

# Somali State Conflict: Revisiting the Political Economy of the Somali Security State (1969-1991)

## Abstract

This paper focuses on the emergence of “Somali Scientific Socialism” and its major impact on the emergence of the economy and politics of the ‘Somali Republic’ at that time period. The major objective of this paper is to contribute to the existing literature of the Somali conflict and mainly focuses on the economic and political impact of “socialism” on the post-independent Somalia. The deductive research approach with reference to the case study method is employed throughout the article. Data in the form of journals, books, academic papers, dissertations, reports, and online publications are used as secondary sources. In this paper, theories on state conflict are reviewed in order to justify the main objectives of conducting this research. Thus two major theoretical approaches to the Somali state conflict are studied i.e., instrumentalists and traditionalists. Likewise, the findings of this study showed that the country’s economy is deeply devastated by the ‘socialist system’. The paper concludes that ‘socialism’ had a profound impact on the economy of the country. In the early years of its rule, the production of all major crops drastically declined, which has forced the country to rely on food aid and loans from outsiders. Somalia’s economy during this period was disastrous in comparison to neighboring countries, such as Ethiopia, and Kenya. Barre and his socialist-style system formed a clan division and perpetrated ethnic clashes due to nepotism, disparity, treachery, ethnic genocide and emergence of guerrilla warfare organizations, which later removed the regime in power in 1991.

**Key Words:** Somalia, Somaliland, Socialism, Scientific Socialism, State Collapse, Economic Collapse, Civil War, Statelessness.

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# Somali Devlet Çatışması: Somali Güvenlik Devleti Politik Ekonomisini Yeniden İncelemek (1969-1991)

## Öz

Bu makale “Somali Bilimsel Sosyalizmi”nin ortaya çıkışı ile bahsekonu gelişmenin aynı dönemde gün yüzüne çıkan “Somali Cumhuriyeti” ekonomisi ve politikası üzerindeki ana etkisine odaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Somali’deki çatışma üzerine mevcut literatüre katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamakta ve esas olarak “sosyalizm”in bağımsızlık sonrası Somali üzerindeki ekonomik ve politik etkisine odaklanmaktadır. Çalışmada tündengelimli araştırma yaklaşımı kullanılmaktadır. Dergi, kitap, akademik makale, tez, rapor ve çevrimiçi yayınlar şeklindeki veriler ikincil kaynak olarak kullanılmaktadır. Çalışmada, bu araştırmanın yürütülmesinin temel amaçlarını doğrulamak amacıyla devlet çatışması teorileri gözden geçirilmektedir.

Bu nedenle, Somali devlet ihtilafı iki ana teorik yaklaşımla ele alınmaktadır; bunlar araçsalcı (instrumentalist) ve gelenekçi (traditionalist) yaklaşımlardır. Aynı şekilde, bu çalışmanın bulguları, ülke ekonomisinin “sosyalist sistem” tarafından derinden tahrip edildiğini göstermektedir. Çalışma, “sosyalizmin” ülke ekonomisi üzerinde derin bir etkisi olduğu sonucuna varmaktadır. Yönetimin ilk yıllarında, önde gelen tüm mahsullerin üretimi ciddi bir şekilde düşüş göstermiştir. Bu durum ülkeyi gıda yardımına ve yabancıların kredilerine mecbur kılmıştır. Somali ekonomisi bu dönemde Etiyopya ve Kenya gibi komşu ülkelere kıyasla çok geride kalmıştır. Barre ve sosyalist sistemi klan bölünmesine sebebiyet vermiş ve daha sonra 1991’de iktidardaki rejimi ortadan kaldıran kayırmacılık, eşitsizlik, ihanet, etnik soykırım ve gerilla savaşı örgütlerinin ortaya çıkması nedeniyle etnik çatışmaları beraberinde getirmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Somali, Somaliland, Sosyalizm, Bilimsel Sosyalizm, Devlet Çöküşü, Ekonomik Çöküş, İç Savaş, Devletsizlik.

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## صراع الدولة في الصومال: إعادة تدقيق الاقتصاد السياسي لدولة الصومال الأمنية (1969-1991)

### ملخص

تركز هذه المقالة على التأثير الأساسي لظهور الاشتراكية العلمية الصومالية والمستجدات موضوع البحث على اقتصاد وسياسة الجمهورية الصومالية التي ظهرت في نفس الفترة. تحدف هذه الدراسة الى المساهمة في تطوير الدراسات المتعلقة بالصراعات والموجودة في الصومال وتركز بشكل أساسي على التأثيرات الاقتصادية والسياسية للاشتراكية على الصومال في فترة ما بعد الاستقلال. تم استخدام النهج الاستنتاجي في هذه الدراسة. وتم استخدام المجالات، الكتب، المقالات الأكاديمية، الرسائل، التقارير ومنشورات الأونلاين كمصادر ثانوية. ويتم التطرق الى نظريات صراع الدولة بمهدف التحقق من الاهداف الاساسية في تنفيذ البحث في هذه الدراسة.

ولهذا السبب، يتم دراسة صراع الدولة في الصومال عن طريق تحجين نظريين أساسيين؛ الأول هو الذرائعية (instrumentalist) والثاني التقليدي (traditionalist). كما أن نتائج هذه الدراسة تظهر تخريب عميق في اقتصاد الدولة تسبب به النظام الاشتراكي. توصلت الدراسة الى نتيجة أن الاشتراكية لها تأثير كبير على اقتصاد الدولة. حيث أنه حدث انخفاض كبير في مستوى الإنتاج لجميع المحاصيل الزراعية الرئيسية في السنوات الأولى للحكم. وقد جعل هذا الوضع الدولة محتاجة الى المساعدات الغذائية والقروض الأجنبية. وكان الاقتصاد الصومالي في هذه الفترة متخلفا كثيرا بالنسبة لدول الجوار مثل أنيوييا وكينيا. تسبب باري ونظامه الاشتراكي بالتقسيمات العشوائية كما تسبب فيما بعد بالصراعات الاثنية بسبب ظهور منظمات حرب العصابات والإبادة الجماعية العرقية، الخيانة، وعدم المساواة والمخسوبيات التي تسبب فيما بعد في عام 1991 بإسقاط النظام الحاكم.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الصومال، أرض الصومال، الاشتراكية، الاشتراكية العلمية، اختيار الدولة، الأختيار الاقتصادي، الحرب الأهلية، عدم وجود السلطة.

