in Ohanwe 2009: 34), while value capabilities are goods and conditions which people believe they are capable of obtaining given the social means which are available to them (Ohanwe 2009: 34).

studies have shown that there are no guarantees that deprivation, whether relative or absolute, will result in violent behaviour, and thus the explanatory power of the relative deprivation theory is limited (Porto, 2000: 15).

Economic inequality is another issue which may give rise to dissent (Goodhand, 2003: 635). According to Lichbach (1989: 432), most major conflict theorists would agree that economic inequality is at least a potential, if not common, cause of rebellion. It is believed that not only absolute economic well-being, but also the distribution of wealth in a society affect the level of political discontent, which may escalate to severe political instability, violent protest and revolution (Ohanwe, 2009: 35). Cramer (2003) however argues that the links between inequality and civil conflict may not be as strong as is often assumed. He points out the importance of focusing on different kinds of inequality, how societies manage inequalities, as well as what developments cause violence to flare up as a result of inequality. Charles Tilly (in Ohanwe, 2009: 35) has theorised on the topic of how issues such as social and economic inequalities may be addressed through collective action. In Tilly's theory of conflict, political conflict can manifest itself in three ways: it may be competitive, in which two groupings attack each other's assets; reactive, in which a group responds to an attack by another; or proactive, in which a group assails in order to acquire resources. A shared interest within a group is thus a prerequisite for collective action.

On the contrary, Collier (2006: 22) argues that although popular perception tends to take at face value the discourse of grievance voiced by rebel organisations; it is *greed* which is the primary driver of civil wars. Collier has, together with Hoeffler (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004), studied the conflict generating effects of grievances stemming from inequality, political oppression and ethnic and religious fragmentation, and found that they have "little or no explanatory power in predicting rebellion" (Collier, 2006: 22). While acknowledging that grievances naturally do exist, and may give rise to deep political conflict, Collier contends that that does normally not imply that they will escalate to violent conflict or civil war. Instead, he has found (Collier, 2000; 2006) that economic characteristics of a society, such as dependence on primary commodity exports, slow economic growth, low incomes and large diasporas, are much more significant predictors of armed rebellion. Closely related to the 'greed' theory is the 'resource wars' thesis, according to which armed groups have relied on, often illegally, obtained income from natural resources such

as diamonds, oil and timber. It is believed that while profiting from natural resources may be a way of financing the war effort, it may also be a primary motivating factor behind a conflict (Le Billon, 2001: 561). The role of the diamond trade in the civil war in Sierra Leone has often been cited as an example of a conflict where the 'resource war' explanation is applicable (Le Billon, 2001).

A central argument in Collier's publications is that rebel groups tend to use narratives of grievance in order to attract recruits and to some degree justify their actions in the eyes of the society and the international community, while being covertly motivated by opportunities for personal enrichment (Collier, 2000; 2006). Such opportunities may arise in a context of fighting and unrest, and may present themselves in a number of forms. Looting, for instance, has often been used by rebel leaders as a means of paying their soldiers. That is, instead of paying out salaries, soldiers are encouraged to take whatever they can get their hands on. Another form of benefiting from war is by charging people for protection: those who are spared from violence are asked to pay for the continuation of status quo (Keen, 2000: 29).

Furthermore, control of trade by armed groups is also common in civil wars. Warring factions may set up road blocks along trade routes to collect "taxes" or may attempt to extract a proportion of the production of goods. According to Collier (2000: 93) this is one reason why countries which rely on primary commodity exports are at an especially high risk of experiencing civil war, as these may be viewed as "lootable" resources, which are most easily taxed. In short, proponents of the greed theory of conflict assert that while they do not deny that various identity and inequality related grievances exist, especially in developing countries, it is economic agendas, or greed, which ultimately motivate groups engaged in violent conflict. Similarly, they contend that wars become perpetuated when the continuation of the war is in the interest of groups or key individuals, for whom war is financially rewarding. The section on war economies below will further discuss the role economic agendas play in war.

The greed theory has generated some strong criticisms. Goodhand (2003: 639) points out that "the 'greed' argument, with its focus on economic agendas and commodities tends to downplay the importance of political and social factors". Similarly, Cilliers (in Porto, 2003: 14) notes that while economic considerations certainly have been important both as causal and perpetuating factors of

war for as long as humans have been engaged in violent conflicts, the greed theory's reductionist nature significantly lessens its explanatory power. Keen (2000) argues that instead of focusing on either greed or grievance, the interplay between the two must be studied. For instance, attention should be given to how those with grievances are manipulated by the greedy.

Thus, while most agree that economic agendas are a factor in contemporary civil wars, there is disagreement as to how significant they are when it comes to explaining war, and whether they can be viewed as an underlying cause of conflict. Goodhand (2003: 638) notes that there is an important difference between what "causes, triggers and sustains" war, and there has been considerable debate on whether economic agendas may serve as an explanation for the outbreak of some civil wars, or whether it is more useful to view them as a factor which sustains and fuels conflicts. It has been suggested that while grievances resulting from bad governance, for instance, are an underlying *cause* of conflict, "greed" is a *symptom* of it (Moore in Goodhand, 2003: 638). Kaldor (2009: 3), who in her own work has put a significant amount of emphasis on the economic dimension of the new wars, asserts that while economic agendas can be central in conflict, it is "difficult to distinguish between those who engage in criminal activities to raise money for their political causes and those who use a political cause as a cover for their criminal activities". Generally however, most critics seem to agree that the greed theory's ignorance of other social and political processes is a major flaw (Goodhand, 2003: 640).

2.5   Roots of African conflicts

2.5.1   *Background*

Africa as a continent has been particularly prone to conflict. During the Cold War the superpowers backed opposing factions in bloody proxy wars throughout Africa, but the end of the bipolar world order has not seen a decline in armed conflict in the continent (Adebajo, 2005: 26). Some even argue that the "War on Terrorism", spearheaded by the United States following 9/11[6], imitates the Cold War and is similarly undermining lasting peace in the African continent (Glickman, 2005). Although it is a fact that a large number of African countries have suffered

---

[6] 9/11 refers to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and other targets in the United States on September 11, 2001.

from war, or large scale political violence, it must be noted that numerous countries and regions in Africa have experienced relative peace and stability since independence[7]. Armed violence and war is thus not a universal African phenomenon, but levels of violence differ greatly from country to country. Nevertheless, the overall pattern of armed violence in Africa deserves attention, and though there are no simple overarching explanations which can be generalised to the continent as a whole, this section gives an overview of some of factors which have been identified as causes of African conflicts (Mazrui, 2008: 36).

2.5.2 *Colonialism*

The legacy of colonialism has often been cited as one root cause of political conflict in Africa. Some have however argued that now, after 50 years of independence, colonialism should no longer be used as an explanation, scapegoat or excuse for the wide array of problems which many African countries struggle with, such as poor governance, poverty and violent internal strife. Still, there are elements of the colonial history which when studied may assist in developing an understanding of certain aspects of the post-colonial African wars.

In some instances, such as in Angola[8], domestic strife erupted as political parties competed over who should inherit political power from the colonial government. Civil conflict may also flare up as a result of forces seeking to destroy the political system handed down to them by the colonialists, as has been argued to be a reason for the war in Nigeria in the 1960s[9] (Ohanwe 2009: 39). Moreover, Osman (2007: 91) asserts that the colonial powers had "no interest in promoting a viable state in Africa", and thus the lack of democratic tradition in the former colonies is a further source of conflict. Generally, it is often believed that conflict in Africa has its roots in the marginalisation of the rural and urban poor which has resulted from colonialism, as well as from post colonial strategies for development, such as structural adjustment programs introduced in Africa by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Goodhand, 2003: 636).

---

[7] Most African countries achieved independence from the colonial powers in the 1960's.
[8] Since its independence from Portugal in 1975, Angola experienced armed conflict until 2002 (Saunders, 2009).
[9] The Nigerian Civil War, also known as the Nigerian-Biafran War, took place from 1967-1970 (Ohanwe 2009: 39).

Most notably, however, the various divisions created and strengthened by the colonial powers are viewed by many as a root cause of several of Africa's problems; not only conflict, but also poverty, corruption and bad governance (Osman, 2007: 91). First of all, the arbitrary borders which were drawn up at the partitioning of Africa created unnatural political entities as they often cut straight across pre-colonial group territories. This is believed to be a primary source of many of the cross-border and internal disputes which have plagued Africa post-independence (Ohanwe, 2009: 40; Mazrui, 2008: 37).

Second, the strengthening of ethnic identities and divisions, which often involved giving preferential treatment to certain groups, is another legacy of colonialism (Osman, 2007: 91). The case of Rwanda is an illustrative example. Although the Belgian colonialists in Rwanda did not invent the terms *Hutu* and *Tutsi,* they played a significant role in recreating and reinforcing these ethnic identities. The Tutsi, who according to the Belgians where better suited as leaders than the "more lowly" Hutus, were constructed as the "superior race" (Straus, 2006: 20). Through the construction of such hierarchies, in which "race" became the central political idiom and determinant of power, the colonial rulers set the basis for the ethnic tensions which erupted in violent clashes and massacres not only in 1994, but also earlier, in the 1960s, -70s and -80s (Straus, 2006: 21, 23; Sibomana 1997: xvi).

2.5.3 *Ethnicity*

Ethnicity has been cited as an explanatory variable in several conflicts of the past decades; Rwanda, Sudan, and, outside of Africa, the Balkans, are prime examples of wars characterised by 'ethnic violence' resulting from what some observers have termed "primordial" differences or "ancient hatreds" (Ohanwe, 2009: 38; Berdal & Malone, 2000: 4). An ethnic group may be defined as a group of people, small or large, "who are united by common inherited culture (including language, music, food, dress, customs and practices), racial similarity, common religion, and belief in a common history and ancestry and who exhibit a strong psychological sentiment of belonging to the group (Osman and Souaré, 2007: 9). The relationship between ethnicity and conflict may be analysed using one of three different approaches: primordialism, instrumentalism and constructivism.

According to the primordialist approach, ethnicity and group membership is a given, and an automatic source of identity since birth. Proponents of this view see ethnic divisions and tensions as "natural", and thus believe the existence of these to be a sufficient explanation for conflict between ethnic groups (Lake and Rothchild, 1998: 5; Kaplan, 1993). The instrumentalists, on the other hand, argue that ethnicity is merely an instrument used by power-hungry individuals or groups to further their economic or political agendas. The clanism which has been apparent in the conflict in contemporary Somalia may be characterised as a result of this type of instrumentalism, which has seen warlords and other leaders use clan-linage as a means of mobilising people to fight for various clan-based militias[10] (Osman and Souaré, 2007: 9). In this view, politicised ethnicity is not much different from other forms of political association, and thus ethnic conflict is merely one part of the wider conflict process (Lake and Rothchild, 1998: 6).

Finally, from a constructivist perspective ethnicity is understood not as a constant, immutable identity or characteristic, but as a socially constructed phenomenon which may evolve over time, as a person's social interactions change. According to constructivists, ethnicity is not inherently conflictual; thus the relationship between ethnicity and violence must be explained. Violence may erupt as a result of socially constructed ethnic divisions in a social system which breeds conflict, and has the potential to quickly spin out of control (Lake and Rothchild, 1998: 6).

Regardless of what approach to ethnicity one applies, it must be noted that ethnicity in itself does not cause armed conflict. As Lake and Rothchild (1998: 7) argue:

> Most ethnic groups, most of the time, pursue their interests peacefully through established political channels. But when ethnicity is linked with acute social uncertainty, a history of conflict and, indeed, fear of what the future might bring, it emerges as one of the major fault lines along which societies fracture.

Furthermore, it is important for analysts of conflict to recognise the numerous other social variables and structures which can ignite conflict in societies which are ethnically heterogenous, or homogenous. Every conflict situation should thus be analysed within its unique context and other conflict generating factors should not be lumped together with the ethnic factor but be viewed in isolation from it in order to avoid a "catch-all" explanation which views ethnicity as a prime cause of conflict (Ohanwe, 2009: 39).

---

[10] The concept of "clanism" is used in literature on Somalia to describe the politicised notion of clan which elites may use to further their own interests. Clan-lineage can in the Somali context can be understood as similar to ethnic divisions in other countries.

Collier (2006) has, contrary to what many believe, found that ethnic heterogeneity and income inequality are for the most part unrelated to conflict. According to Collier (2006: 14), ethnic diversity is generally *not* a source of conflict; the only exception is cases of ethnic dominance in societies where one ethnic group constitutes between 45 and 90 percent of the population. In this case the majority can gain permanent political control, and may find it advantageous to exploit the minority. Under such circumstances the minority may find it necessary to fight the dominant ethnic group. If the minority is much smaller than 10 percent, however, there tends to be very little to be gained from exploitation by the majority. Also, if society is highly fragmented along ethnic lines, groups can hope to gain access to political power through winning coalitions (Collier, 2006: 14).

2.5.4 *Other sources of conflict in Africa*

Religion has been identified as another source of conflict in Africa. While strife rooted in ethnicity has been common in sub-Saharan Africa; religion, though politicised, has been at the root of several North African conflicts (Mazrui, 2008: 38). Similar to ethnic or other identities, religion can bring groups together, but can also give rise to boundaries which separate the 'believing' from the 'unbelieving'; resulting in labelling of insiders and outsiders, and the construction of notions of 'us versus them'. Politicised religious identities can, not by themselves but when invoked and channelled, act as potent catalysts for civil conflict. Most conflict-ridden countries in Africa have had impoverished populations, and religion may become the "only constant source of strength" in a context of severe deprivation. It may therefore become people's primary identity, which they are prepared to fight, and possibly die, for (Misra, 2008: 14-15).

Political belief and ideology has also played a role in African conflicts, especially as a motivating factor for resistance movements. According to Copson (1994: 85), it has been rather common for resistance movements in Africa to follow beliefs and ideologies leaning to the left of the political spectrum. Marxism, for instance, found strong support on the continent during the Cold War (Copson, 1994: 85). Hence, there was a significant element of ideology present in the previously mentioned proxy wars in which the United States and the Soviet Union supported opposing sides in numerous African conflicts. Another ideological movement which has sparked conflict in parts of Africa is nationalism. For instance, during the Biafran war in Nigeria, the separatist nationalism

of the Igbos was a key driver of the conflict (Misra, 2008: 27). Throughout Somalia's history, too, nationalism and irredentism have been at the root of violent clashes with the colonial powers and neighbouring states (Farah, Hussein & Lind, 2002: 232).

Factors related to the economy are also believed to have played a pivotal role in the development of numerous civil wars in the continent. As mentioned above, Collier identifies low income, poor economic opportunities and economic decline as important risk factors for conflict, and also claims that "economies with around a quarter of GDP coming from natural resource exports are acutely at risk of civil conflict" (2006: 17). Misra (2008: 17) mentions that countries which experienced civil wars in the 20th century have had a number of characteristics in common; namely entrenched poverty, widespread unemployment, severe economic stagnation, and in some cases even the total breakdown of the economic system. Many war-affected African countries fit this description. In relation to Africa in particular, Osman and Souaré (2007: 10) point to the impact of the global recession of the 1980s as a reason for the economic decline, which in turn exacerbated poverty. Poverty may be viewed as an important contributing factor to war, because it has the potential to exacerbate underlying social tensions and deprive governments of the means to prevent or end war (Copson, 1994: 90). Misra (2008: 17) further notes that 'individuals are easily susceptible to forms of violence against the prevailing system during periods of economic hardship and deprivation".

Correspondingly, poverty tends to be linked to limited opportunities for education and employment. Grievances may be further intensified by such lack of opportunity, especially among social groups which are suffering from discrimination (Copson, 1994: 92). Poverty and lack of opportunities may not only spark social conflict, but may be reasons for why people join already existing rebellions. For young people especially, the poor prospects of schooling and employment, as well as the lack of channels for political participation, can make the armed forces seem like a good opportunity to gain some form of training and employment; and to get a feeling of participation and importance, not to mention the provision of food, clothes and shelter. In Sierra Leone, the high participation of children and youth in the civil war can be partly explained by such economic and educational constraints (Peters, 2004).

Geography is commonly neglected in analyses of civil wars, but has by some scholars been deemed a significant factor to take into account. Large, multinational states are believed to be at a particularly high risk of conflict. In the case of the population being highly scattered over a vast geographical territory, it becomes increasingly difficult for the state to control the country and to exercise its administrative, political, economic and military authority (Misra, 2008: 23; Collier, 2006: 5; Copson, 1994: 95). Groups living in geographically isolated areas may feel alienated from the state, leading to a centre-periphery divide which may give momentum to mounting opposition to the state and even secessionist insurgencies. Furthermore, "inaccessible and rough terrain" magnifies state weakness, as up-keeping infrastructure in such sparsely populated regions is very costly. Consequently, the lack of state presence makes such areas attractive to rebels and insurgents (Misra, 2008: 23). The DRC is an example of a geographically large state in which the population lives along the fringes of a vast area which lacks sufficient infrastructure. The three main cities are located in the extreme west, extreme south-east and extreme north, which further hampers the government forces' effective control over the country. The geography and topography of the DRC thus contribute to its proneness to rebellion (Collier, 2006: 5).

Furthermore, bad leadership, or dictatorship, has been known to breed conflict. The African continent has experienced its fair share of authoritarian leaders and dubious governance in general. Several leaders who came to power in the wake of the fight against colonialism turned out to be very reluctant to give up power in a democratic manner, and instead established themselves as autocratic leaders who monopolised power and suppressed all opposition (Ohanwe, 2009: 44). It is believed that such heads of state make decisions which ultimately lead to war because their primary interest of staying in power overshadows preserving peace for their citizens (Osman and Souaré, 2007: 10-11). For example, Zaire (today's DRC) under Mobutu Sese Seko experienced 32 years of corrupt, authoritarian governance and economic mismanagement, which eventually stirred up the people to overthrow Mobutu under the leadership of Laurent Kabila (Ohanwe, 2009: 44).

Finally, three additional contributing factors which should be mentioned are the effects of environmental degradation and climate change, the availability of weapons, and the possible influence of the diaspora on a conflict. Copson (1994: 97) rightfully points out that climate change has resulted in new, possibly conflict-generating, problems. Food scarcity and population

relocations are among the effects of climate change, and in the African context the desertification in Northern Africa is an example of a phenomenon which impacts migration patterns, and has the potential to lead to further civil unrest. The easy access to weapons is another concern. The conflicts of the Cold War period left an enormous amount of weapons in Africa, and furthermore, with the end of the Cold War, vast stocks of arms which were now redundant made their way into African markets and could be bought very cheaply. The danger associated with this abundance of weapons is further noted by Mazrui (2008: 39), who points out that at the time of independence, many African states had relatively disciplined and professional armies, yet the military technology of these armies was generally not advanced. Today, modern advanced weapons are easily accessible on the African continent, but the armies have become increasingly undisciplined, more fragmented and less professional.

As a final potential conflict-fuelling factor, large and organised diasporas have in many cases played a crucial role in "inciting violence and promoting regime change in their home territories" (Misra, 2008: 143). The risk of conflict resuming is significantly increased if a country which has recently experienced armed conflict has a large refugee diaspora. They often earn more money than the people in their home countries and can thus afford to assist rebel groups financially. They may do this to show continued loyalty and support to their country of origin, and as a means of affirming continued belonging. Collier (2006: 15) especially highlights the fact that the people in the diaspora do not have to suffer the consequences of renewed conflict as they are living abroad, and thus often have a distorted, perhaps romanticised view of their people's struggle. The impact of the diaspora is perhaps primarily a contributing factor which may fuel an already existing conflict, further exacerbating its intractability. The following section will examine the theory behind intractable conflicts in particular.

2.6   Intractable conflicts

2.6.1   *Characteristics of intractable conflicts*

As the previous sections have demonstrated, conflicts are highly intricate phenomena which in all likelihood have their roots in not one, but a number of issues, which when combined in a particular constellation may result in the outbreak of violence. All conflicts are unique. Some may

be easily resolvable by negotiating or making use of other peaceful means. Other conflicts, between individuals, groups or nations, turn more intense, violent and destructive; and become increasingly difficult to manage and resolve through peaceful strategies. Such conflicts may be termed intractable.

As put forth in Chapter 1, intractable conflicts are armed conflicts which have lasted over a significant amount of time, and which consistently have refused to yield to mediation and peacemaking efforts. They are among the most dangerous conflicts in the world today, as they often threaten the peace and stability of entire regions. Well-known examples of intractable conflicts, besides Somalia, include the conflict in Northern Ireland, the conflict between Israel and its neighbours, and the conflict between India and Pakistan. Though some conflicts of this kind last for decades, it is nevertheless imperative to note that intractability does not imply that a conflict is completely resistant to resolution; on the contrary, the view endorsed in this study is that conflicts can be more or less intractable, but are never totally unmanageable or irresolvable (Bercovitch, 2003: 1; Kriesberg, 2005: 66).

When analysing conflicts, the distinction must be made between underlying causes, proximate causes, and exacerbating and prolonging factors. Thus, "the sources of intractability are not the same as the original causes of the conflict" (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2005: 5) While the previous sections have largely focused on what causes conflict, attention must now be turned to investigating what specific reasons and circumstances make some conflicts intractable. Intractable conflicts are generally believed to be about deep-rooted issues such as identity and human needs. In addition, the vested interest of various groups in the continuation of war, and different forms of profiteering from war is believed to increase a conflict's intractability (Bercovitch, 2003; Azar, 1990; Zartman, 2005; Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2005: 6).

More specifically, intractable conflicts differ from other conflicts in terms of duration, actors, issues, relationships, geopolitics and management (Bercovitch, 2003: 2). The *duration* of the conflict is a key defining feature of intractable conflicts. When conflict lasts over a long period of time, it eventually becomes institutionalised, and parties become blind to cooperation and possible solutions. As Zartman (2005: 49) highlights, it is not the duration itself which is the issue of importance, but the effects of that duration. As conflict becomes protracted and deeply

entrenched, an ever-growing number of obstacles arise with the course of the conflict which renders it increasingly difficult to resolve. The *actors* in intractable conflicts are states or groupings with long historical grievances, who strongly wish to see these grievances redressed or avenged. As mentioned, groups or individuals involved often develop a vested interest in the conflict as a means of holding on to status, power or wealth. In these conflicts, there are typically elites who benefit from conflict which has become fixed in a, for them, comfortable stasis (Crocker, Hampson & Aall: 2005: 12-13).

