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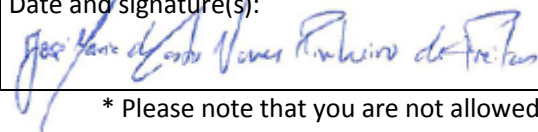
Study programme:	Development and International Relations		
Semester:	10th		
Exam Title:	10th Semester Thesis		
Name, Date of birth/ Names, Dates of birth of group members:	Name(s)	Study number	Date of birth (not CPR number – only 6 numbers: dd/mm/yy)
	José Maria Freitas	20142592	28/12/92
Hand in date:	7.29.2016		
Project title /Synopsis Title/Thesis Title	The dynamics of endogenous and exogenous state-building processes: The case of Somaliland		
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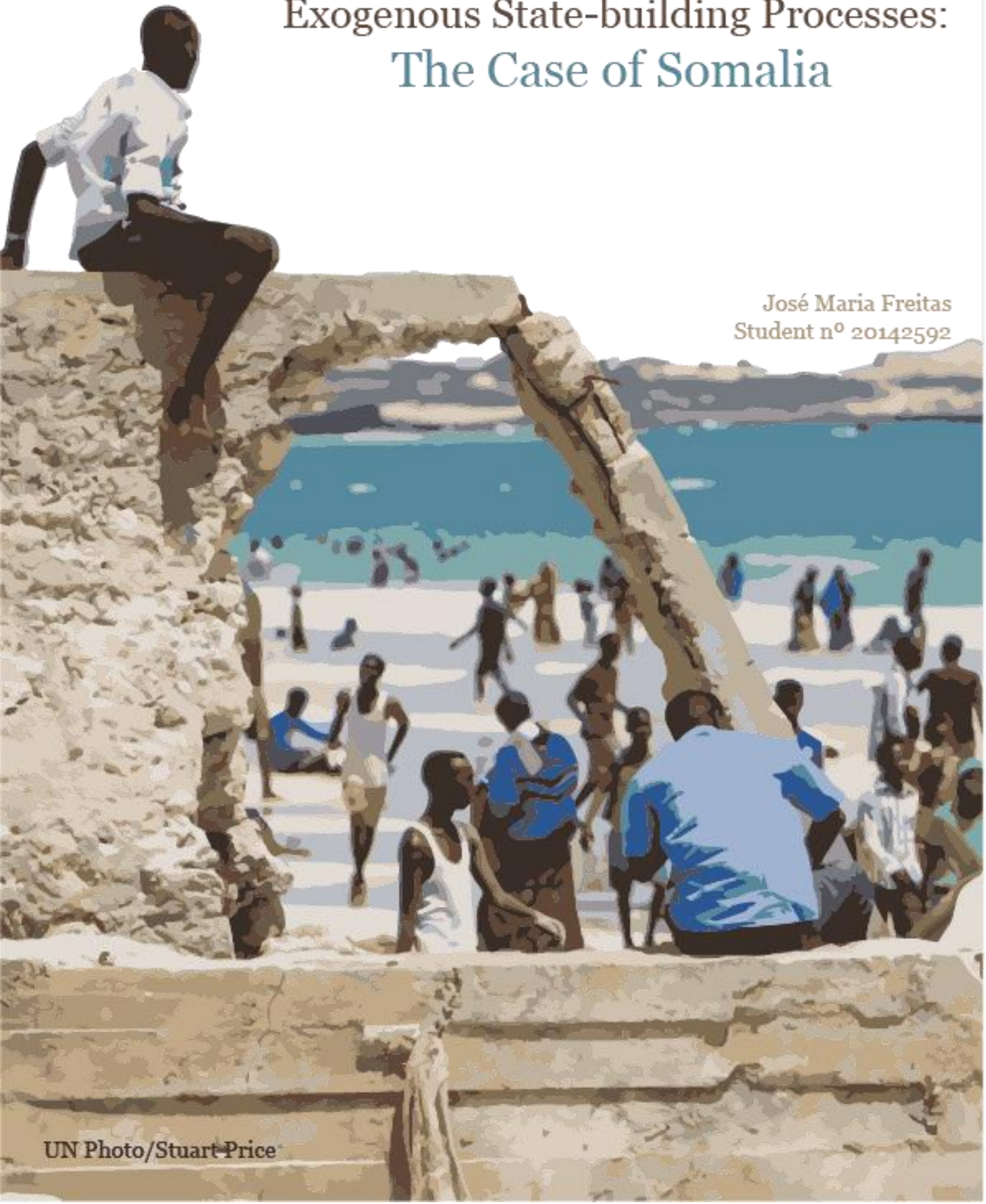


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# The Dynamics of Endogenous and Exogenous State-building Processes: The Case of Somalia

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## ***Acknowledgments***

*It is impossible not to thank those who not only improved this thesis but also enabled it in the first place.*

*First, I would like to thank my supervisor Abdulkadir Osman Farah, for his vital insight and support. I am grateful for his feedback and recommendations.*

*I am very thankful to Aalborg University and the lecturers of Development and International Relations who enriched my knowledge throughout this last two years.*

*Lastly, my thanks go to my friends and family that supported me during my stay in the United States.*

José Freitas

## **Abstract**

The objective of this thesis is to analyze possible alternative pathways for state-building. By examining the dynamics of both endogenous and exogenous state-building processes. Focusing on Somaliland, this paper will offer an insight on the region's state-building path.

By analyzing diverse trends of literature on the concept, the thesis develops an analytical frame to better understand this tumultuous process. The paper argues for the need of rethinking the concept by focusing more on the bottom aspect of state-building. By analyzing the Somali state-building path after Siad Barre's overthrow and consequently the Somaliland state trajectory, this paper will propose that grassroots peace-making, traditional structures and home-grown democracy were vital aspects in the process of Somaliland's state-building.

Conceptually, the thesis focus is in the point of view of scholars in both International Relations and Development studies. Applying a qualitative research concentrated in the regions of Somalia and Somaliland, the thesis will strive to contribute to the theoretical debate that surrounds the important concept of state-building. It is intended that the research results go past the general understanding of Somaliland by contributing to the understanding of the complex process of state-building in failed states.

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## **1. Introduction**

Somalia's central government collapsed in 1991 when Siad Barre's regime fell. Since then, the International Community failed in almost every state-building project in the region. In that same year, the self-proclaimed and internationally unrecognized state of Somaliland emerged and ever since, it has developed into one of the most stable democracies in the region.

Somaliland's achievements are even more notable when compared with Somalia's collapsed statehood. Somaliland's successful state-building path can be explained, among other causes, by its distinctive hybrid political structure that managed to blend traditional structures with modern forms of governance. This political order has attracted scholars that view Somaliland as an example of statehood in Africa.

Somaliland's remarkable path should be recognized, encouraged, and supported. It proves that an endogenous approach can work. The findings in this paper prove that Somaliland's endogenous state-building was beneficial and brought political and social institutions to the self-proclaimed state by incorporating vital intangible aspects, as culture, for example.

The main purpose of this project is to contribute to the understanding of the dynamics of exogenous and endogenous state-building. The question started when observing Somalia troubled path. When further research was made, Somaliland became the focus of this thesis. Somaliland state-building path was definitely different when compared to the "devised norms and paradigms on how to fix fragile states" (Balthasar, 2014, p. 9). It is for this reason that it is important to take a closer look to this less traditional approach that.

Beforehand, it is important to support that Somaliland's state-building effort was endogenous. The International Community was not involved, giving space to traditional structures to play a vital role regarding inter-clan peace agreements and building domestic institutions. While important, these remarks should be analyzed carefully since it does not necessarily mean that the absence or presence of external intervention determines the success, or lack thereof, of state-building missions. It will be stressed throughout this

paper that every case is different and that Somaliland path was not entirely perfect. Despite its many issues and conflicts, the self-declared state “had room to experiment. While this approach carried risks, it enabled the ‘rules of the game’ to evolve gradually and change over time.” (*idem*).

It can be said that Somaliland’s state-building effort should serve as an example for the International Community to rethink its approach to fragile states. It will never be a clean and short process but one that demands prioritization and difficult decisions. Today, Somaliland created a functioning state, especially when comparing with the many failed attempts in creating a stable Somalia.

There is an extensive literature review regarding state-building processes such as Balthasar (2013), Collier (2009), Fukuyama (2004), Goldsmith (2007), Jackson (1990), Lewis (1962), Little (2003), Menkhaus (2015), Ottaway (2002), among others. Nevertheless, despite this extensive literature, understanding how to use the tool of state-building is still difficult. Therefore, analyzing both Somalia and Somaliland’s cases represents the main ambition of this thesis.

This thesis will strive to explore the dynamics of both endogenous and exogenous state-building by focusing essentially on the case of Somaliland arguing that the traditional way is “a conflict-prone, high-risk protracted, and haphazard process” (Balthasar, 2014, p. 4) and that politicians, peacekeepers, and stakeholders should be experimenting different approaches to the concept, given the fact that current ones are failing.

The research question is formulated as follows:

***How can Somaliland’s state-building path be identified as a lesson for the International Community?***

The paper’s empirical findings suggest that there is a wide range of possibilities in addressing the concept of state-building. This study encourages the International Community to think more creatively regarding external interventions. It is important to first recall that Somaliland’s case cannot be seen as a plan to follow step-by-step, but, instead, it should be identified as a lesson for the International Community that so often failed interventions.