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## Introduction

The objective of this paper is to understand the Somali state conflict, particularly the major impact of “socialism” on the economy and politics of the Somali Republic that existed between 1969 and 1991. In this part of the paper, theories on state conflict are reviewed in order to justify the main objectives of doing this research. First, the two major theoretical approaches to Somali state conflict are studied i.e. instrumentalist and traditionalist paradigms. Second, the most crucial and important part of the instrumentalist’s theory of the state is explained and the hypotheses are developed based on this theory. Third, the background motives of the Somali state conflict are explained in three phases; the first phase: pre-colonial period; the second phase: colonialism period and the third phase socialist state era.

## The Two Major Theoretical Approaches and the Somali State Conflict

In this section of the paper, the authors explain the two major theoretical arguments on the Somali state conflict. According to Abdi Ismail (2010), there are always two major prototypes for the conflict in Somalia, these are classified as traditionalist and instrumentalist schools. The first view, the traditionalist approach, is purported by Ioan M. Lewis, a British anthropologist who extensively studied the Somali nomads during the colonial period in the 1940s and the 1950s. The scholars of the traditionalist thesis argue that “the continuity of clan politics had destroyed the state” (Lewis, 1993, 1994; Said Samatar, 1991; and Simons, 1995). As mentioned, the traditionalists’ paradigm is that “the segmented clannism among the Somali societies remains their foundation of pastoralist culture, and that ‘clannishness’ – the primacy of the clan interest- is its natural divisive reflection on the political level” (Abdi Ismail, 2010: 19). The other school, the instrumentalist approach, Ahmed Samatar, and Abdi Samatar are the forth runners of this school. Ahmed Samatar argues that “the Somali problem is not the clan reality and its culture, but the elite manipulation of the ruling class is the real ‘virus’ of the Somali case” (Abdi Ismail, 2010:19). As mentioned, in this part of the paper, the two major debates are reviewed about the Somali state conflict, the traditionalist and the instrumentalist schools of Somali studies. Theoretically, the two schools deeply analyze the political economy explanations of the state collapse. The post-colonial Somalia has been a subject of an academic treatise like their peers in Africa for the last fifty years (Mohamoud, 2006). In this

background, Ellis argues that “the body of literature on the state in Africa is derived from political theory rather than from close observation of African history or society” (Ellis, 1996:2).

According to Mohamoud (2006), the proponents of the instrumentalist approach emphasize the impact of external actors rather than internal dynamics while addressing the problems of the Somali state. In addition to that, they have also focused on the state class which they have blamed for the internal disintegration of Somalia. In the following section of the theory part of the paper, discussion on the traditionalist approach of the Somali studies is reviewed.

### **Traditionalists and Somali Studies**

The traditionalist debate of the Somali studies is generated from three important writings. First, the historical writings of the British explorers, such as Richard Burton; second, the anthropological recordings of I. M Lewis and Evans- Pritchard; third, the modernization theories noted earlier- Richard Burton an English explorer who had extensively written about the cultural, social and political institutions of the Somali people at the time. Apart from Richard Burton, there were also a few Arab travelers/explorers. However, I. M Lewis, an English anthropologist comprehensively studied the Somali people and their culture. Lewis justified his study and noted: “my romantic ambition to go and study [the] Somali nomads” (Mohamoud, 2006: 38; Lewis, 1994:2). Lewis published numerous works on Somali traditional systems, such as kinship and clannism structure. Lewis established the traditional foundations of the Somali studies. According to Lewis (1961), the Somali social structure is pastoral nomadism, and I quoted long, he argues: “[...] the Somali pastoral nomads have (sic) the following key characteristics. First, the Somalis are highly egalitarian because of the absence of exploitation and domination in their power relations. Second, the Somali society is stateless, lacking centralized institutions and formalized authority. Third, the primary social networks of the Somali people are regulated by a web of lineage segmentation, which provides the fundamental basis for identity-formation” (Lewis, 1961: *ibid*). Even in the contemporary era, this clan fragmentation shapes the political system of Somali society. Therefore, lineage and clan segmentation became the central thesis of the traditionalist paradigm of Somali Studies. Since then, after Lewis’s treatise, many studies had been fit for his

argument. In this case, as Laitin and Samatar (2001) noted: “as per European anthropologists Enrico Cerulli and I. M. Lewis have mentioned that in order to understand Somali politics, it is imperative to understand the relationship between the Somali clans and their kinship ... the political history of independence is clear. One can hardly think of a major domestic or foreign development in Somali politics since independence which was not greatly influenced by an underlying consideration of the clan (Laitin and Samatar, 1987: 155). Several authors followed Lewis’ footsteps, and many articles were written on the basis of traditionalism.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the traditionalist scholarship of Somali Studies is a ‘nutshell’ (Mohamoud, 2006). In the following section, I would also like to review the other school, i.e. the instrumentalist school of Somali studies.

### **Instrumentalists and the Somalia Studies**

In the 1980s, the Instrumentalist model as part of Somali Studies became a major challenge to the traditionalist scholarship. This school has been pioneered by the two Somalian scholars, i.e. Ahmed Samatar and Abdi Samatar. According to Mohamoud (2006), instrumentalist scholars have been influenced by the “discourse of dependence”. They argue in several publications that they “...propose that the materialist literature portrays more accurately both the general global environment in which the submerged classes of Africa continue to struggle and the post-colonial state’s existence and function” (Samatar and Samatar 1987:673).