The *issues* of these conflicts tend to be deep-rooted and intangible. Identity, sovereignty, and values or beliefs are examples of issues at the heart of intractable conflicts (Bercovitch, 2003: 2). Identity is viewed as especially crucial in the analysis of intractable conflicts. Identity does not however in itself cause conflict; it is only when identities become polarised[11] that they can cause conflict to flare up (Zartman, 2005: 50). Deep-rooted communal or ethnic cleavages are often characteristics of protracted conflicts. In such contexts, conflict is fuelled by the refusal of parties to recognise each other's identity; and identity becomes interlinked with conflict in the sense that the parties (especially elites) come to define themselves and their existence primarily in terms of the conflict itself (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2005: 14). The *relationships* of intractable conflicts are therefore characterised by "polarized perceptions of hostility and enmity, and behavior that is violent and destructive" (Bercovitch, 2003: 2).

As far as *geopolitics* is concerned, it is common for intractable conflicts to take place in less stable regions, where they become implicated in the surrounding regional geopolitics, and their eventual resolution may largely depend on developments towards peace in the wider region. In such areas, states and actors become highly interlinked and sometimes "wear multiple hats" depending on the circumstances. In these instances it can become difficult to distinguish whether an actor is internal or external to a specific conflict (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2005: 14). Intractable conflicts further tend to occur in 'buffer zones' between major powers, blocs or civilizations. The ideal buffer state has its own identity and remains neutral in relation to its surrounding states. Alternatively, however, such states become heavily contested and are either partitioned between the two sides or dominated by one of them (Zartman, 2005: 57; Bercovitch,

---

[11] Polarised identities refer to sentiments of "us vs. them", and thus involve denigration of "the Other" (Zartman, 2005: 50).

2003: 2). Typical examples of such buffer regions include Afghanistan, Sudan and Kashmir. With regards to *management* of conflict, intractable conflicts are typically very difficult to manage, and consequently they often have a history of a number of failed peacemaking efforts. Intervention by external actors is common, and may, for instance, take the form of embargos, sanctions or imposed ceasefires. While well-timed, appropriate interventions may be of use, many interventions fail to have a significant positive impact on the course of the conflict, and may even exacerbate it (Kriesberg, 2005: 72-73).

2.6.2 *Azar's theory of protracted social conflict*

Edward Azar was among the first to draw attention to the topic of intractability, and his theory of protracted social conflict (PSC) has received a great deal of attention from scholars in the fields of conflict analysis and resolution. For Azar, the most useful unit of analysis is the identity group. Contrary to proponents of the 'greed' theory of conflict, Azar posits that the focus of protracted social conflicts, which most often take place in "underdeveloped settings", is communal identity; whether ethnic, religious or cultural. This shared identity is in turn dependant on the fulfilment of basic needs such as the need for security, distributive justice, or communal recognition (Azar, 1990: 2). Azar argues that the fundamental nature of such developmental needs renders them difficult to suppress, and they will thus be pursued by all available means, leading to a "prolonged and often violent struggle by communal groups" (Azar in Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2005: 84). The seeming intractability of such conflict is exacerbated by a lack of sufficient national or international institutions capable of managing conflict resulting from "unmet psycho-political and socio-economic needs" and consequent "dysfunctional cognitive and behavioural patterns" (Azar, 1990: 2).

In his framework for analysis of PSC, Azar identifies four clusters of variables which are preconditions for such conflicts; namely communal content, human needs, governance and the state's role, and international linkages. Regarding communal[12] content, a society characterised by multi-communal composition is viewed as particularly prone to PSC. There are two reasons for the rise of politically active multi-communal societies. First, a fragmented political landscape may

---

[12] Azar (1990: 7) uses the term "community" as a reference to "politicized groups whose members share ethnic, religious, linguistic or other cultural 'identity' characteristics".

be a legacy of colonial 'divide and rule' policies; or second, there may be a historical pattern of rivalry between communal actors, which often involves the state being dominated by one or a few communal groups who are unsympathetic of the needs of other groupings in society.

When it comes to developmental human needs, it is assumed that "individuals strive to fulfil [these] through the formation of the identity groups" (Azar, 1990: 7). While noting that deprivation does not in itself give rise to conflicts, Azar holds the view that when grievances resulting from need deprivation are not address by the authority, and groups collectively express their grievances, protracted social conflict may evolve. Access to political and economic power is also of relevance in this regard. In cases where there is a refusal by ruling political elites to accept the communal identity of other groups, the resulting failure to grant them access to the decision-making process is another source of deprivation (Azar, 1990: 9).

Governance and the state's role is furthermore an integral cluster of variables in the study of protracted social conflicts. As a modern state per definition has the authority to govern and regulate society, and should provide citizens with basic goods and protection, "the level of satisfaction or deprivation of basic needs is generally influenced by the intervening or mediating role of the state" (Azar, 1990: 10). To gain a comprehensive understanding of a conflict situation it is therefore crucial to analyse the state's political system. Azar points out that in states which experience protracted social conflict political authority tends to be monopolised by one single identity group or a coalition of dominant groups. These groups typically use the state apparatus to maximise their own benefit at the expense of other groups. In such a situation it follows that the means to fulfil basic needs are unevenly distributed and the risk of protracted conflict increases (Azar, 1990: 10).

Finally, international linkages must be taken into account. Azar (1990: 11) highlights economic dependency and client relationships with strong states as crucial to the analysis of PSC. He argues that relationships of dependency between economically strong and weak states exacerbate the unequal distribution of means to satisfy basic needs, and distorts economic and political systems through the realignment of domestic capital, international capital, and the state. In regards to client relationships, Azar asserts that political and military client relationships in which the client state must give up a certain degree of autonomy to show obedience and loyalty to the patron state

also increase the risk of PSC. It does so because such a client relationship fails to serve the citizens, as a foreign policy must be pursued which is disjoined, or even contradictory, to the needs of the public (Azar, 1990: 11). To summarise Azar's theoretical framework: protracted social conflict arises when people are denied the fulfilment of their fundamental needs on the basis of their communal identity. This deprivation is however a result of a multifaceted causal chain which involves the role of the state and particular international linkages. Azar points to how underlying causes, such as colonial legacy and a fragmented society, play an important role in the outbreak of protracted social conflicts (Azar, 1990: 12)

2.6.3 *The role of identity in protracted conflicts*

It has become clear that identity is central to the study of intractable conflict, and therefore it deserves some further attention. In its most common usage, identity refers to a perception of a self, how people understand and know themselves (Cook-Huffmann, 2009: 20). A distinction is often made between personal or self-identity, and collective or social identity. According to Vuchinich (cited in Cook-Huffman, 2009: 21), "identity issues are at the root of conflict when there is a perception that an interaction challenges or threatens self-image or "face". Identity threats, then, often result in increasing rigidity and inflexibility which coupled with defensive responses intensifies and exacerbates conflict. Once issues of identity become a concern in a conflict-situation, the likelihood that the conflict will turn intractable increases as perceptions, assumptions and communication dynamics transform issues which originally were potentially negotiable (Northrup, 1989).

While on the topic of identity, it is useful to draw some links to earlier sections which touched upon identity in relation to the goals and causes of contemporary wars. As noted earlier, rebel groups are examples of actors who may use a discourse of grievance and social capital based on clan or ethnicity to mobilise groups into fighting. In other words; to mobilise and recruit, rebels need a cause, and "to achieve cohesion they need a strong group identity" (Goodhand, 2003: 638). Hence, both the grievance, the group, and to some extent identities, are often manufactured. A key perspective in identity theorising which focuses on the relationship between the self and the society is precisely to understand how identities are constructed "within specific relationships and

in a particular time and place" (Cook-Huffman, 2009: 20). In conflicts, identities can thus be constructed and manipulated to serve the interest of elites or warring factions.

Moreover, one is reminded that Kaldor (2006:7) identified identity politics as being at the root of the goals of the new wars "in contrast to the geo-political, or ideological goals of earlier wars" (Kaldor 2006: 7). Identity politics is a claim to power based on identity, whether national, clan, ethnic, religious or linguistic identity. The identity politics of the new wars can be contrasted to the 'forward-looking' ideologies of the old wars, which included ideas about how society should be organised. In the absence of such forward-looking projects, the new wars have involved the invention and reinvention of identities to create political legitimacy. Identity politics in the new wars tend to make use of this type of 'backward-looking' projects, leading to exclusion of identity groups and spurring a fragmentation of society (Kaldor 2006: 8). This fragmentation and polarisation may be manifested in sentiments of enmity, fear and hatred which generally underpin intractable conflicts (Bercovitch 2005: 100).

2.6.4 *Towards a framework for analysing Somalia's intractable conflict*

This section will elaborate on Kriesberg's (2005) framework for analysing intractable conflicts, which was briefly presented in Chapter 1. It will be used in this study as a starting point and a basis for analysis of Somalia's protracted conflict. As mentioned Kriesberg identifies three sets of factors - internal, relational and external - that must be analysed in order to understand the emergence, perseverance and transformation intractable conflicts. These factors shape the six phases of intractability, which were listed in Chapter 1. As shown in Figure 2, Kriesberg's six phases of intractability are: the eruption phase, the escalation phase, the failed-peacemaking-efforts phase, institutionalisation phase, de-escalation and transformation phase and termination and recovery phase (Kriesberg, 2005: 74). Within each set of factors, both structural factors and factors related to agency must be considered. Structural factors are "relatively impersonal forces constraining human conduct", while agency factors refer to the ability of persons to take specific actions, to practice agency. These two factors are however not always easy to distinguish from one another; what appears structural for a person who does not have the ability to exert any influence over a particular matter, may seem like an agency factor from the point of view of a

powerful actor. The importance of different factors will change during the course of the conflict, due to changing conflict dynamics (Kriesberg, 2005: 77).
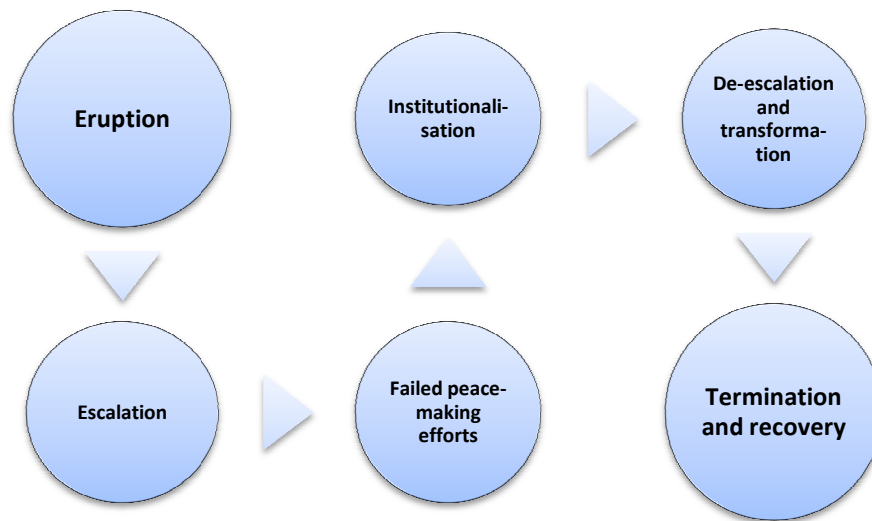

Figure 2. Kriesberg's six phases of intractability.

First of all, the *internal* structural factors of the parties to the conflict are essentially the fixed parameters within which they must operate. The agency of the conflict parties is limited by these factors, which thus affect the course of the conflict. Examples of structural factors in the internal environment which Kriesberg (2005: 77) identifies include cultural patterns, decision-making institutions, level of economic development, and capacities for engaging in different ways of fighting. Internal structural factors can therefore be expected to shape how warring parties understand themselves and their identities, how they experience grievances, how they formulate their goals and by what means they attempt to attain them.

Internal factors which contain elements of agency can greatly affect intractability. For instance, how political leaders deal with opposition, from outside or within their own camp, is crucial. The risk of conflict remaining intractable is heightened in the case of suppression of opposition and total domination of the course of action by hardliners. Similarly, official leaders often play a pivotal role in the course of a conflict, but leaders on various levels, such as oppositional leaders and leaders of rebel groups are also very influential in this regard as they "help define who is on each side of a fight and influence the sense of grievance" (Kriesberg, 2007: 78). New possibilities for conflict transformation may present itself following a change of leadership, as exemplified by

F.W. de Klerk's election to the Presidency in South Africa in 1989[13]. A final example of an important internal factor is the vested interests by some actors in the continuation of conflict, which has been discussed in the context of the greed-theory of conflict.

Relational factors, then, are concerned with the relationship between adversaries. The unequal distribution of power, income or access to goods and services is a key structural characteristic of the relationship between opposing groups which must be taken into account (Kriesberg, 1998: 43; 2005: 79). Differences in economic resources, culture and coercive capabilities also play a role, along with the degree of integration between the opposing groups in social, economic and cultural spheres. Where cross-cutting identities and shared interests exist between groups the risk of destructive intractable conflict is significantly reduced. Relational agency factors are sometimes difficult to distinguish from structural factors, as people shape their structural circumstances and are likewise shaped by them.

When an intractable conflict is in a process of transformation, agreements for limited cooperation between parties can be made. Such agreements may include "informing each other about military exercises", and could also involve "establishing organizations to coordinate activities regarding matters of common interest" (Kriesberg, 2005: 80). This type of interaction between sides may significantly improve relations and potentially lead to transformation and eventually resolution of the conflict. The absence of any such initiatives will have the opposite effect. Finally, a common feature of intractable conflicts which relates to the relations between adversaries is the belief by one side to the conflict that yielding to the opposing side is worse than continuing the conflict in the hopes of the other side yielding, even though losses are constantly incurred. In this case the intractable conflict will only come to an end when the parties have reached a mutually hurting stalemate, which makes them believe that a better option is a real possibility for both sides (Kriesberg, 2005: 81).

The third and final group of factors (and actors) are *external* to the conflict and the country/countries where it takes place. The first major external structural factor which will impact intractability is the superimposition of a set of other conflicts on a particular conflict. A clear example is the Cold War which, as previously mentioned, had a great impact on many conflicts in

---

[13] Frederik Willem de Klerk began negotiations with the African National Congress (ANC) which eventually led to the end of apartheid in South Africa in 1994.

Africa and elsewhere. In these cases the intractability of conflict was exacerbated by opposing sides receiving military and financial support from the superpowers and their allies, leading to more protracted and destructive conflicts. In a similar manner, the "War on Terrorism" is today affecting the course of conflicts around the world, both positively and negatively. For instance, while intensifying conflict in the Middle East, the widespread rejection of terrorism after 9/11 is on the other hand believed to have contributed to a ceasefire between the Tamil Tigers and the government in Sri Lanka. Other structural factors listed by Kriesberg (2005: 82) are:

> a multitude of social institutions constituting the global economic market affecting trade, investment, and migration; the technological capabilities underlying communication, travel, and production; and the non-social environment of global climate, water and mineral resources, pollution, and land quality.

Again, agency becomes intertwined in the structural factors as their impact on intractability will depend on how they are used and perceived by various actors, whether individuals or organisations.

Outside intervention in a conflict may cause it to escalate or de-escalate, or it may contribute to the continued intractability of conflict, even when the interveners expect the effects of the intervention to be positive. As touched upon, external actors may provide military assistance or other materials, or they may impose arms embargos or sanctions which deprive the warring parties of certain goods and resources. They may also provide economic or humanitarian assistance, or offer refuge to exiled leaders. Intervention may also take forceful forms, as in the case of foreign troops being deployed in order to assist a side in the conflict, or to enforce peace. Importantly, external actors often play a prominent role in intractable conflicts as mediators, who through various mediating activities and negotiations aim to transform the conflict, break the cycle of violence, and set it on the path to resolution. An external actor in a conflict may be a governmental or nongovernmental entity; a state, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), or an international governmental organisation (IGO) (Kriesberg, 2005: 81).

By systematically analysing a conflict in terms of the three groups of factors; internal, external and relational, and by identifying key structural and agency factors within these, one is thus able to gain a comprehensive understanding of the conflict and what shapes its intractability. By following this framework, the analyst will further be able to recognise factors which may be

contributing to conflict transformation, or which may act as a catalyst for transformation in the future. The following section will focus on the existence of war economies, which contain elements of both structure and agency, and of internal and external factors.

2.7   War economies

As discussed above, a number of issues may lie at the root of contemporary conflicts, and, as noted, a common factor in many of today's wars is the pursuit of economic interest by key actors, which may serve to sustain conflict. Such economic agendas must be understood in the context of modern war economies; alternate systems of power, profit and protection, which affect the conflict dynamic in a perpetuating way (Berdal & Malone, 2000: 2; Goodhand, 2003: 638; Ballentine & Sherman, 2003: 2). David Keen (quoted in Berdal & Malone, 2000: 6) gives a concise overview of the concept of war economies:

> Conflict can create war economies, often in the regions controlled by rebels or warlords and linked to international trading networks; members of armed gangs can benefit from looting; and regimes can use violence to deflect opposition, reward supporters or maintain their access to resources. Under these circumstances, ending civil wars becomes difficult. Winning may not be desirable: the point of war may be precisely the legitimacy which it confers on actions that in peacetime would be punishable as crimes.

As touched upon in Chapter 1, war economies in the traditional meaning of the term involved the militarisation of economic life and the widespread mobilisation of people and assets to finance the war effort. While war economies in civil wars, or new wars, also entail such elements; they are additionally characterised by their parasitic, illicit and predatory nature. As has become apparent, rather than being dominated by value-adding economic activities, rent-seeking and the extraction and trade of primary products is paramount in the economies of these new civil wars. They rely heavily on the grey and black markets, and use calculated and systematic use of violence to attain assets, control trade, and exploit labour (Ballentine & Sherman, 2003: 2-3).

Although the wars of today tend to be internal in character and are thus commonly referred to as civil wars, it must be noted that the emergence of war economies in weak, developing world states can only be understood within the broader global context, as regional and global forces will impact on political, social and economic factors shaping the conflict dynamics in these countries. The rapid processes of globalisation which have taken place during the past decades have opened

new doors for elites wishing to pursue their economic agendas in times of war. It has also presented warring factions with new and abundant opportunities for self-financing through access to poorly regulated global markets (Berdal & Malone, 2000: 2-3; Ballentine & Sherman, 2003: 2). Kaldor (2006) has termed this phenomenon the "globalised war economy" and views it as a distinct characteristic of the new wars of the 1990s and 2000s. The globalised war economy is linked to global markets through legal and illegal trade, and is fuelled by transnational linkages such as remittances from citizens living abroad, direct assistance from foreign governments, or humanitarian assistance from aid organisations (Kaldor, 2006: 109-110; Duffield, 2000: 85).

Wars in African countries such as Sierra Leone, Angola and the DRC have shown high degrees of interconnectedness with the global economy, which has likely increased both the intensity and duration of the conflicts, instead of positively contributing to economic growth and development. In these cases revenue from diamonds, oil, and coltan respectively was diverted into the shadow economy of the state and played a central role in financing warfare and enriching elites (Cater, 2003: 32). In Angola, for instance, the war economy is believed to have enabled warlord Jonas Savimbi to accumulate over four billion dollars, which he largely used to finance his second war. According to Collier (2006: 19) a typical civil war costs around 60 billion dollars, although around half of the cost is likely to occur after the war, as the country recovers. The impoverished state of many African countries which have experienced civil war can thus largely be attributed to the cost of war, and the predatory behaviour of warlords.

Not all countries are rich in natural resources which can be exploited to fuel the war economy and enrich key individuals, and in such cases warlords, elites and rebel groups have found other ways to profit from war. Arms sales and the smuggling of illicit weapons, drugs or other goods are among commonly practiced activities within a war economy, along with looting, extortion, kidnappings and the like (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2005: 7; Kaldor, 2006: 108). As mentioned above, monetary support from the diaspora may also fuel the war economy and assist in financing the war-effort (Collier, 2006: 15). Moreover, the diversion of humanitarian aid has been a common feature of wars in Africa and elsewhere, accentuating the humanitarian dilemma of aid as potentially feeding war. Refugee camps have been integrated into war economies, as sources of food and medical supplies for belligerents. As Münkler (2005: 88) writes: "[n]ot only did hunger become a weapon in the struggle for power; international aid became an involuntary funder of the

brutal gangs fighting the civil war". Insurgents have taken advantage of NGOs and charities both by confiscating aid, either for their own direct usage or for re-selling; through taxation; or by compelling organisations to make use of their logistics or 'protection' services[14]. The diversion or abuse of aid has been common during the conflict in Somalia, for instance.

In line with the theorising around war economies and warlordism, William Reno (2000: 44) argues that some cases of internal warfare, and the rise of warlords, should be understood as emerging out of a particular Cold War era relationship between "private power, commerce and state power in weak states". Reno uses the term "shadow state" to describe the relationship between politics and corruption in such states. Shadow states are the products of personal rule, and of relationships which involve rulers giving out payments to key strongmen in return for their loyalty, obedience and support, leaving little to be spent on services. A "shadow of state bureaucratic agencies based on personal ties" is thus created (Reno, 2000: 46). For a shadow state ruler, conflict becomes a tool of governance in that public goods such as security and economic stability, which should normally be available to all, are removed to compel individuals to seek the personal favour of the ruler in order to secure exemption from these volatile conditions.

In conclusion, it appears evident that conflict can be highly profitable for some chief beneficiaries of the war economy, for whom continued conflict contains strong economic incentives. The conclusion may be drawn that resource looting and other shadowy economic activities associated with contemporary war economies are not causes for the outbreak of wars, but are often very important in explaining their duration and seeming intractability. Conflict resolution thus becomes especially challenging in situations where violence related to profiteering by key actors has become endemic and deeply entrenched.

2.8   Conclusion

This chapter started out by defining central concepts such as conflict, war and civil war, before proceeding to discuss the particular characteristics of war in modern times. Subsequent sections presented various theoretical arguments on the causes of armed conflict in general, and African

---

[14] Especially smaller NGOs may have to accept protection from attacks at a fee, or make use of warlords' rented lorries for the transportation of aid and supplies (Münkler, 2005: 88).

conflicts in particular. The conclusion can be drawn that there is a wide variety of factors which may contribute to the outbreak of civil war. The factors are often highly interlinked, making it difficult to distinguish absolute causes and determine causal relationships. It however appears clear that while grievances rooted in issues such as poverty and inequality in many cases are underlying causes of social and political conflict between communal identity groups, economic factors and agendas certainly also play a role, and have the potential to significantly impact the intractability of wars. The next chapter will give an overview of Somalia and the specific characteristics of its intractable conflict.

3 A CONFLICT TURNED INTRACTABLE: THE CASE OF SOMALIA

3.1 Introduction

Somalia and its intractable conflict is at the time of writing appearing daily in the international media. Not only is the international community concerned about the numerous acts of piracy which have occurred off the coast of Somalia during the past few years, but as conflict between the fragile transitional government and the Islamic insurgency has re-intensified in recent months, all eyes are once again upon this troubled East African country. According to the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset the country has experienced 20 years of armed conflict since 1978. Following the end of Mohammed Siyad Barre's dictatorship and the collapse of the state, Somalia has had a climate of instability and periodic violence, where "clan-based political dynamics [have] consistently worked against the re-establishment of a central government" (Healy, 2008: 20).

