

# **HYBRID SECURITY GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA**

***HYBRID POLITICAL ORDERS IN THE HORN: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS  
BETWEEN SOMALILAND AND PUNTLAND***

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## **Abstract**

In terms of local and traditional peace and state building in Africa, the Somaliland experience stands out clearly. A series of peace conferences since 1991 led and owned by Somalilanders themselves resulted in a peaceful and democratic transition and a hybrid political order. A study on Hybrid Security Governance in Africa, the case of Somaliland offers important lessons concerning our general theories about security governance in Africa, the role that political elites play in conflict resolution, indigenous systems of governance, and the failure of existing international approaches to state reconstruction. We can point to concrete observations from more than three years of researching hybrid security governance. The article provides a comparative analysis on the experiences of Somaliland and its neighbor Puntland to further shed light on the nature of hybrid security order in the Horn of Africa. It also explores the assumptions embedded in the works of the classic Western theorists in the light of the experiences of Somaliland and Puntland in order to show that the underlying conceptual structure of international state reconstruction work needs to be rethought. This emerging evidence of organic approaches to building and sustaining peace in parts of Africa offer lessons for other parts of the world. As such, understanding the processes that create hybrid political orders seems an attractive approach to peace building in Africa.

## 1. Introduction

In the conflict-ridden Horn of Africa, particularly in the weak states of Sudan, South Sudan, and Somalia, Western led peace-making has become a key means for the West to create states, fund and drive peace processes, intervene in the internal affairs of states, and press on these states wholly unsuitable Western institutions of governance. The process in Somaliland and to some extent neighboring Puntland however departs from this norm. The processes of conflict resolution and peace building in Somaliland and Puntland have followed a markedly different trajectory from that of many countries in the Horn of Africa and the results are glaringly evident. Particularly Somaliland represents a resilient and dynamic hybrid, which needs to be better understood. Currently we do not know enough as the evidence base for and scholarship on exactly why and how this happened in these areas and not in others is insufficient. Besides there has never been any attempt to compare the two. The article covers the salient features on the political transitions in Somaliland and Puntland and how this impacted on peace and state reconstruction. The author followed rigorous procedures in identifying similarities and differences and their import on the nature and scope of hybridity in both regions.

Almost all aspects of comparison, not just the one specifically on hybridity- and the role of traditional leadership in it- contain an implicit, as yet underdeveloped, critique of prevailing paradigms for peace and state building. The political reconstruction in both, narrowing its focus to a single issue of peace building, illustrates how this comes about. One way to address what connects them all is to understand through our comparative analysis how the specific contexts in which political and armed movements develop impacts on the nature of hybridity. This lens in turn allows us to tackle the broader issues identified here. In this article peace building experiences and hybrid political orders in the two critical polities in Somalia is examined in order to amend the assumptions the international community brings to state reconstruction—not only in the Horn of Africa but elsewhere. To be sure, the liberal peacebuilding approach has not managed to deliver stable peace and security. Since 1991 the international system has struggled and failed to recreate a state on the territory of the former Somalia. Rather proto-state systems have been formed by Somalis themselves in Somaliland and Puntland and alternative forms and structures of governance and order exist in other parts of Somalia, but none enjoys international recognition (Leonard & Samantar, 2013). These structures are often of a hybrid nature.

These include the incorporation of local or traditional authority figures into parts of formal governance, and efforts to institutionalize and professionalize local or traditional judicial mechanisms, or both. The concept of hybridity highlights the existence of multiple non-state providers of “security, welfare and representation”, as the state shares “authority, legitimacy, and capacity” with other actors, networks and institutions that transcend the formal/informal distinction (Wennmann, 2009). Somaliland and Puntland can be characterized in this way. So far, there has been little study of how and why this came about. Besides, hybrid refers to the fact that the informal systems are not well understood in the literature. Clearly, the clan elders have played a crucial role in the peaceful transition, and are now a similarly significant force in contemporary government, jointly with elected politicians. Meanwhile, Somaliland has a functioning, effective and legitimate political order. This order combines customary institutions in particular councils of elders (Guurti) and modern state institutions based on free and fair elections, such

as a parliament and a president. Yet in emphasizing hybrid governance and hybrid orders we are not fully acquainted with the specific socio-economic and political contexts that allow traditional leadership to play a preeminent role in political transitions.