Ahmed Samatar explained the tools which are critical to the Somali political economy and emphasized more historical changes and material production as well as the transformation of the Somali people both socially and economically. In his book, (Samatar, 1989), “The State and Rural Transformation in Northern Somalia”, he further explained (8):

“This paradigm concerns production and accumulation, economic surplus distribution, social reproduction, political arrangements, and global order impingement”.

The Instrumentalist scholars mostly focus on external actors in the contemporary economic and political making of the Somali people. Therefore, the researchers of this school further go in too deep into discussion on the global market economy and the imposition of colonial administrators. So,

<sup>1</sup> See for example the work of V.Luling (1997: 287-300).

before they start challenging the major content and outline of their paradigm, they tried to challenge the epistemological content of the traditionalist approach. They claim, that their analysis of the Somali case is outdated. In this case, Abdi Samatar postulates his argument: "In this endeavor, the first task is to deconstruct the ghettoization of Somali studies in African studies as a backwater field. Despite the radical theoretical developments in the latter area over the last twenty years, exacerbated by the crisis of peripheral capitalist development on the continent, Somali studies appear marooned with the earlier phases of the theory of modernization. It is, therefore, high time that the conceptual and methodological advancement in African underdevelopment research penetrated the Somali situation and studied it. (Abdi Samatar 1989:4).

In addition, the instrumentalist scholars charged the traditionalist scholars claiming that they don't have the specificity and by their confusing the concepts of tribalism, nomadism and the state in the process of the social formation of the Somali people. Abdi Samatar (1992) argues that "context and precision direct the instrumentalists who support their thesis" (Abdi Samatar, 1992). In their analysis, they argue that the social and political transformation of the Somalis did not remain static, it has been changing over time.

However, they have mentioned that there are important analyses on this case. First, the imperial invasion, and then, the commercialization of its pastoral production, and lastly, the formation of a centralized state. Ahmed Samatar himself argues that traditionalist scholars confuse kinship with clanism. He further noted: "Kinship refers to a core relationship that is sponsored by both blood-ties and a deeply respected culture and practice (xeer)-one that mediates between individuals or groups. In some pre-capitalist social formations, this is part of the dominant ideology. On the other hand, clanism is the transformation of kinship by separating blood feet from tradition and practice. This bifurcation results from the forceful intrusion of an alien type of social and economic organization and its concomitant norms and values" (Lyons, 1989:8).

Finally, the instrumentalist scholars argue that the political transformation of the Somali people for over a hundred years has the major result of Somali disintegration. They have classified Somalis as different strata i.e. pastoral producers, merchants, bourgeoisie and intelligentsia. The instrumentalist scholars reaffirm that, like their peers in traditionalist schools, in Somalia there is a social rivalry between the social strata that hampered the develop-



ment of the country. To be more specific, they argue that “[The] internal tussles of the ruling class, the small bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia over the control and appropriation of the surplus created by the peasants and pastoral nomads that are at the heart of the Somali question” (Samatar and Samatar, 1987: 63-65). The instrumentalist scholars further argue that the dominant class fraction is the one that perverts the politics of the clan as an instrument of their personal interest. While they do not usually classify Somalia as classical Marxism, they suggest that the class conflict is the main reason for the collapse of the state.

### **The Soviet’s instrumentalist Foreign Strategy on Somalia**

The Soviets and Somalians changed reciprocal visits since President Sharmake’s visit to Moscow. It has been reported that Soviet Defense Minister Marshal Ghrechko visited Somalia on February 13, 1972, with an invitation from the Somali Officials. He left Mogadishu after a week of an official visit. Somali Vice president and the defense minister Gen. Mohamed Ali Samatar arrived in Moscow in July the same year. There were no official statements released after these two meetings<sup>2</sup>.

Gorodnov et al (1972), contended by rationalizing the Soviet assistance to Somalia. They wrote “Kismayo<sup>3</sup> was built by the Americans ... who left behind an ill memory of themselves ... to this day rusting metals and smashed trestles stand as a mute reproach of American aid” (Gordonov et al, 1972)<sup>4</sup>. In the eyes of the Soviets, the state of Somalia, prior to 1969, was a land of corruption. As E. Sherr argued that “before the events of October 1969, power was in the hands of the rich elite, and corruption among government officials was a characteristic feature of political life in that period”<sup>5</sup>. After 1969, the transformation of Somali polity has been welcomed by the Kremlin. However, Sherr (1974) contends that “Somalia’s Policy of non-alignment and neutrality became more principled and consistent after the revolution”.

<sup>2</sup> Pravda, July 12, 1972; Pravda, July 18, 1972

<sup>3</sup> A port in Southern Somalia

<sup>4</sup> See details, Gordonov et al (1972), “In the Somali Democratic Republic”, international Affairs, Moscow, no 5, pp 105.

<sup>5</sup> E. Sherr (1974), Somalia: Socialist orientation, International Affairs, Moscow, no.2, p.84