While the regions of Somaliland and Puntland have managed to maintain some form of a working government, and stayed relatively stable and secure, south-central Somalia has remained volatile and deeply fragmented between warring factions. In this area, and particularly in the capital Mogadishu, the politics of certain clans degenerated into warlord politics, with competing clan factions and leaders attempting to gain control of business opportunities[15] (Healy, 2008: 20). Over the years the conflict has transformed from a war between rival clan-based liberation movements to one where political Islam gradually has become more central. As the purpose of this study is to identify what factors are at the root of the seeming intractability of the Somali conflict, a descriptive overview of the case study is imperative at this point.

Accordingly, this chapter will present the case of Somalia, by first giving a historical background and demographic overview of the country, before moving on to focus on the timeline and characteristics of the current intractable conflict. A section will also be dedicated Somali identity and clan lineage, which is central to understanding the complexities of the conflict. Lastly, the

---

[15] According to Healy (2008: 20), warlords of the Hawiye clan have been particularly dominant.

Somali war economy will be explored in some detail. This study posits that individuals and groups sometimes have a vested interest in the continuation of conflict as it provides them with opportunities for personal enrichment within the economic structures of a war economy, parallel to the formal economy. Therefore, the economic activities of faction leaders and the Mogadishu business class which may contribute to sustaining the conflict will be discussed.

3.2 Historical background and demographic overview

### 3.2.1 *Introduction to the Somali people and their society*

The Somali population has been influenced and shaped by hundreds of years of conquest, migration and assimilation. Before Somali pastoralists moved into the eastern Horn from Ethiopia in the 10th century, the land known today as Somalia was inhabited by other peoples, such as the Oromos, an agro-pastoralist group also present in neighbouring Kenya and Ethiopia (Farah, Hussein & Lind, 2002: 322). According to some historians the Somalis may originally stem from Islamic missionaries who travelled across from the Arabian Peninsula around 615 AD (Møller, 2009: 8). Though the accuracy of this theory is questionable, it is clear that contact with Arabs and the Islam world through trade, missionary activities and migration has had a major impact on Somali society for hundreds of years. The Somali were converted to Islam early on, and today a large majority of Somalis remain Sunni Muslims of the Sha'afi School of Law. Somalia has furthermore been a member of the Arab League since 1974 (Lewis, 2008: 2).

The Somalis have traditionally occupied a vast territory in the geographical area known as the Horn of Africa, across the Gulf from the Arabian Peninsula. Of the estimated eight million Somalis, around two million are believed to be living outside of their homeland as a result of the collapse of the central authority and deteriorating state of affairs in Somalia since the early 1990s[16] (Lewis, 2008: 1). Moreover, roughly a century ago the area occupied by ethnic Somalis was divided into five parts under the control of various countries, which is why a distinction must be made between the country known today as Somalia, and the Somali nation, which includes Somalis resident outside the official borders of modern Somalia.

---

[16] For more facts and figures on Somalia, see the Appendix.

Somalia is often considered one of the most ethnically homogenous countries on the African continent, as most of the population share a common language (Somali), religion (Islam), and culture. Both linguistic and religious minority groups nevertheless exist, but most live in association and various stages of assimilation with ethnic Somalis. Lineage, in terms of divisions along clans and sub-clan lines, underpin Somali society, and throughout Somali history such divisions have manifested themselves as conflicts between clans and sub-clans. In recent decades these conflicts have turned increasingly intense and bloody, certainly partly due to the prevalence of modern weapons (World Bank, 2005: 7).

There is little agreement on the exact structure of the clans, and sub clans in particular, with even Somalis themselves disputing clan structures and affiliations. Fluid sub-clan identities further complicate the matter. Most observers however agree that at least the Dir, Isaq, Hawiye and Darod clans can be considered four of the main Somali clan families (World Bank, 2005: 7; Møller, 2009: 11; Farah, Hussein & Lind, 2002:326). Digil is sometimes also considered a major clan, as is Rahanweyn (also called Digil Mirifle). These, along with their sub-clans and some minority clans, constitute Somali society (World Bank, 2005: 7, Lewis, 2008).
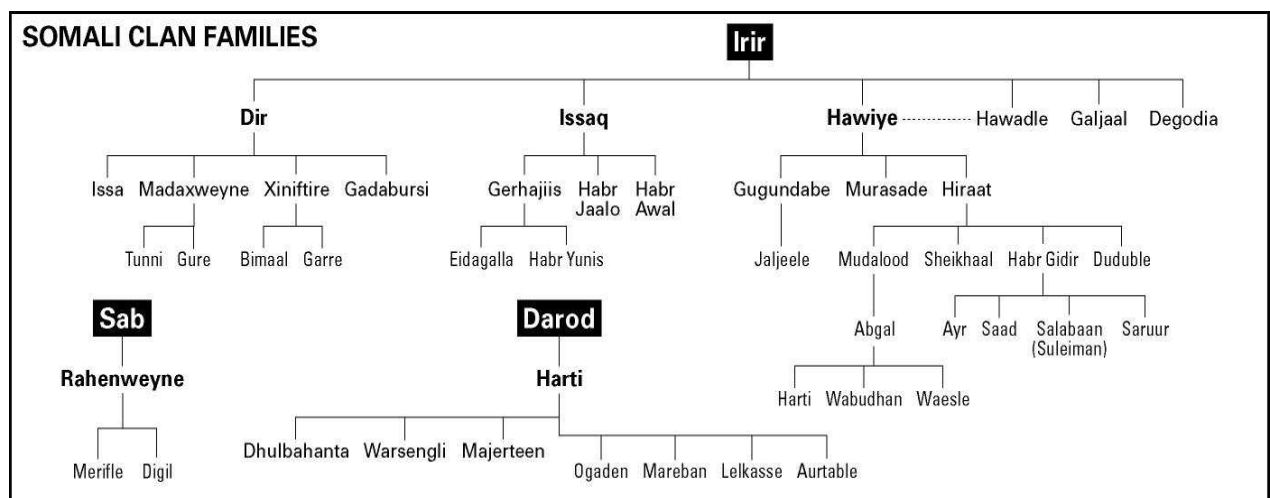
(Source: Africa Confidential, 2007)

Figure 3. Main structure of Somali clans

According to Lewis (2008: 4), the division of the nation into six main Somali clans can to a certain degree be geographically distinguished[17]. The fertile land between the Shebelle and Juba

---

[17] See the Appendix for maps of Somalia.

rivers in southern Somalia is home to farmers and agro-pastoralists mainly from sub-clans of Digil and Rahanweyn, sometimes collectively referred to among Somalis as the Sab. The largest sub-clans of the Dir, mainly Esa (also spelled Issa) and Gadabursi, live primarily in the Harar-Borama-Zeila area around the Ethiopian border, while the Isaq inhabit the part of Northern Somalia known today as the Republic of Somaliland, which is yet to be recognised internationally. The Isaq are neighbours to the largest collection of clan families, the Darod, who traditionally occupy north-eastern Somalia, including the region known as Puntland; the Ogaden region in present-day Ethiopia; and north-eastern Kenya. Lastly, the Hawiye, another large collection of clans, occupy the Hiran and Mudug regions in central Somalia as well as parts of the Benadir region where the official capital of Somalia, Mogadishu, is located (Lewis, 2008: 5).

A 60 to 70 percent majority of Somalis traditionally belong to a nomadic pastoralist culture; a non-sedentary lifestyle of herding camels, goats, sheep and, in some areas, cattle. Camels are traditionally considered the most valued source of wealth. The remainder of the Somalis are cultivators, many of whom also keep some livestock; or urban city-dwellers whose livelihood primarily depends on commerce and fisheries. Similar to several other African countries, Somalia has become increasingly urbanised, and today many from pastoralist families live in urban centres for at least part of the year (Lewis, 2008: 3).

3.2.2   *A brief political history of Somalia*

To understand subsequent Somali history, including the many years of social conflict, it is imperative to gain some comprehension of pre-colonial Somalia. Colonisation came to fundamentally influence and change Somali politics and society, and its impact on the country's future cannot be underestimated. Lewis (2008: 27) explains the context within which the colonisation of Somalia occurred:

> Although the Somali pastoralists had, traditionally, a strong sense of cultural and linguistic unity, they did not form a single political unit. They were a nation, not a state, although they possessed the cultural prerequisites for statehood. The six major divisions of the nation (the Dir, Isaq, Darod etc.) did not combine together to confront the world, nor did they regularly act as stable or autonomous political units within the Somali political system. They were too large and widely dispersed to do this, and lacked the necessary organisation.

It follows that with the Somalis divided into countless sub-clans whose members were often widely scattered across the land in their nomadic movements, they had little means of preventing the Europeans, who arrived in the late 19th century, from dividing up the Somali territory among themselves (Lewis, 2008:28). Pre-colonial Somalia was largely a stateless society, where customary law, known as *Xeer,* was used to manage relations between communities (Farah, Hussein & Lind, 2002: 323).

At the time of the scramble for Africa[18] the British and French were the two superpowers competing in the Horn of Africa. Italy and Russia were also involved in the region and were vying to secure Ethiopia as a client state[19]. The British had a garrison at Aden, and in order to secure meat for the garrison they signed 'protection' treaties with various northern Somali clans. The French and Italians entered into similar treaties with local clans. The four foreign powers competing in the region soon had to acknowledge that Ethiopia was the local superpower; and in the light of this realisation Russia withdrew, leaving merely some military advisors and weapons behind. At this point, France, Britain and Italy entered into negotiations with Emperor Menelik of Ethiopia which resulted in the Somali nation being divided into five parts – which came to be represented by the five-pointed star on the Somali flag. Djibouti was one division; it was under French rule and also included inhabitants of the Afar tribe. The British Somaliland Protectorate, today's Republic of Somaliland, was another; an area in the north of the Horn where Hargeisa was, and still is, the capital. As its neighbour to the south, British Somaliland had Italian Somalia with Mogadishu as its capital. Some Somalis came under British rule in the northern parts of Kenya; and, finally, the fifth part was the large area in Ethiopia named after its Somali residents: the Ogaden (Lewis, 2008: 28-29). Several attempts were later made to consider a reunification of the Somali nation, but none ever became realised (Farah, Hussein & Lind, 2002: 232).

Both the British and the Italians controlled their Somali territories by appointing expatriate District and Provincial Commissioners to administer greater regions. At the local level, the Italians, more so than the British, upheld a system of 'indirect rule' in which Somali leaders were recognised as 'chiefs' provided that they cooperated with the colonial authorities. Once fascism

---

[18] The 'scramble for Africa' refers to a time period during the late 19th century when the European powers competed for land in Africa and partitioned Africa among themselves, dividing up the continent into colonies under European rule.
[19] Ethiopia was an independent nation at the time and remained one of only two African countries to retain its independence throughout the European scramble for Africa, the other country being Liberia.

had gathered momentum in Italy, it was implemented in Somalia "by strongly differentiating the 'natives' from their 'natural rulers', the Italian colonisers" (Lewis, 2008: 30). The Italians also differentiated between clans and created something of a pro-Italian cadre, similar to the French *évolué* and Portuguese *assimilados*. This class was given a Western education, and was recruited mainly from the Mudug and Majerten regions (Osman, 2007a: 125).

On the whole, colonial rule brought numerous changes to Somalia. For instance, the introduction of the European notion of statehood awakened nationalist sentiments and spurred the growth of nationalist and irredentist movements (Farah, Hussein & Lind, 2002: 323). This is one explanation to some of the armed conflicts which occurred in the pre-independence era. Between 1900 and 1920 the British and the Italians fought against Mohammed Abdulle Hassan, a Somali religious and nationalist leader referred to by the British as the "Mad Mullah" (Peterson, 2000: 10). In Italian Somalia, the Somalis violently opposed Italian fascist rule during the 1920s and 1930s, and Italy and Britain fought among themselves over Somalia during the Second World War (Farah, Hussein & Lind, 2002: 322). In addition, the colonialists facilitated Somalia's integration into the world economy by the establishment of plantations producing cotton, and later bananas, to be exported abroad. The Somalis were however not only introduced to an agrarian lifestyle, but also to an urban one. During the colonial years urban centres such as Hargeisa in the north and Mogadishu in the south rapidly grew and became centres for politics and business (Farah, Hussein & Lind, 2002: 324).

In 1960, Somalia was granted independence from Italy, and Italian Somalia was merged with British Somaliland in accordance with a UN Trusteeship Council agreement (Farah, Hussein & Lind, 2002: 324). At independence, Somalia formally became a multiparty democracy led by Aden Abdulla Osman as the first president. The judicial system was at this time based on a mix between the British and Italian legal systems and Islamic *Sharia* laws. Clan politics were a feature of the Somali political arena under Somalia's first government; the president himself was of the Hawiye clan from the South, and politics were largely dominated by Hawiye and Darod clan members. Subsequently, the marginalisation of northern clans led to political tensions which to some extent have existed until present (Ohanwe, 2009: 142). In the 1967 elections, Osman was defeated by his prime minister, Abdirashir Ali Sharma'arke, who two years later was assassinated by one of his bodyguards. While some Somalis remember the nine years of civilian rule from

1960-1969 as a golden era; "others characterise it as a time of corrosive and paralysing clannism" (Farah, Hussein & Lind, 2002: 324).

Under President Abdirashir and Prime Minister Mohamed Egal politics in Somalia increasingly moved towards the one-party, autocratic system which in subsequent decades has become so typical in Africa. A drastic change in foreign policy, involving a distancing from the pan-Somali struggle[20] and a détente with Kenya and Ethiopia, is likely to have been a major contributing factor to the public dissent which eventually manifested itself in the military takeover following the assassination of the President. In the bloodless coup of 1969 General Mohammed Siyad Barre, Commander of the Army, ascended to power. The General had been trained in Italy, where he also had the chance to study politics, and had previously served as a police inspector in Somalia. A year after coming to power, Barre declared Somalia a Marxist state, officially adopting Scientific Socialism as the state ideology (Lewis, 2008: 37-38).

Central elements of Siyad Barre's policies were strengthening Somali nationalism, while denouncing clan politics, and promoting literacy and development. In an attempt to unify the people, clan ties were banned under the slogan "socialism unites, tribalism divides" (Ahmed & Green, 1999: 117). Among his early achievements as president was the implementation of a script for the Somali language; as well as a number of large mass literacy campaigns in 1973 and 1974 (Lewis 2008: 41; Gilkes, 1994: 16). Regardless of these promising initiatives, Somalia was a one-party state - led by the Somalia Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP) - on its way to becoming a brutal dictatorship (Ajulu, 2004: 77).

In 1977, in the wake of the fall of Emperor Haile Selassie in Ethiopia, Barre saw the opportunity to seize the Ogaden region in the hopes of reuniting the Somali nation. Previously a client of the Soviet Union (USSR), Barre attacked Ethiopian garrisons in the Ogaden with the help of Soviet weapons, but was defeated by Ethiopia in early 1978. The USSR and Cuba had chosen to ally themselves with the stronger regional power, the new Marxist government in Ethiopia, and thus supported it with weapons and troops (BBC, 2010a; Ajulu, 2004: 77). Following the loss of Ogaden, and his abandoning of Scientific Socialism, Barre's rule became increasingly autocratic

---

[20] Pan-Somalism was the belief that all ethnic Somalis should be united in a single state. The idea was first put forth in the early 1940s by Somali intellectuals in Italian Somalia, after which it progressively spread throughout all Somali territories (MIS, 2010).

and despotic. Despite his anti-clanism rhetoric, Barre consequently awarded political posts to his fellow Darod clan members, and favoured his kin in networks of patronage. He especially favoured members of the Marrehan, Ogaden and Dulbahante, all sub-clans of the Darod clan. This gave rise to the derogatory term 'MOD-rule' (Møller, 2009: 10). Barre's divide and rule politics also involved harassment and even physical elimination of opposition to his regime (Ajulu, 2004: 77).

The disastrous defeat in Ogaden caused widespread public dissent and spurred the birth of several Somali liberation movements. The first of these was the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) established in 1978. The movement, which consisted mainly of Majerten clan members, engaged in a struggle against the government which was met with harsh repression (World Bank, 2005: 9; Møller, 2009: 10). In 1981, the Somali National Movement (SNM) arose in Isaq-dominated Somaliland, launching a resistance campaign against Barre which for several years received support from Ethiopia. The movement's secessionist ambitions culminated in a highly destructive civil war which erupted in 1988 between the SNM and government forces. By 1991, the SNM had gained control over the Somaliland-region and declared independence – and has stayed *de facto* independent ever since (Møller, 2009: 10; Lewis, 2008: 71).

From 1989-1990 the government became involved in a third war, which took the form of a series of armed clashes with various clan-based liberation movements, such as the United Somali Congress (USC, Hawiye clan), the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM, Ogaden clan), and the SSDF (Majerten clan). With this conflict the seeds to Somalia's long period of instability and war had been sown. As stated in a World Bank (2005: 10) report: "[t]his multifront war presaged the predatory looting and banditry that characterised the warfare in 1991-1992". Economically, the last years of Barre's rule were disastrous as the state virtually ran out of money. Foreign aid was suspended, taxation collapsed and soldiers were encouraged to loot to compensate for unpaid salaries (Drysdale, 1994: 20). Additionally, a number of factors, including Barre's refusal to share power, his clan politics, the weakened mediation role of Somali elders and the sharpening of inter-clan feuds were among the reasons behind the series of events which eventually led to the toppling of his government.

3.3   Two decades of war: 1991- present

3.3.1   *The volatile 1990s*

Conflict intensified in Somalia in the late 1980s and throughout 1990, and in December that year rebel forces struck Mogadishu. By this time Siyad Barre no longer had the resources to maintain his system of patronage politics, nor the capacity to suppress and contain the numerous resistance movements, and in January 1991 he was finally ousted by forces primarily from the Hawiye-supported USC, but also from the SPM and the SSDF. This event is generally viewed as the start of the two decade long conflict and protracted complex emergency from which Somalia is yet to emerge. The most intense violence however erupted later in the year, in November 1991, as tensions rose and clan-based factions became embroiled in a fierce struggle for control of urban and rural assets, and perhaps ultimately: the remnants of the state (Bradbury & Healy, 2010; Copson, 1994: 49-54). The two-year period following the fall of Barre is often referred to by Somalis as *burbur*, 'catastrophe'. In coming years, this first stage of the conflict has commonly been characterised as a time of chaos, lawlessness and inter-clan war. During the first months of the war, tens of thousands were killed (civilians included), one and a half million people fled the country, and at least two million became internally displaced (Bradbury & Healy, 2010).

Before spreading south, the armed conflict was largely concentrated in the Isaq dominated northern parts of the country. Here, the Somali National Movement (SNM) were among the most persistent opponents of the central government, and following its collapse the SNM announced the region's secession from Somalia in May 1991, signifying the birth of the Republic of Somaliland (Copson, 1994: 52). While Somaliland embarked on a more peaceful path, the war in southern Somalia raged on. To make matters worse; looting of assets, destruction of social and economic infrastructure and disruption of food supplies – combined with a serious drought – gave rise to a famine in which an estimated 250,000 Somalis died. According to some estimates as many as one-fourth of the country's children under the age of five may have died as a result of war and famine, putting Somalia on the radar of all the world's largest humanitarian aid agencies (Copson, 1994: 50; Bradbury & Healy, 2010).

During this turbulent time the Hawiye-dominated USC had become split in two factions based on the sub-clans Agbal and Habar Gidir. The USC militia was led by General Mohammed Farah Aideed, a member of the Habar Gidir clan and a former general in Siyad Barre's army. When Barre fled from Mogadishu in January 1991 General Aideed pursued him, while the Agbal faction of USC set up an interrim government in Mogadishu under the leadership of Ali Mahdi, a well-known Agbal businessman and warlord. The government was however short lived; and as antagonisms between the two factions rapidly deepened, a violent struggle ensued. All out war broke out in the streets of Mogadishu in November 1991; the start of four months of continuous bloodshed and destruction of property. Mogadishu was effectively split into two parts, controlled by Aideed and Mahdi, respectively, and separated by the so-called 'green line'[21] (Møller, 2009: 11; Drysdale, 1994: 16).

The international community reacted rather slowly to what was happening in Somalia. However, as the media started spreading images across the globe of the terrible suffering caused by famine and war, it soon became difficult for anyone - the United Nations and the West included - to turn a blind eye to the deteriorating state of affairs in the country. The UN's first attempt at peace-keeping, the United Nations Mission to Somalia (UNOSOM), was a small operation aimed mainly at monitoring a ceasefire between the opposing factions. Lacking military and logistical capacity, the UN soon had to turn to the only remaining superpower, the United States, for assistance (Drysdale, 1994: 1). Consequently, on December 9 1992, the US-led Unified Task Force, better known as UNITAF, was launched under the title 'Operation Restore Hope'. This operation eventually brought a total of 37,000 troops, 26,000 of them American, to Somalia. UNITAF's original mandate was originally limited to securing the delivery of food aid and general peacekeeping, but as the security situation in Mogadishu degenerated increased force and engaging in actual combat became necessary (Gilkes, 1994: 35; Lewis, 2008: 78; Copson, 1994: 53).

In March 1993, during a quiet period in the inter-clan fighting around Mogadishu, it was decided that UNITAF was to be replaced by UNOSOM II, consisting of troops from a wider range of countries, but also of a large number of Americans staying on from UNITAF. By June UNOSOM

---

[21] The 'green line' was in fact a road which had become a dividing line between the south and north districts of Mogadishu; the north controlled by Ali Mahdi's militia and the south by Farah Aideed's (Mukhtar, 2005).

II was caught up in all-out war against General Aideed's forces (Lewis, 2008: 78). In October, US President Clinton had to announce the withdrawal of American troops from Somalia, following the unfortunate incident later known as 'Black Hawk Down' (Bradbury & Healy, 2010). An American helicopter was shot down, 18 US soldiers were killed and pictures of dead Americans being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu were broadcasted on US television. Less noted in international media was the fact that between 300 and 1,000 Somalis were also killed in the incident (Møller, 2009: 12).

With the Americans gone, the rest of the UNOSOM force also quickly started dissolving, leaving the UN leadership desperately trying to negotiate and restore the peace-agreement between Mahdi, Aideed and other warlords, but to no use. Aideed himself was killed in a clash in the capital in April 1996 (Lewis, 2008: 79). Somalia, still without a functioning central authority, was now left in a worse state than before the international forces arrived. As the final peacekeepers were leaving in 1995, extensive looting of the US$160-million UN headquarters in Mogadishu began. UN buildings were taken apart completely, and "with the money from the sale of this scrap and other discarded equipment, a new generation of faction leaders and warlords was rising to prominence" (Lewis, 2008: 80). Political instability continued throughout the latter part of the 1990s, with internationally-mediated peace talks in Ethiopia and Egypt yielding little results. This lack of progress eventually led to political leaders in the north east creating the self-governing, semi-autonomous state of Puntland in August 2008. The President of Puntland, Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf, was a former military leader of the SSDF, and later became president of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (Bradbury & Healy, 2010). Meanwhile, in war-ravaged south-central Somalia there were certain elements which helped preserve some form of order in the midst of political chaos, most notably the previously mentioned *Xeer* law; mediation of clan elders; and the existence of various charitable Islamic institutions and *Sharia* courts (Møller, 2009: 13).