In this thesis, there will first be a presentation of the research design, followed by a theoretical presentation regarding the concept of state-building and the creation of hypothesis. Further on, both Somalia and Somaliland will be contextualized. The analysis of the state-building path for both regions will be made. Finally, after a discussion, a conclusion of the findings will follow and, ultimately, the reflections regarding implications for further research.

## **2. Methodology**

In this chapter, the methodological considerations of the thesis will be presented. These include the approach chosen, the selection of case studies, the objective of the research, the conceptualization of validity and reliability, and, lastly, an extensive description of the paper's outline.

In search for answers, this thesis will make a use of a qualitative research strategy. It is intended to offer a comprehensive understanding of the social world, which diverges from the quantitative approach where measurements are the main characteristics. In other words, this work depends highly on secondary sources.

This research strategy will offer insight into:

### ***How can Somaliland's state-building path be identified as a lesson for the International Community?***

The detailed analysis of documents is an important research tool, being the most used by leading scholars. Academic books, articles, journalistic sources, reports, government papers, speeches and electronic materials will set up the base of the analysis. The choice of this method is backed by the fact that these data lays the basis for a proper evaluation of the topic, description, assessment, and interpretation of the facts. Therefore offering an in-depth understanding of a wide-ranging of opinions. Thus, the possibility for independent observations and conclusions is conceivable.

The research design is a crucial part as it incorporates all the aspects of the study in a clear and articulated manner, guaranteeing that the research question is accurately addressed.

Exploring and analyzing all the materials chosen for the thesis creates a better understanding of the attitudes and approaches of both domestic and international actors towards Somaliland and Somalia. A drawback of this type of method lays on the fact that events are changing continuously and at a fast pace, affecting therefore the conclusions

of the study. Nonetheless, the interpretative techniques will aim to offer a better understanding of the reality.

Writing about Somaliland proved to be a challenging task. Given the fact that Somaliland's international recognition is not a widespread topic in the International Relations arena, it lacks studies and analysis that contribute positively towards building knowledge and a framework about the self-proclaimed state. While studies regarding Somalia are concerned with explaining and analyzing the dilemmas of a failed state are in fact abundant, the existence of studies with regards to Somaliland is lacking. These works on Somaliland address the unique state-building path and reconciliation effort the region underwent.

Although the primary concern of this thesis is the region of Somaliland, a contextualization of Somalia as a whole is crucial in order to illuminate Somaliland's situation as well as the dynamics of both endogenous and exogenous state-building. Therefore, this work presents an historical contextualization of Somalia allowing a greater flexibility in comparing and highlighting both cases, enabling a clear understanding of the situation concerning Somaliland.

## **2.1 Selection of Case Studies**

Analyzing arguments while only focusing on successful cases of state-building is a challenging task. In order to provide a complete and valid analysis, both failed and successful cases have to be present. Somaliland set up the starting point in the selection of case studies. Nevertheless, shedding light on the Somali case is important because both paths are marked by heterogeneity that can be described as it follows: firstly, the formation of Somalia in the 1960s. Secondly, a phase that deeply affected the Somali state trajectory - the autocratic state in the 1970s and 1980s, marked by signs of state-breaking and the Ogden War between Ethiopia and Somalia. Thirdly, the 1990s witnessed a complete state collapse and failed state. Lastly, the self-proclamation of Somaliland, considered by some "Africa's Best Kept Secret"<sup>1</sup>, can be presented as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Iqbal Jhazbhay, "Somaliland: Africa's best kept secret, a challenge to the International Community?" African Security Review 12, no.4 (2003): 77-82

Somaliland's Initial Transition (1991-1993), advancing State-Building (1993-1997), and transition to Democracy (1997-2001).

## **2.2 Objective of research**

The thesis will strive to examine ***How can Somaliland's state-building path be identified as a lesson for the International Community?*** The main goal is to examine the concept of state-building, presenting different insights from scholars and consequentially understand if state-building can follow a different path, in order to boost creative and flexible thinking by International actors and Somalis. There is a long range of articles, research papers, conferences and conferences that analyze the causes for the shortcomings by external entities and Somali people. With this data available, it will be the objective of this thesis to analyze possible alternative pathways for "state-building".

## **2.3 Validity and reliability**

Since the thesis follows a qualitative research method, it naturally leads towards more subjective and less reliable findings when comparing to quantitative research. In this paper, both theoretical and personal interpretations tools are applied. Methods such as generalization and subjectivity pose as a threat to this type of investigation. Nevertheless, a wide-range of literature provides a higher level of reliability avoided therefore a biased point of view. Analyzing books, articles, reports, theses, websites, and reports, among others, will offer a good background and consequently increase both validity and reliability of the thesis. Both notions will be conceptualized in the next sub-chapters.

### **2.3.1. Validity**

Validity refers to the veracity and accuracy of the research in hand. A high level of validity will guarantee a bridge of knowledge between the empirical data collected and the case in hand. Alan Bryman in *Social Research Methods* (2012) identifies two types of validity: internal and external validity. Internal validity refers to causation and whether a conclusion of the research or theory established is a factual reflection of the causes. External validity relates to whether the results of a particular piece of research can be

generalized across social settings (Bryman, 2012). As aforementioned, it is the intent of this thesis to investigate whether state-building should follow a different path and whether “bottom-up” approach should be considered.

### **2.3.2. Reliability**

It refers to whether the conclusions of a study can be replicated or not. For example, in order to achieve a high amount of reliability and to obtain the same results, it has to be possible to trail the same approach as formerly used. Reliability is particularly important in quantitative research and given the fact that this thesis uses a qualitative method, it is important to take some weaknesses into account. This project can be considered a theory testing case study. This means that the same research question might have different outcomes in relation to a country that might be facing the same situation. Every case is different and should be analyzed and treated with the complexity that it is inherent to its nature.

## **2.4. Thesis outline**

Following the introduction and methodology chapters (chapters 1 and 2), the thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 3 presents the Theoretical and Conceptual Approach confronting the concepts of state-building and nation-building – often used interchangeably. An historical contextualization of the terms is made presenting nation-building as a concept predominantly used in 1950s and 1960s and overlooked until the 1990s when state-building reemerges as a central aspect of the International Community “good governance” plan. Subsequently, the concept of state-building according to International Relations’ scholars is presented, addressing Collier’s top-down (exogenous) theory. Also, the view on the concept of state-building is presented through the scope of development studies. Here, scholars such as Ottaway (2002) defend that state-building should be endogenous, creating ownership and participation by the local communities, criticizing the current approach by external actors. Both ownership and participation are conceptualized in order to create a framework for a bottom-up state-building.

Chapter 4 presents Somalia and Somaliland's history. Providing historical and political background of both regions is allowing the reader to understand the context and dynamics of the past and present. In this chapter, the importance of the clans is presented. Also, an overview of the colonial period is made. Nonetheless the concern lays mostly in the beginning of the 1990's for both Somalia and Somaliland.

Chapter 5 refers to the analysis. The first sub-chapter sheds a light on Somalia's state-building path, ultimately challenging Collier's theory. Here some important aspects are examined. For example, the role of the traditional structures in the region and the several external military interventions that shaped the regions as it is seen today. The upcoming elections are also analyzed. It serves as a basis for understanding how complex the process is and why an exogenous approach is refuted by historical facts. The second sub-chapter, Somaliland's state-building effort is analyzed, claiming that democratization and decentralization were both beneficial and genuine for the region's development. Using empirical evidence, it is proven that the democratic process was flawed, violent and elite-driven. Nonetheless, the analysis reveals that there are alternative options that should be a source of creativeness for Somali policy makers and international partners. It is concluded, that despite making its failure to gain international recognition, Somaliland made important steps towards building a state.

Chapter 6 is the discussion and it strives to answer the research question ***How can Somaliland's state-building path be identified as a lesson for the International Community?*** This chapter will be structured in three sections. The first two address both hypotheses 1 and 2. The latter section will discuss the findings.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion, bringing together the thesis and shortly describing the complexities of the dynamics of both endogenous and exogenous state-building,

Chapter 8 refers to reflections, shedding light on what lies ahead in the future, caveats, and avenues for further research.

### **3. Theoretical and Conceptual Approach**

In order to justify the research done, a theoretical and conceptual approach will be made in this chapter. First, the literature review will be presented. Secondly, an important distinction between state-building and nation-building will be made. After this distinction is made, an historical contextualization will contribute to the understanding of both concepts. Fourth, state-building will be presented through the point of view of Paul Collier and the first hypothesis will be created. The fifth sub-chapter will present the development studies approach and what can be considered as the endogenous approach, thus creating the second and last hypothesis.

#### **3.1. Literature Review**

There is extensive literature that deals with the concept of state-building. It is an interdisciplinary term discussed in many different clusters of human sciences, *i.e.*, international relations, social sciences, economics, amongst others. Thus, it is extremely hard for one to identify one perspective of state-building and to create a framework of theories and concepts. Nonetheless, it is possible to observe trends that together create a form for state-building.

#### **3.2. State-building vs. Nation-building**

“State-building” and “nation-building” are used interchangeably by some authors, occasionally causing misinterpretation (Goldsmith, 2007). “State-building” is used to refer to interventionist approaches to reinstate and reconstruct organizations of a state or, as Fukuyama’s affirms, “...the creation of new governmental institutions and the strengthening of existing ones...” (Fukuyama, 2004, p. 17). On the other side, “nation-building” refers to the creation of a cultural identity, norms and traditional practices, *i.e.*, a process that contributes “to the psychological integration of states” (Walle, 2009, p. 7). This terminology will be used in this thesis.

