

## STATE-BUILDING IN SOMALIA: THE CASE FOR LIMITED THIRD PARTY STATE-BUILDING

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### INTRODUCTION: THE FRAGILE EQUILIBRIUM OF SOMALIA

At the heart of contemporary debates regarding approaches to state-building lies Somalia. While the internationally recognized Federal Government of Somalia took office in 2012, continued infighting and cronyism has fragmented political stability. Democratic mechanisms of power transfer, namely elections, have been undermined by corruption, allowing wealthy businessmen and warlords to control the parliament.<sup>1</sup> The government controls most of Somali territory, but the presence of groups such as al-Shabab and Somali pirates has prevented the federal government from establishing a monopoly on the use of force. Despite efforts by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the unwavering strength of al-Shabab suggests that efforts have only succeeded at displacing, not defeating them.<sup>2</sup> This forces actors to remain committed to Somalia, as when they withdraw their support, as Ethiopia did by reducing its troop presence in 2016, al-Shabab regains territory.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the constant fear of an al-Shabab resurgence has kept AMISOM from withdrawing despite tensions between AMISOM and Somali authorities. In terms of its foreign policy, Somalia is defined by its cooperation with the international community to meet its needs. Despite regional cooperation to combat al-Shabab, Somalia struggles to become a part of regional communities such as the East African Community due to requirements for economic reforms. Although the southern Somalia is most often cited for its instability, political problems persist in the north as well. Puntland faces many of the same institutional deficiencies as Somalia due to its focus on the peace process.

While political state-building has taken precedence over economic policy, economic conditions in Somalia have been gradually improving and reforms are underway. However, many of these changes face large hurdles and remain vulnerable to shocks. Weak institutional capacity has hampered the effectiveness of technical assistance from international actors, and the issue of fiscal federalism remains volatile as disagreements arise from various parties. Fiscal and monetary reforms are essential to economic recovery but the slow, fragile transition threatens to ruin the progress made in development so far. Instability has threatened key transport routes and created uncertainty, deterring investment. For example, Somali piracy has created economic hubs centered around illegal commerce which lack the infrastructure to successfully contribute to the Somali economy. The criminal economy has crowded-out legitimate businesses and empowered warlords, further weakening the prospects for institutional

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change.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the lack of coping strategies has left the Somali economy vulnerable to shocks due to weather. The impact of weather is particularly devastating due to its effects on the Somali livestock industry which employs over half of Somalia's population and generates 80% of its foreign-exchange receipts.<sup>5</sup> Other sectors, such as the services sector, have the potential to become economic drivers, but they will require investment and a resolution of political disputes.

To address the issue of Somali state-building, this paper will utilize the concepts of third party state-building and shared sovereignty and apply such concepts to Somalia by comparing them to historical forms of governance in Somalia. This paper concludes that while third party state-building offers a promising way to revive the Somali state, such a measure requires building loyalty and legitimacy, or nation-building, within Somalia first. Alternatively, a third party could take control through full executive authority to resolve the political obstacles posed by local actors. However, this measure is unlikely to produce a sustainable state in Somalia, and given the legacy of intervention tainted by colonialism, should be viewed with skepticism. While third party state-building may be a useful tool to engage Somali institutions, such an approach requires a deeper understanding of Somali nationalism and traditional institutions and will need to be limited in scope. This paper will begin by presenting a brief history of Somalia and the Somali Civil War to illuminate the conditions that enabled the present situation to manifest. Then, it will introduce the concepts of third party state-building and shared sovereignty and trace their application in recent history. After an application of these concepts to Somalia, this paper will explore the possibility of statelessness as an alternative, ultimately concluding that despite the risk of colonialism, a limited version of third party state-building and shared sovereignty can be of assistance to the project of Somali reconstruction.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE FAILED COLONIAL STATE**