3.3.2 *The 2000s and the transformation of the conflict*

a. ***A series of peace processes***

After the departure of the UN in 1995, the armed conflict in Somalia went through a transformative phase, where violence became more local, less intense, and involved shorter and less lethal clashes between armed factions. The political environment was, nevertheless, becoming increasingly fragmented (World Bank, 2005: 12). Following a series of unsuccessful, somewhat half-hearted attempts at reaching a political solution, the most successful peace initiative yet was launched in Arta in Djibouti in 2000, largely as a result of active lobbying by President Guelleh of Djibouti. An important breakthrough was reached during the Arta process; namely the creation of a Transitional National Government (TNG) (Bradbury & Healy, 2010). At first the TNG appeared promising, as it was the "most inclusive and representative peace initiative since 1991", but a number of problems soon rose to the surface (Webersik, 2004: 2).

Although the peace process in general was more inclusive than previous ones, the new transitional government was dominated by Mogadishu-based clans, falling short of serving as a government of national unity (Menkhaus, 2007: 359). Moreover, according to the World Bank (2005: 13), the leadership of the TNG "devoted most of its attention to securing foreign aid and external recognition, rather than engaging in the arduous process of rebuilding a central government". During its first year, the TNG enjoyed popular support among Somalis, but as its shortcomings became apparent this support quickly began to wane. Moreover, the TNG was met with stark opposition both from factions within Somalia, as well as from neighbouring states (Webersik, 2004: 3; World Bank, 2005: 13).

Over its three year mandate, the TNG had failed to become operational and eventually only managed to control the capital and small pockets inland; which instigated another effort to bring the protracted conflict to an end, this time under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD)[22] (ICG, 2002: 2). In October 2002, Somali political leaders gathered in Eldoret in Kenya to sign a new declaration, designed to address the crucial issues of creating a structure for a future Somali state and reconciling the nation. Wiser from previous processes, the

---

[22] IGAD comprises of seven states in the Horn of Africa, namely Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. These states cooperate, for instance, in the area of promoting and maintaining regional peace and security (IGAD, 2010).

engineers of the Eldoret Declaration put the potentially explosive issue of power-sharing last on the agenda (ICG, 2002: 3). In 2003, the Process was moved from Eldoret to Mbagathi (near Nairobi), and the period from 2002 to 2004 has subsequently been termed the Mbgathi Process or the Somali National Peace and Reconciliation Conference (Healy, 2008: 20).

The most significant outcome of the Mbgathi peace process was the establishment of a new Transitional Federal Government (TFG), an institution which is still in existence at the time of writing. This time around, a 275-person parliament was selected by Somali clans in proportion to their numbers in the total population. The parliament elected Colonel Yusuf as President, and he in turn appointed Ali Mohamed Gedi as Prime Minister, which some say was Ethiopia's insistence (Healy, 2008: 21). While Ethiopia had been a patron of the *opposition* to the first transitional government, the TNG, roles were now reversed with Ethiopia considered something of an architect of the new TFG. Kenya supported the TFG while former TNG sponsors, namely Djibouti, Egypt and the Arab League, took a significantly more measured stance. In 2004, the International Crisis Group (ICG, 2004: 18) described the TFG as "as much – if not more – the product of regional detente as of a peace deal between Somalis". In the early days of the new TFG Western countries were rather polarised in their views, with Italy showing eager support, but the United States and the United Kingdom remaining more hesitant. As following sections will show, however, much has changed in Somalia since 2004, and at the time of writing the US and the West in general is supportive of the TFG.

By 2005 the TFG had relocated from Kenya to Baidoa in Somalia, as Mogadishu was considered too dangerous. It had however already marginalised itself both geographically and politically and was generally not viewed as legitimate by Somalis (Lewis, 2008: 84). Following the rise of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) and Islamist militias, which will be discussed in more detail in the following section, the TFG found it increasingly difficult to consolidate its position as the government of Somalia and to exercise any real control in the country. In late 2006 Ethiopia intervened militarily to support the transitional government and prevent the spread of fundamentalist Islam in Africa. This concern was shared by the US, who backed Ethiopia in its undertakings in Somalia (BBC, 2010b). Realising the unevenness of the opposing forces, the UIC withdrew from Mogadishu, allowing the TFG to install itself there under Ethiopian protection. Armed conflict however became a fact: Ethiopian soldiers were almost daily targeted for attacks

by Islamist and clan-based militia groups, who according to Møller (2009: 17) 'fought dirty', for instance making use of terrorist methods of warfare, "attacking humanitarian and UN agencies, and using roadside bombs". After failing to make any significant progress and suffering numerous casualties, Ethiopia eventually withdrew in late 2009. The fighting in 2007- 2008 resulted in the death of hundreds of civilians, and the displacement of thousands, especially from Mogadishu.

b. *The rise of political and militant Islam*

Though religion (Sunni Islam) has been an integral part of Somali life for centuries, radical Islam has traditionally been unpopular in the country. The majority of the opposition to Barre's government, many of which were to become warring factions during the civil war, were reform movements; and until recently militant Islam enjoyed very little popular support, even among the small group of local Islamists (Hoehne, 2009: 2). Nevertheless, the history of political Islam in Somalia goes back to the 1970s, but under Barres dictatorship any active Islamists were suppressed. Militant Islam can be traced back to the early stages of the civil war, when Islamic militias associated to, and some even trained by, Al-Qaida[23] and the notorious Osama bin Laden engaged in the battles of Mogadishu. The most prominent of these, Al-Ittihad al-Islamiya (Islamic Unity, or AIAI), was one of the groups attempting to seize power after the fall of Barre and was also the first Somali radical Islamist group known to have received assistance from bin Laden. With the help of bin Laden's supporters it tried to take control of the cities of Merka and Kismayo in southern Somalia, but failed due to the strength of well-armed local clan militias (Tucker-Jones, 2010: 47; ICG 2002: ii). According the Tucker-Jones (2010: 53), US involvement in Somalia in the early 1990s may have had a significant impact on the subsequent growth of militant Islam in the country, as it "gave fuel to bin Laden's contention that America was in the business of dominating Muslim states".

After the death of Farah Aideed in 1996, Islamic courts started emerging in Mogadishu. At first, these courts were hardly extremist; they were however religiously conservative and issued sentences in accordance with *Sharia* law. Firmly supported by sub-clan elders and the business

---

[23] Al-Qaida is a transnational terrorist organisation founded in the late 1980s by Osama bin Laden. Al-Qaida was for instance responsible for the 9/11 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon in the United States (Bajoria & Bruno, 2009).

community, the courts' influence grew, and they "began to perform some of the functions normally conducted by the government" (Hoehne, 2009: 5). In 2000, a number of courts created a joint council, called the Supreme Council of Islamic Courts, which in 2006 became known as the Union of Islamic Courts. The UIC was thus a coalition of Islamists[24], led by a mixture of radicals and moderates. Though it was primarily an Islamist movement, it was also a "manifestation of Hawiye clan interests and resistance" (ICG, 2006: 2, 17). The courts created an armed militia and had by 2006 grown to become the politically and militarily most significant force in Mogadishu and beyond (Hoehne, 2010: 6). The UIC was on the whole received well by Somalis as it provided the first semblance of a government since 1991 (Tucker-Jones, 2010: 50). There is general consensus that the courts brought a period of relative peace and stability to war-torn Mogadishu. Among the positive developments were that the security situation in Mogadishu drastically improved, trade revived and food prices dropped (Lewis, 2008: 88; World Bank, 2005: 13; Møller, 2009: 13).

As a reaction to the rise of the Islamic Courts and their alleged links to terrorist networks, a coalition of powerful warlords created the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (ARPCT), backed by the United States. As a countermove, Islamist militias allied themselves with the Union of Islamic Courts, and between February and June 2006 the UIC fought and won a four-month war against ARPCT, driving it out of the capital. The fighting reportedly resulted in some 350 deaths and the displacement of thousands. The UIC's victory consolidated its position as the most powerful military and political group in south-central Somalia, strengthened its control over Mogadishu and surrounding areas, and further undermined the TFG's position as a central authority (ICG, 2006: 1; Møller, 2006: 16). Around this time Somali-born US citizen Hassan Dahir Aweys rose to power within the leadership of the Islamic militias and the UIC. Aweys sought for his extremist interpretation of Islam to apply to all of Somalia, which rendered his coming to power a crucial point in the transformation of the Somali conflict towards one centred around political Islam. At the same time, the relationship between the TFG, on the one hand, and the Islamic Courts and militias on the other, worsened drastically.

---

[24] Hoehne (2009: 2) defines 'Islamism' as covering "social reform movements as well as militant or 'jihadi' groups". He further writes that while 'Islamism' is a broad term, perhaps "the only common goal of all Islamists is to erect Islamic states", ruled by *Shar'a*.

The Islamists were particularly angered by the TFG's association to primarily Christian Ethiopia, Somalia's long-time arch enemy (Tucker-Jones, 2010: 50).

As mentioned above, later in 2006 Ethiopian troops arrived to assist the TFG, and on December 26 the UIC was ousted from all its positions in southern Somalia, in what was viewed as a significant victory by the nominal national government. In early 2007, the US also deployed helicopter gunships to support the operations against the insurgents. The TFG's power however remained very limited and restricted to the capital, while the Islamic insurgency was gaining momentum in other parts of the country (Tucker-Jones, 2010: 50; Hoehne, 2010: 20). A youth militia by the name of al-Shabaab emerged during the UIC's rule in 2006. From the start al-Shabaab's insurgency used hit-and-run guerrilla tactics, but was soon also using terrorist methods such as suicide bombings. The first suicide bombing in Somali history took place on the September 18, 2006, and was aimed at President Yusuf. Yusuf survived the attack but his brother and 11 others were killed (ICG, 2010).

Al-Shabaab has since risen to become the most dominant military force in southern and central Somalia. It reportedly has links to al-Qaida and other terrorist organisations, as well as to the networks of pirates which are disconcerting foreign vessels in the Gulf of Aden (Tucker-Jones, 2010: 51-52; Hoehne, 2009: 2). The other main insurgency in contemporary Somalia, called Hizbul Islam, shares several of al-Shabaab's goals, such as the creation of an Islamic state, but is politically more moderate (Abdi, 2010). What significantly differentiates these from previous divisions in Somalia is that these groups are not based on the clan system. Over two decades, the intractable Somali conflict has thus transformed from a secular conflict largely concerning the distribution of power and assets between various clans, to a religious conflict; in which the element of gaining power and resources still definitely exists, but in which the issue of religion and interpretation of Islam has become increasingly overwhelming.

3.3.3 *Latest developments – Somalia today*

As mentioned above, mid-decade the formation of the Union of Islamic courts brought a brief period of stability and an upswing in the economy to south-central Somalia (Lewis, 2009: 89). In the wake of the UIC's demise, a new transitional unitary government was formed, incorporating

elements of the Islamic Courts (Roque, 2009: 1). Despite these attempts at rebuilding the collapsed state, the situation in Somalia has again gradually destabilised in the past few years, with the country reportedly experiencing its worst humanitarian crisis in 18 years in 2009 (Farah, 2009). In early 2007, African peacekeepers were deployed in Somalia under the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to protect the Transitional Federal Government. Efforts by AMISOM-backed TFG troops to create a "victor's peace" have however been met with violent resistance, with deadly clashes frequently occurring (Bradbury & Healy, 2010). In August 2010, the African Union said it would "increase AMISOM's strength to 8,000 troops and allow these forces to pre-emptively attack al-Shabaab" (ICG, 2010). The situation in Somalia is causing tension in the wider Horn of Africa region: Ethiopias's support of the TFG and Eritrea's supply of arms to Somali rebel factions adds an element of proxy war between the two regional foes to the already complex conflict (Holzer, 2010). In addition, in July 2010 al-Shabaab detonated bombs in two locations in Uganda, killing over 70 people, in what reportedly was a warning to Uganda to stop supporting AMISOM with troops (Biryabarema, 2010a). This was the first time al-Shabaab attacked targets outside of Somali territory.

In October 2009, al-Shabaab drove its main rival, Hizbul Islam, out of the port of Kismayo in the South, and now appears to have consolidated its position as the most powerful insurgent group in Somalia, as mentioned above. The insurgents are striving to take control of Mogadishu, where merely a small enclave is still controlled by the TFG (BBC, 2010b; Dersso, 2009: 1). Severe instability persists in south-central Somalia, with Mogadishu once more caught in a cycle of attacks and counterattacks between rival factions. Terrorist attacks and violence against civilians is common, and has resulted in thousands of deaths and displacements over the past few months. Al-Shabaab has imposed strict Islamic law on the population, banning everything considered non-Islamic such as Western music, books, television and sports. This is causing many observers to compare the situation to Afghanistan under the Taliban. The group officially declared war in August 2010 and continues its violent struggle for power while tightening its fundamentalist grip on the Somali people ("Somalia: Bitter Clash", 2010; ICG, 2010; Straziuzo & Hassan, 2010).

At present, piracy is among the most visible manifestations of the Somali conflict, and has become a key concern to the international community and the West. The long-lasting absence of a central authority has for more than a decade allowed pirates to operate in the coastal waters

outside Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, launching their operations mainly from ports in the semi-autonomous region of Puntland. Only during the six-month rule by the Union of Islamic Courts did acts of piracy cease almost completely. During recent years the number of attacks has steadily increased, and piracy is now a major threat to international shipping which NATO, the EU and others have taken measures to combat. Reportedly, there are links between the pirates and Somali rebel groups, with money from piracy being routed to fund al-Shabaab's insurgency while advanced weapons find their way into the hands of the pirates (Middleton, 2008: 9; Tucker-Jones, 2010: 51).

3.4   Clan lineage and identity in Somalia

As has become apparent thus far, clan lineage and kinship are integral elements of Somali society, and have always been important sources of identity for Somalis. Family genealogies have traditionally served as a basis for group division and for the formation of political identities (Lewis, 2008: 27). As clan lineage, and consequently political allegiance, is determined by the male line, instead of asking each other *where* they are from, Somalis ask each other *whom* they are from. In his memoirs from Somalia, Peterson (2000: 8) writes that: "kinship ties were paramount and were expected to be upheld in war and peace. […] Clan has always been the last refuge, the last security during crisis, the only proven guarantor of safety when the world falls apart".

As a nation, Somalis are known in Africa for having a strong nationalist identity, yet this identity is now organised along sectarian and exclusivist clan lines. Webersik (2004: 6) explains: "in the absence of a government over the past decade clan affiliation gained importance in providing security, job opportunities, and access to valuable resources in an increasingly insecure environment". The protracted war has resulted in a localised identity, where Somalis identify themselves primarily in terms of sub-clan or even sub-sub-clan (World Bank, 2005: 16; Webersik, 2004: 6). Clan identity has been an important mobilising factor during the civil war, when the conception of mutually exclusive political identities was strengthened. In ensuing peace processes root causes of the violence such as politics of exclusion, unequal distribution of resources or economic decline have been "neglected in the discourse of clan hatred" (Webersik, 2004: 15; Hoehne, 2006: 399).

Just as ethnic identities can be constructed, as discussed in Chapter 2, clan consciousness in Somalia is according to many observers a product of elite manipulation (Adam, 1999: 170; World Bank, 2005: 16-18). Siyad Barre is understood to have strengthened clan divisions and manipulated identities to serve his economic and political interests, by favouring certain clans while marginalising others. Highly respected clan leaders and elders have also in subsequent years acted as forces which shape clan identities that divide and unite (World Bank, 2005: 16). Roque (2009: 74) brings to the fore the interesting observation that clan structures, identities and loyalties have become increasingly fluid over the course of the Somali conflict, with key political leaders and commanders occasionally switching sides and loyalties according to their pragmatic objectives. According to Roque (2009: 78) "fluidity in loyalties has been engineered though the manipulation of cultural identities". Consequently, and inevitably, conflict becomes increasingly intractable and unmanageable when interests and identities are as dynamic as they currently are in Somalia.

3.5   The Somali war economy

One of the research questions guiding this study is whether the existence of a war economy sustains and perpetuates conflict in Somalia. As discussed in Chapter 2, central driving forces in today's war economies are individuals who profit from conflict by taking advantage of a grey economy which tends to arise in conjunction with modern civil wars. Any in-depth analysis of the Somali war economy's effect on sustaining conflict has to date been rare, and thus this study aims to make a contribution to the existing literature by making an assessment of this effect. The two decades of war have not surprisingly devastated the Somali economy. Today, Somalia remains one of the poorest countries in the world with a GDP per capita of US$298 (2008 estimate) (UNdata, 2010). Traditionally, land, or *deegaan*, has "formed the basis of material wealth in Somalia", and in recent decades the main source of income and the cornerstones of the formal economy in south-central Somalia have been agriculture, pastoral production, commerce and remittances. The export of bananas and charcoal has been of particular importance (Farah, Hussein & Lind, 2002: 337; Grosse-Kettler, 2004: 14; Ahmed & Green, 1999). In the periods of relative stability the Somali economy has had the chance to revive somewhat, and a few sectors such as telecommunications have rapidly grown. The Somalis have been very successful at for

instance establishing internet banking systems which connects the most remote nomad to the modern world of commerce (Lewis, 2008: 25). Parallel to the formal and informal economy[25], a war economy however exists which consists of illegal trade networks and obtaining of assets by violent means. While the illicit war economy was the most elaborate during the height of the civil war in the early 1990s, there are still those who benefit from lawlessness and conflict in Somalia (Webersik, 2006: 1471).

As has been mentioned, warlords who benefited from lawlessness by using violence as a means to economic ends emerged across Somalia in the 1990s, but have according to the World Bank (2005: 13) been much less of a factor since 1999. While actual warlords may now be rarer, there is nevertheless a class of businessmen who may have links to warring factions, and whose economic activities are of questionable legality and morality. In the Somali context the difference between warlord and businessman with a militia can sometimes be rather diffuse. According to Hansen (2007: 3) a warlord is typically in control of a region or fiefdom, in which he taxes the inhabitants as well as merchants wanting to conduct business in the region. A warlord also has political ambitions, and may be, or may have been, a faction leader. A businessman, on the other hand, will seldom take part in political negotiations. During the 1990s it became common for businessmen to build up their own private security forces (Webersik, 2006: 1471). A businessman will employ a militia not to conquer land, but for protection of his assets. Osman Hassan Ali 'Atto' of the Hawiye clan is a good example of an individual who benefited from conflict and a state of general lawlessness in Somalia. He was a wealthy businessman already prior to the war, but was able to further enrich himself by engaging in trade and construction of weapons and vehicles used in the war, such as the battle wagons commonly known as 'technicals'[26]. He supported General Aideed and other faction leaders in the beginning of the civil war, but switched sides several times in accordance with his own financial interests (Webersik, 2006: 1470).

---

[25] Though the lines are blurred between formal sector, informal sector and criminal sector/war economy, Grosse-Kettler (2004: 14- 24) places for instance trade in bananas and charcoal within the regular sector; money transfers and currency printing within the informal sector; and trade in arms within the illegal war economy.

[26] Webersik (2006: 1479) gives a concise definition of a 'technical': "[t]echnicals are pick-up trucks with mounted machine guns. The word 'technical' allegedly derives from the need among aid agencies to account for expenses spent on the hire of the services of armed groups who owned these trucks. Aid agencies accounted these security costs as 'technical expenses'".

Kinship and business are closely interlinked in the informal Somali economy. While some argue that the emphasis on clans can and should be eradicated, clan lineage still plays a significant role in the structure of the current economy. Perhaps the most prominent example is how remittances channelled through informal banking systems, which rely on kinship and trust, have become a major pillar of the Somali economy. The creation of client-patron relationships based on clan lineage has furthermore been essential for many Somali businessmen. When building up a customer base, merchants have often relied on clan loyalty. Similarly, when the security situation deteriorated in the country and businesspeople had to start employing security personnel they typically recruited from their own clan (Webersik, 2006: 1477).

Various 'taxes' and 'fees' have long been a popular source of income for faction leaders. Webersik (2006: 1469, 1473) explains how roadblocks manned by armed men from competing militias can be found across southern Somalia, typically on the outskirts of towns and communities. To be allowed to pass through such a roadblock one will be required to pay a fee; or a tax for transported goods. Fees and taxes which hardly relate to actual services or maintenance expenses are also regularly collected at airstrips. These airports offer few additional services such as fuelling or cargo facilities, yet fees equivalent to those of a professional airport are charged. It has become extremely profitable for factions and influential individuals to monopolise control of entry and exit points throughout the country. As several scholars have noted, the line between business and criminal activity has become blurred in south-central Somalia (Webersik, 2006: 1473; Menkhaus, 2003: 416). The collapse of the central state has allowed faction leaders and businessmen to engage in sectors of the economy which would normally be controlled by the state, such as money printing and drug trafficking (Webersik, 2006: 1469).

Trade in weapons is another typical feature of a war economy, and Somalia is no exception. It is of particular importance as it has a two-pronged impact: the availability of weapons exacerbates the intensity of fighting, while the business of war is simultaneously fuelled. Supply and demand of weapons are created by war and shape its dynamics (Grosse-Kettler, 2004: 25). New conflict dynamics have resulted from the trade in weapons within Somalia: for instance, the weapons trade between pirates and insurgent groups has made the pirates more dangerous and the insurgents more affluent (Middleton, 2008). In 1992, Somalia was subjected to a total arms embargo by the United Nations. The later amended embargo remains in force but has been violated constantly.

Warlords and businessmen have continued to smuggle in weapons, selling them on public markets. As a result, small arms and light weapons have become an unfortunate part of everyday life in Somalia. Neighbouring Ethiopia and Eritrea are also heavily implicated in the high prevalence of weapons in Somalia, as they support opposing warring factions militarily (Grosse-Kettler, 2004: 25-26; SIPRI, 2010).

In civil wars in countries such as Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo the exploitation and looting of valuable natural resources such as diamonds and coltan have fuelled the conflict and sustained warlords, while Somalia, in contrast, has few such *strategic* resources (Grosse-Kettler, 2004: 14). Farah, Hussein and Lind (2002: 334) however write that according to unconfirmed reports, "precious stones and other natural resources are exploited and exported outside Somalia by well-connected foreigners usually through faction leaders and under the banner of some aid agencies". From 1991 onwards, looted property became a major export from Somalia. Factories, power stations and bridges were among the long list of public assets which were completely stripped and exported as scrap metal. Looted copper and machines were also sold to foreign countries (Webersik, 2006: 1469; Drysdale, 1994: 20).