The case of Somaliland and to some extent the Puntland region thus departs consciously and deliberately from the case in many African countries where 'state-building' and corresponding security sector reform (SSR) processes focus on structural and formal institutional arrangements of the state, rather aiming in principle at a hybrid political and security order in which the security sector and security governance came to reflect a clan, customary, and state organizations and structures. Unlike the process in the rest of Somalia, which depends on foreign aid and military coercion, the process in Somaliland, and to some extent Puntland, relied on home-grown institutions, processes and interest groups. Unlike most parts of Somalia, which followed top-down approaches of state and peace building, Somaliland and Puntland followed bottom-up approaches. Central to both peace processes are traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution, incorporating the role of traditional leadership, which is largely disregarded in many parts of southern Somalia.

Thus, this African case study has much to offer global processes in the same way that global approaches might contain important lessons for Africa. Viewed in this way, much can be made of the evidence that challenges conventional assumptions and patterns of peace building – some of which confirm what is already known in the literature; and others which might belong in the realm of emerging/ new evidence. We already know, for example, that while Somaliland and Puntland followed similar trajectory of peace building there are important differences that needs to be taken into account, and the article attempts to provide the subtlety in both experiences. The fact that Somaliland's hybrid security governance was developed independent of donor influence is also very important. As such the comparative analysis between Somaliland and Puntland builds on the research on hybrid security governance in Somaliland.

## **2. Perspectives on Somaliland and Puntland.**

It is often contended that state reconstruction in Puntland since the mid-1990s resembles that of Somaliland. Both Puntland and Somaliland are located in Northern regions of Somalia. They both integrated traditional leaders into the political decision making. Unlike in much of south Somalia where war lords and their militias dominated politics the systems of governance in Somaliland and Puntland were shaped through extensive, locally led processes of consultation with citizens of assemblies of elders and their representatives (Leonard & Samantar, 2013). The similarities emanate from having the earlier liberation movements to the Barre regime to acquiring liberated territories which formed a basis for a nascent administration which in turn allowed for a locally owned and locally funded political process to happen (Medhane, 2008). In 1991, Somali National Movement/SNM/ captured the north western regions of Somalia which became known as Somaliland. The Somalia Salvation Democratic Front/SSDF/ led by Abdullahi Yosuf took over Puntland after successfully expelling an Islamist extremist group in 1992. However it was in 1998 that Puntland was established as an autonomous regional administration.

Both processes were aided by father-like figures that had history and name in Somali politics long before the collapse of the Somali state in 1991. Most important of all there was minimal foreign interference in

the peace processes a stark difference from the heavy handed foreign involvement and massive intervention of regional and western powers in southern Somalia. Though the regional grouping IGAD and particularly Ethiopia is said to have encouraged Abdullahi Yusuf of Puntland to pursue a bottom-up approach to peace and security the process was solely led by Puntland political and clan leaders (Medhane, 2015). Puntland's formula for integrating clans and traditional leaders mirrored that developed at Somaliland's formative conferences. In a way, leaders in Puntland mimicked Somaliland, establishing a government through inter-clan conferences and traditional authorities (Hoehne, 2015). Indeed a major common theme that requires rigorous analysis would be the dominant role of leading export traders in the political economy of Somaliland and Puntland. This refers to the nature of Somali pastoralism one which is characterized by a unique but highly developed capitalist system, dominated by a handful of export traders based in the port of Berbera (Somaliland) and to a lesser extent Bosaso (Puntland).