### **3.3. Historical contextualization of the terms**

As mentioned above, the concepts are often used interchangeably in modern discussions, but, in fact, history shows that the terms were used differently.

On one hand, nation-building was deeply debated in the 1950s and 1960s. “During the Cold War, the US and the USSR both used nation-building as a tactic to limit the reach of their enemy. However by the 1970s the term fell out of favor having been linked with the US’s involvement in the Vietnam War.” (Scott, 2007, p. 4). Both state-building and nation-building were “forgotten” by the international agenda during the 1980s, mainly due to a shift of focus towards reducing the role of the state and “releasing” the market (Fukuyama, 2004). In the 1990s, state-building re-emerges as a consequence of the “limited developmental progress in many Southern states” (Scott, 2007, p. 4). The so called “good governance” plan moves in the direction of the concept of state-building, in other words, towards a top-down approach.

### **3.4. State-building: a top-down approach?**

Paul Collier has been an avid supporter of international intervention as a solution for the recovery of post-conflict countries. The author of *The Bottom Billion* (2007) presents the record on post-conflict recovery, “40 percent of all post-conflict situations, historically, have reverted back to conflict within a decade. In fact, they have accounted for half of all civil wars” (Collier, 2009). A reason to this poor record lies on the fact that most of post-conflict situations have been guided by a conventional approach. In his conference *New rules for rebuilding a broken nation*<sup>2</sup>, Collier presents the three principles behind this conventional approach: Firstly, a prioritization of politics by building a political settlement. Secondly, short-term peacekeepers – “The situation is admittedly dangerous but only for a short time” (*idem*). Thirdly, assuming that elections are the exit strategy that will ultimately produce an accountable and legitimate government. Collier assumes that this approach denies reality. Regardless of any political innovations the author affirms that, in fact, politics should be considered last: “The politics become easier as the

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<sup>2</sup> TED talk - [New rules for rebuilding a broken nation](#) by Paul Collier



decade progresses if you are building on a foundation of security and economic development - the rebuilding of prosperity” (*idem*). The author affirms that in order for that to happen, a mentality shift has to take place. In his words, “the mentality has to shift from zero-sum to positive-sum before you can get a productive politics. You can only get positive, that mental shift, if the reality is that prosperity is being built” (*idem*).

Collier presents two complementary approaches that challenge the reality of the conventional approach. The first relies on recognizing the interdependence between 3 different actors:

- **Security Council:** it “has the responsibility for providing the peacekeepers who build the security. And that needs to be recognized, first of all, that peacekeeping works. (...) But it needs to be done long-term. It needs to be a decade-long approach, rather than just a couple of years.” (*idem*)
- **Donors:** “Typically in the past, the donors have been interested in the first couple of years, and then they got bored. They moved on to some other situation. Post-conflict economic recovery is a slow process. There are no quick processes in economics (...)” (*idem*)
- **Post-conflict government:** “there are two key things it has got to do. One is it has got to do economic reform, not fuss about the political constitution. It has got to reform economic policy. Why? Because during conflict economic policy typically deteriorates. Governments snatch short-term opportunities and, by the end of the conflict, the chickens have come home to roost” (*idem*).

The second approach is complimentary to the first and that it “focus on a few critical objectives” (*idem*). According to the author, three aspects are critical:

- **Jobs:** especially for young men. “In post-conflict situations, the reason that they so often revert to conflict (...) it’s because young men get upset. And why are they upset? Because they have nothing to do. And so we need a process of generating jobs, for ordinary young men, fast” (*idem*). Collier says that the construction sector is as a vital role in the reconstruction of a state.

- **Improvement of basic social services:** Collier proposes the creation of what he calls Independent Services Authorities. “It’s to split the functions of a monopoly line ministry up into three. The planning function and policy function stays with the ministry; the delivery of services on the ground, you should use whatever works: churches, NGOs, local communities (...) And in between, there should be a public agency, the Independent Service Authority, which channels public money, and especially donor money, to the retail providers. So the NGOs become part of a public government system, rather than independent of it” (*idem*). This approach would make the NGO’s accountable.
- **Clean government:** “if all we do is put money in and close our eyes it’s not just that the money is wasted -- that’s the least of the problems -- it’s that the money is captured. It’s captured by the crooks who are at the heart of the political problem. And so inadvertently we empower the people who are the problem” (*idem*). This means scrutiny and also technical assistance when following the money.

According to Collier this approach would create jobs and, therefore, security (young people would have jobs) and infrastructures would be rebuilt. The improvement of basic social services would give the sense that the government is doing something useful. Lastly, the gradual selection of politicians would create a shift from corrupt to honest.

Economic policies are a central aspect of Collier’s theory. It is firmly defended over his book *The bottom billion* and over his numerous conferences and papers. The author affirms that “this legacy of conflict is really bad economic policy” (*idem*). He affirms that the objective of this top-down approach is to ensure economic growth in the so-called “bottom billion” countries.

Collier and Hoeffler (2002) affirm that “poorer countries are more likely to experience civil wars. The opportunity cost for potential rebels are low and thus make recruitment easier” (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002, p. 1). This recruitment dilemma can be observed in Somalia and it is presented by Menkhaus (2015) as a consequence of the longevity of Somalia as a failed state. “It has been a collapsed state for 25 years, that means 75% or more of the population has no living memory of what state is even supposed to do” (Menkhaus K. , 2015). Therefore, a whole new level of state-building arises.

Collier's approach can be directly related to the concept of exogenous approach, where state-building is a process that ultimately relies on external actors intervention in the rebuilding process.

This leads to the creation of a first hypothesis:

***Exogenous approach (top-down) is in fact the solution for Somaliland.***

## **3.5. Development studies and State-building**

Literature on state-building has been mostly focused on the field of international relations. This hesitation by development experts to adopt the language of state-building “may be an attempt to distance themselves from the modernization theories of the past and the aggressive foreign policies of the present” (Scott, 2007, p. 4). This leads to a logic tension between the development community and the use of the principles of state-building. Local ownership plays a crucial role in this matter. “Development policy uses ‘participation’ as a guiding principle and advocates on behalf of the world’s poorest people, hopefully in their best interests” (Scott, 2007, p. 4 and 5).

Before going further in analyzing endogenous state-building, it is important to stress that the above-mentioned is a central aspect of this thesis.

The concept of ownership and participation will be addressed in the next sub-chapter.

## **3.6. Endogenous State-Building**

### **3.6.1. Conceptualization of Participation and Ownership**

Ownership is understandably interrelated with participation. First, the concept of participation will be addressed and secondly, the notion of ownership.

## Participation

The concept of participation comprehends different definitions and approaches. According to Britha Mikkelsen and her book *Methods for Development Work and Research* (1995) participation can be used as:

- A cosmetic label;
- A co-opting practice, in order to mobilize local labor;
- An empowerment process (Mikkelsen, 1995, p. 54).

Nilsson and Woodford-Berger (2000) present a typology of interests in this concept. For the ones implementing, participation means:

- **Legitimization;**
- **Efficiency** in cost-benefit analysis;
- **Sustainability** in order to avoid dependency;
- **Empowerment**, allowing people to take action.

For the ones receiving participation, it means:

- **Inclusion** and access to benefits;
- **Time** spent on project;
- **Leverage** and **influence** on the project;
- **Empowerment.**

In theory, participation seems like the perfect solution to a torn up country like Somalia but many scholars identified different critiques and obstacles when trying to utilize a participatory approach. This approach can be used as a form of manipulation with the inherent risk of co-optation by the elites (Cooke and Kothari, 2000). Also, it is reasoned that access and equity stay at the theoretical level (Guijit and Kaul Shah, 1998). Lastly, it is claimed that NGO's often have an influenced perception on what a community is (Nelson and Wright 1995).

## **Ownership**

Chesterman (2007) categorized different forms of local ownership. Accordingly, ownership can range from:

- **Responsiveness:** the most passive form of local ownership where policies are made according to the local culture;
- **Consultation:** gives local actors impact on the policy design;
- **Participation:** local actors play a uninterrupted role in policy design;
- **Accountability:** mechanisms are available to local actors in order to hold the International Community responsible for their decisions;
- **Control:** local actors in the center of the policy design;
- **Sovereignty:** local actors with power to cease a project at any given time.

Again, and as aforementioned, it is essential to stress that it is extremely hard to determine if a community-based approach would have a positive outcome in every country. In practice, there is generally a very low level of local ownership by the local actors. Chesterman proves that point by explaining that the nature of consultation is by itself time-consuming and frustrating, especially under delicate conditions of time pressure and urgency (Chesterman, 2007). Also, the lack of contextual knowledge and the problematic relationship between donors and recipients of aid makes an already complex issue even more unpredictable.

By looking to Somalia's current situation, it is fair to assume that the country would be facing most of the limitations mentioned above. Power relations are complex and often difficult to exchange in a country where there is a substantial number of clans. We would see the process being shaped by these local relations of power, with them having a personal agenda, hijacking and manipulating any type of project.