Aid agencies are sometimes accused of fuelling the Somali war economy, due to the massive amounts of humanitarian aid which have been diverted over the years to the benefit of warring factions. These have benefited from humanitarian aid for instance by outright confiscation, or by erecting roadblocks where armed militias 'tax' convoys carrying food and supplies (Peterson, 2000: 4). According to some estimates up to 50 percent of food aid from the World Food Program (WFP) has been diverted to cartels and rebel groups. WFP however claims the real number to be between two and ten percent (Hassan, 2010). American dollars have also streamed into the war economy through direct payments for various services. Westerners in Somalia, including UN staff, NGO personnel and journalists, have had to pay enormous amounts for transport, housing and, above all, security. Even the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had to go against its principles and hire armed protection to be able to work in Mogadishu (Perrin, 2008: 6).

The *qat* trade with its high profit margins is furthermore viewed as a major pillar of the Somali war economy, as it has become an important source of income for businesspeople and faction leaders alike. Use of the narcotic drug *qat* substantially increased in Somalia during the 1980s and

1990s, especially after the collapse of the Barre regime. During the civil war young recruits started chewing the drug as a means of coping with fear and fatigue, while others, women included, also turned to *qat* to ease anxiety and trauma in their insecure, war-torn environment (Lewis, 2008; Webersik, 2006; World Bank, 2005: 26). As Lewis (2008: 24) explains: "[i]mporting and marketing qat from Kenya and Ethiopia became big business in the 1990s and played an important role in the political economy of the 'warlords'". The Kenyan *qat* production, for instance, was in 2006 estimated at US$300 million at wholesale prices. Once flown to Somalia, faction leaders in control of airstrips levy each bag of *qat* a 'tax' and a 'landing fee' for the aircraft. After entering Somalia, bags of *qat* are distributed across the country and sold at retail prices up to 12 times the original unit cost, making the *qat* trade a highly profitable affair (Webersik, 2006: 1474). In addition to enriching warlords, a downside of the widespread *qat* consumption is that addiction to the drug severely affects the income and productivity levels of already impoverished Somalis (World Bank, 2005: 27).

Finally, there are also links between the diaspora and the war economy. As mentioned, according to estimates the Somali diaspora comprises of some two million people (Lewis, 2008: 1). The diaspora thus has the potential to have a significant influence on affairs in their home country, primarily through remittances. In 2002 it was estimated that the diaspora remits around US$360 million annually to Somalia, including Somaliland and Puntland. Most of the remittances are aimed at directly supporting relatives, often in rural areas, while some is invested in the private sector. Remittances may however also be used to finance war or sponsor warlords, especially in times of intensified conflict, when the clan is under threat or attack (World Bank, 2005: 25). Over the 20 years of conflict, remittances have thus become a significant component of the war economy. While the diaspora may directly or indirectly contribute to sustaining armed conflict, they may also "positively contribute to a transition to peace and economic recovery." Webersik (2006: 1470) mentions the promising example of the radio station HornAfrik established by three Somalis from Canada, which serves the public in a positive way by contributing to education in a country where illiteracy may be as high as 80 percent.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has given an overview of the case of Somalia in terms of its 20 year long, protracted conflict. After a history of divide and rule politics, both under the colonial government and later under Siyad Barre's dictatorship, Somalia's central state collapsed in 1991. The political vacuum which followed resulted in an intractable struggle for power between clan-based movements, and later between the fragile interim government and religious extremist groups. The lack of state control has given rise to a war economy which is fuelled by looting; diversion of aid; trade in arms and qat; and remittances from the large Somali diaspora. To date, there have been 15 internationally led attempts at brokering peace and re-establishing a functioning state (Dersso, 2009: 1). As noted in a World Bank (2005: 12) report:

> The conferences have tended to provoke conflict inside the country, divert energies of the political elite from governing areas they claim to control to jockeying for positions in a proposed state, and elevate the status of factional and militia leaders, whom some argue are part of the problem, not the solution.

The above quote highlights the acuteness of the research questions posed in this study: why is the Somali conflict so intractable; why is it so difficult to resolve? And what is the role of these factional and militia leaders, who in many cases benefit from the war economy? Are they and the shadow economy they sustain a major obstacle to a lasting peace? Finding answers to these questions is the objective of the following chapter.

4 ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES AND DRIVERS OF SOMALIA'S INTRACTABLE CONFLICT

4.1   Introduction

As the previous chapter illustrated, the crisis in Somalia has been a complex conflict of escalating and de-escalating violence. The conflict has thus by no means remained static, but has transformed over time both in terms of intensity, actors and issues. It is apparent that the Somali conflict neatly fits the description of Kaldor's (2006) new wars, which were discussed in Chapter 2. In the absence of a central state and effective government over the past two decades, the warring parties have to a large extent been non-state, and even private actors. During the past six years, the TFG's armed forces and the assisting Ethiopian troops have been the only actors bearing resemblance to conventional governmental actors, while the remainder of warring factions have been resistance movements, or warlords. While nationalism and irredentism played a role in Somalia's earlier wars, such as the war in the Ogaden in the 1970s, ideology or geopolitical considerations appeared to be significantly less important in the civil war of the 1990s.

Instead, what Kaldor terms identity politics was a definite element of especially the first rounds of the civil war when clan-based factions fought over access to the state apparatus, thus using clan as a basis for political claims. Furthermore, the methods used in the Somali conflict bear close similarities to other new wars. The sometimes deliberate targeting of civilians and the increasing use of terrorist methods are cases in point. In 2007, for instance, over 6,000 civilians were killed in fighting (Amnesty International, 2008). According to recent reports both sides are attacking civilian targets; al-Shabaab deliberately using suicide bombers, and AMISOM more indiscriminately by shelling civilian neighbourhoods under the control of the insurgents (Raghavan, 2010; Ditz, 2010). Finally, how fighting has been funded over the years in Somalia is also typical of the new wars: looting, pillaging, diversion of humanitarian aid and smuggling of narcotics and weapons are all examples of how faction leaders and warlords have financed their campaigns. The reliance on violence has been central to the funding of new wars, and Somalia is

no exception. Along the same lines, the difference between armed clashes and armed criminality has over the years become increasingly blurred in the country (World Bank, 2005: 13).

Thus far in the study a comprehensive overview of relevant theory as well as a description of the case of Somalia's intractable conflict has been given. This chapter will proceed to analyse the Somali conflict by applying theories presented in Chapter 2 to the case of Somalia's protracted war, drawing on facts presented in the previous chapter.

4.2   Conflict theories applied to Somalia

4.2.1   *Greed vs. grievance*

Due to the complex nature of the Somali conflict it appears plausible that neither greed nor grievance is sufficient in itself to explain the occurrence of violence in the country. A brief analysis of the greed vs. grievance debate's applicability to Somalia is however interesting. To begin with some of the grievance-related arguments, such as Gurr's theory of relative deprivation, are in my view not entirely applicable to the case of Somalia. Although rivalry between clans has always existed over issues such as access to water or grazing land, the Somali society is traditionally highly egalitarian (World Bank, 2005b: 3; Ohanwe, 2009: 137). While certain social groupings, such as minority Bantus, in all likelihood have experienced some sense of relative deprivation in relation to more dominant ethnic Somali clans, this has not given rise to armed conflict of any significant scale. This is in line with the criticism of the relative deprivation theory's limited explanatory power, which was brought up in Chapter 2.

Economic inequality may however have contributed to the outbreak of conflict, mainly due to unequal economic distribution as a result of clanism. Both the civilian governments and Barre's dictatorship created patrimonial paths to state funds and contributed to social and economic inequality by giving advantages to clan members (Osman, 2007a). Clan favouritism made Somali politics a zero-sum game in which only certain clans were the winners. As a result of divide and rule politics under the colonial powers, and later Barre, grievances stemming from political exclusion have been a crucial contributing reason to the birth of numerous opposition movements,

who at times took to violence to make their voices heard. The Isaq-based Somali National Movement's liberation struggle in Somaliland is an illustrating example (Møller, 2010: 10).

The greed-thesis also finds some support in the case of Somalia. While outright greed by warlords and other individuals and groups will be discussed in more detail in a subsequent section, it is useful to note here that Somalia is in possession of all four of the economic characteristics which Collier identifies as making a country significantly more prone to conflict. To repeat, these are dependence on primary commodity exports, slow economic growth, low incomes and large diasporas (Collier, 2000; 2006). Somalia's formal economy relies heavily on the export of commodities such as livestock, bananas and charcoal (CIA, 2010). Somalia may however be contrasted to other conflict-ridden cases like Sierra Leone, where the role of an extremely valuable resource, in this case diamonds, has been central. Somalia is, as previously noted, lacking natural resources of this kind, and thus the 'resource wars' thesis does not apply to Somalia per se. However, Somalia is one of the poorest countries in the world and has a slow economic growth much due to protracted instability and conflict. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Somalia furthermore has a substantial diaspora, with the potential to influence Somali affairs.

After having researched the Somali conflict, I must draw the conclusion that the dichotomy of grievance and greed as causes of conflict is of limited use: the two can and should not be separated from each other. I agree with Keen, cited in Chapter 2[27], who calls for further studies of the interplay between greed and grievance. In the Somali case, it appears as though grievances have often been at the root of conflict, while economic considerations have fuelled conflict further. When one considers the early years of conflict in the late 1980s, it was grievances stemming from Siyad Barre's exclusionist policies which ultimately gave rise to armed violence, while warlords who found ways to profit from lawlessness and war emerged at a later stage. I thus disagree with the rigid analytical separation between greed and grievance. I believe that grievances and greed are connected in a two-way relationship in which a situation where grievances have given rise to social conflict can be exploited by the greedy. At the same time, greed can give rise to grievances under circumstances where some benefit and others do not. In

---

[27] See page 25.

my view, it appears as though the concept of greed is more useful in the study of what fuels and sustains war, at least in the case of Somalia.

4.2.2 *Other causes of conflict in Somalia*

The Somali conflict is incredibly intricate, and there is no simple explanation to why conflict initially broke out. Like most conflicts, and certainly many African conflicts, a plethora of factors lie at the root of conflict in Somalia. According to my analysis it is safe to say that should one of these factors have been absent Somalia is still likely to have experienced violent civil strife. I will in this section, without going into too much detail due to space constraints, identify factors which in my view appeared to have been especially important in putting in action the violent chain of events which has yet to come to an end.

An analysis of the Somali conflict would hardly be complete without briefly considering the damaging effects of colonialism on subsequent conflictual problems. As indicated in Chapter 3, the Italians, the British, the French and the Ethiopians divided up the Somali nation so that it eventually ended up split into five parts. These artificial borders between people of the same language and culture were the direct cause of several wars, such as numerous border disputes with Djibouti, a guerrilla war with Kenya, and the war in Ogaden (Ohanwe 2009: 40, 135). Furthermore, Somali irredentism ultimately stemming from colonialism has had far reaching negative effects on its domestic problems. The wars have been very expensive, resulted in large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and led to internal disputes. Furthermore, the colonialists divide and rule policies had damaging implications for clan relations. The Italians in Italian Somalia, for instance, tended to promote members of the Mudug and Majerten clan, grooming them into local elites (Osman, 2007: 93). Such policies gave rise to sentiments of discontent and frustration among other social groups.

Bad leadership under dictator Siyad Barre is in my view another key root cause of conflict in Somalia. A brief account of his divide and rule policies were given in Chapter 3. Though Barre's official policy was to eradicate clan politics, he clandestinely resuscitated and practiced it himself (Ohanwe, 2009: 144). His favouring of certain clans (the so-called "MOD-rule"), created grievances among other clans, motivated the formation of opposition movements, and ultimately

led to the outbreak of violent liberation struggles. Many of Barre's policies concerning military expenditure, agriculture and food production were also very damaging, and exacerbated economic decline and food shortages (Osman and Souaré, 2007: 11). Another legacy of Barre's rule and his use of force is the enmity it brought about between Somalia and its neighbours. As a result, Somalia and Ethiopia went to war over the Ogaden region, and Kenya and Ethiopia entered into an alliance to hinder Somalia from becoming a powerful regional actor. All in all, Barre's autocratic governance set a bad example for future governments and directly created grievances among his people. His rule has been described as a "curse on Somali nation and Islamic culture" (Hassan Mekki quoted in Ohanwe, 2009: 143).

Ethnicity has been identified by numerous scholars as a major source of tension and conflict in Africa, and disastrous cases such as Rwanda and Darfur[28] have spurred the academic debate on ethnicity and conflict. Somalia is often referred to as something of an odd case among African conflicts by scholars who find it peculiar that the continent's perhaps most ethnically homogenous country has experienced such destructive, protracted social conflict. Somalia thus serves as proof that sharing the same language, religion, culture and similar physical features is no guarantee for a society to escape conflict. In my view, parallels can however be drawn with the notion of 'clan' in Somalia and 'ethnic' groups elsewhere. Just as the identities of Hutu and Tutsi were reinforced and manipulated by the Belgians in Rwanda, the colonialists and subsequent local leaders in Somalia have managed to construct clan identities and strengthen divisions to further their own political aims.

I wish to again stress the point put forth by Lake and Rothchild (1998: 7) that ethnicity, or in the Somali case clan lineage, is not inherently conflictual but becomes a societal fault line when it is associated with fear, uncertainty and a history of conflict. I thus disagree with the primordialist school which views ethnic divisions and conflict stemming from these as 'natural'. Instead, I find the constructivist, or instrumentalist, view more useful. In my view the Somali case is evidence of

---

[28] In Rwanda, the genocide of 1994 was ethnically motivated, with members of the ethnic group Hutu killing persons considered to be of a different group, Tutsi. The more recent Darfur conflict is predominantly characterised as one between black Africans and Arabs, with black Africans particularly targeted for deadly attacks.

the fact that although the division into clans has always existed, 'clan' only became a potential source of violent conflict after it had become politicised and manipulated by elites.

As a last point, I also to some extent agree with the transformationist school's views on the long history of conflict in Somalia. According to this perspective, transformation of Somali society and the country's integration into the world economy is at the root of societal conflicts (Ohanwe, 2009: 139). Somalia was for long a traditional society of nomad pastoralists and cultivators, with few commercial links to the outside world except some trade with Arab merchants. The kinship structure was governed by cultural and political norms, in accordance with *Xeer* (customary law). As a result of inclusion into the world economy a capitalist economic order rose within Somalia which gave rise to competition between pastoralists, an influx of people to the cities, and increased opportunities for individuals to make profits by engaging in transnational economic activities of questionable legality. The fundamental changes to society and the social frictions which the introduction of a capitalist mode of production has brought to Somalia should in my view not be viewed as a primary cause of conflict but possibly as a contributing factor.

In conclusion, in my opinion the roots of Somalia's long conflict can be traced back to the division of the Somali nation into five separate parts, the colonial administrations' and subsequently Siyad Barre's divisive policies and the construction and manipulation of politicised clan identities. The changes to traditional Somali society brought about by the processes of modernisation and globalisation may furthermore have increased social tensions and contributed to the eventual outbreak of conflict. Moving away from root causes of conflict, the next section will explore factors which sustain the Somali conflict and add to its intractability.

4.3   Intractability of conflict

4.3.1   *General analysis of Somalia's intractable conflict*

After years of armed struggles, Somalia is a textbook example of an intractable conflict. This section will refer back to theory presented in Chapters 1 and 2, and analyse how definitions of

intractable conflicts may be applied to this particular long war. To repeat from Chapter 1[29], Zartman (2005) lists five typical characteristics of intractable conflicts: protraction, polarised identities, profitability, absence of ripeness and polarised solutions. In Somalia, conflict has become extremely protracted, with only a few years of peace since the late 1970s. Clan identities have become polarised, as a result of clan politics and prolonged conflict. The growth of a war economy has brought an element of profitability to the conflict, as personal greed has been a motivating factor for powerful warlords. Furthermore, as the numerous peace conferences have shown, ripeness "as a pressure toward negotiation" has largely been absent in Somalia (Zartman, 2005: 52). That is, the parties to the conflict have not actively sought a solution to the conflict as they have seldom been in the position of a mutually hurting stalemate which makes compromise and a solution attractive to both sides. Related to this, possible solutions have been highly polarised, with the adversaries finding it very difficult to cooperate and make concessions to the other side.

Similarly, as discussed in Chapter 2[30], in addition to the long duration and other factors mentioned above, intractable conflicts tend to involve certain types of actors, issues, relationships, geopolitics and methods of conflict management. The *long duration* of intractable armed conflicts is problematic in many ways. The most apparent issues are naturally large-scale loss of life and the devastation of social, physical and economic environments which are often a result of long periods of fighting. In Somalia the visible manifestations of the long war have been hundreds of thousands of deaths due to fighting, and due to starvation and suffering linked to the conflict. What is more, the state and formal economy collapsed in the early 1990s as a direct result of conflict between clan-based groups.

A less evident but potentially disastrous aspect of the prolongation of such conflicts is the entrapment in a self-perpetuating cycle of violence in which conflict becomes institutionalised and warring factions become blind to cooperation and finding solutions. Instead of working towards a mutual agreement, warring groups re-escalate the conflict in an attempt to achieve their own specific goals through violent means, as the Islamic militias have done in Somalia in recent years. This is typical for a transformative phase in a conflict, which is essentially what the time

---

[29] See Chapter 1, page 8.
[30] See Chapter 2, page 33.

around 2006 was, when the Islamic element in the conflict became more prominent. The *actors* in intractable conflicts often have a long sense of historical grievances. For instance, the events in Somaliland which eventually led to its secession from Somalia are one clear example of a situation where deep-seated historical grievances were at the root of a long conflict. Somaliland is predominantly inhabited by the Isaq, who were discriminated against and subjected to human rights abuses under Barre's 30 years of authoritarian rule (de Waal, 1991: 95). In the current rounds of the conflict, it appears as though historical grievances directed at Ethiopia and the West contribute to al-Shabaab's motivation to fight the TFG.

As is typical for long conflicts, the core *issues* of Somalia's conflict have changed over time as the conflict has transformed. While superficial issues such as resources, wealth and power have motivated the parties throughout the civil war, deep-rooted and intangible issues such as clan identity, and later religion, have also been central. Identity in itself has traditionally not been a source of conflict in Somalia's pastoral communities: rather, conflict has centred on material issues like land or livestock. As clan identities began to become polarised, as a legacy of colonial rule and Barre's dictatorship, identity became linked to conflict. It follows that the *relationships* of Somalia's conflict have been characterised by sentiments of enmity and hostility between members of rival clans which time and time again have resulted in the outbreak of violence.

What is more, the *geopolitics* of the Somali conflict are also completely in line with what is typical for intractable conflicts. Somalia is located in an unstable region, the Horn of Africa, where numerous wars have been waged and relationships between neighbouring countries are continuously tense. Somalia itself has become deeply implicated in regional geopolitics. As an example, Eritrea is supplying arms and financial support to Somali rebels, which is viewed by some as primarily an effort to anger its longstanding rival Ethiopia. Moreover, Somalia is something of a 'buffer zone' between regions, cultures and key global players. Simply put, it is located on the border between East and West, between Christian Ethiopia and the Muslim Middle East. To use Samuel Huntington's terminology, Somalia is located on the fault-line between two 'civilizations', the Islamic and the African (Huntington, 1993: 4). Finally, intractable conflicts are typically very difficult to *manage*, and as discussed in Chapter 3, there have been numerous attempts to manage the Somali conflict. Peace conferences and arms embargos are among initiatives by external actors, which regrettably have been of merely limited success.

4.3.2 Brief analysis of Somalia within Azar's framework of PSC

The importance of identity in the analysis of intractable conflicts is highlighted in Azar's (1990) influential work on what he calls protracted social conflict (PSC)[31]. The 'identity group', which Azar views as the most useful unit of analysis, is in the case of Somalia the kinship group, consisting of members of the same sub- (or sub-sub) clan which have a shared identity in terms of a feeling of belonging which distinguishes them from other communal groupings. With Somalia having one of the poorest living standards in the world, the long conflict has taken place in precisely such an "underdeveloped setting" in which conflict, according to Azar (1990: 2), incubates and grows best. In addition to being "underdeveloped", the collapse of Somalia's central state is likely to have severely exacerbated the intractability of the conflict. Without a functioning state apparatus there were few domestic institutions available which would have been capable of solving the conflict, and in addition, the international institutions which have made some efforts at curbing the fighting and brokering peace have not had the capabilities necessary to put an end to the cycle of reoccurring violent clashes.

To analyse Somalia's protracted social conflict requires an analysis of the four clusters of variables identified by Azar as pivotal in the transformation of a non-conflictual situation to a conflictual one. To repeat, the clusters are communal content, human needs, governance and the state's role, and international linkages. In terms of *communal content*, the colonial era shaped communal patterns and dynamics in Somalia in a number of ways. The division of the Somali nation into five parts created artificial divisions between clans and communities, imposing something of a new communal identity on several groups. For instance, members of the Ogaden clan were suddenly "Ethiopian" and Somalis living in Kenya were expected to identify themselves as "Kenyan". The process of colonisation and eventually independence was furthermore a tumultuous time for the wider Somali society, as a previously stateless society was forged into one political entity. Such imposed integration is likely to cause social fragmentation which may eventually breed protracted social conflict (Azar, 1990: 7). Within the borders of modern Somalia, communal content was largely shaped by Barre's divide and rule politics. During this time, the Somali state and political sphere was dominated by a few clans, who remained unresponsive to the needs of other clans, hence feeding the potential for PSC.

---

[31] For Azar's theoretical framework, see Chapter 2, page 35.

Azar contends that human needs, or the satisfaction of material needs, are another core cluster of variables which cause intractable conflicts to flare up. If the authority fails to properly address the basic material needs of all communal groups, grievances which may eventually be given violent expressions are likely to arise. Similarly, grievances develop from political exclusion as a result of a refusal by the central government to acknowledge the communal identity of other groups. Siyad Barre's more or less clandestine clan politics which became apparent in his favouritism towards the Marrehan, Ogaden and Darod clans were a direct cause of subsequent conflict-spurring grievances. When it comes to governance and the state's role, a crucial characteristic of Somalia's protracted conflict is the 20 year absence of a *de facto* state. Nevertheless, at the time of the ignition of the long social conflict Somalia's political system was authoritarian, and the state apparatus was dominated by members of a few dominant societal groups. Barre and members of his neo-patrimonial network used the state to further their own interests, which not surprisingly exacerbated societal grievances.