The character of Somali national identity stands out from other African identities. Whereas most African states attempt to create a national identity from diverse ethnic groups inside their boundaries, Somalia has essentially one nationality and the Somali population shares an identity with Somalis in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. The Somali cultural identity is a product of a common language (Somali, albeit with regional variations), a belief in common ancestors, shared historical experiences, an Islamic heritage, occupation of a common territory and a pastoral lifestyle.<sup>6</sup> Much of the history of the Somali national identity is not well known due to colonial scholars' preoccupation with political and territorial matters over underlying cultural processes. Additionally, despite the 2500-year long occupation of Somali-speakers on the Horn of Africa, their nomadic lifestyle meant that permanent settlements and artifacts have been difficult to find. The absence of a centralized government also made written records or official documents from pre-colonial Somalia rare. Despite the lack of a state, Somali tribes resolved disputes through a common law system based on kinship ties and Islamic law (qanoon). While clan differences existed, communitarian kin ties

maintained Somali civil society, or a moral commonwealth (*umma*), and prevented a total fracturing of society as some accounts might suggest. Precolonial mechanisms for sustaining civil society may be useful as the Somali people attempt to rediscover their national identity and mend the tears that colonialism has created in the social fabric.

The development of colonial relationships accentuated clan differences and fragmented Somali national identity. The unequal distribution of the benefits of trade to Somalia combined with the zero-sum nature of Somali clan power competition allowed colonial regimes to exploit tensions between groups to strengthen their foothold in Somalia. The Treaty of Berlin in 1884 triggered a scramble for Africa that was particularly devastating for Somali society. For brevity, the most prominent agents of colonialism in Somalia were Britain, France and Italy. As a result of the efforts of the Somali Youth League (SYL) and the Somali National League (SNL), British Somaliland and Southern Somalia (under Italy) united to form the first Somali Republic on July 1, 1960.<sup>7</sup>

The period of the Somali Republic was littered with various problems. Somalis viewed the state with suspicion and rebelled against the leadership. National institutions were violated and economic downturns eventually culminated in the assassination of President Sharmarke in 1979 and the military coup that followed. Upon seizing power, Siad Barre, the leader of the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC), crushed political activity and organization by eliminating the constitution, the Supreme Court and the National Assembly. After Somalia's defeat in the Ogaden War, the Somali political sphere turned inwards as the regime heavily favored clans of Siad Barre's family. The combination of ecological degradation, internal strife and a failing economy raised defiance to the regime, eventually resulting in the ousting of Siad Barre in 1991. The end of Siad Barre's regime marked the escalation of the Somali Civil War as armed factions began competing to fill the power vacuum left by Siad Barre. While the north remained relatively peaceful, Mogadishu and the south devolved into chaos. The displacement of farmers in the Jubba Valley created the conditions for the devastating famine in 1992 which killed approximately 300,000 Somalis. Ultimately, the inability of farmers to generate strong local institutions created an overdependence on militias for security. Thus, the farmers' lack of military training enabled warlords to loot the farmers, a pattern of activity that continued with the increase in international intervention.

The United Nations Mission to Somalia (UNOSOM) was launched as a response to the famine, yet it ended up exacerbating many of the problems it aimed to solve. International food aid competed with producers in the Jubba Valley, the very farmers suffering the brunt of the famine. Additionally, failure to loosen the grip of warlords on farmers led to aid being appropriated by the warlords to maintain their control. As UN troops entered Somalia, the violence escalated, most notably when the UN held General Aideed responsible for the ambush of 23 Pakistani UN troops. The violence continued after UN forces left in 1995, yet some regions in Somalia began to find methods to mitigate the chaos in their communities, such as the usage of Islamic

law (sharia) in tribunals to settle disputes. The Transitional National Government (TNG) was formed in 2000 to help guide Somalia to another republican government. In 2008, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) signed an agreement for the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops. This marked the formation of a coalition government, which began its campaign to regain control of southern Somalia in 2009. As the TFG's interim period ended on August 20, 2012, the current Federal Government of Somalia was established as a permanent central government in accordance to the Roadmap for the End of Transition, a UN-backed agreement providing milestones for the creation of democratic institutions.

### **ORIGINS OF THIRD PARTY STATE-BUILDING AND SHARED SOVEREIGNTY**

Third party state-building has been discussed by scholars as an alternative to traditional, indigenous state-building. The distinctive features of third party state-building are the scope of international administration in governmental functions and international authority over these functions.<sup>8</sup> Third party state-building is more political in nature, as it is intrinsically tied to issues such as election design, education reform and currency systems. While traditional forms of intervention, such as peace support, have deliberately avoided the controversy tied with direct political engagement, third party state-building must inevitably address political issues, as was the case in Bosnia.