## The Soviet Agenda in Somalia

To understand the Soviet agenda in Somalia, it is crucial to look at the historical importance of the country and Somalia's geostrategic position. Throughout its history, Somalia had been a geostrategic place for foreign powers. During the period of European Colonialism, in order to consolidate their positions in Somalia, Britain, and Italy depended on military force. Similarly, Soviet Russia was involved in the Somalian politics in 1962 and authorized a loan of US\$ 32 million to modernize and strengthen the Somalian army, as well as raising its military presence to 14,000. Moscow subsequently increased the amount of aid to US\$ 55 million. There has always been a geostrategic concern in the Cold War ambitions of the Soviet Union, aimed to tackle the presence of the United States in the Horn of Africa. In this paper, therefore, it is argued that the Soviet Union used Somalia to advance its presence and influence in the region not as a "socialist state" in the horn of Africa, but also it is a geostrategic location. The Soviet Union delivered T-34 tanks, armored personnel carriers, MiG-15 and 17 fighters, small arms, and ammunition to Somalia in the late 1960s. It was estimated that about 300 Soviet military advisors were sent to Somalia to train the Somali army, and that about 500 Somali pilots, officers and technicians were trained in Soviet Russia. There was an argument that the Soviet Union orchestrated both the military coup and the assassination of Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, the civilian president. Nevertheless, following the coup, Siad Barre supported "Scientific Socialism," and Somalia became the major receiver of military equipment from the Soviet Union. Somalia's military alliance with the U.S.S.R. has prospered for almost eight years. At the beginning of 1972, as stated, in exchange for Soviet access to the facility, Defense Minister Andrei Grechko visited Somalia and signed an agreement to modernize and develop the port of Berbera. This unremitting access to the Berbera port provided the Soviet Union with a foothold in the strategically important Indian Ocean-Persian Gulf area to combat the military activities of the United States in Horn Africa. In addition, Sofinsky (1974) argues that "the decision to take socialist orientation logically led the adoption of scientific "socialism" as the ideological basis of the SRC of Somalia ...Somalia "has become an outpost in the struggle for the national liberation of social emancipation on the African continent, and one of the most progressive states in Africa".<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See Sofinsky (1974)

The Soviets increased aid and investment in Somalia after the October 1969 coup. In 1974, the Soviets built several factories in Somalia, including a meat factory in Mogadishu, a deep-sea port in Berbera and Fish Plant in Lasqorey. Moscow used the Somali state as instruments to develop their regional political objectives, they claimed that they developed Somalia as a young Socialist state in the Horn of Africa. In the eyes of the Soviets, the October socialist revolution was to build Somalia as free from the “exploitation of man by man”.<sup>7</sup>

### **Collier and the theory of State Building**

In this section of this paper, Collier’s theory of state conflict is reviewed. State failure is wide concept for political scientists. It created a fast range of academic discussions for the last decades. However, there is no consensus among scholars on the definition of state failure. For Rotberg (2004), he classified human and non-human factors as causes of state failure. He argues that some researchers highlighted accidental factors as the major causes of state failure. In his analysis, he concluded that “human agency” should be blamed for the problem. Paul Collier mostly studied the academic field of state-building. In his book, *Bottom Billion Countries*, Collier employed a rich quantitative analysis of some least developed countries. He had described one billion people in poor countries where no economic development is imaginable. He noted, “The real challenge of development is that there is a group of countries at the bottom that are falling behind, and often falling apart” (Collier, 2008:3).

Collier (2008) further analyzed and advocated for international intervention to stabilize states, he wrote: “... an intervention which this year permanently alleviates the poverty of one thousand people in China is simply less valuable than an intervention with the same effect in the Democratic Republic of Congo, not because Chinese people should be less valued than the Congolese but because the prospects for the Chinese are manifestly more promising.” (Collier et al., 2008:10).

As part of the argumentation in this paper, the authors disagree with Collier (2009) claiming that “the involvement of the international community is crucial for functional states to emerge in the bottom billion countries”. He also justifies a military intervention as a state stabilization. In contrast to

<sup>7</sup> V. Shemrov (1974), “New Stage in Soviet Somali Relations: New Times, Moscow, no. 29, pp 23-24

Collier's thesis, Robert Jackson argued that "in the post-colonial period, all African states were quasi-states" not fully functioning states for that matter (Jackson, 1990). Collier (2009) argues that "in the bottom billion countries" where there is no mechanism of accountability in place, the losing party should accept defeat. Therefore, Collier (ibid) stipulates those countries that their governments became too corrupt to give basic goods such as water, shelter, and education, he defined this as 'poverty trap with conflict trap'. In a report published with other scholars, *Breaking the conflict trap: Civil war and development policy*. (2003), they have summarized: "War retards development, but conversely, development retards war. This double causation gives rise to virtuous and vicious circles... When development fails, countries are at a high risk of becoming caught in a conflict trap in which war wrecks the economy and increases the risk of further war." (Collier et al, 2003:1).

Pre-colonial Somalis were under a 'stateless' situation (Mohamoud, 2006). No formal institutions or polity existed, but the social order was maintained through moral and social cohesion among the Somali nomads at the time. The concept of statelessness as "a free society with rules or order without law" (Hussein Adam and A. Mazrui, 1997) is used throughout this paper. Pre-colonial Somalians like other societies in Africa have tried to form a viable and stable social and political system, but there was no formal government (Ellis, 1999). The literature on Somalian politics and economic studies is mainly dominated by both Somali-born and non-Somali scholars, such as Lewis (1961, 1965, 1964, 1972, 1967, 1982, 1994, 1999, 2002, & 2008), Samatar and Abdi, I (1989, 1987, 1988, 1994, 1997), Menkhaus (2004 and 2003), Adam (2008; 1997, 1998), Bradbury, M (1994), Samatar, S.S (1993, 1997). According to Osman (2008), the literature on the causes of the Somali State conflict is indeterminate, he argues "despite this human catastrophe and suffering, the literature on the causes of Somalia's conflict remains inconclusive". The conflict has been explained as lack of governance and poor leadership (Samatar 1993; Samatar 1994; Hashim 1997), from the problems of running for wealth and power (Kusow 1994; Mukhtar & Kusow 1993; Besteman 1999; Lee Casanelli and Besteman 1996) or from bad economic policy and lack of sound developmental policies (Osman, 2007; Mubarak, 1996). Other studies postulated the Somali conflict as "continuing from stone age ancestral clan rivalries but using 'Star Wars military' violence" (Besteman 1999:4).

## The Economic and Political Situation during the Socialist Regime

In this section of the paper, the general situation of the Somali state during the socialist regime was discussed. Most of the economic analyses are further discussed in the third chapter of the paper. We argue from this point that, Somalia's economic system drifted from a mixed economy (colonial system) to centralized (Socialist System) under the military dictatorship of General Mohamed Siad Barre, who seized power in October 1969. The first charter of the Somali regime empathized more on the central role of the state in society, it assured that every Somalian has the right to work, to get social justice, good participation in national development and it should end to clan nepotism under the supervision of the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC).