Lastly, much like many later writers on intractability, Azar highlights the role of *international linkages* in generating PSC. The tense regional dynamics in the Horn of Africa were touched upon above and will be expanded on in a subsequent section. Suffice it to say here that the historical tensions between client and patron states have had a major impact both on igniting and sustaining Somalia's PSC. For instance, Barre was able to wage war on Ethiopia over the Ogaden region thanks to previous Soviet patronage, and ironically lost the battle due to the Soviet Union's switch from backing Somalia to backing geopolitically more important Ethiopia. The series of events which followed the defeat in the Ogaden can be directly linked to the PSC which continues in Somalia today.

In sum, an analysis of Somalia's conflict using Azar's framework, reveals that key factors which had an impact of the development of a conflictual situation were; the transformation of the communal content into a more fragmented pattern of clans, the development of grievances as a result of divide and rule policies, the legacy of authoritarianism and the subsequent absence of a central state, as well as international linkages such as client-patron relationships with a superpower. While Azar's theory focuses primarily on *preconditions* for protracted social conflict, the following section will elaborate on the specific characteristics of intractability in Somalia, by analysing the conflict within Kriesberg's theoretical framework for intractable conflicts.

4.3.3 *Analysing Somalia's conflict within Kriesberg's framework*

A quick recapture of Kriesberg's core concepts and terminology is required before delving into the analysis of Somalia's intractable conflict. The six phases in the life-time of an intractable conflict are; eruption, escalation, failed peace-making efforts, institutionalisation of conflict, de-escalation and transformation, and finally conflict termination and recovery[32]. Important to note again is that these phases do not necessarily follow this exact sequence and it is common for conflicts to regress to an earlier phase, which has happened in Somalia. The long period of war can be viewed as having started at the end of the 1980s when conflict between clan-based liberation movements and the government led to numerous armed clashes, or alternatively when Siyad Barre was ousted in 1991. In the political vacuum which ensued following the fall of Barre, conflict quickly escalated between armed factions and warlords, namely between Farah Aideed and Ali Mahdi. The escalation phase was followed by a phase of de-escalation during the latter part of the 1990s, but in the early first decade of the 21st century, Somalia entered the phase of failed peacemaking-efforts. The Arta process, started in 2000, is a case in point. Then, after a period of less intense, de-escalated conflict, a transformation of the conflict took place. However, unfortunately this did not lead to its solution but instead eventually to a re-escalation of violence, this time between the Transitional Federal Government and Islamist militias.

These phases of intractability are shaped by the three sets of factors discussed in Chapter 2: internal, relational and external. The factors may be slightly different - or less or more important - depending on what stage the conflict is in (Kriesberg, 2005: 77). Due to space constraints this analysis will focus mainly, but not exclusively, on the internal, relational and external factors of this current round of the conflict, from 2006 until present. Also, only a limited number of *key* factors will be discussed. To repeat, each set of factors in Kriesberg's framework consist of structural factors and factors related to agency. The line between the two is however sometimes very blurred.

Internal structural factors are the parameters within which actors in the Somali conflict have to operate. I identify the following as key internal structural factors: the lack of a legitimate, functioning central government, low levels of economic development, and religion. A state

---

[32] See Figure 2, page 39.

without a network of formal institutions which are able to upkeep law and order can easily become a breeding ground for criminality and armed violence. Actors may benefit from the lawlessness as it makes it easier for them to pursue their goals by all means necessary. Also, the Somali government has little or no effective control over arms trade and the smuggling of weapons into the country. Weapons can easily be bought at Somali markets for fairly low prices (Webersik, 2006: 1475). Within such a setting, and with the TFG being so weak, it is relatively easy for insurgent militias to continue their warring campaigns with impunity. The lack of a strong central governing authority is therefore a very important internal structural factor in the case of Somalia.

Reliable economic data on Somalia is difficult to obtain, but in 2007 the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) estimated that two thirds of the Somali population are forced to live on the equivalent of less than two US dollars per day (UNDP, 2007: xi). The slow economic growth and poor economic and social infrastructure are thus also important structural factors to take into account. They have an impact on the intractability of conflict in several ways, but to name an example; poverty and the lack of economic and educational opportunities make joining an armed faction an increasingly attractive option for young men. Furthermore, as long as the prospect of accumulating wealth by legal and conventional means is limited, there will be a larger number of people who use conflict and violence to enrich themselves.

The impact of religion, namely Islam, on the Somali conflict is manifold. On the one hand, Islamic courts, civil society organisations and educational institutions have played an important role of filling some of the functions which normally would be fulfilled by the state. In this sense, and in the sense of security which religious faith can bring to victims of war, Islam has been a positive internal force in Somalia. On the other hand, the increased power of the Islamic courts, the introduction of radical elements to Islamic institutions and the growth of militant Islam has proven detrimental. The primary goal of Al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam is to create an Islamic state in Somalia, requiring the people to follow strict *Sharia* law. Their means of pursuing this goal are extremely violent and have radically exacerbated the security situation for Somali citizens. The introduction of Islam as a central issue in the conflict did not encourage transformation leading to conflict resolution; on the contrary, it has contributed to intensifying conflict and to increasing its intractability.

Internal agency factors are also undermining the solution of Somalia's intractable conflict. While the TFG, at least in its rhetoric, is working towards peace and a stable Somali state, the hard-line Islamist rebels are unable to accept TFG's vision of a future Somalia and keep using armed violence as a means of achieving their own goals. The TFG is choosing to fight the insurgency with the help of AMISOM troops. Both sides thus view fighting as the only viable alternative at the moment as they see their goals as incompatible. By exercising agency and making certain decisions the parties to the conflict are thus contributing to the conflict's intractability. As Kriesberg (2005: 78) states in regards to internal agency factors: "if the course of action is wholly dominated by the hard-liners, conflict is likely to remain intractable". Also, there has been a tendency for splits both within Somali transitional governments, and within insurgency groups, which further undermines conflict resolution. Al-Shabaab is reportedly deeply divided over issues such as clan, ideology, methods and leadership (Menkhaus cited in Hanson, 2010) The disunity within the TFG is apparent in a long feud between TFG President Sharif Sheik Ahmed and Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, which has proved very unhelpful and destabilising in Somalia's current situation (Ryu, 2010)[33]. Though a change of leadership sometimes has the potential to act as a catalyst bringing about positive conflict transformation, this is in my view unlikely to happen in Somalia while al-Shabaab retains its hard-liner stance.

Next to be analysed are factors pertaining to the *structure of the relations* between opposing sides, such as difference in strength, resources and cultural patterns of conduct. The TFG is protected by some 7,000 African Union peacekeepers, as well as several thousand Somali forces, many of them trained in Ethiopia and Kenya. The exact strength of al-Shabaab is not known, but most analysts agree that it comprises of several thousand fighters (Hanson, 2010). The adversaries are thus relatively equal in troop strength, but al-Shabaab is at the moment the dominant faction due to a number of reasons. First of all, al-Shabaab uses terrorist methods, including suicide bombings, which have the potential to be highly destructive and cause large numbers of casualties. Second, while the struggling TFG is weak financially, the insurgents are receiving substantial financial and military support from countries such as Eritrea (Holzer, 2010). Furthermore, the UN Somalia Monitoring Group reports that opposition forces are "generally better disciplined, organised and

---

[33] In fact, the Prime Minister resigned on September 21, 2010 after a long period of political tensions within the transitional government (New York Times/Reuters, 2010).

motivated than their government adversaries" (United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia, 2008: 6).

In addition, the relations between the opposing sides are highly impacted by their different views on *Sharia*, and the structure of the future Somali state. As long as such fundamental differences of opinion exist, which to some extent are rooted in religious identity, it will be very difficult to reach a stable agreement. Kriesberg (2005: 79) notes that crosscutting identities tend to limit the destructiveness of conflict, but in the Somali case with all its fragmented identity groups conflict has remained destructive and intractable. Concerning *relational agency factors*, the very limited cooperation between warring factions further undermines the prospects of reaching a sustainable agreement. Al-Shabaab, especially, seems very reluctant to cooperate. It appears as though the Somali conflict has reached a point where it will only end should the parties find themselves in a mutually hurting stalemate.

A hurting stalemate situation could potentially arise in Somalia should the TFG with the help of AMISOM gain further ground to the point where the two opposing sides would control nearly equal parts of the south-central Somali territory. For the time being, however, each side believes that continuing to fight is a better option than yielding to the opponents. From al-Shabaab's point of view, the group is very close to gaining control over virtually all of south-central Somalia, which is likely to be a strong motivating factor for it to continue to fight. The TFG on the other hand, as the official government of Somalia, must grasp on to the little power it has, and cannot back down to allow al-Shabaab taking over the country.

The impact of *external factors* on intractability of conflict, Somalia's included, cannot be overemphasised. External structural and agency factors tend to be highly intertwined, with most factors listed below containing elements of both. A major factor which has had an impact on Somalia for decades is that sets of other conflicts have been superimposed on it. Previously, and perhaps most notably, Somalia became implicated in the superpower rivalry of the Cold War, with the USSR rewarding Barre's Marxist policies by providing financial and military support. Once the Soviets had switched to backing Ethiopia instead, they were replaced in Somalia by the rival superpower, the United States (Lewis, 2008: 125). In the 21st century it can be argued that Somalia has become part of another conflict involving the US, namely the "War on Terror".

Following 9/11, US military actions have, perhaps inadvertently, not only been directed at terrorism, but also at fundamentalist Islam. Some have even called it a "holy crusade" against the Muslim world (Chossudovsky, 2010). Viewing Somalia with its collapsed formal government as the ultimate failed state, America early on suspected Somalia of harbouring Islamist militants and terrorists (Tucker-Jones, 2010: 51). Marchal (2007: 3) writes:

> Of course, after 9/11 the emphasis shifted to a new and more up-to-date category: the figure of the 'terrorist', whose status was confirmed—or, more properly, 'defined'—through his inclusion on lists drawn up by the US administration. […] [W]hen the existence of the Islamic Courts in Mogadishu was acknowledged by the foreign media early in 2006 […], their members were all seen as belonging to brands of Islamic extremism that were, by assumption, connected to Al-Qaeda. To a large extent, this global description, based on events far away from Somalia with little or no consideration of internal Somali politics, constructed the narratives that were used after 20 December 2006 to justify the Ethiopian and US military intervention in Somalia.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, American involvement in Somalia in the 1990s is believed to have fuelled subsequent anti-American sentiment in Somalia (Tucker-Jones, 2010: 53). Al-Shabaab and other insurgent groups are driven by a strong desire to disassociate Somalia from everything 'Western'. Now, viewing the TFG as a marionette of Ethiopia and the West, al-Qaeda backed al-Shabaab is fighting it with terrorist methods such as suicide bombings. It is thus clear that the US and the "War on Terror" have had a significant effect on the course of the Somali conflict.

Looking more closely at Somalia's immediate geographical neighbourhood, Ethiopia has for a long time been deeply embroiled in Somali politics. As Healy (2008: 29) puts it, Ethiopia has invested too heavily in the Somali conflict to "settle for a quick exit". While an ungoverned, chaotic Somalia is not in Ethiopia's interest, a strong and hostile Somalia would be the worst possible scenario. Møller (2009: 20) argues that the most desirable option for Ethiopia is a weak Somali state which remains completely dependent on Ethiopian support. Like the US, Ethiopia also has a strong anti-terrorist rhetoric, but in reality its continuous disputes with Eritrea remain a strong driver of its policy towards Somalia. Similarly, Eritrea's Somalia policy of backing rebels is driven less by any real stakes in the conflict, but more by its hostile relations with Ethiopia. Since the long war of independence between Eritrea and Ethiopia the relations between the two countries have been strained, and this conflict has also been superimposed on Somalia, and has in my view been a major factor impacting on intractability of conflict.

There is a plethora of additional external factors which impact Somali affairs and the course of the conflict. International organisations have been major external forces influencing the conflict. The UN intervened militarily (UNOSOM I and II), imposed ineffective sanctions which still remain in place, and has continuously had some presence in Somalia through several of its subsidiary organs and related agencies. IGAD has had an important role as a mediator and supporter of the TNG, which is hardly surprising considering that Ethiopia is the most powerful member of IGAD. The African Union has become an increasingly important player, and is currently planning on increasing its military presence in Somalia (ICG, 2010). Other external factors are the global technological advancements which have opened up the possibilities of telecommunications within Somalia, and which have enabled remittances from the diaspora to be distributed to families, businesses and even warring factions across the country. Furthermore, effects from the external physical environment, such as global warming, are intensifying the Somali crisis by exacerbating devastating droughts which have the potential to lead to thousands of deaths and escalated fighting over increasingly scarce resources.

In conclusion, in this section I have identified factors which I, after having studied the protracted Somali conflict, identify as having a major impact on its intractability. In terms of internal factors the low level of economic development, the lack of a legitimate and effective government, and the role of Islam are important structural factors; while the choices made and methods used by the warring parties are crucial agency factors which sustain conflict. When it comes to relational factors, the current similar military strength of the warring sides makes the conflict increasingly intractable, as does the opposing views on how future Somalia should be governed and how *Sharia* should be interpreted. Lastly, the impact of external actors on affairs in Somalia is in my opinion one of the strongest individual factors which without a doubt has had a fundamental effect on developments in the country. Since colonialism external actors have had interests in Somalia; and the involvement by actors ranging from superpowers to international organisations to small countries like Eritrea have in my view had a negative impact on peacemaking in Somalia as they have failed to act in the best interest of the Somali people and to take into account local circumstances and political dynamics.

Kriesberg's framework was a useful tool of analysis as it provided me with a logical overview of the conflict and allowed me to identify key factors within the internal, relational and external

spheres. As an intractable conflict develops, the nature and importance of the different factors are however continuously changing. A limitation of the model used here is in my opinion the challenging task of analysing and identifying all relevant factors at a specific point in time to gain a realistic understanding of the conflict dynamics at that moment. It is also at times very difficult to distinguish structural factors from agency factors, rendering the division arbitrary in some cases. Furthermore, it merely gives a framework to use as a basis for analysis: what factors to include is ultimately dependant to the subjective views of the analyst.

4.4   The impact of the war economy

> All aid is interference in the existing conditions; there is no neutral aid. The gangs with the weapons, the warlords and their militias knew that. In Somalia they took control of the aid and the unprotected aid workers. Every delivery of beans, protein cakes or vitamin preparations strengthened their position; every new shipment filled their war chests. For they 'rented out' the lorries and made their 'protection troops' available at a price. Not only did hunger become a weapon in the struggle for power; international aid became an involuntary funder of the brutal gangs fighting the civil war. Terror lived from aid. (Münkler, 2005: 88)

In Chapter 3 it was established that there exists a parallel economy in Somalia which thrives on illegal activities and the use of violence for economic gains. The above quote vividly illustrates the role that humanitarian aid has played as a significant pillar of the Somali war economy. For the warlords of south-central Somalia, there were definite "economic incentives to maintain conflict by diminishing the prospects of peace." (Webersik, 2006: 1478) Taking advantage of aid in any way possible was one such major incentive. Indeed, Somalia during the 1990s was a typical case of a new war which had become intertwined with the so-called "globalised war economy" (Kaldor, 2006). The links to the international war economy were characteristic: transnational networks of trade in drugs and weapons, remittances from the diaspora and enormous amounts of humanitarian assistance flowing in; some straight into the hands of greedy individuals. However, there is some recent evidence of shadowy economic activities of the war economy yielding to an increasing number of legitimate businesses, as the long war and disastrous state of insecurity is causing stakeholders to apprehend that a secure and legitimate business climate would in the long run be more beneficial for all.

For instance, Webersik's (2006: 1477) research has shown that in general Somali businesses would benefit significantly from peace, a stable society and a functioning government. Relatedly, a survey conducted by Hansen (2007: 94) among members of the Mogadishu business class shows that 100 percent of respondents support initiatives for peace and reconciliation. Should a central state which upkeeps law and order exist in Somalia, matters which business people currently have to organise for themselves, such as security, water and electricity would be handled primarily by the state. The state could in that case also offer skilled labour, credit schemes and low transaction costs which businesses would benefit from. Furthermore, political stability would be highly conducive to increased foreign investment. There are thus many economic incentives for the establishment and consolidation of a politically stable government in Somalia, and for cooperation between stakeholders. However, this has yet to materialise.

There are few-depth studies of the Somali war economy as a whole, and none that are up to date, which renders making an accurate assessment of the current impact of the war economy on the course of conflict rather problematic. Adding to the difficulty of obtaining data is the clandestine nature of these economic activities, and the fact that incentives exist for business rivals and political leaders to claim that their rivals are engaged in such shadowy activities. From the research material available to me, it however seems like the war economy was more of a driver of conflict in the 1990s during the war between various warlords, than what it is now when the conflict has become polarised between the struggling TFG and the Islamist rebels. The Islamists seem to be more focused on their goal of establishing an Islamic state in Somalia, and more concerned with imposing strict Sharia on the Somali population, than primarily seeking to enrich themselves through the war economy.

That said, however; a recent report by the UN Monitoring Group for Somalia has found that the war economy still has a very corrupting and enfeebling effect on state institutions under the TFG. As mentioned in Chapter 3, according to some 2010 estimates up to half of the World Food Program's money for Somalia is diverted by corrupt dealers, members of the Islamist rebel groups, and even aid workers themselves (Stockman, 2010). In addition to diversion of aid, characteristics of the current war economy include severe corruption at all levels; for instance commanders and troops alike are reportedly selling their ammunition and weapons, sometimes to the adversaries, to compensate for the low or non-existing salaries (Kashka, 2010). What is more,

a portion of all remittances from the enormous Somali diaspora, possibly consisting of over two million people, is likely to be routed into the war economy, either to fund the activities of warring factions or to businesses and individuals implicated in shady economic undertakings.

Piracy has in recent years become a distinct feature of the contemporary Somali war economy. At the time of writing, some 24 foreign vessels and over 400 people are held hostage by pirates in Somali coastal towns (Ecoterra, 2010). Ransoms paid for the release of vessels and hostages can range up to several million dollars, rendering piracy a lucrative business for the estimated 1500 active Somali pirates operating in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. Piracy is especially rife in the semi-autonomous region of Puntland. There, small towns such as Eyl[34] have developed into piracy hubs where the local population has come to benefit from the enormous ransoms, for instance by providing services to the pirates in the form of catering for hostages (Mohamed, 2010). Considering that Puntland has become a safe haven for pirates, and the fact that next to nothing is done by the Puntland administration or the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia to combat piracy, it has been suggested that links might exist between the respective governments and the pirates. Furthermore, piracy becomes implicated in the war economy through the cooperation between the Islamist militias and the pirates. Reportedly, al-Shabaab provides the pirates with weapons and some training, while the pirates in return help al-Shabaab with smuggling of arms and foreign jihadist fighters into Somalia, as well as pay them a cut of obtained ransom money (Shinn, 2009). In this way, piracy is likely to directly fuel current fighting, although it is important to note that as it is geographically concentrated to the Puntland area its effects on events in south-central Somalia are difficult to estimate.

In conclusion, warlordism and the extensive war economy were undeniably important factors which fuelled the war in Somalia, especially in its early stages in the 1990s when lawlessness prevailed and international actors brought lots of opportunities for rent-seeking and looting. While the prospects of benefiting from conflict became more limited during the de-escalatory phases of the late 1990s and early 2000s; corruption, personal greed and hidden agendas of political players have continuously posed an obstacle to achieving true reconciliation and bringing lasting peace to the country. This is an important reason why the numerous peace conferences have failed (Webersik, 2004: 19). With the transformation, re-escalation and re-intensification of the conflict

---

[34] See map of Somalia in the Appendix.

that have occurred over the last couple of years, the opportunities for benefiting from war and instability may again have increased. With intensified fighting, the trade in weapons goes up, both within the country and across national borders. Furthermore, the trade in *qat* and other drugs increases as a result of a heightened demand among soldiers and civilians who turn to drugs as a means of coping with the war. In addition, the current humanitarian emergency requires immense external assistance, some of which may be diverted and misused. Finally, the notable upsurge in piracy in recent years has become an additional pillar of the war economy, as it directly fuels fighting with money obtained from piracy routed to rebel groups in return for weapons and other goods and services (Tucker-Jones, 2010: 51-52; Hoehne, 2009: 2; Middleton, 2008: 9). It follows that the war economy is one major factor which at present continues to sustain conflict in Somalia, alongside other factors affecting intractability, as discussed above.

In the final analysis, the war economy's current impact on the intractable state of conflict in Somalia is thus in my view significant, but to a lesser extent than I anticipated at the outset of this study. Nevertheless, regardless of its links to political conflict, the war economy is sustaining violence in Somalia, as extortion and collection of taxes and fees are often conducted by armed men under the threat of, or through the use of, violent behaviour. Similarly, trucks carrying trade goods tend to be manned with armed militia. The availability of weapons and prevalence of armed men contribute significantly to a general sense of insecurity in Somalia, which severely undermines a lasting peace. Although the business class and people of Somalia wish for peace and political stability, the war economy and the conflict and fighting itself is likely to remain in a symbiotic relationship in which the one fuels the other. All factors affecting intractability of conflict in Somalia are closely intertwined, making it difficult to assess the impact of the war economy by itself on the continuation of conflict. In my view, the war economy is particularly closely connected to state collapse and lack of effective institutions in Somalia. In a well-governed society with functioning state institutions and a respect for the rule of law, a war economy of the type that exists in Somalia would be inconceivable.

4.5   Conclusion

This chapter has provided an analysis of Somalia's intractable conflict, by applying theories of several renowned scholars. Researching Somalia's history and events building up to the outbreak

of the civil war, presented in Chapter 3, resulted in the identification of a few factors which had a particularly strong contribution to subsequent violent struggles, namely the effects of colonialism, Siyad Barre's bad leadership, the politicisation and manipulation of clan-identities, and the deliberate strengthening of clan divisions. What is more, the changes to traditional Somali society brought about by its inclusion into the capitalist world economy is likely to have been a contributing factor to tensions and conflict between social groups.

Attention was then turned to the intractability of conflict in Somalia, first analysing it in terms of its general characteristics typical of intractable conflicts. After finding that preconditions for protracted conflict, as identified by Azar, existed in Somalia prior the civil war, the current characteristics and dynamics were analysed within Kriesberg's theoretical framework. To summarise, important factors which are keeping the conflict in its intractable state are the low level of economic development, lack of effective governance, the role of Islam, fragmented identity groups, the agency the adversaries exercise and the relations between them. Moreover, external factors, such as the influence of regional or global hegemonic powers on Somali affairs, were identified as factors of particularly strong significance.