### **3.7. Endogenous State-Building: Promoting local ownership**

The stimulation and emphasis dedicated towards “local ownership” are characteristics inherent to the concept of endogenous state-building. Marina Ottaway, a strong advocate of this process concludes “that the approach cannot be applied to all countries, countries, that institution-building is often undertaken prematurely, and that there is a discrepancy between the donors' prescriptions and the resources they are willing to make available.” (Ottaway, 2002, p. 1001). The author gives the example of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, countries that fell apart in the early 1990’s, saying that the International Community did not consider the scenario where “collapsed states may be too dysfunctional to be patched back together, and that other solutions might thus need to be considered” (*idem*). The author then addresses Robert Jackson’s definitions of a *de jure* state:

“De jure states are those that exist by a fiat of the International Community, which recognizes them as sovereign entities whether or not they have a government capable of effectively controlling or administering the territory. Collapsed states are the most extreme form of the purely de jure state. (...) Somalia, without even a nominal government for a decade, is still considered a state with sovereign rights.” (Ottaway, 2002, p. 1003).

And a *de facto* state:

“(…) where the people occupying the territory are organized under or have organized an effective government” (*idem*).

Ottaway then explores this last concept, affirming that there are two categories for a *de facto* state. On one side, it is possible to observe the existence of a nation according to Weberian principles, supported by democratic institutions, that has international recognition and at the same time possesses control on both people and territory. “It has an effective administrative apparatus and is characterized by the rule of law. (...) This is the model the International Community tries to replicate in collapsed states” (*idem*). The author defines this as a *de jure* as well as a *de facto* state, defining it as a “Weberian state”.

On the other side, the state has no international recognition and power is imposed through weak institutions. “It is a state *de facto* but not *de jure*. For brevity, I will refer to this as the ‘raw power state’” (*idem*). Ottaway gives the example of Somaliland as a “raw power state”. It has not receive any kind of international recognition but it has developed institutions.

Considering the conceptualization made above, this bottom-down approach creates the second hypothesis:

***Endogenous approach (bottom-up) is the solution for Somaliland.***

## 4. Empirical Presentation of the Case

In this chapter, empirical data will be presented. Firstly, Somalia clan structure will be presented, as it is a central feature of the country. Consequently, an historical contextualization will be made. Lastly, in the second sub-chapter, Somaliland state-building path will be presented.

### 4.1. Somalia

#### 4.1.1 Clan Structure

In order to understand Somali politics, an understanding of the clan system is indispensable. Somali society is homogenous in ethnicity, religion and language and it is composed of various clans. The clan system comprises five main clans that branch into a vast number of sub-clans and minority groups. The five clans are the Darood, Isaaq, Hawiye, Mirifle and Digil. Each of these clans divides into various divisions of sub-clans. The minority groups are the ones that are outside the main lineage of clans. (Lewis M. , 2008).

Two principles are the basis of the clan structure: *kinship* or *tol* (refers to descents) and *xeer* (refers to the political contract). Somalis are alienated according to their kinship, as Luling explains:

“A group of men and women descended from a common male ancestor about five generations back forms a lineage. Several such lineages, all of whom trace descent from an earlier ancestor, form a larger group, and several of these groups again coalesce at an earlier point in the genealogy, and so on until one reaches the ancestor of the clan.” (Luling, 2006).

Sub-clans coexist under the principle of *deegan*, a term that set the rules of the settlement communities that share farming land.



Regarding the *xeer*, it “guarantees the rights of all members of a clan community, particularly their property and traditional rights. *Xeer* includes a number of rights, duties and obligations that govern clan groups and is based on the collective responsibility of the clan” (Abukar, 2015, pp. 14-15). For example, individual crimes are resolved collectively with *xeer* working as a system of conflict resolution within the clans.

The clan leader is, in most cases, the oldest member. All adult men engage in the *Shir*, a mechanism of decision-making:

“The position of each member is a reflection of a number of factors, including religious knowledge, wisdom, age, and wealth. Traditionally, *Shir* is a male-oriented mechanism, and women do not participate in *Shir* meetings. To avoid fragmentation and internal conflict, decisions in *Shir* meetings are made by consensus” (Abukar, 2015, p. 15).

In summary, Somali clan structure lies in two main principles – *Shir and xeer*. Both have been the support of Somali system for centuries. Nevertheless, this rule of law and clan governance are often confronted by internal or intra-clan conflicts.

Other source of that support the theory of this structure is Gundel and Dharabxo’s (2006) report. The authors base most of their insight on I. M. Lewis (1962). The report divides the Somali traditional structures into three core features:

Traditional social structures:

“In short, the Somali society is based on a vertically oriented segmentary lineage system in which individuals take their position according to their patrilineal descent (traced through the male line). Hence, according to Lewis, all the pastoral Somalis belong to genealogical lineages, which also function as their basic political units. The segmentary lineage system can be differentiated into categories of clan-family, clan, sub-clan, primary lineage and mag-paying group as divisions of varying size.” (Gundel & Dharbaxo, 2006, pp. 4-5).

The customary laws – the xeer. The so-called political contract:

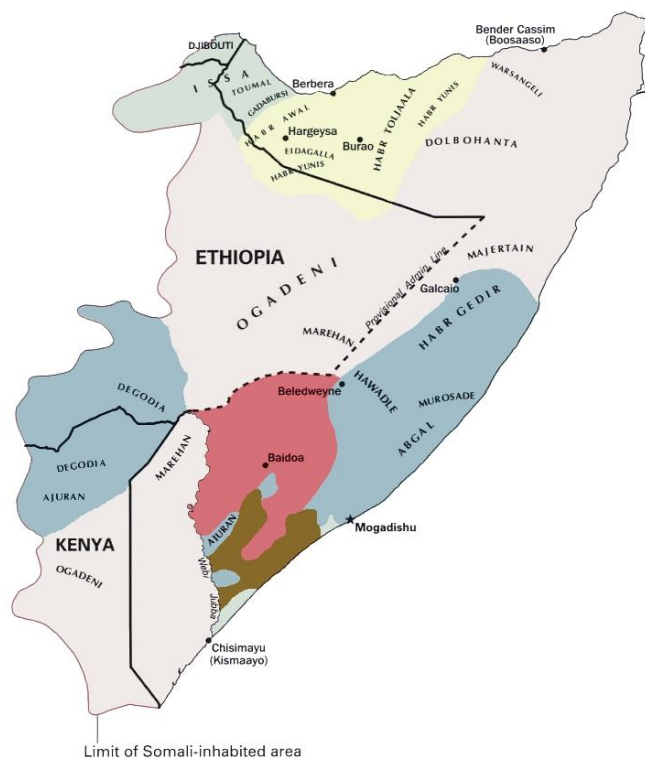
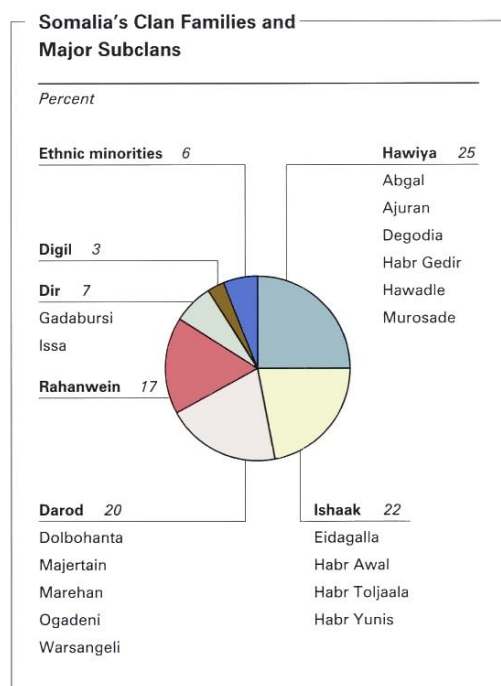
“Generally speaking, the Somali xeeers are unwritten agreements, passed down orally from one generation to the next, entered bilaterally by elders representing clans that live and migrate adjacent to one another. Inter-clan xeer originally concern the sharing of resources, especially grazing and access to water between pastoralists. The xeer is a customary code and procedure founded upon contractual agreement, and denotes a body of explicitly formulated obligations, rights and duties. It binds people of the same treaty (xeer) together and defines their collective responsibility in external relations with other groups.” (Gundel & Dharbaxo, 2006, p. 8).

The traditional authority structure:

“Despite being subject to political repression, the basic structures of the traditional authorities in Somalia are still more or less the same. However (...) we can state that since the civil war in 1990, they have gained importance, especially in securing the fragile peace, and restoring a level of law and order. In spite of substantial regional differences, their primary role is still the regulation of access to shared resources such as grazing areas and water, which still is based on the xeer. The role of the clan elders in the xeer cannot be overstated, as they are simultaneously considered its legislators, executors and judges. Decision making is led by the male clan elders on the basis of consensus – factors which both subordinate the interests of individuals to the interests of the clans, and severely marginalize women in decision-making.” (Gundel & Dharbaxo, 2006, p. 48).

The map below gives a perspective on the aforementioned:

### Ethnic Groups



**Distribution of Somalia's Clan Families and Major Subclans**

Source: ["Ethnic Groups from Somalia Summary Map, CIA 2002"](#)

### 4.1.2. Historical contextualization

Due to its strategic location in the Horn of Africa, close to the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf of Aden, Somalia gains weight as a commercial post early on. For example, its ports served through many centuries to exchange their goods with imported products of Arabia, the Persian Gulf and India. This contact with foreign merchants brought Islamism to Somalia around the seventh century. Mary Harper describes how this outspread:

“There has been substantial Arab influence on Somalia for hundreds of years. The existence from at least seventh century of settle Arab Merchant communities in coastal towns such as Mogadishu, Zeila and Berbera led to the mixing of Arab and Somali blood through intermarriage, and hastened the penetration of Islam, which was adapted into a distinctly ‘Somali-style’ (...)” (Harper, 2012).