In 1976 the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP) mobilized a national program, such as a 1972-74 campaign to eradicate illiteracy, a program which is participated by the high school students to teach their fellow nomads. Barre vowed that the intention was to turn the Somali nomads into a modern and developed socialist state, to which he claimed people could prosper and look for development and leadership, and welfare instead of the clan. He embodied for the nation that he was the president and 'aabaha Qaranka' (father of the Somali nation), Barre. (Bradbury, M. 1997; Ahmed Samatar, 1985).

According to Abdi Samatar (1985), Scientific Socialism's attack on the culture of the Somali people was directly linked with authoritarian and state control of the whole economy. Although the government's so-called 'policy' was to decentralize state authority, and to enable participation for all in development, all state structures were controlled by the state authority. In this case, Barre controlled all formal government institutions.

Ahmed Samatar (1988) noted that Barre vowed, it is their duty as talented leaders to work for their fellowmen with justice and dignity. Barre said in his speech: "One of the major principles in "socialism" says that, under the socialist regime, it is the privilege and duty of the strong and talented leaders to use their superior strength and wealthy powers to serve their fellow men without distinction of class, nation or greed." (cited in Ahmed Samatar, 1988: 148).

What happened in the Somali Republic at the time was, however, completely the opposite. Therefore, the argument in this paper is that both colonialism and socialism were not a good experiment in the case of Somalia. Moreover, socialism aggravated many social, political and economic crises in

Somalia from dictatorship to disintegration. In this matter, it can be argued in another way that, maybe an African/Arab-style socialism, could have been a suitable policy option. When the Horn of Africa has become an important geostrategic location during the inauguration of the Suez Canal in 1869, the colonial powers started to arrive and secured the territory in the long coasts of Somalia.

The British established their protectorate of British Somaliland in 1887 in the north (British Somaliland), then paralleled by the establishment of the protectorate of French Somaliland later in 1885, and finally, an Italian colony settled in the southern shores in 1889 (Samatar and David Laitin, 1987).<sup>8</sup> All the Somalian territories have been divided among European powers, the Ethiopian empire at the time also took over the Somali-inhabited Ogaaden<sup>9</sup>, while the Northern Frontier District (NFD) of Kenya became part of British colonial mosaic, the Somali people found themselves in a struggle with five different powers at the end of 19th century (Balthasar, D. 2012; Samatar, S. 1993).

According to Ismail, Ahmed et al (1999), nomadic pastoralism was the major livelihood of the Somali people in the Somali peninsula. Before the European invasion in the middle of the 19th century, there was a massive migration of Somali people into different areas, where non-Somalis were originally populated.

The analysis at this point put forward different claims about the root causes of the Somali State Conflict. A special reference is given to the political and economic impacts of socialism in Somalia. The Somalian political and social structure, however, mostly consists of clan families, subdivided into sub-clans<sup>10</sup>. The family members of each sub-clan, which is basically called a 'dia' paying group<sup>11</sup> have their internal tradition agreement to support each other and share certain payments of blood compensation. They have their own traditional leader called 'elders' and each sub-clan have their own council of elders who have certain responsibilities. During the colonial period, all elders were under the payroll of the colonial office, they were the legitimate representatives of respective groups. During the emergency situation,

<sup>8</sup> For details see Samatar, S. *etal* (1987) *Somalia: Nations in search of a state*, See also Dominik Balthasar (2012)

<sup>9</sup> In this paper the word 'Ogaadeen' refers to the present day of the Somali Region of Ethiopia

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix Page

<sup>11</sup> In this paper, the term 'dia-paying' related to clan members who have collective responsibilities such as blood compensation and the like.

each member of the 'dia paying group' acts as an active member, who has an obligation to help each one undergoing hardship circumstances during the crises. In the crisis period, every member must be observed to be acting in a good character and must be helpful. According to Mubarak (1996), the clan "is a 'myth' invented by outsiders" (Mubarak, 1996). According to Ismail Ahmed et al (1999), the majority of the current studies or examinations of the socio-political crisis of the Somali people are based on as noted misconceptions and theoretical generalizations which is supposed that Somalis are socially unique at the same time culturally and linguistically homogenous society. Therefore, our thesis agrees to the point that, many analysts had failed to analyze properly by ignoring the complexities of the political reality of the Somalis, while mostly focusing on an exploration of state conflict based on clannism and segmentation'. Ahmed Samatar (1999) argues that on the topic of clans and lineage structures, many scholars have raised clanship as the most dominant factor in the Somali contemporary political and social system. Therefore, understanding clan and lineage in the contemporary Somali politics, is not sufficient to understand their political and social structure. Many NGOs show charts as an illustration of Somali clan genealogy; thus, this concept is superimposed on many factions, and this shows the disorder of the literature on Somali society when it comes to the clan. While not rejecting the cases mentioned, the argument in this paper, in order to understand the State conflict of Somalia, is that it is important to look beyond the clan issue. Agreeing to Adam, H.M. (1994), the unification of the two Somali territories of the North (British Somaliland) and South (Italian Somaliland) was a major problem and this could be the root cause of the Somali Conflict. In his argument, he further noted: "[.....]the rapid union of the two Somali territories to form the 'United' Somali state in 1960 was a great challenge to the new government, because soon after independence, the Somalilanders (Northern Clans) became disillusioned with the way the union was proceeding and indeed voted 'No' in the unification referendum" <sup>12</sup> (Adam, 1994: *ibid*). But we disagree with him at this point, because the main dream after independence was the unification of all Somali territories, not only South and North but also the other regions which were under colonial rulers, including the Somali Region (Ethiopia) and NFD (Kenya) and French Somaliland (present-day Djibouti). Adam (1994) also noted that the interest of unionization of the two

<sup>12</sup> For details see Adam (1994) Somalia: A Terrible Beauty Being Born? In *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and the Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, Zartman (ed). Lynne Rienner Publishers, London UK

Somali colonies while Somaliland initially (independent) accepted conditions demanded by southerners, moreover Mogadishu became the capital city and the center for the Somali parliament. In addition, the Southerners held all the major important posts of the government, plus a majority of the parliament seats. Therefore, because of the increasing discontent, southern leaders started to further marginalize their northern colleagues.