Finally, a central finding of this chapter was that the impact of the Somali war economy on the intractability of conflict was the greatest during earlier rounds of the civil war, namely in the early to mid-1990s, but continues to undermine developments towards a lasting peace. Conflict has recently re-escalated, resulting in renewed opportunities for greedy individuals to find ways to benefit from for instance the high influx of humanitarian aid or the trade in weapons. Piracy has established itself as prominent feature of the contemporary war economy. Furthermore, a key concluding point is that the war economy that currently exists is undermining the prospect of a safe and secure environment in Somalia, as it is sustaining a culture of violence and lawlessness, with groups systematically using violence to reap the benefits of the shadow economy. The following, and concluding, chapter will further discuss the findings and the study as a whole, as well as identify possible avenues for future research.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis has been to research and analyse root causes and perpetuating factors behind Somalia's long, intractable conflict. The objective was to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of what has fuelled and sustained this particular civil war, which has proven so difficult to bring to an end. The thesis also aimed at assessing in particular the impact of the war economy on the continuation of war in Somalia. Somalia's conflict is an interesting case study because of its unique features, such as the role of clans and the political vacuum within which it takes place, but also because of the fact that relatively few comprehensive studies have been conducted, especially recently, on the topic of Somalia's twenty year long period of statelessness and near constant violent fighting.

This study aimed to make a contribution to the literature by conducting a systematic assessment, using up to date data, of why this particular conflict has become so protracted. For the core analysis of the conflict's intractability, a framework put forth by Kriesberg (2005) was utilised. This theoretical foundation was chosen because it allows the analyst to gain a structured and logical overview of an intractable conflict at a specific point in time. While the thesis first and foremost set out to identify factors which contribute to the intractability of conflict in Somalia, a thorough conceptualisation of relevant theory and a historical overview of the case study were provided as a point of departure. An analysis then followed which tied theory to empirical data. This chapter will summarise core findings, provide a concluding discussion as well as identify possible avenues for further research.

5.2 Summary of findings

Although the issue of intractability was the main focus of the research, the study took the position that it is nonetheless vital to understand the underlying root causes of a particular conflict situation to successfully proceed to analyse its intractability. A comprehensive theoretical discussion was provided in Chapter 2 on the causes of conflict, both in general and with regard to

Africa in particular, which served as a starting point for subsequent analysis of the case of Somalia. There were several illuminating key findings regarding the source of Somalia's troubles. First of all it was determined that in this particular case at least, it is of little use to analyse greed and grievance related arguments separately, as the two are highly interlinked. While grievances have certainly contributed to spurring conflict throughout Somalia's history, they have also been manipulated by the greedy, who find ways to exploit a conflict situation to their own benefit. It was determined that some of the primary root causes of conflict in Somalia were the legacy of colonialism; the bad leadership under both the colonial powers and subsequent governments (most notably Siyad Barre's); manipulation and politicisation of clan identities and the tumultuous transformation of the traditional Somali society in the wake of the country's inclusion into the capitalist world economy. All of these factors have instigated societal friction which eventually boiled over and manifested itself in bloody clashes between opposing groups.

The main research question of this study was: *what factors can be identified as contributing to the intractable and protracted nature of the conflict in Somalia?* The process towards arriving at an answer to the research question began with an examination of existing literature on intractability of conflict, which included the work of prominent scholars in the field, such as Edward Azar (1990) and Louis Kriesberg (1998, 2005). Azar's theory of protracted social conflict provided a useful point of departure for an analysis which showed that pre-war Somalia did in fact possess several characteristics considered preconditions for the development of a protracted conflict situation. Next, Kriesberg's theoretical framework for analysing the current characteristics and dynamics of Somalia's conflict was applied in order to identify internal, relational and external factors which have a significant impact on the continuation of conflict. According to my analysis, the most significant internal factors contributing to intractability of conflict in Somalia were the long absence of a central governing authority, the low level of economic development, the role of Islam, as well as particular choices made by the parties to the conflict. Relational factors which are crucial are the similar military strength of the opposing sides, their lack of cooperation, and their different views regarding the country's law and governance. Finally, external factors were deemed to have had a particularly strong effect on the long war. Ethiopia's constant meddling; Eritrea's support of al-Shabaab; the UN's and the AU's various missions; as well as the presence of a plethora of humanitarian aid agencies have shaped the conflict throughout its course. In my

opinion, the negative influences of external interference have until this date unfortunately outweighed the positive ones.

A sub-question posed in the introductory Chapter was: *to what extent does the war economy sustain and perpetuate conflict in Somalia?* The conclusion drawn in Chapter 4 was that the war economy had the greatest impact on the conflict in the first rounds of the civil war after the fall of Barre, when competing warlords violently clashed over land, power and opportunities for personal enrichment. After periods of a less thriving shadow economy during the de-escalatory phases of the conflict, the resurgence in fighting during recent years has instigated a revivification of the war economy. While trade of *qat*, smuggling of weapons and diversion of aid are still some of the shadowy economic activities undertaken by certain groups and individuals, piracy has become a prominent new feature of the contemporary war economy. The massive ransoms obtained from hostage-taking make it tempting for various stakeholders throughout Somalia, most notably al-Shabaab to establish and maintain links to the pirates. The war economy thus continues to have an influence on the Somali conflict; it adds to its intractability, makes it increasingly difficult to establish a legitimate and stable non-corrupt government, and generally sustains violence in the country.

Another sub-question posed at the outset of this study was *whether the case of Somalia is unique in terms of the factors which perpetuate the conflict or whether the findings of this study allow for generalisations to be made regarding other intractable conflicts?* I argue that the Somali conflict is unique at this point in time, certainly in the African context and perhaps in a global context as well. The uniqueness of the Somali clan-structure and the central role it has had throughout Somalia's political history and during the civil war renders it difficult to draw clear parallels to other cases. In terms of the factors which were identified as contributing to conflict intractability; some, such as low levels of economic development are typically common features of contemporary intractable conflicts, while others, such as the long absence of a central governing authority, are rather unique to the case of Somalia. In regards to the war economy, as well, Somalia stands out in comparison to other conflicts. While the existence of a 'shadow economy' and profiteering from war are well-known phenomena in Africa, the Somali war economy exhibits particular features which are not found anywhere else. Although piracy does exist elsewhere, such as in the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa, the scale of piracy practiced off the coast

of Somalia is unique. What is more, the links between piracy and warring factions also make this particular facet of the war economy the only one of its kind.

In terms of the particular characteristics of Somalia's intractable conflict and the factors which perpetuate it, it thus becomes difficult to make generalisations. However, in more general terms, it can with great certainty be said that a conflict risks turning intractable when groups and identities become polarised to the extent that they have in Somalia. The case of Somalia also demonstrates that when conflict becomes institutionalised, and parties to the conflict start defining themselves in terms of the conflict itself, it becomes very difficult to solve. A final finding which may be applicable to other cases is that external interference in an intractable conflict must be carefully calculated and must serve in the best interest of the country at hand, taking into account local circumstances, or it risks exacerbating the conflict and adding to its intractability.

5.3   Suggestions for further research

As mentioned in the introduction, most of the research on Somalia has focused on its history, on the society from an anthropological view, or on the first rounds of the civil war. The American intervention of 1992-1993 has been a particularly common topic of Western scholarly articles. It follows that there are few up to date academic research studies which comprehensively analyse the causes and drivers of the Somali conflict, taking more recent developments into account. Though this thesis has attempted to do precisely that, its limited length leaves much room for more in-depth studies on the topic of intractability of conflict in Somalia. I have identified two avenues for further study which in my view would make a particularly valuable contribution to existing research.

First of all, it was beyond the scope of this study to focus on the protracted absence of a central state in Somalia. I have however found it to be a crucial aspect of Somalia's subsequent troubles with political instability and conflict. More research needs to be conducted on state collapse; why has it been so difficult to reinstate a central state in Somalia? Would a Western-style state work effectively in Somalia, or would a different type of governing authority, or several authorities, be more appropriate? It seems to me that conflict will remain intractable until some form of compromise regarding the governing of the country is achieved, and thus the long absence of a

central state and the prospect of a future effective, legitimate government is an important factor to study more exhaustively in forthcoming studies on intractability of conflict in Somalia. As argued in Chapter 1, the 'failed state' thesis should however be repudiated in this context, as it is a Western-centred concept which assumes that states which do not live up to the Western standards of statehood are doomed to perpetual "failure". This type of discourse is counterproductive to understanding social conditions and analysing the real underlying reasons for crisis in countries such as Somalia.

Second, it turned out to be difficult to gain a real, comprehensive understanding of the contemporary war economy due to a lack of reliable primary data. This is partly due to the security situation on the ground in Somalia, but where possible more field research should be conducted in Somalia on the specific dynamics of the current war economy and its links to conflict. From this information further analyses of the war economy's conflict sustaining effects could be made. Some specific research questions which would be useful in guiding further research on the war economy are: What are the actual links between the pirates and the warring factions (both the insurgents and the government)? To what extent are there still warlords who benefit from a shadow economy? How much of all humanitarian aid is in reality being diverted to armed factions and greedy individuals? If these amounts are substantial, then the particular issue of how to stop humanitarian aid from indirectly fuelling conflict needs to be addressed. It would in my view be highly valuable to research how the negative influences of external actors in general could be diminished, as the constant interference in Somali affairs by outside actors, including Ethiopia and Eritrea, has proven ill-fated.

5.4   Concluding discussion

At the time of writing, Somalia's intractable conflict shows no signs of de-escalation or positive transformation, with deadly clashes occurring daily in and around Mogadishu. It is turning into the most severe security threat on the African continent, especially in light of the July 11 2010 bombings in Kampala, Uganda, which al-Shabaab took responsibility for. Reportedly, the attacks, which killed 74 people, were launched in response to Uganda's contribution of troops to AMISOM (Biryabarema, 2010a). There are now (October 2010) discussions of increasing the AMISOM force with 20,000 troops, which is believed sufficient to contain and push back al-

Shabaab and restore peace and order to the devastated Somalia (Biryabarema, 2010b). Al-Shabaab has rapidly grown more powerful since 2006, and given the current strength of AMISOM there is a possibility of the Islamists toppling the TFG and seizing power in Somalia completely.

The proposed addition of troops to AMISOM is in my view unlikely to contribute to a lasting peace. In the short-term, fighting al-Shabaab with a larger force would require heavy fighting which is likely to result in a large number of casualties, including civilian deaths. In the longer term, while severe and violent repression of al-Shabaab may lead to a temporary de-escalation of the conflict, the issues of how to govern Somalia and the role of *Sharia* will remain unresolved. The point was made in an earlier chapter that conflicts can be more or less intractable, but not wholly intractable. Despite twenty-years of lawlessness and conflict, the Somali conflict can and will eventually come to termination as well. However, until the parties are willing to compromise, it is unlikely that peace and conflict resolution will be achieved by military means.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abdi, R. 2010. *Somalia's divided Islamists*. Crisis Group Podcast, 5 July. [online] Available: http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/podcasts.aspx (10.9.2010)

Adam, H. M. 1999. "Somali civil wars" in Ali, T.M. & Matthews, R. O. (eds.) *Civil wars in Africa – Roots and resolution*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Adebajo, A. 2005. "Africa and America in an age of terror" in Kaldende-Kaise, R. and Kaiser, P.J. (eds.) 2005. *Phases of conflict in Africa*. Toronto: de Sitter Publications.

Africa Confidential. 2007. *Somalia: Peace but no keepers*. 19 January. [online] Available: http://www.africa-confidential.com/article-preview/id/1981/No-Title (20.10.2010)

Ahmed, I.I. and Green, R.H. 1999. "The heritage of war and state collapse in Somalia and Somaliland: Local level effects, external interventions and reconstruction" in *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 1.

Ajulu. C. 2004. "The reasons for the failures in the reunification of Somalia" in *Africa Insight,* vol. 34, no.1.

Allen, C. 1999. "Warfare, Endemic Violence & State Collapse in Africa" in *Review of African Political Economy*, vol. 26, no. 81.

Amnesty International. 2008. *Routinely targeted: Attacks on civilians in Somalia*. 6 May [online] Available: http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR52/2008/en/1162a792-186e-11dd-92b4-6b0c2ef9d02f/afr520062008eng.pdf (7.10.2010)

Azar, E. 1990. The *management of protracted social conflict: theory and cases*. Hampshire: Dartmouth Publishing Company Ltd

Babbie, E. and Mouton, J. 2001. *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Ballantine, K. and Sherman, J. 2003. "Introduction" in Ballantine, K. and Sherman J. (eds.). 2003. *The political economy of armed conflict: Beyond greed and grievance*. London & Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Bajoria, J. and Bruno, G. 2009. *Backgrounder: al-Qaeda*, Council on Foreign Relations, December 30. [online] Available: http://www.cfr.org/publication/9126/alqaeda_aka_alqaida_alqaida.html (26.10.2010)

BBC. 2010a. "Somalia country profile", *BBC News*. [online] Available: http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/africa/country_profiles/1072592.stm (17.8.2010)

BBC. 2010b. "Q&A: Somalia's conflict", *BBC News*. [online] Available: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4760775.stm (17.8.2010)

Bercovitch, J. 2003. "Characteristics of intractable conflicts" in Burgess, G. and Burgess, H. 2003. *Beyond Intractability*. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Available: http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/Characteristics_IC/ (12.7.2010)

Berdal, M. and Malone, D.M. 2000. "Introduction" in Berdal, M. and Malone, D. M. (eds.) 2000. *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Biryabarema, E. 2010a. "Uganda bomb kills 74, Islamists claim attack", *Reuters*, 12 July. [online] Available: http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE66A2B120100712 (12.10.2010)

Biryabarema, E. 2010b. "Uganda says it can raise whole force for Somalia", *Reuters Africa*, 5 October. [online] Available: http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE69404I20101005 (12.10.2010)

Bradbury, M and Healy, S. 2010. "Endless war: A brief history of the Somali conflict" in *Whose peace is it anyway?: Connecting Somali and international peacemaking*, Accord no. 21, Bradbury, M and Healy, S. (ed.) 2010. London: Conciliation Resources. [online] Available: http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/somalia/endless-war.php (8.9.2010)

Byrne, S. and Senehi, J. 2009. "Conflict analysis and resolution as a multidiscipline – A work in progress" in Sandole, D., Byrne, S., Sandole-Staroste, I. and Senehi, J. (eds.). 2009. *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*. New York: Routledge.

Cater, C. 2003. "The political economy of conflict and UN Intervention: Rethinking the critical cases of Africa" in Ballantine, K. and Sherman J. (eds.). 2003. *The political economy of armed conflict: Beyond greed and grievance*. London and Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Chossudovsky, M. 2010. "America's holy crusade against the Muslim world", *Global Research*. 30 August [online] Available: http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=20818 (22.9.2010)

CIA. 2010. *The World Factbook : Somalia*. [online] Available: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html (29.9.2010)

Clarke, W. and Herbst, J. 1996. "Somalia and the future of humanitarian intervention" in *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 75, no. 2.

Collier, P. 2000. "Doing well out of war: An economic perspective" in Berdal, M. and Malone, D. M. (eds.) 2000. *Greed and grievance: Economic agendas in civil wars*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Collier, P. 2006. 'Economic causes of civil conflict and their implications for policy" in Crocker, C., Hampson, F. and Aall, P. 2007. *Leashing the dogs of war – Conflict management in a divided world*. Washington, D.C.: Institute of Peace Press. [online] Available: http://users.ox.ac.uk/~econpco/research/pdfs/EconomicCausesofCivilConflict-ImplicationsforPolicy.pdf (2.7.2010)

Collier, P. and Hoeffler, A. 2004. "Greed and grievance in civil war", *Oxford Economic Papers*, vol. 56, no. 4.

Cook-Huffmann, C. 2009. "The role of identity in conflict" in Sandole, D., Byrne, S., Sandole-Staroste, I. and Senehi, J. (eds.). 2009. *Handbook of conflict analysis and resolution*. New York: Routledge.

Copson, R.W. 1994. *Africa's wars and prospects for peace*. London: M.E. Sharpe.

Cramer, C. 2003. "Does inequality cause conflict?" in *Journal of International Development*, vol. 15, no. 4.

Crocker, C., Hampson, F. and Aall, P. (eds.) 2005. *Grasping the nettle: Analyzing cases of intractable conflict.* Washington, D.C.: Institute of Peace Press.

De Soysa, I. 2000. "The resource curse: Are civil wars driven by rapacity or paucity?" in Berdal, M. and Malone, D.M. (eds.). 2009. *Greed and grievance: Economic agendas in civil wars*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

De Waal, A. 1999. *Evil days: Thirty years of war and famine in Ethiopia*. USA: Human Rights Watch.

Dersso, S. 2009. *The Somalia Conflict – Implications for peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts,* ISS Paper 198. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

Ditz, J. 2010. "Internal AU Reports Acknowledge Indiscriminate Targeting of Somali Civilians", *Antiwar.com*, July 21. [online] Available: http://news.antiwar.com/2010/07/21/internal-au-reports-acknowledge-indiscriminate-targeting-of-somali-civilians/ (7.10.2010)

Drysdale, J. 1994. *Whatever happened to Somalia? – A tale of tragic blunders*. London: Haan Associates.

Duffield, M. 2000. "Globalization, transborder trade, and war economies" in Berdal, M. and Malone, D.M. (eds.). 2009. *Greed and grievance: Economic agendas in civil wars*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Ecoterra. 2010. "Piracy Reports from Somalia", *Australia.to NEWS*, 8 October. [online] Available:
http://australia.to/2010/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4527:piracy-reports-from-somalia-by-ecoterra-8-october&catid=99:status-of-abducted-vessels-in-somalia&Itemid=223 (11.10.2010)

Elmi, A. and Barise, A. 2006. "The Somali Conflict: Root causes, obstacles, and peace-building strategies" in *African Security Review*, vol.15, no.1.

Farah, I. 2009. "The Somali conflict and the regional context: A few provocative remarks", *Society for International Development Forum*. [online] Available : http://www.sidint.net/docs/Somalia_Farahpaper.pdf (7.9.2010)

Farah, I., Hussein, A. and Lind, J. 2002. "Deegaan, politics and war in Somalia" in Lind, J. and Sturman, K. (eds.). *Scarcity and surfeit – The ecology of Africa's conflicts*. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

Floudiotis, A. 2010. "Al-Shabaab: Troubling Youth", *News Blaze*, 14 May. [online] http://newsblaze.com/story/20100514130442iiis.nb/topstory.html (7.6.2010)

Francis, D. 2006. *Uniting Africa – Building regional peace and security systems*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate Ltd.

George, A. and Bennett, A. 2005. *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. Cambridge and London: MIT Press.

Gilkes, P. 1994. *Conflict in Somalia and Ethiopia*. East Sussex: Wayland Publishers.

Glickman, H. 2005. "Africa in the war on terrorism" in Kaldende-Kaise, R. and Kaiser, P.J. (eds.) 2005. *Phases of conflict in Africa*. Toronto: de Sitter Publications.

Goodhand, J. 2003. "Enduring disorder and persistent poverty: A review of the linkages between war and chronic poverty" in *World Development*, vol. 31, no. 3.

Grosse-Kettler, S. 2004. *External actors in stateless Somalia: A war economy and its promoters*. Bonn International Center for Conversion. Bonn: BICC.

Hagmann, T. and Hoehne, M. 2009. "Failures of the state failure debate: Evidence from the Somali territories" in *Journal of International Development*, no.21.

Hansen, S. 2007. *Civil war economies, the hunt for profit and the incentives for peace.* Enemies or Allies Working Paper. University of Bath/University of Mogadishu. [online] Available: http://www.umb.no/statisk/noragric/staff_cv/hansen_short.pdf (2.9.2010)

Hanson, S. 2010. *Backgrounder: Al-Shabaab*. Council on Foreign Relations, 28 July. [online] Available: http://www.cfr.org/publication/18650/alshabaab.html (22.9.2010)

Hassan, M.O. 2010. "Somali militants seize and burn aid food". 21 August. [online] Available: http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gUugQtYZ078cfAu4Tz0tdEyNvBiQD9H N9KJ00 (22 .8.2010)

Healy, S. 2008. *Lost opportunities in the Horn of Africa – How Conflicts Connect and Peace Agreements Unravel*. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Hill, J. 2005. "Beyond the other? A postcolonial critique of the failed state thesis" in *African Identities*, vol.3, no.2.

Hirsch, J., Oakley, R., and Crocker, C. 1995. *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope: reflections on peacemaking and peacekeeping*. Washington, D.C.: Institute of Peace Press.

Hoehne, M. 2006. "Political identity, emerging state structures and conflict in northern Somalia" in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 44, no. 3.

Hoehne, M. 2009. *Counter-terrorism in Somalia: How external interference helped to produce militant islam*. Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, Germany.

Holzer, G-S. 2010. "Eritrea recalibrates Somalia policy", *The International Relations and Security Network (ISN)*, 20 March. [online] Available: http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Current-Affairs/Security-Watch/Detail/?lng=en&id=113820 (13.9.2010)

Huntington, S. 1993. "The clash of civilizations?" *in Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no.3.

ICG (International Crisis Group). 2002. *Somalia: Countering terrorism in a failed state*. Africa Report no. 45. Nairobi/Brussels: International Crisis Group.

ICG (International Crisis Group). 2004. *Somalia: Continuation of war by other means?* Africa Report no. 88. Nairobi/Brussels: International Crisis Group.

ICG (International Crisis Group). 2006. *Can the Somali crisis be contained?* Africa Report no. 116. Nairobi/Brussels: International Crisis Group.

ICG (International Crisis Group). 2008. *Somalia: To Move Beyond the Failed State*. Africa Report No. 147, 23 December 2008. [online] Available: http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/147-somalia-to-move-beyond-the-failed-state.aspx (7 June 2010)

ICG (International Crisis Group). 2010. *CrisisWatch Database: Somalia*. [online] Available: http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/crisiswatch/crisiswatch-database.aspx (12.9.2010)

IGAD. 2010. *About us*. [online] Available: http://igad.int/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=93&Itemid=124&limitstart=1 (10.9.2010)

Jones, B. 2008. "The Global Political Economy of Social Crisis: Towards a critique of the 'failed state' ideology" in *Review of International Political Economy*, vol.15, no. 2.

Kaldor, M. 2006. *New and old wars*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Kaldor, M. 2009. "New wars". *The Broker*, 14 May. [online] Available: http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/Special-Reports/Special-report-Who-is-the-enemy/New-wars (5.7.2010)

Kaplan, E. 2006. *Backgrounder: Somalia's Terrorist Infestation*, Council on Foreign Relations, 6 June. [online] Available: http://www.cfr.org/publication/10781 (2.6.2010)

Kaplan, R. 1993. *Balkan ghosts*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Kashka, B. 2010. "UN food aid used to nourish war in Somalia", *Global Geopolitics & Political Economy*, 23 March. [online] Available: http://globalgeopolitics.net/wordpress/2010/03/23/un-food-aid-used-to-nourish-war-in-somalia/ (1.10.2010)

Kriesberg, L. 1998. *Constructive conflicts: From escalation to resolution*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Kriesberg, L. 2005. "Nature, dynamics, and phases of intractability" in Crocker, C., Hampson, F., and Aall, P. (eds.) 2005. *Grasping the nettle: Analyzing cases of intractable conflict.* Washington, D.C.: Institute of Peace Press.