Third party state-building is a relatively recent phenomenon, with its earliest roots being the strengthening of territories by colonial powers to prepare for the transfer of sovereignty.<sup>9</sup> Since 1995, there have been four cases of third party state-building: Eastern Slavonia (now part of Croatia), Kosovo, East Timor, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The recentness of third party state-building may be explained by contemporary trends that have shifted state-building away from traditional, internally-focused processes. Historically, states have needed strong internal institutions to raise revenue and obtain military power. Due to historical processes, such as war, that determined the survival of states, states that were not internally sound were often destroyed and replaced by ones that were.<sup>10</sup> In the contemporary era, borders have been constructed around the world and the state has become the dominant political form, causing states to worry less about external threats destroying their borders. The rise of the United States post-WWII increased globalization and the decentralization of finance and capital, altering the links between war-making and state-building and shifting trends towards state-building based on external support.<sup>11</sup> Due to these trends, even weaker and smaller states could garner sufficient international support to sustain themselves. Post 1950, foreign aid boomed to unprecedented levels due to the interests of donor countries and belief in a just international order.<sup>12</sup> These factors combined have created the conditions for third party state-building and what Krasner calls "shared sovereignty."<sup>13</sup>

Like third-party state-building, shared sovereignty involves an agreement be-

tween domestic political authorities and an external actor to cooperate on various issues. Krasner argues that shared sovereignty could improve governance by encouraging the creation of new political structures that check abuse of power by factions in power and by allowing political candidates to align themselves with better governance. In countries where predation by officials is a barrier to development, shared sovereignty could serve to deter actors from breaking the equilibrium. A historical example of shared sovereignty is the relationship between North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) powers and West Germany to protect Western Europe during the Cold War. NATO maintained jurisdiction of their forces in Germany while Germany was allowed to arm itself. The Convention on Relations gave western allies a right to resume their occupation until the Bonn Agreements were terminated in 1990 by the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany. This gradual shift towards self-governance provides an example of how shared sovereignty can avoid creating overdependence on external assistance. Per Krasner, the reason for the success of shared sovereignty in the case of West Germany was the support for democracy and a market economy amongst Germans.<sup>14</sup> A more contemporary and relevant example is found in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone made a deal with the UN in 2002 to create a special court to try war crimes and crimes against humanity. The court was appointed by the UN and took precedence over national courts. The Sierra Leone case provides an example of how external actors can provide assistance in a targeted area of governance countries ravaged by internal warfare. By having the UN appoint the court's judges, the 2002 agreement gave legitimacy to the court in the view of the citizens of Sierra Leone. In both the West Germany and Sierra Leone cases, shared sovereignty was utilized to supplement the recipient country's inability to sustain or defend itself. Despite the theoretical potential of shared sovereignty and third party state-building, most cases of state failure involve complex dynamics between competing factions that limit the ability of shared sovereignty and third party state-building to effectuate reform. A clearer diagnosis of the potential benefits and limitations of these concepts in the Somali context requires an analysis of social, political and economic dynamics in Somalia.

#### **APPLICATION: REBUILDING SOMALIA**

As described above, the complex dynamics between competing factions in Somalia make the application of third party state-building and shared sovereignty a difficult project. Aside from major political parties, there are various marginalized groups that can play a larger role in determining the future of Somali development. For example, pastoralists, traders, women and farmers have the potential to engage in community-based projects to rebuild institutions at a local level. By using mechanisms such as increasing community participation on institutional needs, development and state formation can occur "starting from the bottom."<sup>15</sup> While statelessness will be discussed in further detail later, this kind of community participation can also serve as a valuable supplement to approaches such as third party state-building and

shared sovereignty. The strengthening of local institutions could bolster Somali federalism and prevent a central government from treating the highly heterogeneous regions of Somalia as if they were the same. Of course, it is unlikely that the strengthening of local institutions will revive all clan traditions and ancestral customs since many of these have disappeared. Many of these systems, such as the caste system, were based on social exclusions that are most likely undesirable in modern Somali society. Thus, although there is a need to revive Somali nationalism, communities must be careful about which aspects of their historical identity they choose to contribute to the larger projects of nation and state-building.