From a socio-economic point of view, the civilian government's development program also failed to tackle the serious problems of underdevelopment and socioeconomic problems in the north with the problems inherited from the colonial administration. Despite the integration of the two colonial systems, serious corruption has been accredited to the public sector. However, the Somalilanders (clans in the north) were not the only group who suffered from the union. The Rehanwein clans from the two-river region in Somalia, who had the same number of seats with Hawiye and Darod (the two other major clan families) in the south before the unification of the Somali north and south, also became marginalized (Mukhtar, 1996). Abdi Ismail (2010) posits in the case of tribalism of Barre and noted "There was little progress on this front. By the mid-1970s, the resistance of Somali politics to tribalism was observed .... one possibility is that Barre, although he had explicitly rejected tribalism, consciously used clan harmony as a control mechanism." (Abdi Ismail, 2010:147).

In addition to that argument, clan control was Barre's political game after the military coup. We agree with Laitin and Samatar's (1987) proposition that "Siad [ Barre ] displayed what some would call the Majerten clan paranoia from the early period of the revolution".<sup>13</sup> Barre re-legitimized Somali politics with tribal insertion (Abdi Ismail, 2010: *ibid*). As I have mentioned above, the traditionalist approach lies in the Somali clan support and its reflections on the Political Economy of the Somali conflict. Makhubela (2010) surmises that Somalia has been a disintegrated country in terms of clans and sub-clans since 1897 (Lewis, 1994 and 2003). Adam (2008) also has a point, in that during the post-colonial period, from 1960, (when Italian colony of Somalia and British Somaliland united and the Somali Republic was formed), the issues of clan lineage and fragmentation "were further compounded."

Osman (2007) argues that "the Barre military regime became more clanish in character, dominated by the Darod sub-clans of Mareehan, Ogaaden

<sup>13</sup> The *Majeertens* were the clan that held all the key positions of power during the civilian administrations.



and Dhulbahante” (Osman, 2007: 37). Agreeing to Lewis, Makhubela (2010) conjectures: “Somalis have a common ancestry, a single language and belong to the Islamic faith (Sunni), yet they are one of the most divided people along clan lineage and patronage<sup>14</sup>. They are divided into six clan families – Darod, Hawiye, Dir, Isaaq, Digil, and Mirifle/Rahanweyne, which are further divided, according to agnatic descent into subsidiary clans of lineage groups” (Makhubela, 2010:37)

At this point, authors agree with Bradbury M (1994), that the clan structure is, therefore, a fundamental political unit essential for individual and group survival, particularly during conflict times. Menkhus (1995) discusses that most analyses of the prolonged civil conflict and state collapse of Somalia focus on “flawed political leadership as the cause of Somalia’s woes”. Many scholars blame the divisive tactics of the Barre regime, he left a deep legacy of clan animosity on the current political and social system in Somalia, which became the main obstacle to national reconciliation of the Somali people. Other analyses portrayed that “the Somali conflict as ‘continuing from Stone Age ancestral clan rivalries’ but using ‘Star Wars military violence” (Besteman 1999:4). Although many studies suggest that, clan conflicts or ethnicity-based politics somehow affected the Somali State failure over decades, however, some scholars have questioned the validity of this paradigm. In those scholars, Ahmed Samatar and Abdi Samatar wrote: Ultimately, “a political leader’s primary motive is to remain in power and, ultimately, to respond to those who hold them in power. The government and leadership survival slowly became the most important task for the majority of the Somali elite to win the struggle over influential positions. There were, however, some notable exceptions” (Abdi Ismail, 2010: *ibid*).

As Samatar (1988) surmises, all the issue of religion, clanism and political participation had to dealt with in the context of newly developed system of “socialism”. Abolition of clan was first addressed by Barre. All his speeches marked clanism as an ‘evil’. As Samatar (1988), observed, “a general ‘Campaign against Tribalism’ was launched from February to March of 1971” (Samatar, 1988: 149). As I have mentioned earlier the blood compensation locally called ‘diya payment’ was abolished, the weddings and burials were to be held in municipalities.

<sup>14</sup> To understand Somali clans and sub clans, see the *Clan Genealogy of the Somali people* in the Appendix page.

In this part, our thesis would focus on the socialist impact on major institutions of the Somali state at the time, including political institutions, culture, and religious institutions. In this section, I will look into the Somali-Ethiopian war in 1977, which was once said to be “the most turning point of the socialist regime of Somalia”. Somalis are 100% Muslim, therefore, “Socialism” confronted the national religion.

In a long speech Barre, while mentioning the lack of any contradiction between Islam and “Socialism” he declared that: “... Ours is the religion of common man. It stands for equality and justice, consequently, “Socialism” as applied to our particular condition cannot identify religion as the obstacle to the working class and therefore cannot negate it” (Samatar, 1988: 156). Samatar (1988) noted, “the most explosive confrontations were those over the 1974 Family Act”, the law states that women and men should have the same inheritance. Somali religious leaders rejected the law. They declared that their religious values had been attacked, and this act was imposing secularism and bureaucratic invasion. Finally, many religious leaders were arrested, and in 1975 ten Somali Sheikhs (Religious Scholars) were executed in Mogadishu in broad daylight after accusing them of a counter-revolutionary idea. In a speech, Siad Barre said: “If both Islam and “Socialism” advocate, justice, equality and improvements in people’s lives, who can tell me where they differ? Where do they contradict one another? What harm is there in having the faith of Islam, and at the same time applying “Socialism” as an economic and political system through which our country can make progress? I would say none” (Ahmed Samatar, 1988: *ibid*). According to Samatar, not only the religious leaders were confronted, two Military generals<sup>15</sup> from SRC were accused of anti-revolution, as far as 200 other individuals who were arrested with a security sweep. The two generals were convicted in a military tribunal and shot in public in July 1972.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The main aim of this research was to contribute to a better understanding of the existing literature about the analysis of the legitimacy, the implementation of the “Somali Scientific socialism” in Somali republic, and it also mainly focused on the economic and political impact of this ‘system’ on the Somali state. As discussed in the first part, during the cold war, “Socialism “had beco-