Lake, D. and Rothchild, D. 1998. "Spreading fear: The genesis of transnational ethnic conflict" in Lake, D. and Rothchild, D. (eds.) 1998. *The international spread of ethnic conflict.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Lewis, I.M. 1994. *Blood and bone: The call of kinship in Somali society*. Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press.

Lewis, I.M. 2002. *A modern history of the Somali: Nation and state in the Horn of Africa*. Oxford: James Currey.

Lewis, I.M. 2008. *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland – Culture, history, society*. London: Hurst Publishers Ltd.

Lewis, J. 2003. "Design Issues" in Ritchie, J. and Lewis, J. (eds.). *Qualitative Research Practice – A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. London: SAGE Publications.

Lichbach, M.I. 1989. "An evaluation of 'Does economic inequality breed political conflict' Studies?" in *World Politics*, vol. 41, no. 4.

Licklider, R. 2005. "Comparative studies of long wars" in Crocker, C., Hampson, F. and Aall, P. (eds.) 2005. *Grasping the nettle: Analyzing cases of intractable conflict.* Washington, D.C.: Institute of Peace Press.

Lind, W. 2004. "Understanding Fourth Generation War", January 15. [online] Available: http://antiwar.com/lind/index.php?articleid=1702 (15.9.2010)

Mazrui, A. 2008. "Prologue - Conflict in Africa: An overview" in Nhema, A. and Zeleza, P. 2008. *The roots of African conflicts – The causes and costs.* Oxford: James Currey.

Menkhaus, K. 2003. "State Collapse in Somalia: Second Thoughts" in *Review of African Political Economy,* vol.30, no.97.

Middleton, R. 2008. *Piracy in Somalia : Threatening global trade, feeding local wars.* Chatham House Briefing Paper. [online] Available : http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/f iles/12203_1008piracysomalia.pdf (13.9.2008)

MIS (Movement for an Independent Somaliland). 2010. *The history of Somaliland.* [online] Available: http://independentsomaliland.com/somaliland-history/ (15.9.2010)

Misra, A, 2008. *The politics of civil wars: Conflict, intervention and resolution.* New York: Routledge.

Mohamed, K. 2010. "Piracy brings development to the people of Eyl", *Radio Netherlands Worldwide*, 4 June. [online] Available: http://www.rnw.nl/international-justice/article/piracy-brings-development-people-eyl-0 (11.10.2010)

Møller, B. 2009. *The Somali Conflict – The Role of External Actors.* Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies. [online] Available: http://www.diis.dk (29.3.2010)

Mukhtar, M.H. 2005. "Somalia and the end of Mogadishu syndrome" on *Holler Africa*. [online] Available: http://www.hollerafrica.com/showArticle.php?catId=1&artId=231 (9.9.2010)

Münkler, H. 2005. *The new wars*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Northrup, T. 1989. "The dynamic of identity in personal and social conflict" in Kriesberg, L., Northrup, T., and Thornson, S. 1989. *Intractable conflicts and their transformation*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Ohanwe, A.C. 2009. *Post-Cold War conflicts in Africa – Case studies of Liberia and Somalia*. London: Adonis and Abbey Publishers Ltd.

Osman, A. 2007a. "Cultural diversity and the Somali conflict: Myth or reality?" in *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, vol. 7, no. 2.

Osman, A. 2007b. "The Somali internal war and the role of inequality, economic decline and access to weapons" in Osman, A. and Souaré. 2007. *Somalia at the crossroads – Challenges and perspectives on reconstituting a failed state*. London: Adonis and Abbey Publishers Ltd.

Perrin, B. 2008. *Humanitarian assistance and the private security debate: An international humanitarian law perspective*. Working Paper published by The Canadian Red Cross and Liu Institute for Global Issues. [online] Available: http://www.redcross.ca/cmslib/general/oteoc_ben_perrin.pdf (14.9.2010)

Peters, K. 2004. *Re-examining voluntarism : Youth combatants in Sierra Leone*. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

Peterson, S. 2000. *Me against my brother – At war in Somalia, Sudan and Rwanda*. New York and London: Routledge.

Porto, J. 2002. "Contemporary Conflict Analysis in Perspective" in Lind, J. and Sturman, K. (eds.). *Scarcity and Surfeit – The ecology of Africa's conflicts*. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

Raghavan, S. 2010. "Attack on Somali civilians sparks worries of militia's growing boldness" in *The Washington Post*, 28 August. [online] Available: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/27/AR2010082703498.html (6.10.2010)

Ramsbotham, O., Woodhouse, T. and Miall, H. 2005. *Contemporary conflict resolution: The prevention, management and transformation of deadly conflict*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Reno, W. 2000. "Shadow states and the political economy of civil wars" in Berdal, M. and Malone, D.M. (eds.). 2009. *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Reno, W. 2006. "Insurgencies in the Shadow of State Collapse" in Kaarsholm, P. (ed.) 2006. *Violence, Political Culture & Development in Africa*. Oxford: James Currey.

Rice, E. 1998. *Wars of the Third Kind: Conflict in underdeveloped countries.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Roque, P. 2009. "The battle for Mogadishu: Revealing Somalia's fluid loyalties and identities" in *African Security Review*, vol.18, no.3. [online] Available : http://www.iss.co.za/uploads/18NO3ROQUE.PDF (13.9.2010)

Rotberg, R. 2003. *State failure and state weakness in a time of terror*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Ryu, A. 2010. "International backers of Somalia's TFG show growing unease", *Voice of America*, 14 September. [online] Available: http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/east/International-Backers-of-Somalias-TFG-Show-Growing-Unease-102875959.html (22.9.2010)

Saunders, C. 2009. "Angola: From war to peace" in *Transformation: Critical perspectives on southern Africa*, no. 69.

Shinn, D. 2009. "Rise of piracy and other maritime insecurity in Somalia", *East Africa Forum*, 7 April. [online] Available: http://www.eastafricaforum.net/2009/04/11/rise-of-piracy-and-other-maritime-insecurity-in-somalia/ (11.10.2010)

Sibomana, A. 1997. *Hope for Rwanda*. London: Pluto Press.

SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute). 2010. "UN arms embargo on Somalia", July 17. [online] Available : http://www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes/un_arms_embargoes/somalia (14.9.2010)

Somalia Amateur Radio. 2010. *Somalia population maps and Somalia natural resources maps*. [online] Available : https://sites.google.com/site/somaliaamateurradio/somalia_population_maps (20.10.2010)

"Somalia: Bitter clash in Mogadishu leaves 20 dead". 2010. *AllAfrica.com*, 23 August. [online] Available: http://allafrica.com/stories/201008240005.html (24.8.2010)

"Somalia's Prime Minister resigns, citing political tensions". 2010. *New York Times/Reuters*. 21 September. [online] Available: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/22/world/africa/22somalia.html?_r=1 (22.9.2010)

Stockman, F. 2010. "The case against aid" in *The Boston Globe*, 12 September. [online] Available:

http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2010/09/12/the_worlds_humanitarian_aid_org anizations_may_do_more_harm_than_good_argues_linda_polman/?page=2 (30.9.2010)

Straus, S. 2006. *The order of genocide – Race, power, and war in Rwanda*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Straziuzo, J. and Hassan, M.O. 2010. "Somalia rebels looking increasingly like Taliban", *Associated Press*, August 21. [online] Available : http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hyhXBRG_5y9tMRW6iL6qsKcNSlpAD9 HOA2200 (12.9.2010)

Tucker-Jones, A. 2010. *The Rise of Militant Islam – An insider's view of the failure to curb Global Jihad*. South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Books Limited.

U.S. Department of State. 2010. *Background Note: Somalia*. [online] http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm (7.6.2010)

UCDP/PRIO. 2009a. *UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset Codebook – Version 4-2009*. Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), Centre for the Study of Civil Wars, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO) [online] Available: http://www.prio.no/CSCW/Datasets/Armed-Conflict/UCDP-PRIO/Armed-Conflicts-Version-X-2009/ (14.7.2010)

UCDP/PRIO. 2009b. *UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset – Armed Conflicts Version 4-2009.* Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), Centre for the Study of Civil Wars, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO) [online] Available: http://www.prio.no/CSCW/Datasets/Armed-Conflict/UCDP-PRIO/Armed-Conflicts-Version-X-2009/ (6.10.2010)

UNdata. 2010. *Somalia.* [online] Available: http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Somalia (15.9.2010)

United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia. 2008. *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1853.* [online] Available: http://reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2010.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/MUMA-83N2WN-full_report.pdf/$File/full_report.pdf (22.9.2010)

Van Creveld, M. 1991. *Transformation of war*. New York: The Free Press.

Wallensteen, P. 2007. *Understanding conflict resolution – War, peace and the global system.* London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Webersik, C. 2004. *Bargaining for the spoils of war – The Somalia National Reconciliation Process*. Paper presented to the Third Horn of Africa Conference, 27-29 August 2004, Lund, Sweden.

Webersik, C. 2006. "Mogadishu: An economy without a state" in *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 8.

Whitaker, 2010. "UN mission fails to protect civilians in the DRC", *openDemocracy: Security Briefing*, 26 August. [online] Available: http://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/security-briefings/260810 (15.9.2010)

World Bank. 2005a. *Conflict in Somalia: Drivers and Dynamics*. [online] Available: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTSOMALIA/Resources/conflictinsomalia.pdf (31.5.2010)

World Bank. 2005b. *Traditional Governance in Somalia – South Central Somalia*. Brief Report for the World Bank. [online] Available: http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/153065/southcentralsomalia.pdf (17.9.2010)

Zartman, I. W. 2005. "Analysing intractability" in Crocker, C., Hampson, F. and Aall, P. (eds.) 2005. *Grasping the nettle: Analyzing cases of intractable conflict.* Washington, D.C.: Institute of Peace Press.

Zeleza, P. 2008. "Introduction: The causes & costs of war in Africa" in Nhema, A. and Zeleza P. (eds.) 2008. *The roots of African conflicts – The causes and costs*. Pretoria: UNISA Press.

APPENDIX. Facts, figures and maps

Somalia: Basic facts and figures

| |
|---|
| **Population**: 9.1 million |
| **Capital**: Mogadishu |
| **Area**: 637,657 sq kilometres |
| **Independence**: 1 July 1960 |
| **Major languages**: Somali (official), Arabic, Italian, English |
| **Major religion**: Islam |
| **Ethnic groups**: Somali 85 %, Bantu and other non-Somali (including Arabs) 15 % |
| **Life expectancy**: 48 years (men), 51 years (women) |
| **Infant mortality rate**: 109.19 deaths/1,000 live births (6th highest in the world) |
| **Literacy**: 37.8% (of total population age 15 and over can read and write) |
| **Monetary unit**: 1 Somali shilling = 100 cents |
| **Main exports**: Livestock, bananas, hides, fish |
| **Main imports**: Manufactured goods, petroleum products, foodstuffs, qat. |
| **GDP per capita (PPP)**: $600 (2009 est.) |

(BBC, 2010a; CIA World Factbook, 2010)
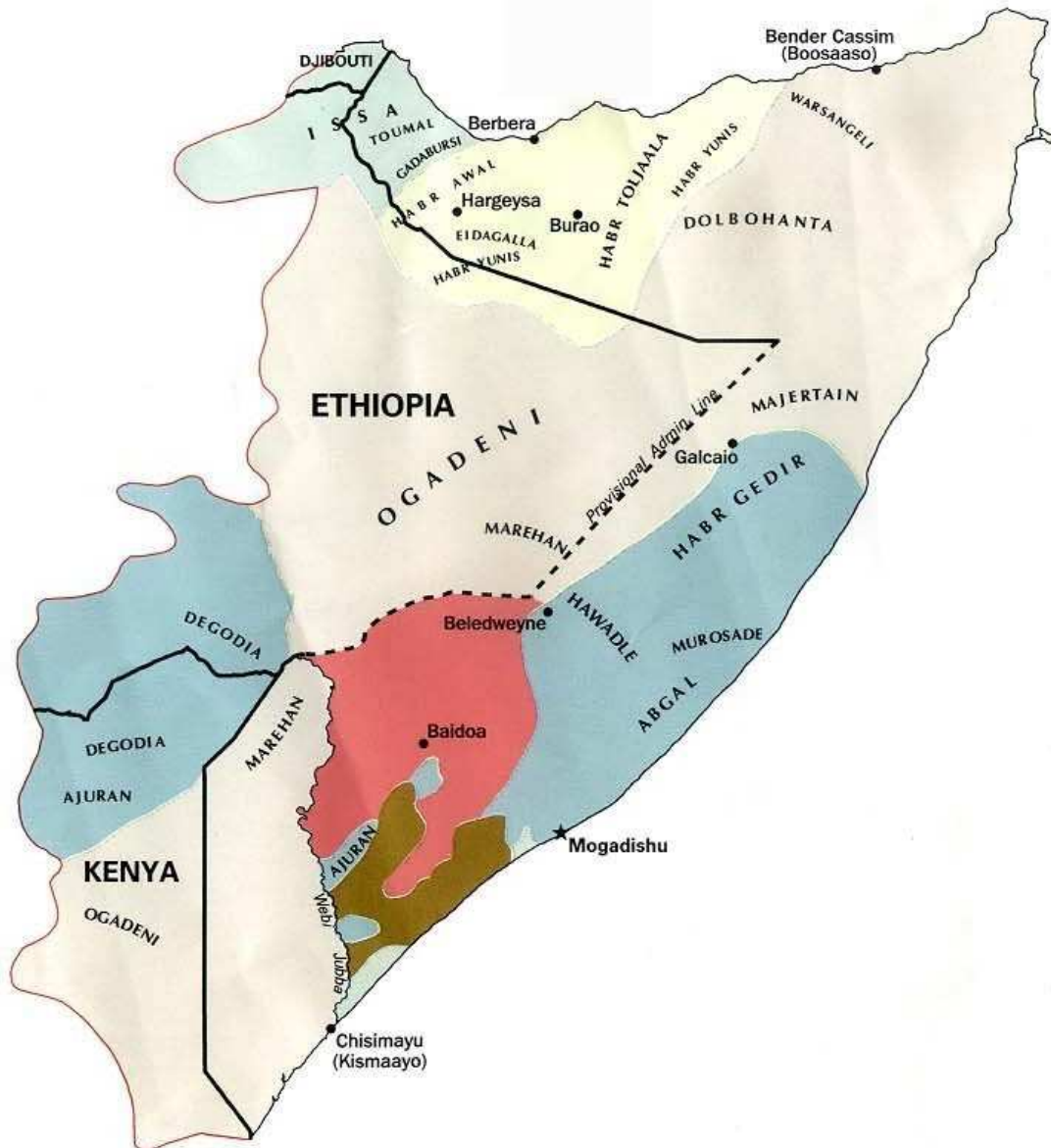
Map 1. Somalia
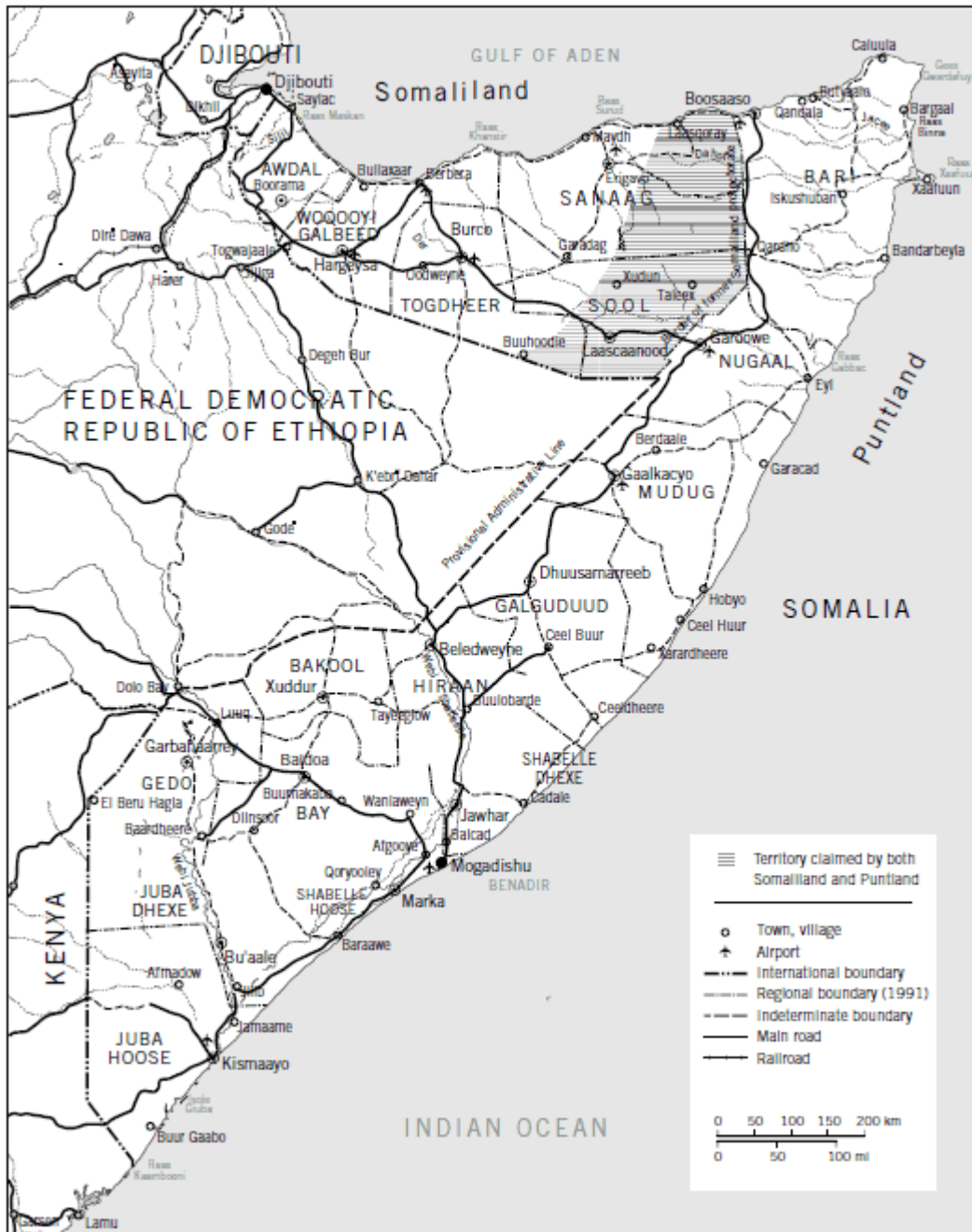
Source: Bradbury and Healy, 2010.

Map 2. The current political situation in Somalia
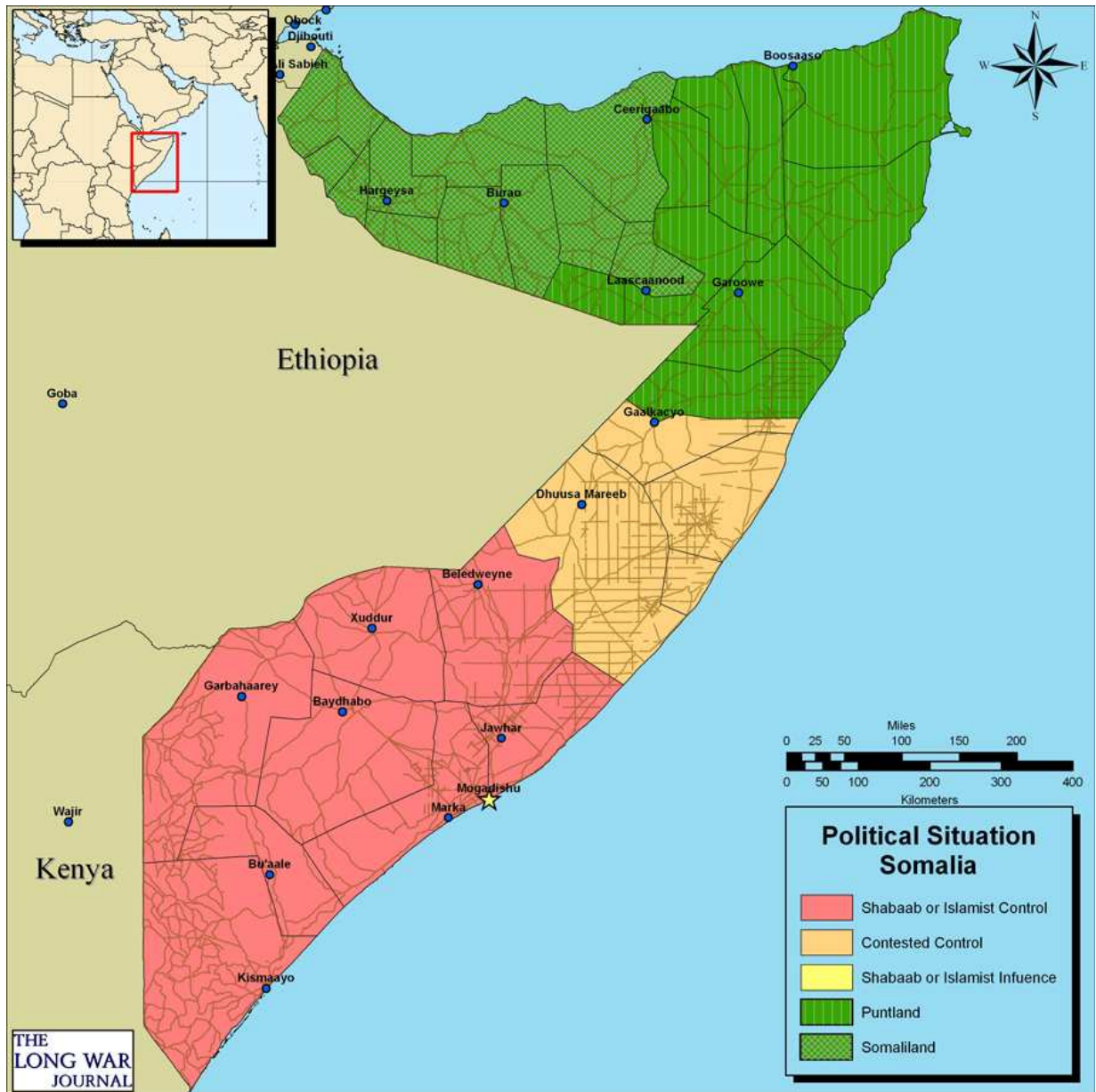
Source: Hanson, 2010

Map 3. Clans in Somalia

Source: Somalia Amateur Radio, 2010