### ***Pre-colonial and colonial Somalia (1885–1960)***

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 by Great Britain gave a new geopolitical dimension to Somalia. The country was the scene to a dispute between European imperialist powers: Great-Britain, France and Italy. These countries dominated the region during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, through the imposition of laws of the Western world.

In June 24<sup>th</sup> of 1960 the British Somaliland (North) became independent, and the same happened five days later, to the Italian Somaliland (South). On July 1<sup>st</sup> of 1960, the two territories converged in the creation of the Somalia Republic, a state that would act through a parliamentary, multiparty and universal suffrage regime, conditions imposed by Britain and Italy, before its final withdrawal.

### ***Post-Colonial Period (1960–1969)***

In 1961 and through a popular referendum, the people of Somalia ratified a new constitution. In 1967, former prime-minister Abradirashid Ali Shermake was elected President. On October 15<sup>th</sup> 1969, contrary to what was expected, President Shermarke was assassinated by one of his bodyguards. This led to a military *coup d'état* on October 21<sup>st</sup> 1969 where Mohamed Siad Barre took power without facing armed opposition installing a dictatorship, dissolving the Parliament and the Supreme Court and suspending the constitution. Several opposition movements emerged from the various clans.

### ***Military Regime (1969–1991)***

Siad Barre's government was supported by the Soviet Union, distancing itself from the previous democratically elected and pro-western government who had a clear support from the United States. In a speech commemorating the first anniversary of the revolution, on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1970, Barre announced:

“In our Revolution we believe that we have broken the chain of a consumer economy based on imports, and we are free to decide our destiny. And in order to realize the interests of the Somali people, their achievement of a better life, the

full development of their potentialities and the fulfillment of their aspirations, we solemnly declare Somalia to be a Socialist State”<sup>3</sup> (Laitin, 1976).

Hopes of a new period were high but the country faced numerous problems in the following years.

The Ogaden War (1977-78) between Somalia and Ethiopia had heavy political, economic, and social consequences for the country. Additionally, this conflict was truly influenced by the Soviet Union and the US. The Soviet Union attempted to mediate this conflict peacefully was the primary solution. Fidel Castro was one of the members that proposed a solution to the conflict: A socialist confederation between Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia. This proposal was rejected by Barre and the war began. During the conflict, the Soviet Union’s support through the supply of tanks, weaponry and helicopters was essential. (Weiss, 1980). Consequently, this distancing led to an approach by the United States:

“Of course, Somalia was not doomed to float out at sea. In a polarized world, a Soviet enemy was automatically the United States' friend. Here, Washington found an opportunity to normalize relations with Mogadishu. It offered military equipment to Somalia in order to counterbalance Soviet and Cuban support for Ethiopia. Somalia, built by Soviet aid, joined the Western camp in 1978, thus verifying the old cliché that there are ‘no permanent friends nor permanent enemies’” (Mohamed, 2009).

Despite the renewed proximity to the United States, Somalia was defeated and this resulted in the beginning of decline of the popular support, many Somalis had become disillusioned with life under a dictatorship.

Barre’s regime got weaker as the Cold War came to an end, reducing drastically Somalia’s strategic significance. Consequently, the dictatorship became more authoritarian. Ken Menkhaus (2007) describes how Somalia’s descent into civil war and state failure is a consequence of the years that followed the Ogaden War:

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted in David Laitin (1976): “The Political Economy of Military Rule in Somalia”. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol.14, no. 3, p. 46

“With the partial exception of the security sector, most government institutions began to atrophy in the years following the disastrous Ogaden War with Ethiopia in 1977–78. Fierce government repression, heightened clan cleavages and animosities, gross levels of corruption, and low salaries all combined to accelerate the state’s decline. The public school system, a source of pride and progress in the 1970s, crumbled. Production on state-run farms and in factories plummeted. Government ministries were almost entirely dysfunctional despite a bloated civil service, due in part to chronic absenteeism and cronyism; effective and committed civil servants were seen as a threat and removed” (Menkhaus K. , 2007, p. 80).

It was therefore clear that Somalia had become repressive and expropriating and no longer had the international attention and aid when comparing with previous years. It had become “a tool to dominate political opponents and rival clans, expropriate resources, and above all serve as a catchment point for foreign aid that was then diverted into the pockets of civil servants clever, powerful, or well-connected enough to place themselves at strategic spigots in the foreign aid pipeline.” (Menkhaus K. , 2007, p. 80).

### ***Civil War and UN Interventions (1991–1995)***

In January 1991 the government of Somalia fell. Southern Somalia was devastated by a “factional warfare”, resulting in an estimated 250,000 Somalis dying and with over one million fleeing the country as refugees. In the Northern part, a unilateral declaration of secession gave independence to the state of Somaliland<sup>4</sup> in May 1991. (Menkhaus K. , 2007).

In November 1992 the United States announced UNOSOM<sup>5</sup>, an operation intended to protect humanitarian aid. The operation plunged into failure and crisis. An armed conflict with the most powerful warlord in the country, General Mohammed Farah Aideed led to a withdrawal of troops in early 1995, “leaving Somalia still in a state of war and state collapse” (Menkhaus K. , 2007, p. 81).

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<sup>4</sup> Somaliland's self-proclaimed independence is not recognized by any country or international organization.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Operation in Somalia.

### ***Transitional Period***

These several factors mentioned above – the lack of governance, a poor economy and the ongoing civil war – resulted in a serious phenomenon: Maritime Piracy. Somalia's geographical location in the Horn of Africa, where thousands of ships annually circulate is of extreme strategic importance. Several ships make the connection between Asia and Europe and sail the Red Sea towards the Suez Canal. As a critical access path of many vessels, this was the "ideal" stage for the practice of piracy. Also, the inability to control territorial waters, resulted in consecutive "attacks" to the fish resources of the country by fishermen from across the world. This led to the scarcity of resources. In response, the Somali fishing community organized themselves into groups divided by small boats and armed with weapons, taking assault ships hostages and demanding ransoms in exchange. It was the year 2005 and the world was facing the resurgence of piracy, this scourge quickly became a threat to trade and maritime safety. For the next few years piracy turned into a "war business", practiced by many young people and controlled by leaders who take advantage of the chaotic state of the country to get rich. International military operations had a definite role in eradicating almost completely since 2013. (Balthasar, 2014)

It became clear that over the years that since the departure of UNOSOM Somalia did not bear the fundamental foundation for the existence of a state, there was no central government or neither judicial nor legislative power. There was rather a power vacuum that led to the fall of Siad Barre's regime in 1991, plunging the country into a deep and intense civil war of extreme violence. Chaos emerges leading to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis that persists to the present day.

Somalia was for many years the number one failed state according to the Fragile States Index (Fund for Peace, 2015). Although occupying the second position in 2015's index behind South Sudan, it does not necessarily mean that the countries current situation improved.

### ***Post-transitional Period***

In 2012, the new Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud took office, bringing hope and optimism to the country. However, and with little to no surprise, “the administration today appears to be drifting toward failure once again. al-Shabaab<sup>6</sup> is far from defeated, social fragmentation within Somalia is on the rise, and political infighting continues unabated.” (Balthasar, 2014, p. 4). Somalia’s “vicious circle” of struggle to exit fragility persists.

### ***Vision 2016***

The next Parliamentary elections in Somalia since 1967 are planned to be held later this year. With al-Shabab still posing as a threat, Somalia will have a tough job of guaranteeing a safe environment. Somalia is still a long way from reconstructing an operational state. The type of state-building that has been adopted in Somalia, in other words, an exogenous approach based on military intervention has proved itself as a “conflict-prone, high risk, protracted, and haphazard process” (Balthasar, 2014, p. 4). The next sub-chapter will present Somaliland state-building trajectory.

## **4.2. Somaliland: “Africa’s Best Kept Secret”<sup>7</sup>**

### ***Somaliland’s Initial Transition (1991-1993)***

In May 1991, Somaliland proclaimed its unilateral declaration of independence. International observers have been praising the region and “alleged uniqueness and apparent success of its state-building project to processes of tradition reconciliation, grassroots democracy, the blending of traditional and modern forms of governance into so-called hybrid political orders, and the polity’s overall peaceful nature” (Balthasar,

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<sup>6</sup> “Al Shabaab is al Qaeda’s affiliate in Somalia and operates primarily out of the country’s southern and central regions. The group is fighting an insurgency against the internationally recognized Somali Federal Government, which is based in Somalia’s capital, Mogadishu. Al Shabaab has targeted African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) peacekeepers for their support of the federal government. The group has also repeatedly threatened the United States and the West and has demonstrated the capacity to strike beyond Somalia’s borders.” (American Enterprise Institute, 2016)

<sup>7</sup> Jhazbhay, I. (2003) Somaliland: Africa's best kept secret, a challenge to the international community?"



Thinking Beyond Roadmaps in Somalia: Expanding Policy Options for State Building , 2014, p. 5). Balthasar's description puts Somaliland close to current concepts of development, peace, democracy and pluralism, or, in other words, the region can be considered a *de facto* (if not a *de jure*) state.

A historical contextualization is essential in order to understand the process of state-building that Somaliland experienced.