In the 1990's, the leading export traders of Berbera have played a key role in establishing and stabilizing the Somaliland state, while those in Bosaso have played a similar role in the north-east. Hence, a major consideration is the role of a domestic capitalist class in the formative political processes in both areas. Examining the role of export particularly livestock traders in the political reconstruction of Somaliland and Puntland is critical in understanding the different trajectories of peace building in Somalia as a whole. However the similarities end there. Evidently, the process in Somaliland was far more conclusive than the one in Puntland. The colonial history is different which has an impact on the political culture and conduct of the political elite. While Somaliland was established as a successor to the British Protectorate, Puntland emerged as the administration for all Harti clans in the north-east. The separate existence of Somaliland, therefore, is based on a territorial logic and Puntland on a genealogical logic.

Whether it is about the robust presence of traditional leadership, a strong livestock trading class or educated and technocratic political elite in Somaliland, the impact of a unique British rule should not be discounted. This largely explains the origin and development of a hybrid political order in Somaliland. On a relative level, the British colonial system in Somaliland did neither oppress nor modernize it. British colonialism in Somaliland could be described as 'indirect of an indirect rule'. One of these explanations pointed out that Somaliland has not been a Colony, but a Protectorate, with less detectable mineral and agricultural resources than other regions in Africa. The British had occupied it but their presence and ambition was minimal. The British occupied Somaliland in order to safeguard their position in Aden and to assure the supply of mutton to their military Garrison there. The Somaliland clan chiefs signed treaties with Britain between 1884 and 1886 and proclaimed as Protectorate in 1887. Although the role played by the British Colonial rule in Somaliland in the conservation of the traditional system of governance is undeniable and has been closely related to the above mentioned facts, nevertheless unlike the most of the East and West Africa countries, where certain level of modernization had been introduced by the British Colonial administration, Somaliland had been exception and remained largely out of the main stream of urbanization in those colonial times.

The British Colonial administration left the country without significant change, without slightest feature of modernization, a country without single paved road, without modern agriculture and without single industrial site. As the saying goes 'the British left this part of the country almost as they found it' (Adem Musa Jibril, 2005). It is critical here to mention that the British left behind only six elementary schools,

four Intermediate schools, and only one secondary school. Moreover, British education authorities prohibited political literature and practice in the schools with the aim to produce generations of non-politicized class of technocrats for their Colonial purposes (Ibid, 2011)<sup>2</sup>. One would argue that in Somaliland, to a degree, Western ministerial political values have been infused with pastoral democracy. Equally prominent and markedly different from Puntland is the collective sense of victimhood in the war against Siad Barre in which the government in the south destroyed entire towns in the north-west of the country and bombed their inhabitants. As pressures rose up against Siad Barre, the regime becomes more aggressive escalating repressive measures against the entire Somali people in general and Somaliland in particular.

In 1988 Somaliland has turned into a battlefield, and serious attempts were made to cleansing the whole Issaqi population in order to force them to surrender and embed their land to other Somali clans. As events moved ahead the regime's focus turned on against the Issaqi population, in a time when the centre of the resistance tilted towards the north. From the early 1980s, the north was administered by increasingly harsh rule emanating from the capital, with savage reprisals meted out to the local population, who were assumed to be pro-SNM and subjected to severe economic and political harassment (I.M.Lewis, 2008). The aims and objectives of this notorious policy were to clear away the resistance of SNM supporters as the backbone of the armed opposition. This is because SNM has sustained strong mass movement, throughout the ten years of armed struggle, during which the regime was deeply involved in a practical implementation of infamous policy of "divide and rule", the aim of which was to isolate the SNM in order to deny of them the support and solidarity from the other Somali clans

The second critical issue to look at refers to the presence of a vibrant trading class that has been key to the political reconstruction of Somaliland. In spite of the lack of interest to develop the main economic sectors, the British needed Somaliland as a marketplace for cheap and fresh meat for its military in the Aden Colony and as a result there emerged and flourished livestock trade between the Aden Colony and Somaliland. Out of this regional trade opportunities, trade between Somaliland and Aden Colony flourished and a class of livestock traders emerged, whose financial growth of capital was unparalleled in any part in the Somali speaking region. This has led to the expansion of Berbera, Burao and Hargeisa cities to become the most important commercial boom in the Somali region. Those commercial livestock traders also become the wealthiest indigenous class in the Somali region. Whilst, in the Italian Somali part import export trade has been entirely under the control of the Italians and Yemeni traders throughout the colonial period, and remained so until late 1960s.