Strong local institutions may also result in more representative political systems. For example, Mohamed discusses the possibility of a head of state that is primarily responsible for foreign affairs and has a limited domestic role.<sup>16</sup> Domestic matters could be determined mainly by an assembly of representatives from different clans and regions. Of course, the effectiveness of such a system would depend on the Somali population's willingness to adopt representative democracy. An adapted solution would be for Somalia to develop a democracy born out of its own culture, rather than to copy a style of democracy based on European states. Such a political system would emphasize the restoration of moral values which have been replaced by genealogical clan bonds (*xigaalo*) and individualism. The historical failure of Somali states, ranging from the liberal politics of the Republic of Somalia to the military regime, shows that absent adaptation to Somalia's customs and peoples, political systems are bound to fail. Part of this project is an understanding of the fluidity of Somali identity. Traditional clan and tribal theories were built on *xigaalo* but staticized social organization by removing *xigaalo* from its social and legal context. Thus, a more effective form of democracy must incorporate an understanding of *xigaalo* as a dynamic system, constantly evolving and being recomposed to incorporate the wide range of differences in Somali identity.

The importance of Somali public opinion in determining the outcome of policies such as third party state-building makes understanding it a priority for international policymakers, or as Caplan puts it, "loyalty before guns."<sup>17</sup> Understanding Somali public opinion, however, presents its own set of complex problems. First, public opinion data is scarce, and the credibility of polling mechanisms remains dubious due to the low participation rate of important social groups, such as women. Additionally, the importance of public opinion relative to the stances of political leaders is questionable. On one hand, political leaders are often able to shape public opinion and enact policy changes. However, absent genuine public support for institutional change, third party state-building would likely continue the legacy of failed intervention in Somalia. To complicate the matter further, intervention is most likely inevitable in Somalia. The presence of peacekeepers, foreign aid, and new actors such as the Gulf states and Turkey suggest that even if nations that are currently invested in Somalia withdraw their support, other actors will be there to fill in.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the combination of international humanitarian norms and the presence of terrorist groups

in Somalia will continue to keep nations invested in Somalia. Thus, the question for intervening actors becomes how they adapt their intervention to address the specificities of Somalia's complex situation.

While the Somali public's opinion on intervention has generally been negative, there are specific areas where there have been signs of public support. According to a Voice of America poll, Somalians exhibit strong support for the incorporation of Sharia Law into civil and legal code.<sup>19</sup> The poll also revealed support for a strong central government balanced with more robust regional governments. Additionally, the Somali people are likely to support salaries for government forces that have received external training. This would prevent defection, improve morale and encourage armed forces to respond to civilians, rather than just their clan commanders.<sup>20</sup> This reform would likely contribute towards reducing warlords' ability to exploit civilians and international aid by creating loyalty to the Somali civilian base, instead of specific factions. By catering to specific areas where Somali support for reform exists, external actors may find a fruitful chance to engage in limited, targeted instances of third party state-building. Limiting third party state-building to specific areas instead of adopting it as part of a sweeping reform agenda may help policymakers avoid what scholars refer to as the "nirvana fallacy," the tendency to compare the status quo to an ideal state in favor of consideration of relevant alternatives that are realistically available.<sup>21</sup>

Before discussing the areas of Somali society where third party state-building could have an impact, it is important to address the Promethean dilemma as well as the three questions that Darden and Mylonas pose as prerequisites to effective engagement.<sup>22</sup> The Promethean dilemma asks how an external actor can transfer organizational capacity to a local population without those capabilities being used to undermine efforts to establish stable governance. Current international aid falls prey to this problem, as mentioned in the discussion of warlords and their ability to seize aid for themselves. In response to the Promethean dilemma, Darden and Mylonas suggest third party state-building as the final step of a broader nation-building strategy. They propose building loyalty through education and indoctrination to resolve the threat of the receiving country from utilizing capabilities against the donor country. However, the Somali situation presents an additional challenge: the ability of warlords to use those capabilities against civilians. Thus, efforts to gain the loyalty of the Somali people cannot occur separately from the strengthening of local institutions and Somali identity to protect civilians from warlords and political infighting. While education and indoctrination may be useful in some instances, such as in campaigns to deter civilians from joining pirate and terrorist groups, they can also become tools of colonial domination when taken too far. Thus, it may be safer to adapt third party state-building to Somali identity, rather than attempting to build Somali support for policies that have historically received negative feedback in Somalia.