Soon after Siad Barre was overthrown in 1991, the Somali National Movement (SNM) – *Isaaq*-based<sup>8</sup> movement in northwestern Somalia – extended its control over the region, leaving “the militias of the *Gadabursi*, *Dhulbahante*, and *Warsangeli* clans, who had generally sided with Barre during the 1988-1991 civil war, with little alternative than to enter into peace negotiations” (*ibid*, p. 6). In May 1991, a national conference held in Burco terminated with the declaration of the Republic of Somaliland. The next few months were not as positive as expected.

The SNM saw two factions formed under Barre's regime. Both would become incompatible. “While enjoying the backing of the ‘civilian wing’, [Abdirahman Ahmed Ali] Tuur<sup>9</sup> was eyed with suspicion by the more hardline military elements, referred to as *Calan Cas*, who were in charge of the most potent SNM militias” (Balthasar, 2013). This suspicion created a competition over division of economic, military and political capitals, blocking the progression of the new government from increasing its power. President Tuur also struggled to unite all the clan militias. The main goal was to create a national security force composed by these clan militias. Tensions were rising and in January 1992 violence began in the city of Burco, leaving 300 dead. In the month of March, violence “spread to the port city of Berbera, when the government attempted to secure the port's economic resources that had come under the control of militias opposing Tuur's reign” (Balthasar, 2014, p. 6). During the following eight months, more than 1000 people lost their lives, leaving Somaliland on the edge of a civil war. The next steps would be crucial and decisive towards the future of the newly formed state. This troubled period

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<sup>8</sup> The *Isaaq* are one of the main clans in Somalia. Members live mainly in the northwestern Somaliland region and the Somali region of Ethiopia.

<sup>9</sup> The first President of Somaliland.

ended up as “two wasted years”<sup>10</sup>, a start that delayed the Somaliland’s hope of becoming a stable region.

### ***Advancing State-Building (1993-1997)***

In 1993, Somaliland’s state-building process began, this time with no conflicts. This new period was led by the new President Muhammad Haji Ibrahim Egal. The new leader controlled other actors through a central government and created a national army.

“Part of the reason why Egal was more successful than Tuur in initiating state-building lay in his being sponsored by the militarily powerful *Calan Cas*, and that he hailed from the *Isaaq* clan of *Iisa Muse* (...) that not only featured some of the region’s tycoons, but also controlled significant economic assets, including the port of Berbera” (*ibid*, p. 7).

President Egal prioritized the mobilization of resources in order to finance the process of state-building. As a first priority, he introduced the Somaliland shilling<sup>11</sup>, created customs’ offices to tax *khat*<sup>12</sup> trade that would come from Ethiopia as well as imports and exports occurring at the port of Berbera. The second priority focused on the security sector and the creation of a national army. Also, the creation of a state administration state was an important step. Despite the increase in security and livelihoods, the government was accused of clan bias in favor of the *Isaaq* clan. Furthermore, Egal’s choice to form the government was contested and the president was accused of centralizing the state, a situation that would lead to serious problems:

“Aggrieved by his choice of ministers and his choice of ministers and his centralizing tendencies, some of the most prominent leaders of the *Garhajis* – made up of the *Isaaq* clans of *Habar Yonis* and *Eidagalle*, including former President Tuur – declared Somaliland’s government illegitimate. In March 1994, the *Eidagalle* took military control of Hargeisa airport, which lay within their

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<sup>10</sup> Patrick Gilkes, *Two Wasted Years: The Republic of Somaliland 1991-1993* (London: Save the Children Fund, 1993)

<sup>11</sup> Official currency of Somaliland.

<sup>12</sup> “*Khat*/qaat is a mild amphetamine-like stimulant, consumed by largely male Somalis” (Balthasar, 2014, p. 7)

traditional territory. (...) Egal unleashed his eager military officers onto the opposition. Conflict spread to Burco, when government troops tried to take control of *Habar Yonis* checkpoints in the city's vicinity in March 1995. The resulting war sparked the heaviest fighting since the anti-Barre struggle in which as many as 4,000 people lost their lives, and up to 180,000 fled to Ethiopia.” (*idem*).

This detailed account portrays Somaliland as a nation devastated by war. Yet, Egal managed reinforced his position. On the one hand, the *Garhajis*, the strongest opposition to Egal's administration, were defeated. On the other hand, Egal depicted the conflict as a war between the *Calan Cas* and the *Garhajis*. This led to a decrease of political legitimization on the *Calan Cas* side, opening the way to allow Egal to exercise more control. The president ended up replacing members of the *Calan Cas* from the government and replacing them with members from smaller clans. The path was created to a troubled transition towards democracy.

### ***Transition to Democracy (1997-2001)***

Between October 1996 and February 1997, a summit was held at Hargeisa<sup>13</sup> in order to restore peace in the region. Egal faced strong opposition from the “Eastern Alliance”<sup>14</sup> but despite the situation, the president managed to manipulate the summit in his benefit. By financing this conference with Government funds, Egal gained leverage over the 315 delegates, “half of whom he ultimately handpicked” (*ibid*, p. 8). Also, he claimed that the civil wars emerged from a political point a view, not a clan one, therefore preventing the involvement of the clan authorities, positioning himself at the center of all negotiations instead” (*idem*). With a clear intent to reinforce his power, Egal won the re-election as president, despite all the accusations of buying votes. The tenure was prolonged for another period of four years, extending his presidency for a total of eight years.

It took another four years to write a final version of the constitution ready to be put to a referendum. The parliament and the government differed over it and despite the existence

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<sup>13</sup> Capital and largest city of Somaliland.

<sup>14</sup> “(...) a political bloc made of Isaaq and Harti clans residing in eastern Somaliland.” (Balthasar, 2014, p. 8)

of two opposing versions, a consensus was achieved. In May 31, 2001, a decade after Somaliland declared its independence, the constitutional referendum took place. Nevertheless, “Egal ingeniously tied the vote to an unrelated vote affirming Somaliland’s status of independence, thereby assuring its approval by 97.9 percent of participants” (*ibid*, p. 9).

In 2002, Egal saw his political status at risk by the clans. He called for multiparty elections, a clear strategy that would (again) reinforce his power and distance the clan opposition that was pushing for another conference. A safety move that Egal depicted as a modernizing and reforming, or, in other words, democratic. On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2002, Egal died unexpectedly in South Africa while having surgery. Despite the unforeseen incident, elections were held in December of that same year, with the United People’s Democratic Party (UDUB) – Egal’s party – winning the elections.

## **5. Analysis**

The analysis section consists of two chapters. The first addresses Somalia state-building efforts, giving an insight on the impact of the exogenous approach, the role of traditional structures and the external military intervention over the years. The second chapter will analyze Somaliland state-building effort, giving an insight on the impact of the endogenous approach, the role of the traditional structures and the (absence of) external intervention.

### **5.1. Somali State-Building**

#### **5.1.1. The role of traditional structures**

It is important to recall that major colonial powers impacted deeply Somalia's and Somaliland's traditional structures. Still, Somalia, more exactly in the South Central region, is where most of the external military interventions took place.

The Somali political structure before the colonization is described by many scholars. Lewis (1962), considered the founder of Somali studies, gives an important insight of a pre-colonial Somalia: "the cohesion of Somali pastoral groups, which is exceptionally strong, thus does not depend either upon territorial attachments or upon allegiance to a political office. Its basis lies rather in community of descent in the male line (*tol*) and in a kind of social-political contract (*xeer*, also *heer*)." (Lewis M. , 1962, p. 37). The *shir*, as described earlier, worked as a mechanism of decision making that operated with little to no problems. For hundreds of years this was the Somalia way of living, bringing the country into the modern era. In other words, a system that functioned and gave autonomy to Somalis over the years.

As described above, Gundel and Dharbaxho's report (2006) supports the theory of a well function state in a pre-colonial era that was based on three essential structures. These *juridico-political* structures are: the traditional social structure; the customary laws – the *xeer*, and the traditional authority structure. It is clear that this system, with a few exceptions, was thoroughly respected and served as a guide for many centuries.

In the current days, in a post-colonial fragmented Somalia, it is still possible to observe that clans and traditional and leaders are well respected in the clan structure, and, therefore, traditional structures have been the guarantors of any form of peace and stability in the region. These findings test Collier's exogenous approach theory of a deep military intervention in order to restore economic and political values, putting aside any role from clans in the process.

Gundel and Dharbaxo point out that "Somalis have increasingly reverted to their traditional structures because of the failure of the central government to build functioning structures that served all of the public without the marginalization of any one clan" (Gundel & Dharbaxo, 2006, p. V). This "easy way out" might point to the fact that there is no better alternative to this way of living. Nevertheless, since the collapse of the state, traditional leaders have been struggling to carry out with duties when comparing to a pre-colonizing era:

"(...) the main function of Somali traditional leaders (settling disputes between and within the clans based on their *xeer*), has been under constant pressure since the collapse of State as they adapted to the very difficult, new circumstances of conflict, lack of rule of law, and a rapidly changing socio-economic environment." (*idem*).

The authors point out an important conclusion that describes perfectly the complexity of Somalia current paradox:

"On one hand the traditional authorities have been increasingly seen as the creators and guarantors of the relative peace and stability that exists (...) locally in South/Central and their *xeer* is the glue that prevents a collapse into anarchy. On the other hand, this very system is in trouble and risks fragmentation if it is not stabilized. Hence, the paradox is constituted by a renewed dependency on the traditional authorities for peace and stability at a time that their very structure is in crisis." (*idem*).

Lack of transparency and legitimation are therefore a central reason behind his fragility problem: “One source of this fragility has been the proliferation of elders, as faction leaders/politicians/warlords were successful in splitting sub-clans groupings into sub-sub-clans to force the selection of a new elder that would be loyal to the given faction leader.”