<sup>15</sup> Gen. Aynanshe (Vice president) and Gen. Gabyare (Defense minister and member of SRC)

me an active promotion in Africa. Some African countries including Somalia had pursued internal policies that led to totalitarianism and single-party rule. In the case of Somalia, Mohamed Siad Barre seized power in a military coup in 1969 and renamed the country the 'Somalia Democratic Republic' which he claimed, was based on "Scientific Socialism", a principle that he himself did not understand. It was argued in this research that, Siad Barre who did not have a formal education, did not have the basic knowledge of socialist principles, never understood Marxism-Leninism, just to please USSR, adopted "Somali Scientific Socialism", an ideology that [he had claimed] 'was fully compatible with Islam and the reality of the nomadic society', but later proved his endeavors the opposite, leading to such as disunity, nepotism, economic failure and political disintegration in Somalia. During the cold war, Siad Barre aligned Somalia with the Soviets. He mentioned that the clan has been outlawed, but at the same time gave a great share to his sub-clan. Not only clans but all formal political institutions existed during the civilian regime has been suspended. Moreover, all formal government institutions such as parliament, the Supreme Court, and political parties were adjourned. Political associations and gatherings were prohibited, and 'the death penalty' for offenders was implemented by the military.

When the president of the civilian and the democratically elected regime was assassinated by one of his bodyguards with the complicity of the military junta, and they overthrew the civilian regime, this created a political vacuum which shaped the central political chaos of Somalia till today. As discussed in the literature of the Somali state conflict, Siad Barre promised to the Somali nation that, his "socialism" will bring three important prospects, unity and justice; economic independence and sufficiency; and development. However, it proved to be the opposite. The country had experienced disunity and inequality among clans; an economy depending on foreign aid, and food import due to the failure of local agriculture and production. Moreover, it has been discussed that, there are multilateral approaches for understanding the Somali state conflict. As Makhubela (2010) noted, there were many additional problems with the Somali case, the colonial legacy; Siad Barre's repression; competition for land and food resources; clan rivalries; clan inequality; exclusion from power and wealth sharing; the economic decline under Barre; the hyper-militarization of the Somali nation due to the abundance of weapons acquired during the years of conflict. However, his analysis is missing the impact of "Somali Socialism" and how the economy failed under the

Barre regime. We argue in this research that, “Barre’s Socialism” was a major factor of both economic catastrophe and political upheavals in post-independent Somalia. Abdi Ismail (2010) described the presence of the Soviet Union in Somalia as an “unhappy principle”. Although there is no clear evidence that shows that Moscow orchestrated both the assassination of the civilian president and support of the military takeover, there were obvious coincided interests.

In this paper, it is argued that the foreign strategic interests of Somalia have always been commercial, because of its location. Soviet Russia used Somalia as a geostrategic place to influence the region and to forward its cold war objectives. Historically, Britain started its stronghold in Yemen in 1839 to protect its trade route to India. France and Italy had also signed treaties with some Somali clan leaders to express their interest in the region. These European colonial powers had left a deep legacy of a system of centralized government grafted into an un-centralized political system of a pastoral people. We argue that the colonial system of Somalia had created a complex division among clans (Laitin and Samatar, 1987).

The other school of thought, instrumentalist argues that clans are not the problem, it is like an institution or ideology used by the elite or ruling class, and outsiders who had a foreign interest in Somalia also used it too. According to Ahmed I. Samatar, the “Somali problem is not the clan reality and its culture, but the elite manipulation of the ruling class is the real virus of the Somali case”. Furthermore, the ‘socialist regime’ of Somalia with the help of soviets used ‘the clan system’ as an instrument to control the Somali people. He even used it as a political game after the coup and according to many scholars, he was the one who re-legitimated the language of the tribe in Somali Politics (Lewis, 1994; Samatar and Samatar, 2001). Somalia was one of the African countries that adopted “Scientific Socialism “as a tool for their own economic and political development. A military junta came in power in a bloodless coup in 1969; they closed down the parliament; suspended the constitutions and abolished all formal institutions.

Mohamed Siad Barre became a totalitarian dictator. Later, he vowed that the regime’s goal was to put an end to tribalism, clan nepotism, corruption in the public sector, and that those objectives can be achieved through the adoption of his ‘Scientific Socialism.’ As discussed, although Barre vowed that clanism will be replaced by “Somali Scientific Socialism” as a blueprint for democracy, equality, and justice, he illegally gave land and water rights to specific clans that supported his rule (Bestamen, 1993).

The final attempt of this research was the examination of the impact of “Somali Scientific Socialism” on the economy and politics of Somalia with the analytical concepts of instrumentalists’ theory. The argument states that conflict based on ethnicity is by the aims of the political leaders and this is the central point to “the theory” of Instrumentalism. A Brass (1985) argues, “Instrumentalism is an idea which is based upon the concept that ethnic conflict is driven by economic wants, greed, and grievance or it can be the active manipulation of ethnic identities by political leaders for their political gain” (Brass, 1985:120). Therefore, the Soviet Union was the one that took all the decisions to implement and use it as a political tool, for them “Somali Scientific Socialism” was to govern Somalia as geostrategic position and advance their regional objectives. They had built military bases, they trained thousands of military officers in the Somali Republic, they also gave millions of dollars of military aid.