Responding fully to Darden and Mylonas' three questions requires a careful analysis of international dynamics and relations with Somalia which exceeds the scope of this paper. Their second question regarding the structure of the international en-

vironment is highly dependent on the stances of great powers and the global balance of power and is thus not discussed in this paper, as the debate over the trajectory of US hegemony is too expansive to cover appropriately in this paper. In regards to their first question, the agent of nation-building, external actors must play a limited role in this process. While they may assist in implementation of reforms or development of local capacity, the Somali people must find a way to reclaim their nationalism and culture without being indoctrinated by foreign powers. When intervention is appropriate, efforts led by groups with legitimacy, such as the UN, may be able to avoid the interference from other parties that a unilateral approach by a regional power might face. More importantly, assistance from groups perceived as legitimate is more likely to receive support from local populations. The third question, regarding the characteristics of the local population, deals heavily with the current fractures and possibilities for unification in Somali society, which has been discussed above.

After policymakers determine that Somalia has met the conditions for third party state-building, it is important to discuss the areas in which this strategy will prove most effective. While a discussion of the specific implementation of third party state-building and shared sovereignty in different areas of Somali politics and economics cannot be covered comprehensively in this paper, I will discuss the potential of third party state-building and shared sovereignty in monetary policy and election reforms, two areas that are crucial in determining the future of Somalia.

Monetary policy is an area where external actors may offer valuable assistance. Somali history suggests that a successful banking system will require an independent central bank institution. While private banks may be able to provide confidence, they cannot effectively guarantee sustained development due to their volatility.<sup>23</sup> Currently, the Central Bank of Somalia (CBS) has little influence over money supply or exchange rate, and most transactions are made with US dollars or counterfeit shillings.<sup>24</sup> Currency reform is an essential part of monetary policy reform, yet it presents many challenges. Corrupt networks that control the counterfeit market will be difficult to dismantle, and the central banks of Somaliland and Puntland (currently functioning as treasurers for their respective regions) will need to have their monetary responsibilities redefined if the CBS attempts to establish monetary control. In this area, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) can provide legitimacy to currency reform efforts and appointments to leadership roles in the central bank.<sup>25</sup> The IMF could sign a contract with Somalia to negotiate cooperation on monetary policy until both parties decide to terminate the agreement. This setup would generate domestic support if it succeeds in controlling inflation, and would avoid being costly to the external actors involved.

Elections are another area where third party state-building has the potential to assist Somalia. National elections in Somalia since the establishment the Federal Government of Somalia in 2012 have suffered from insecurity and lack of government control.<sup>26</sup> While external actors can provide assistance in shaping democratic processes and providing credibility to elections, the more important benefit of external assistance in elections is its appeal to the target country. For example, candidates in Somali

elections may use shared sovereignty contracts to symbolize a break from a past of corruption and to win the faith of voters. Additionally, shared sovereignty agreements for elections may reassure competing political leaders more than an election process run by a government agency prone to corruption by one of the involved parties.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, the actual form of democracy can be determined through local processes and incorporate Somali identity while external actors give credibility to candidates that commit themselves to democracy.

While elections and monetary policy are two of the most significant issues that will determine the trajectory of Somalia, there are other areas where third party state-building may be helpful or even necessary for development. For example, the Somali Civil War severely damaged the health sector. Due to the destruction of basic infrastructure necessary for a revival of the health sector, external assistance may help to fund initial efforts to revive the sector.<sup>28</sup> Menkhaus argues that whatever application of third party state-building occurs in Somalia, the process will likely be very slow and difficult due to spoilers, as will be discussed in the section on statelessness.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, external actors would do well by playing Somalia's strengths and assisting in areas where Somalia cannot grow on its own. For example, Somalia's business elite have the potential to determine the fate of the Somali economy. By productively engaging this class, external powers could stabilize Somalia's economy. This framework would also entail careful consideration of the effects of international actions on ongoing processes in Somalia. For example, the recognition of Somaliland has been proposed to secure political stability. However, such recognition could easily disrupt the balance of power between the executive branch and the legislature as well as Somaliland's movements for democratization.<sup>30</sup> To apply third party state-building and shared sovereignty effectively in Somalia, policymakers must ensure that they are not interrupting processes that have driven the progress made in Somalia up until today.

## STATELESSNESS

While most of the literature compares potential methods of state-building in Somalia, some scholars have attacked the foundational assumption that Somalia needs to be a state in the first place. Leeson, for example, finds that anarchy has been net beneficial for Somali development.<sup>31</sup> Using data from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, he finds that life expectancy, access to health facilities, access to sanitation, and the presence of communications technology have unambiguously increased under anarchy, while poverty, infant mortality, maternal mortality and fatalities due to measles have dropped. Leeson's findings, however, should not be taken as a dismissal of the potential of state-building in Somalia. Although he finds that statelessness is preferable to the Somali central government, this does not necessarily indict new forms of governance that can arise. Rather, his conclusion suggests that it is more productive to examine the causes of the fragile equilibrium between competing factions and evaluate the effects of policy proposals on this balance.