The “dream” of incorporating traditional structures in the process of state-building can also be foreseen as a difficult and easily manipulative task. Nevertheless, it is clear that over the years the different attempts of state-building by international actors have clearly failed. The next sub-chapter will give an overview of the external military interventions.

### **5.1.2. External interventions dilemma**

September 2012 marked an important landmark for Somalia with the installation of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS). Hopes were high as this could finally be the turning point for Somalia. Yet, just after two years, many problems were on the rise. For example, al-Shabaab continued to be a central destabilizer. Somalia was in real danger of falling again. In political, economic and security aspects, there still is a large dependency on international partners, an issue that could be observed in the previous government, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). A slight evolution in Somalia’s federal agenda can be observed but despite some positive signs, fragility and fragmentation are still present. Also, al-Shabaab continues to play a big role in this destabilization context.

Looking back, history shows that there are plenty of lessons to be learned from the several interventions from external actors. For example, when Somalia’s situation deteriorated in the early 1990’s UNOSOM I and II missions were deployed. With no surprise, both operations were a complete failure.

A parallel between Somalia and Afghanistan can be made. U.S and NATO joined forces to fight the Taliban in the early 2000s. This surge backfired and instead of providing security and stabilization for the Afghanistan government, there was an increasing number of attacks against both the external actors and the government structures. “The excessive use of force and killings of civilians in drone and other attacks, including crossfires, have played into the hands of the Taliban. They have helped undermine the

‘hearts and minds’ efforts as the population has turned against the coalition forces.” (Cilliers, 2010, p. 6). It is important to recall that every case is a case and both Somalia and Afghanistan are different countries. Nevertheless, just like in Afghanistan, where coalition forces suffered major setbacks that compromised the operation, external interventions never managed to bring peace and security.

### **5.1.3. 2016 elections: a sign of stabilization?**

In September 2013, Somalia hosted in Mogadishu the national Vision 2016 conference. It gathered regional authorities, national experts, religious leaders, women’s and youth groups and Somalia scholars. The goal was to create a general framework for the political process of the Federal Government, write a constitution and hold elections by the end of 2016.

The main objective of the elections is to “mark the country’s graduation from a state of transition to one characterized by permanent, representative, and democratic institutions of governance.” (Balthasar, 2014, p. 14). In other words, a post-transitional period. Political instability, poor security, and lack of financial and human resources have marked the slow process for delivering Somalia’s Vision 2016. Also, it is hard to assess how the general elections will be organized, how voters will register, and, most importantly, how to assure transparency and legality of political parties. The risk of social fragmentation and renewed violence is still high. Balthasar points out that “as long as political mobilization continues to follow age-old kinship lines, in the absence of viable alternative constituencies, the upcoming elections are likely to spur social fragmentation and enhance the risk of renewed violent conflict” (Balthasar, 2014, p. 16). Social fragmentation will put in risk not only the legitimacy of the elections but it would also “play into the hands of al-Shabaab” (*idem*), risking Somalia’s state-building project.

Linking to the roles of traditional structures, the International Community has highlighted the importance of a more inclusive approach where clan structures have an important role in creating political unity and conflict resolution. For example, many clan elders and members of the political elite were invited to be part of these symposiums. It is therefore essential to recognize that clan structures are still a main aspect in Somali politics. Somali politicians and members of the parliament have the important role to lead the country to



the first free and fair elections since the military coup. For example, creating a parliament with democratic foundations is a massive test that requires the help from the International Community, but help that starts from the bottom. One thing is certain, even if the general elections are not held as hoped, the country will enter a new phase in its turbulent history that has offered so many vital lessons. “Forced” state-building have brought the country to the current state and a simple conclusion can be made: state-building should follow a different path.

#### **5.1.4 Sub-Conclusion**

Collier’s theory emphasizes the use of a top-down intervention in order to create a central democratic state. Collier’s approach can be directly related to the concept of exogenous approach, where state-building is a process that ultimately relies on external actors intervention in the rebuilding process. External military intervention in Somalia as clearly failed over the years.

A deduction can be made: The analysis above questions Collier’s top-down approach theory.

## **5.2. Somaliland State-building**

### **5.2.1. The role of traditional structures**

After the declaration of independence in May 1991, Tuur was appointed as the country’s first executive president, part of the SNM-led interim government. This administration had the important task of including non-*Isaaq* communities by including other clans in the participation of this new era. However, this interim government was extremely vulnerable.

“Old wartime rivalries within the SNM resulted in the outbreak of fighting in Burco. In March 1992, fighting also erupted in Berbera when the interim government sought to establish control over the port and its revenue. The Berbera confrontation threatened to push Somaliland into a state of protracted civil war

that would have replicated the southern deconstruction of former Italian Somaliland. Fortunately the clan elders restored peace, thereby entrenching their stabilizing role.” (Jhazbhay, 2008, p. 60).

Clan elders served as peacemakers. They had a vital role in Somaliland’s state-building path due to traits such as compromise, persuasion, bravery and justice. They have a central role in the Somali society (Ahmed & Green, 1999). Clan elders (*Guurti*) were able to bring consensus between clan and sub-clan rivals, creating consensus, peace and stability. The highest level council of clan elders is the *Guurti*, a traditional system of clan governance. Through this system, clan elders managed conflicts and tensions in the region.

Through several conferences between 1990-1997, clan elders headed the reconciliation process. “During these conferences the clan elders followed their traditional approach to mediation, guided by the Somali proverb: ‘if you want to dismantle a hedge, remove one thorn bush at a time’. They focused on developing the trust essential for negotiation which would help sustain the peace process” (Omaar, 1994, p. 235).

These conferences aimed to:

- Restore peaceful relations between communities devastated by war;
- Establish security and stability in the government regime;
- Establish local and national institutions of governance;
- Create conditions for economic growth.

### **5.2.2. Hybrid Government**

Another good example of the role of the traditional structures lies on the so-called Somaliland hybrid government that combines traditional and western institutions. It is formed by an executive government – President, Vice-President and a Council of Ministers - a Legislative government – a bicameral parliament with an Upper House of

Elders and House of Representatives and an independent judiciary government. (Bradbury, 2003 ). The *Guurti* is incorporated in the Upper House of Elders and it is responsible for handling internal conflicts. Governance is exercised through a “power-sharing coalition” of Somaliland’s main clans. (Bradbury, 2003 )

Therefore, “the inclusion of the traditional was vital for the successful implementation of the modern” because it “established a peaceful environment in which a new form of governance could be introduced.” (Richards, 2008, p. 18) It permitted for the Somalilanders to recognize new hybrid structure and to get familiar to democratic governance, achieving unity. More importantly, “(...) it has given the Somaliland administration a popular legitimacy that Somalia's previous governments lacked.” (Bradbury, 2003 , p. 475).

### **5.2.3. External Assistance: When less meant more**

Somaliland meets most of the internal conditions to be formally recognized as a state. Its accomplishments are even more remarkable when put side by side with Somalia where governments have been largely supported by external and political and financial aid. “According to a 2012 report by the former head of the Public Finance Management Unit in the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG), the Somali government relied on the International Community to fund around 70 per cent of its annual budget. The World Bank noted that this had been reduced to just over 50 per cent by late 2014 for the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), which succeeded the TFG. Politically, there have also been at least 17 internationally sponsored sets of peace talks aimed at achieving national reconciliation in Somalia to date, most costing millions of dollars and involving large numbers of delegates.” (Phillips, 2016, p. 633).

In contrast, Somaliland’s access to external assistance was always restricted. Between 1982 and 1991, before the region’s declaration of independence, President Barre faced a fierce opposition from the northern Somali National Movement (SNM). During this period, the region of North Somalia – largely pastoral economy – was not a beneficiary of food aid programs when Somalia suffered from extreme famine during the 1980s. “In fact, foreign aid organizations were evacuated from the north-west of Somalia in May

1988 when Barre's violent campaign against the SNM and *Isaaq* (the dominant clan in Somaliland) civilians peaked." (*idem*).

Despite the important role that the SNM played in overthrowing Barre, the unity that was demonstrative of the movement was gone and after its declaration of independence, President Tuur – Somaliland's first president – was unable to stop the fight over resources in the region. With no surprise, "The fight over resources became increasingly focused on clan divisions and elites on all sides of power struggle mobilized support from within their clans" (*ibid*, p. 636). President Egal succeeded former President Tuur and from this point on, and despite some of the negative aspects of his term, Egal proved the need of local elites to depend on each other:

"President Egal moved quickly to draw in the major traders, whose businesses relied on secure access to the facilities at Berbera port, as creditors to fund the demobilization of militias, establish the basis of an army, and gain control over key economic infrastructure, in particular consolidating control over Berbera port" (*idem*).

Measures such as securing loans from *Isaaq* traders, establishing an army of 5,000 thousand former soldiers from the militias, and the creation of a national currency gave great power to Egal. This new, large-scale business was now "(...) an exclusive club, membership of which was available in exchange for economic support of Egal's state-building project" (*ibid*, pp.637-638). Despite being exclusive, Egal's practices were generally accepted by Somaliland people as they set the ground for peace and security.