### **3. The SNM as a Liberation Movement**

The third major distinction lies in the nature of the SNM and SSDF as 'liberation movements'. The political and organizational form of SNM corresponded to the nature of the Somaliland society and the rationale on the ground. Organizational and leadership make-up of the SNM, in relative terms, was far more

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<sup>2</sup> Discussions with Adem Musa; Hargiessa, June 2005.

democratic than the SSDF. The central and executive committees of the SNM, as well as the military command of the organization represented the urban elite and their political orientations. On the other hand, the Council of elders (Guurti) represented the traditional value of governance and both had their respective roles as well as joint missions. The alliance of these forces came as a result of a historical necessity dictated by times of difficulties. In spite of its heterogeneous character the SNM had been a cohesive and truly democratic organization. Unlike the SSDF which was led by a strongman, the SNM was like an egalitarian organization. From the beginning, the Movement practiced a degree of internal democracy unique amongst the Somali resistance movements of the period (Drysdale, 1994). SNM differed from SSDF in three important respects: first it applied democratic processes as its leaders were freely and fairly elected periodically; secondly, it was led by its best educated and most experienced professionals, politicians, diplomats; and thirdly its main revenue came from individuals monthly contribution from Issaq professionals, workers and businessman in the Diaspora.

SNMs ability to conduct six general party congresses in the ten years of the armed struggle marked its internal strength and stamina as modern democratic as well as customary oriented mass organization. At the conclusion of each these congresses the top leadership of the organization had been either re-elected or changed democratically and peacefully. As far as the leadership of the SNM and its impact on hybridity is concerned one can point to the manner in which the organization has been strictly following, the bottom-up and participatory approaches in conducting its General Congresses. During elections, the procedure demanded that each clan-community's share in the Central Committee of the party should go through a specific procedure. Each clan would select 20 persons to be their candidates to the Central Committee, and then the Congress would endorse only ten among them (Adem, 2005). That modus operandi combines both systems, the traditional and modern aspects concerning the election process. This is to make sure the quality of leadership, in one aspect and on the other to guarantee the democratic participation of the communities. The communities used to choose their candidates on consensus basis, whilst the procedure included democratic election of both bottom-up and up-bottom approaches.

Abdullahi Yusuf's of SSDF on the other hand remained a one man show. This had an impact on the level and quality of participation by the traditional leadership in the political processes. Formed in 1979 following a failed coup in the wake of the Ogaden war, the group was dominated by Majeerteen officers led by Abdullahi Yusuf. Besides, it was awash with huge amount of foreign cash, prominently from the Libyan leader Mummer Ghadafi. Worthy to mention here is that the other two organizations of the South of Somalia at the time, the SSDF, and the United Somali Congress led by General Mohamed Farah Aided had not been experiencing any kind of internal democracy. This fact reflected the dissimilarities of the two Somali sides of the opposition to the regime in Mogadishu, as it clearly reflected in the everlasting failures met by the peace process in the South. On the other hand, the SNM track had been just the opposite. Hence, a major starting point of consideration in this comparative analysis is the SNM as an African Liberation Movement.