As discussed above, Instrumentalism argues that ethnic conflict arises from thoughtful manipulation by elites [in the case of Somalia, political leaders with clan leaders] on the basis of the rationality decision to encourage ethnic conflict. According to his explanation of Instrumentalism, Fenton (2010) noted that “if the conduct happening as a result of ethnic attachments could be seen to be serving a collective political or economic end, then the ethnic action “could be said to be instrumental” (Fenton, 2010:74).

This research aimed to highlight the element of ‘elite’ manipulation by Siad Barre as an authoritarian leader in the Somali political economy, this system later resulted in deep economic and social disintegration in Somalia. When Somalia’s military leaders decided for “Socialism” in 1970, the Soviets had tripled the military aid to Somalia (Lewis, 1967). For that matter, Lewis (2002) believed that Somali leaders chose “Scientific Socialism” just to lobby their military aid, which has a motive to push forward what they called Somali irredentism (Pan-Somalism) as an objective. Pansomalism was a strategy to unite all Somalis in the horn of Africa and to invade Ethiopia claiming it occupies a Somali ‘Huad land’. In this research, it has been argued that the major objective of the coup leaders was to choose ‘socialist-style’ economy to further their regional political objectives, such as Pan-Somalism<sup>16</sup> and bringing back the Promised Land in Ethiopia.

<sup>16</sup> Pan-Somalism: The Post-World War II ideology favoring a single state for all Somalis. The idea believes that, Somalis have common culture and language justifying to create one Somali state.

Undoubtedly, there was a serious impact of “Somali Scientific Socialism” on the economy and politics of Somalia. Economically, Somalia had been very poor, agriculture was the major sector of their economy, it contributes the highest share to the GDP and export earnings, and it also provided the livelihood for the majority of the population. Another important sector is an urban private sector (mainly small enterprises and other Businesses) which is run by a small commercial class. The third sector, mainly the service sector was dominated by the public employees like, military, police, an employee of ministries, parliamentarians, and other public servants.

The major arguments of my research were that the country’s economy was devastated by the “socialist regime”, in the sense that its policies were later diverted and mislead. For the regime, “Scientific Socialism” was to build a new ‘socialist Somalia’ and grant required military facilities from the Soviets. Siad Barre secured the Soviet’s economic and military support. Although the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) convinced the Somali people that, “Socialism” is the only way for the rapid transformation of their country into a developed and advanced one, but their performances were proven to the opposite, such as clan animosity, foreign aid increment, and economic failure.

The regime created two consecutive development plans in 1971-73 and 1974-1978. As shown in the Data used in chapter three, the productive sector of the economy, such as Agriculture which constitutes the largest share of the country’s GDP, had been neglected. In this regard, a small amount of investment was allocated to agriculture and the livestock sector, while the unproductive sectors such as government administration have been given almost 50% of the investment, such as security and other government administration<sup>17</sup>. As some scholars argued, Somalia became one of the highest militarized states in Africa (Samatar, 1988; Sofinsky, 1974). If you closely look at the status of the economy in this period, agriculture, and major industrial productions were devastated.

Another major economic catastrophe was that the revolutionary goal of making Somalia self-sufficient in food has not been achieved, and Barre failed to decrease the foreign dependency in trade, in the meantime, the trade deficit increased to millions of dollars and food imports were drastically becoming high. Although food imports existed before the military regime, it had been increased substantially after the regime’s policy of self-sufficien-

<sup>17</sup> See Samatar (1988: 45) for details



cy and economic independence failed. During the worst drought of 1971, Somalia had to rely on food aid. Barre and his coup leaders promised that "Socialism" will reduce the foreign dependency and encourage the economic sufficiency, but the regime's record was very poor and fell short of the goals initially vocalized. The economic performance was very disappointing. In the first years of its rule production of almost all major food crops declined, due to lack of investment and lack of proper training of farmers, severe drought also contributed to the problem. This created that the country has to rely on food aid and large loans. Somalia's economy during this period was extremely weak and poor in comparison with the neighboring countries, such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Rwanda.

Politically, the military government prohibited strikes and the death penalty was implemented against offenders. The SRC which was the supreme council and the majority of the members were from the military was appointed to have all the executive decisions. During this period, Siad Barre became the judge, executor, law-giver and supreme authority. The 'Socialist regime' became authoritarian, there were no constitutional limitations on the power of the central government and the president. The contraction of the country's economy, excessive unwise spending by the socialist regime, such as pouring money on unproductive sectors of the (mainly defense and administration) and acute deficiencies in implementation and management contributed to creating a harrowing economic condition in the Somali society.

The major drawback of public employment was that the regime ignored the deteriorating situation of the public employment sector, the investment in the employment sector dramatically decreased. Moreover, there was great mismanagement in the public expenditure, the economic productive sectors gained few shares, and unproductive sectors like general services gained almost 90 percent of the public expenditure. More importantly, the social services sector like education and health were totally neglected and gained less than 3 percent. The Somali military regime invested more on the military to pursue its regional objectives.

There were contradictions between the Islamic values and "socialism" in Somalia, in this regard, the family act which states that men and women should have the same inheritance was not welcomed among the religious scholars, and therefore ten theologians were executed in public in 1975. Not only the religious leaders but two major generals from the military senior officials were also that they were working against the revolutions, later the two



generals were executed in public. Although the formations of SRSP was to decentralize the political structure of Somalia, General Siad Barre controlled in every aspect of the state.

Therefore, this research concludes that, “Somali Scientific socialism” in the Somali Republic had an intense negative impact on both the economy and the politics of the Somali state, from economic catastrophe, for example, failure of agriculture and industrial production, huge trade deficit, extensive food import, and complete collapse of the economy into political chaos and tyranny. It made clan divisions and augmented ethnic clashes due to nepotism, disparity, treachery, ethnic genocide and the emergence of guerrilla warfare organizations which later ousted the regime in 1991.

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