Another important aspect that contributed to Somaliland's peace process was the fact that the conflict in Somalia was centered in the South/Central region. This gave leverage to Somalilanders to create and negotiate their own institutional arrangements. This happened through several inter-clan conferences between 1991 and 1997, "(...) the most important forums in which north-western elites negotiated 'the rules of the game' that sustain Somaliland's political settlement. It was here that the frameworks for national security, political representation and the constitution were largely established." (*ibid*, p.639). In the Borama conference, in 1993, decisions were made based on consensus, not on voting. This was a time consuming practice, but, Somalilanders were not exposed to

external pressure to set international institutional models. Decisions were purely endogenous.

Peace in Somaliland was built from within and it can be seen as an alternative pathway “(...) to models offered in the mainstream state-building and development literature (...) in which peace and political order are seen as primarily the result of neo-Weberian institutional incentives and constraints” (*ibid*, p.640). These outcomes challenge Collier’s and many other scholars in state-building literature – “(...) a finding that runs contrary to the structural accounts of order that dominate the literature”. (*idem*).

#### **5.2.4. Sub-Conclusion**

Somaliland’s remarkable path should be recognized, encouraged, and supported and an endogenous approach can work. The findings in this previous chapter prove that Somaliland’s endogenous state-building was beneficiary and brought political and social institutions to the self-proclaimed state by incorporating vital intangible aspects, as culture, for example.

A deduction can be made: The findings in this previous chapter prove that endogenous state-building was indispensable in order to move the country forward.

## 6. Discussion

By seeking to answer the research question: ***How can Somaliland's state-building path be identified as a lesson for the International Community?*** This chapter will discuss the conclusions of the analysis. Firstly, hypotheses resulting from the exogenous approach will be addressed. Secondly, the endogenous approach hypothesis will be discussed. The last section will focus on the overall findings.

### 6.1. Hypothesis 1

***Exogenous approach (top-down) is in fact the solution for Somaliland.***

In the case of Somaliland, less external intervention meant that it was in the hands of the local elites to create conditions for legitimate solutions to occur. Local communities and the business elite played a major role in order to bring together conflicting parties. Local ownership was fostered and vital to the development of Somaliland. “In other words, there was a strong sense of local ownership precisely because the process was almost entirely locally owned. While ‘local ownership’ is a core rhetorical component of contemporary state-building and development discourses among western donors, it is invariably (if implicitly) framed as complementing donor interventions rather than implying autonomy from them.” (Phillips, 2016, pp. 643-644).

The findings also challenge the *status quo* of state-building as a concept. Somaliland's path proved that the widespread notion that external assistance is essential in order to end a conflict is not true. Instead, it shows that less external involvement “can allow greater space for local agents in mutual dependence to forge locally legitimate solutions.” (*idem*). Somaliland was fundamentally formed outside the any kind of political and economic aid.

The International Community, instead of creating a time frame to restore peace and security, needs to acknowledge that it is a long-term process that could last over decades. Every case is different and it is extremely hard to know beforehand when a conflict will end. Context matters and “blueprint models cannot be imposed from the outside without a proper understanding of, and tailoring to, context (...).” (*idem*). Looking at Somalia,

that over the decades, these models failed. Thus, it is important to take a step back from these continuous endeavors of creating a specific result.

The first hypothesis is therefore empirically challenged.

## **6.2. Hypothesis 2**

### ***Endogenous approach (bottom-up) is the solution for Somaliland.***

It is important to highlight that Somaliland's state-building process varies from the traditional exogenous approach used by the International Community. As Balthasar describes in four important facts, "(...) it might be worth taking a closer look at the less conventional avenue taken by Somaliland." (Balthasar, 2014, p. 9).

Firstly, Somaliland's state-building process was endogenous. Structures were created by local institutions, "(...) such as traditional authorities and inter-clan peace and reconciliation proceedings (...)" (*idem*), putting the International Community aside from the process. This does not necessarily mean that the existence or not of the international actors define the success or failure of any given state-building mission. It was rather "a learn-by-doing" method that carried huge threats but "it enabled the 'rules of the game' to evolve gradually and change over time" (*ibid*, p.9).

Secondly, it was a tumultuous process. The different violent conflicts in the mid 1990s proved exactly that. The concept of state-building is inherent to conflict because it implies a change of the *status quo*. Somaliland's state-building process had major setbacks, proving that was far from perfection. (*idem*)

Thirdly, state-building can be considered an elite-driven process. Proof of that was the claim that Somaliland's election was rigged, an example of undemocratic ethic. Even though the process favors the ones on top, it does not mean that "grassroots actors and democratic governance have no place in state-building; rather, they challenge the widely held proposition that bottom-up approaches and democratic governance are necessary building blocks for success." (*ibid*, p. 10)

Lastly, the complexity of any fragile or newly formed state transforms the state-building project into a long process. Even though Somaliland's state-building was shorter, it still took more than ten years to hold its first elections and draft a constitution. Still today, the self-proclaimed state faces many challenges, "After all, states are the outcome of complex processes, such as power negotiations and rule enforcement, which need time to evolve" (*idem*). Somalia is the perfect example of how this "complexity" affects a state-building project.

Even though Somaliland's state-building effort had many flaws, it serves to prove that there are no perfect methods that can magically save a country from a complex and negative situation. Every case is different in its own way, therefore Somaliland's example cannot be used as a step-by-step plan by Somalia's government. Instead, it should be used as an example that outlines priorities and dangerous/divisive choices. "(...) even though Somaliland's version of state-building came with its own set of problems, it has produced a reasonably functioning state, quite in contrast to the numerous state-building attempts in Somalia." (*ibid*, p.11)

Ottaway (2002) describes Somaliland as a "raw power state", a state that does not possess international recognition but that has developed institutions – a *de facto* state but not a *de jure*. Looking back, it is possible to affirm that Somaliland's state-building trajectory differed significantly from the Somali state-building effort. As stated above, it does not necessarily mean that Somalia should follow Somaliland's state-building path, in other words, Somaliland's case should not serve as a master plan to be copied in order to save Somalia. Somaliland's state-building path was often times tumultuous and still today, it lacks international recognition. Nevertheless, the state made a notable evolution in establishing an acceptable degree of stability and security.

The second hypothesis can therefore be empirically confirmed.



## 7. Conclusion

In this thesis, the guiding question was to understand Somaliland's path and how endogenous and exogenous differ from one another. Therefore, the thesis attempted to deductively analyze *How can Somaliland's state-building path be identified as a lesson for the International Community?*

Based on literature review on the concept of state-building, two opposing hypothesis were produced. The main objective of this project was to understand if state-building should follow a different path, focusing on Somaliland. In the discussion chapter, the empirical data challenges the first hypothesis by proving that the widespread notion that external assistance is essential in order to end a conflict is not true. Instead, it supported the second hypothesis by showing that less external involvement allowed the local community to form locally legitimate solutions.

Somaliland was fundamentally formed outside of political and economic aid. One cannot help being amazed by Somaliland achievements over the past 26 years. The region is the consequence of a political and social process that outspreads its own existence. The analysis of Somaliland's state-building path has implications for the debate regarding the advantages and disadvantages of exogenous and endogenous state-building. Exogenous state-building, which characterized most of the efforts in Somalia, did not appear to succeed. Instead, it became a conflict-prone process that brought even bigger problems to the country. On the other side of the spectrum, endogenous state-building focused on fostering participation and ownership through locally selected councils and local political organizations. The latter refers to Somaliland which, without any doubt, has become a successful case study of African state-building. By avoiding the violence that agitated the south/center region, Somaliland created a hybrid government, merging Western institutions with traditional structures. Somaliland's future in addressing challenges will probably need the hybrid blend of tradition and political modernity that has been happening ever since. Nevertheless, as time goes by and Somaliland develops a bigger connection with the globalizing world, external support will become important. It would be wrong to assume that the region would continue to strive on its own. In order to continue its path to success (and even international recognition), foreign governments

will come into play. Economic growth is an important factor in any developing country and currently, Somaliland's government does not have the capacity to perform such task.

“State-building is a conflict-prone, high-risk, protracted, and haphazard process (...)” (Balthasar, 2014, p. 4). It is for this reason that the International Community should use Somaliland example for future state-building attempts. Somaliland effort was not perfect, far from that, but the region today should be praised as an example of understanding and most importantly – sacrificing of ideals.

## **8. Reflections**

In this section it is necessary to scrutinize the implications that the thesis might produce. It would not be wise to assume that the findings of this paper can be applied in a failed-state situation. Instead, it reveals that there are in fact alternative options to the traditional state-building approach. Despite its failure in obtaining international recognition, Somaliland serves as an example to the International Community to take time to thoroughly examine Somaliland's path and use it as a source of inspiration, both from its successes and setbacks.

As Dominik Balthasar writes, Somaliland should serve as “a guide rather than a master plan (...)” (Balthasar, 2014, p. 17). Again, taking Somaliland case and applying directly to Somalia would be imprudent. Both regions are different historically and socially.

Ultimately, Somaliland story proves that the International Community has to be flexible and that it should expand its approach to state-building. A heavily militarized approach cannot be the answer to every case. In other words, a deep military mentality is not the answer since external military intervention in Somalia was a complete failure. The greater challenge is the social fragmentation of the Somali people.

The Somaliland case proved that an endogenous approach to a fragile situation might be the best solution. The focus of the International Community in failed states should shift towards the local community as they are the base of any society. Traditional and local structures, in the case of Somaliland, worked as a mechanism of inclusive decision making.

One important caveat that is inherent to this study is of course the limitation of the thesis that lies on the case of Somaliland in particular. It is important to determine that this project cannot serve as a creator of generalizable conclusions.

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