Although not party to grand decolonization era, the decade long war of the SNM resembles the second liberation movements that the Horn of Africa gave birth in the 1980s. But unlike the rest of them, which were hierarchical and had a strong military character, the SNM remained an egalitarian organization. The SNM is a different construct, definitely in Somalia (Medhane, 2003). While its focus on armed struggle

against the Barre regime makes it slightly similar to other armed liberation movements in Somalia and the region at large, its failure to link its struggle with a strong ambition for power and control distances it from other liberation movements in Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Partly as a result of this the SNM crumbled during in-fighting between 1992 and 1995. This had impacted on the transition to power and the emergence of Somaliland as an independent entity by an assembly of elders meeting at Burco on 18 May 1991 and the election of Mohammed Ibrahim Egal, who was not part of the SNM leadership, as president in 1993. Ibrahim Egal, had not been part of the SNM struggle, but enjoyed respect as an elder statesman. The reasoning behind his selection is that there was no single party strong enough to wield undue political influence. A key consideration is the nature of funding the reconciliation processes. One of these is undoubtedly the sense of local 'ownership' of the process.

Negotiations occurred largely away from the view of external actors. Unlike in south Somalia the vast bulk of the money required in Somaliland's reconciliation meetings was sourced from Somalilanders – either in the diaspora or within the country. Subsequently, people in Somaliland adopted local traditions of conflict settlement and—in the absence of external support—succeeded in rebuilding a peaceful, stable, largely democratic polity that, by early 2017, had lasted for longer than two decades. Using indigenous peace-making procedures, the various Somaliland communities held a considerable number of local meetings and national conferences to re-establish the peace between the different communities and laid the foundations for a hybrid political order and security governance mechanisms.

In a comparable way, all political systems are hybrids of formal—meaning rule-bound—and informal—meaning based on personal relationships. However, Somaliland stands out as a strong evidence base for the survival and resilience of hybrid orders. It subscribes to those systems that combine formalized procedures from both inside and outside the formal sector. These include the incorporation of local or traditional authority figures into parts of formal governance. And the preconditions for it were provided by the nature and modus operandi of the SNM and the political elite outside of it. It also means to a large extent the essence of the Somali social characteristics, the "Pastoral Democracy" which was entrenched into the soil of theory by Prof. I. M. Lewis half a century ago didn't yet dry up all-at-once as it continues to be an influential factor in uniting the different factions of the SNM and enriching Somaliland's political transition. However, the extensive local political consultations and traditional conflict settlement that led to hybrid political order could be threatened by the emergence of new forces such as Islamists and Diasporic elites who has a strong sense of competition and a 'winner takes all' attitude (ADP, 2008).

#### **4. The Role of New Actors**

The impact of the Diaspora in the socio-economic and political life of Somalis is glaringly evident. The economic influence of the Somali Diaspora is greatly reflected in politics as many Somalis from the US and Europe have continued to rise to cabinet positions and top echelons of political power.

Similarly, political Islam had advanced considerably it led to the emergence of powerful armed groups and powerful political players. Political Islam is not new to Africa, but has evolved over the last two decade in more significant ways. This is not just a reflection of jihadist group's recent inventiveness and adaptation, but the culmination of longer-term historical and global trends (Medhane, 2003). It has continued to

spread building both on economic decline, moral populism, international connectedness and classic vulnerabilities of the state. Indeed, it is among these variables that the deeper and enduring sources of violent extremism and its solutions can be located (Ibid, 2016). The regional state of Puntland was established soon after the military defeat of the Islamist. On the other hand it took several years for Islamists to enter military politics in Somaliland. Meanwhile, in recent years the influence of radical Islamic groups in Somaliland has gone to the extent of attempting a force-backed takeover of power in October 2015. However, Islamists began practicing significant political roles from 2010, when they occupied key posts in Mr. Silaanyo's government, from 2010 to 2015 during which they had been fully in charge in the Somaliland government through the Minister of the Presidency. The purpose of the coup was believed to be an attempt to have an exclusive Islamist government the forms of which are not yet clear. Largely out of favor at the top, Islamists are still very much a feature of Somaliland electoral politics. In spite of this failure at take-over of political power the fact remains that political Islam has already established strong political basis all over the Somali inhabited regions, if not in the Horn region at large (Adem, 2016). The following factors helped the Salafist's ideals to thrive in this region and beyond.