As mentioned in the introduction, there are a variety of competing factions that maintain the uneasy equilibrium of the status quo. The major parties in Somalia are the Somali Restoration and Reconciliations Council (SRRC), the National Salvation Council (NSC), the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia, al-Shabab, and various local administrations. Many of these parties fit the definition of spoilers, “actors who ‘actively seek to hinder, delay, or undermine conflict settlement.’”<sup>32</sup> An analysis of these spoilers and their motivations sheds some light on the failure of Somali state-building efforts. The more protracted the condition of statelessness is, the more difficult it is to revive the Somali state. Additionally, the adaptation of local actors to the condition of state collapse reduces their incentives to revive the state. Thus, it is important to target the interests of a wide range of local actors when engaging in Somali state-building.

While it is certainly true anarchic arguments assume that the status quo is worse than the alternative, this paper argues that the status quo is fundamentally unsustainable and that third-party state-building should be explored as a tool to resolve some of the issues preventing institutional change in Somalia. One of these issues that third party state-building could offer a solution to is the problem of power-sharing. Past interventions that attempted to use power-sharing accords have proven ineffective due to their failure in addressing the perceived zero-sum nature of state control. Somalia’s tax base also remains weak, as foreign aid has created dependency and reduced the incentive for the leaders to govern effectively. This suggests that absent major fiscal and monetary policy reforms, a new Somali state will be limited in its scope and authority. Third party state-building offers a way to break through some of these limitations by providing assistance for structural reforms. While some of the problems in the status quo limit the extent to which third party state-building can be implemented, third party state-building can remove barriers to reforms which may further facilitate both internal and external state-building efforts, as discussed in the Applications section.

Another important factor in the debate regarding Somali statelessness is the effect orientation has on autonomy movements and their institutional stability. Between Puntland and Somaliland, Somaliland has been more successful in its transition to autonomy. Puntland’s involvement in military conflicts has pushed reform and democratization down on the agenda. However, Puntland’s relative institutional weakness is, at the root, a result of its orientation towards the central government.<sup>33</sup> Puntland’s prioritization of participation in the Somali peace process has made power-sharing and elections more difficult. The lack of effective power-sharing mechanisms has maintained armed struggle as the primary means of obtaining central power. On the other hand, Somaliland’s relative lack of a coherent center of governance has driven power-sharing to occur at a lower level. The resulting inter-clan cooperation has made self-governance more effective in Somaliland than in Puntland. While this result may initially seem to align with Leeson’s argument that relative statelessness is preferable to an orientation towards a central government, Dill’s findings can inform state-building efforts. Orientation towards a central government in Puntland failed due to the

dysfunctional nature of the center. Thus, an analysis of the merits of autonomy must incorporate a discussion of the effectiveness of the central government in upholding self-governance. The potential of third party state-building to reform power-sharing mechanisms suggests that such a proposal could resolve the issues present in the case of Puntland. Rather, Puntland's actions committing itself to a central government align well with the mechanisms of shared sovereignty. Shared sovereignty could realistically assist in Puntland's development of an effective, constrained central government through small, gradual reforms. Attempting to construct a strong central government quickly and hoping for the international community to abandon intervention in Somalia and to facilitate a return to statelessness are two sides of the same romantic coin. Both of these options suffer from the nirvana fallacy discussed above. Although statelessness may have existed successfully in the past, growing levels of international intervention promise to interrupt political and economic processes in Somalia regardless of what type of governance it chooses to adopt.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND IMPLICATIONS: THE SHADOW OF COLONIALISM**