☒ The huge Petrodollar funds streaming from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States, mainly in the form Al-Zakat sent through Islamic Charities to be passed to the poor and needy people, but instead used in business and in politics, through which political Islam gradually became overriding in what is known as a war economy.

☒ The second area they conquered is in the field of Islamic education institutions where they have changed the entire Islamic education system that previously belonged to the Sufis sect of Islam, and which they turned it into politicized institutions of the Wahhabist variant, to the extent that in Hargeisa alone, for instance people are talking about the presence of around thousand Mosques, while there were only 8 Mosques in Hargeisa 25 years ago (Ibid). Now all that become Salafia nests, and there operates much higher number of Koranic schools (Madrassas) with much more number of private Islamic schools of all levels that run by Political Islam. This is on the top of scholarships given to Somali youth by Saudi and Sudanese universities.

☒ There are reports that many students from these schools have joined Al-shabaab, some reports mentioned that 80 students only from one of these school in two years.

☒ The third area of strong economic domain is the Hawaala, the well-known Money transfer system.

☒ The fourth area they conquered is the Islamic banking. Through these Banks they have managed to monopolise the entire financial system. Noteworthy here is that they have been blocking the private non Islamic law to be passed by the Somaliland Parliament for the last ten years.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Discussions with Adem Musa Jibril and several political and civil society leaders in Hargeisa and Addis Ababa over the years attest to the same analysis.

Many parts of the continent continue to be attractive to international and local jihadist groups, which could become parasitic on prevailing socio-economic problems, seizing upon ideological dimensions to local grievance. The same applies to Puntland and Somaliland cannot be any different except that it is not rewarded for its achievement in promoting peace and reconciliation. Moreover, the lack of international recognition also imperils foreign support and development aid which continues to perpetuate the existing socio-economic problems. This fact alone plays into the ideology of the Islamists as they continue to belittle the failure of the international system to help local people; hence able to mobilize public opinion for extremist agendas.

It is clear that Islamists and the Diaspora command strong economic leverage and have shown greater political ambitions than in previous years. Their economic influence and conduct of politics might not bode well with the continuation of a peaceful, democratic, and progressive hybrid political order, the full impact of which remains to be seen. Nonetheless, it can be argued that the evolving political configuration favors city dwellers, intellectuals and members of the diaspora over ordinary people from the hinterlands and traditional leaders, slowly eroding the hybrid political system and security governance for which Somaliland has been known (JEAS, 2013). We therefore need to know the exact nature of the new forces entering Somaliland politics and their impact on hybridity. It is important to know how hybrid processes and institutions respond under stress, or when both internal and external conditions change.

Yet emphasizing on hybrid governance and hybrid orders should not equate with objecting to the possibility of establishing modern political parties or viable states. Rather it means that hybrid systems are not static. Indeed Somaliland proves that they are not relics of the past either, doomed to be swept aside. On the contrary, they are dynamic and flexible. Indeed, some of them may continue to overwhelm institutionalized forms of formal government. These being the case hybrid institutions represent the current governance in Somaliland; they are dynamic, resilient, and locally and regionally linked into both formal and informal systems of political support, communications and finance—often including security governance at all levels. They frequently overrun or subvert recognized forms of governance, justice, and security.

It should be stressed that the use of hybridity here does not involve value judgments. Hybrid institutions of governance may help or subvert, succeed or fail; may benefit or oppress. However, this in itself is a significant departure from the normative terminology of failed, weak, clientelistic, patrimonial and predatory states. Hence, the case of Somaliland is a strong reminder that we will continue to move beyond state-centric notions of justice and security, and allow for a more complete conceptualization of the complex ways formal, informal and hybrid actors enhance and diminish them. Insofar as we accept the presence of strong hybrid security governance as a normative element, we presume that a progressive hybridity is one that is able to provide public goods and to offer mechanisms for accountability for its actions.



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