While scholarship regarding the theories of third party state-building and shared sovereignty combined with policy reports on the political and economic conditions in Somalia may present a compelling case for external influence, it is crucial to insert an analysis of Somali history into normative work and policy-making. Under the backdrop of failed state-building and intervention efforts, scholars must be highly skeptical of seemingly sound proposals such as third party state-building and shared sovereignty. For example, if scholarship on Somalia concludes that third party state-building would be feasible and beneficial for Somalia, but the Somali population rejects the proposal, at what point do external actors decide that their interests outweigh the Somali opinion? While seemingly respecting Somali sovereignty, international actors may use increasingly coercive methods or create justifications to produce favorable conditions for intervention. Rather than being limited to the implementation of policy, colonialism manifests itself in the scholarship that supports interventionist policies. For example, many of the policy reports that cite the need for 'sharing of ideas' and 'technical assistance' to developing countries sanitize the language of development and legitimize continuation of colonial relationships.<sup>34</sup> The usage of ahistorical and racialized metaphors is particularly prone in the case of Somalia, where scholarship frequently characterizes Somalia slipping towards collapse, tottering on the brink and collapsing. Additionally, reliance on "official" colonial documents to construct accounts of Somali development erases the Somali voice from history. Prominent scholars in the field, such as I.M. Lewis, have often relied too heavily on documents from Italian officials during the Italian colonial administration and deliberately ignored Somali records.<sup>35</sup> This selective usage of literature has been used by supporters of Italian colonialism to conceal violent acts of land grabbing by denying the land rights claims of indigenous farmers. Other scholars often mistakenly generalize field work in a certain region of Somalia to make broader claims about the

Somali economy. Part of the reason behind this may be the drive of editors to produce more relevant and generalized conclusions, which forces authors to extrapolate their highly-specific research and make overly broad generalizations.

Although engaging in these frameworks of literature and language may appear to be tangentially related to the implementation of policy, such engagement is necessarily political. The historical record proves that, absent a thorough engagement with indigenous frameworks, liberal-democratic efforts could establish the conditions for long-term exploitation and genocide.<sup>36</sup> Attempts to instill democratic structures and the rule of law in Bosnia, Kosovo, and East Timor have resulted in varying degrees of failure, ranging from a lack of internalized reform to the collapse of the liberal state in East Timor in 2006. While the case of Somalia is different, as the government may be more welcoming to a third party and ethnic divisions do not run as deep as they did in Bosnia and Kosovo, these cases illustrate an important point: theories in the abstract may be sound, but attempting to impose state-building without consideration of indigenous standards, preferences, and capacities can worsen the situation. In the case of Somalia, it is apparent that international aid has failed to remove warlords' abilities to externalize the costs of their endeavors on civilian populations. Thus, warlords free ride on aid and strengthen their political positions, making institutional reform more difficult. Incorporating indigenous frameworks into third party state-building is a difficult task, and the exclusion of Somali voices from the decision-making process is a complex issue. Additionally, this paper does not fully escape the trap of using scholarship that may support or use the language of the colonial legacy. However, by stressing the need for careful literature review and engagement with discursive political frameworks in Somalia, this paper hopes to illuminate a path for international cooperation which accommodates Somali agency in reconstruction efforts.

## CONCLUSIONS

The status quo promises no sustainable future for Somalia. Absent an effective state to keep local factions in check, foreign aid will continue to be appropriated by warlords to maintain control of their localities. Ending the ability of warlords to exploit civilian populations via reform is the only viable solution due to the seemingly inevitable nature of foreign intervention in Somalia. While statelessness has managed to improve development and generate cooperation between competing factions, such a condition is unsustainable and leaves Somalia vulnerable to economic and political shocks. Even if a stateless Somalia gained the support of the US and other powers, regional governments would strive to intervene in hopes of addressing humanitarian norms and the threat of terrorism. Despite the lengthy, durable commitment that third party state-building requires, it may offer a way to stabilize Somalia and check the ability of warlords externalize costs upon civilians. Of course, third party state-building is no silver bullet to the deep, structural problems that Somalia faces. Implementation of third party state-building is also highly dependent on the result of current events and reforms in Somalia, making much of the potential analysis prone

to becoming outdated. However, the analysis stressing the need for thorough consideration of Somali identity will remain relevant, as the project of nation-building will span generations. It is important for Somalia and the international community to target specific areas of the state that can benefit from or require external assistance, such as monetary policy and election reform. While the scope of these reforms may appear narrow, these reforms are necessary to open up spaces in Somali society for further nation-building and state-building which will facilitate cooperative relationships while avoiding the trap of overdependence. If international actors can shift their policy focus from providing aid to engaging Somalia in cooperative forms of state-building constructed on Somalian identity and history, Somalia may find itself well positioned to start down the path of reform and state revival.

## NOTES

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